

STUDIES IN EXODUS

LESSON NUMBER 1

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Ex. 1:1-14

INTRODUCTION

In the last fourteen chapters of the book of Genesis we have the story of the children of Israel going into Egypt. It starts with the sale of Joseph by his brethren to the Midianites who in turn sold him to Potiphar. Joseph had not long been in the service of Potiphar until through misrepresentation he was put in prison. Later Joseph was called into the presence of Pharaoh to interpret the king's dreams. Joseph not only interpreted the dreams but gave him what Pharaoh considered to be sound advice as to the manner in which he should prepare for the coming famine. Joseph was promoted to the second place in the realm, where he took over the business of storing provisions during seven years of plenty to tide the nation over during seven years of famine which were to follow. During the famine, Joseph's brethren came to Egypt to buy corn. Joseph took advantage of the fact that they did not recognize him to attempt to get his brother, Benjamin, into Egypt. We must remember that Joseph did not know how the brothers deceived their father into thinking that some wild beast had destroyed Joseph. Joseph felt that his father could have found him in Egypt and could have redeemed him from slavery. Since the brothers acted so wickedly and Joseph thought his father did not care, his only concern was to get Benjamin. So he told the brothers that if they expected to see him on a second trip, they must bring Benjamin with them. Jacob refused to let Benjamin go until the pinch of the famine forced him. On this second trip, Joseph learned a number of things about his brothers that changed the picture. And he revealed himself unto them. He sent for his father and all his family so that he might care for them through the balance of the famine. So about seventy souls moved into Egypt and were settled in the land of Goshen.

Egypt was the greatest nation of its day. The religious and moral influence of Egypt were not good for the Israelites. They worshipped beasts, birds, fishes, and insects of all kinds. About the only good that can be said for the religion of the Egyptians is that they had a belief in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. In the arts and sciences the Egyptians excelled all other nations. They were skilled in handling gold, silver, wood, and stone; also, in weaving, embroidering, and dyeing. They also knew something of engraving. They had great universities and libraries with volumes numbering into the thousands. They had methods of embalming which have not been surpassed until this time.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph.” (Ex 1:8).

1. Identity of the New King. It will not be possible for us to determine positively which Pharaoh is referred to in our text. It should be remembered that the word Pharaoh is not the personal name but

rather a title, such as Caesar. Which of the Pharaohs is the one who knew not Joseph and subjected the Jews to slavery has been a question of interest among scholars for a long time. A generation ago a man by the name of Price wrote "The Monuments and the Old Testament," and said: "This question is now reasonably laid to rest by the excavation in 1883 of Edward Naville, under the auspices of the Egyptian Exploration Fund, within the old territory of Goshen." He goes on to say that in these excavations he found the treasure cities and storehouses which were of Ramses II. A part of the walls of these storehouses, which were twenty-two feet thick, were built with bricks which had straw and a part with strawless bricks. This they take as positive proof that the storehouses built by Ramses II were built by the Jews who were required in their greatest oppression to make brick without straw. Merneptah, the son of Ramses, is, according to this theory, regarded as the Pharaoh whose heart was hardened and on whom the plagues were sent. But a later writer says: "As we have seen, the discovery of the Merneptah Stela by Petrie at Karnak in 1896 instantly threw the Ramses-Merneptah theory into utter confusion, for it was obvious that an exodus such as is described in the Hebrew narratives could not possibly have occurred under Merneptah." (Ancient Records and the Bible, by Adams.) After giving his reasons for such a statement, he says: "On any score, as the conclusions suggested in the previous discussion are justified, Amenhotep II must be regarded as the Pharaoh of the exodus, while his father, Thutmose III, must assume the stigma of Pharaoh of the oppression of Israel through a considerable period of years. The evidence pointing to the correctness of these identifications is both cumulative and convincing." (Page 229.)

2. Knew not Joseph. It is said that this new Pharaoh did not know Joseph. The word know is surely not to be taken to mean that this king had never heard of Joseph and the work which he had done, for surely a man who had been as great and who had wielded such an unusual influence over a nation as Joseph had in Egypt couldn't have been unknown to a man who had the ability to be king of the country. Hence, we take the word know in the sense of approve, and it is so used in many places in the Bible. The vast wealth of the kingdom which this very Pharaoh enjoyed was due to the administration of affairs by Joseph during the seven years of plenty. Joseph gathered grain and put in the vast storehouses of Egypt. When the famine came, he had grain to sell not only to the nations round about, but to the people of Egypt. When their money was gone, the people traded their stock for corn to prevent starvation. When all their stock was gone, they traded their land. In this way Joseph caused the government to possess all the wealth of Egypt. Certainly a Pharaoh of a few decades could not fail to know such an administrator. But This Pharaoh knew not Joseph in the sense that he did not approve of the governmental policies of Joseph and especially of his policy toward that group of people who lived in the land of Goshen. So he not only refused to accord the Jews the special privileges which they had enjoyed under Joseph and the Pharaoh who respected Joseph's authority, but he denied them equal privileges with other people. He brought them into bondage and, as our lesson indicates, made this bondage of an unbearable nature.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 1:1-14

1. The Children of Israel Increase (Ex. 1:1-7)

Now these are the names of the sons of Israel. Our text enumerates eleven of the twelve sons of Jacob. Joseph is not named because he was already in Egypt. The author simply means to tell us how many of them came with Jacob. It is well to learn the names of these sons as they are related to the wives of Jacob. The sons of Leah were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Next, the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, were Dan and Naphtali. The sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, were Gad

and Asher. The sons of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife, were Joseph and Benjamin. As important a place as these men hold in the history of patriarchal times everyone who claims to be a Bible student should be able to repeat their names from memory.

All the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy. There is a difficulty between this statement and that of Stephen in Acts 7:14. In this place Stephen says, "Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls." In Gen. 46:26 we are told that all that came with Jacob not counting his daughters-in-law were sixty-six. If to this number we add Jacob, Joseph, and his two sons, we have the number seventy. Those who are interested in a detailed study of the question should read Clarke's Commentary on Gen. 46 and Barnes' Notes on Acts 7.

And Joseph died and all that generation. This statement is made to indicate the passing of time between the settlement of Israel, in Goshen and the coming of the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. Joseph and all his generation had time to come to maturity and old age and die, and here we have another difficult question in trying to tell how long the brethren of Israel were in Egypt. In Ex. 12:40 we are told that the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt was 430 years. And yet Paul tells us that it was only 430 years from the time the promise was made to Abraham until the law was given at Sinai. (Gal. 3:17.) The Samaritan Pentateuch reads differently from the Jewish scriptures from which our Old Testament is translated. It reads as follows: "Now the sojourning of the brethren of Israel, and all his followers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was 430 years." This reading agrees exactly with the statement of Paul in Galatians. It is most likely the true reading. We can account for half of this 430 years by noticing that Abraham was 75 years old when he came to Canaan. (Gen. 12:4.) He was 100 years old when Isaac was born. (Gen. 17:17.) Therefore, it was 25 years from the giving of the promise until the birth of Isaac. Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born. (Gen. 25:26.) And Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt. (Gen. 47:9.) By adding these figures the reader will find that it was 215 years from the time the promise was made until Jacob went into Egypt. Since it was 430 years from the time the promise was made until the law was given at Sinai, the brethren of Israel could not have been in Egypt but 215 years. We know they were treated kindly by the Pharaoh who knew Joseph, so they were not in bondage for as long as 215 years.

And the land was filled with them. Our text says that the children of Israel increased abundantly and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty. These several terms are used for the purpose of indicating a phenomenal growth. Whether we are to understand that there was anything miraculous about it is not probable, but that we are to understand their increase was due to the providence of God is quite certain. Clarke attributes this phenomenal growth (1) to the fact that Hebrew women were exceedingly fruitful, often bearing twins, (2) that there were no premature deaths among them and that they lived to an old age.

2. Children of Israel Oppressed (Ex. 1:8-11)

A new king who knew not Joseph. A question which we did not consider under the Key Scripture is whether this new king who knew not Joseph is simply a different king in the regular dynasty or was this the first king of a different dynasty. The latter supposition seems most proper. There would hardly be so abrupt and complete a change of policy by a king of a dynasty which had approved and enjoyed the work of Joseph. Therefore, an interesting discussion on a change of dynasty is found in the Pulpit Commentary on this chapter.

Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. We are not to suppose that this king said such to the people of Egypt, but rather to his counsellors and important heads of the departments of government. That we are to take this statement as literally true is hardly possible. There were only 600,000 men of war in Israel which would account for some 3,000,000 people, and Egypt certainly had more than 3,000,000 people. The margin gives another reading as follows: “*Too many and too mighty for us.*” This seems more in harmony with the context than the reading of the text.

Let us deal wisely with them. This new king looked far into the future realizing that the Jews had multiplied exceedingly during the last few decades, and knowing that their growth would be even more rapid in the future, he saw the need of doing something to check this growth.

They join themselves unto our enemies. His concern was that these people might become a menace, first, because they were of a different nationality, and second, that they might join themselves to an invader and give the invading army additional strength. A people who could raise an army of half a million men would certainly pose a threat to the security of a nation. Especially since they might be counted upon to be sympathetic with the people of Asia who were related to them.

They did set over them task masters. “They were marched to the quarries to hew out large blocks of granite and limestone, and then to drag them to respective destinations, or to put them on rafts and pilot them down the Nile. They would be employed in digging canals; in making bricks and mixing mortar for the countless erections always in progress.... Egypt in all ages has been so marked by the oppression of its toiling thousands that one of the crimes from which an Egyptian had to clear himself before the judge of the soul was cruelty to them. Thirty thousand men died in this valley in digging out a canal with their hands, without picks, or spades, or wheelbarrows, falling worn-out with toil exacted from them by the blows of the pitiless taskmasters; and the monuments show similar misery to have been inflicted from the remotest ages.” (Geikie.)

They built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. For a long time the location of these cities was indefinite. But in 1908 an expedition went over the territory and found cities with sufficient marks of identity to identify them as the very cities mentioned in the text. An inscription over the gateway of one reads, “I built Pithom.” This is supposed to be an inscription by Rameses the Great. Examination was made as to the type of structure. The walls were found to be composed of bricks laid in mortar. The bricks in these walls were of two kinds. In the lower part of the wall the bricks were made of “Nile mud mixed with clean straw.” But as the walls went up the straw became more scarce. The bricks show that they were made not of clean straw but of weeds including even the roots. But farther up in the wall there are bricks without any straw at all. This corroborates fully the Biblical story of oppression

3. Fears of the Egyptians (Ex. 1:12-14)

The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied. The idea here is that in the proportion the Egyptians afflicted the Jews, in that proportion the Jews multiplied. This multiplication, from the very nature in which it is described, though not miraculous, was under the providence of God.

They were grieved because of the children of Israel. It was the Egyptians who were grieved at the increase of the Jews. They could not understand how a people so sorely persecuted could continue

to grow so rapidly. The fact that they could not understand their growth under such conditions is an indication of the severity of the persecution.

Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor. This is an explanation of their being grieved. “The monuments often, indeed, speak of brick making by forced labor, and in the various buildings which represent this, or any other kind of taskwork, the overseer with his stick is rarely absent. Thus, among the pictures of Beni Hassan, workmen are represented being beaten severely with the sticks, which are different from the long rods of office, and were used solely to bastinado the unfortunate laborers. Some of these are women thrown naked on the ground, two men holding the arms and another the feet while the taskmaster pours blows on the exposed body. There is even a picture at Beni Hassan of a woman being thus bastinadoed.” (Geikie.)

In mortar and in brick. This statement used to give Bible scholars considerable trouble. Modernists criticize the Bible because it was claimed the use of mortar to hold bricks together was unknown in the days of the oppression in Egypt, and up to the time of Naville’s discovery, Egyptologists were obliged to say that they knew nothing of walls laid in mortar in Egypt. Whatsoever might be their attitude toward Biblical statements in general, they knew nothing of bricks laid in mortar in Egypt. Yet, when Naville uncovered these store chambers, he found and reported that the walls were laid in mortar. Examination of the walls very soon showed that his report in this was absolutely correct. These walls are laid in good hard mortar, which, after 26 years’ exposure to the torrential rains of the winter season in the Delta, still stood as perfect as the mortar in brick houses of the Western world. And these walls have stood for more than 3,000 years. Where Rameses’ engineers got the idea of laying bricks in mortar is not certainly known, but probably in Palestine or Syria during Rameses’ many raids in that part of the world. Since 1883 other walls have occasionally been found in Egypt in which bricks were laid in mortar.” (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.)

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Suffering is often good for us. Israel was held together by it in Egypt; was kept from mixing with Egyptians and losing their identity; and was caused to feel dependence upon God.
2. Suffering often develops a patience and humility which it would otherwise be impossible for us to have.
3. Our suffering gives God an opportunity to manifest His power and goodness on our behalf. Israel experienced unusual manifestations of the power and goodness of God in deliverance from suffering.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 1

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

1. With what incident does Israel's connection with Egypt begin? _____

2. How did Joseph fare in Egypt? _____

3. What conditions caused Israel to move into Egypt, and how many went? _____

4. What do you know of the religion of Egypt at that time? _____

5. What do you know of Egypt's knowledge of the arts and sciences? _____

6. Is the word Pharaoh a name or a title? _____
7. Can you identify the Pharaoh of the oppression and the exodus? _____

8. In what sense did the Pharaoh not know Joseph? _____

9. Relate some things Joseph did which made him known to all succeeding generations. _____

10. Can you name the sons of Leah? _____
11. Can you name the sons of Bilhah? _____
12. Can you name the sons of Zilpah? _____
13. Can you name the sons of Rachel? _____
14. How many souls went into Egypt with Jacob? _____
15. How long were the children of Israel in Egypt? _____

16. How long was it from the promise to Abraham to Israel's going into Egypt? _____

17. How long were they actually in bondage to Pharaoh? _____

18. What is said of the increase of the Israelites in Egypt? _____

19. Does a king who knew not Joseph suggest a change of dynasty? Why? _____

20. Why did this new king fear the Jews? _____

21. What did the king do to prevent their rapid growth? _____

22. What type of work did he have the Jews do? _____

23. What cities did they build for him? _____

24. Did their methods of affliction gain the desired results? _____

25. What indication do we have of the severity of the persecution by the king? _____

26. What do we learn from the monuments in Egypt about this slave labor? _____

27. What method of building did the Egyptians use which is now common in the western world? _____

28. What can be said for the quality of their work in building? _____

LESSON NUMBER 2

THE BIRTH OF MOSES

Ex. 2:1-10

INTRODUCTION

The book of Exodus opens with an account of the change of dynasties in Egypt and the enslavement of the children of Israel. How long the children of Israel were actually enslaved has been a question of debate. In our last lesson, we showed that it was 215 years from the time the promise was made to Abraham until Jacob and his sons moved into Egypt. Briefly we account for this time in the following way: Abraham was seventy-five years old when the promise was made to him. (Gen. 12:4.) From the promise to the birth of Isaac was twenty-five years. (Gen. 21:5.) Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob was born (Gen. 25:26), and Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt. (Gen.47:9.) Adding the numbers thus obtained gives us 215 years from the promise to the time they went into Egypt. But from the promise to the giving of the law was only 430 years, which leaves 215 years from the time they went to Egypt until they were delivered. Joseph was thirty years old when he was made ruler. (Gen. 41:46.) He was thirty-nine when the children of Israel went to Egypt. He lived to be 110 years of age. Thirty-nine subtracted from 110 leaves seventy-one, the number of years from the time the children of Israel went to Egypt until the death of Joseph. To this add eighty, the age of Moses when the children of Israel left Egypt, which gives 151. Subtract this from 215, and the result is sixty-four, the number of years from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses. During this short time, Egypt enslaved the children of Israel, and much suffering, unbearable suffering, was the result. At the time of the birth of Moses, in fact since their coming into Egypt, the children of Israel lived in Goshen. It was a small portion of Egypt covering some 900 square miles. A part of it was an irrigated plain which includes some of the best land in Egypt.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“And when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.” (Ex. 2:2b)

1. Situation into Which Moses Was Born. According to Smith’s Bible Dictionary, Moses was born at Heliopolis just a few miles north of Cairo, Egypt. Another name for the city is On. This is the city where Asenath, Joseph’s wife, lived. (Gen. 41:45.) It was an important shelter for the worship of the sun god. With this system of worship, Moses must have been well acquainted, not only because he was born there, but because he very likely got most of his education there. According to Geikie, there was a great university there and his description of the “shady cloisters” and “lecture rooms for the students, and quiet houses for the professors and preachers, in their many quarters and offices,” and rooms for temple servants, the library and writing chambers with their hosts of scribes, the gate keepers, laundry men, and cooks, sound like the description of some great university of our time. One library of that period contained 26,000 books, “and even yet we possess some papyrus rolls from it.” This was at Thebes.

2. The Birth of Moses Providential. Since God is omniscient, He knew when the time would be ripe for the deliverance of the children of Israel. We should therefore expect Him to bring in the deliverer

at the most opportune time. Paul says that God sent forth His Son when the fullness of the time came. (Gal. 4:4.) If the birth of Jesus was determined by the ripeness of the time, it would certainly not be out of place for us to conjecture that the birth of Moses, who was to deliver Israel from bondage was determined in somewhat the same manner. We should not, therefore, think that the birth of Moses simply happened at about the right time. God doesn't do things by haphazard methods. Nor does He take chances of having the right man at the right place at the right time.

3. He Was a Goodly Child. Our text says that his mother saw that he was a goodly child. Perhaps every mother has this feeling about her child, but the words here used suggest that he was a perfect physical specimen such as would indicate beauty of form. We may well understand why this should be when the child was to be such as would appeal to the emotions of Pharaoh's daughter sufficiently to cause her to desire him.

(a) No doubt, his mother could not see the greatness of the choice which he was later to make, but as we look back upon Moses, we look upon him as a goodly character because of that great choice. When he came to the years of maturity, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chose rather to suffer afflictions with the children of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. (Heb. 11:24,25.) Having only the teaching of his mother during the first few years of his life as a basis for this choice, we marvel at her ability to instill into his heart such lessons as would enable him to make this choice.

(b) The goodness in Moses also showed itself in his waiting on God. Soon after Moses made his choice, he attempted to deliver his people in his own way, and at his own time. In this attempt, he killed an Egyptian and fled from Egypt to Midian. There he waited forty years for God to call him and use him in His own way. The ability to wait in patience is as outstanding as the ability to wage a fight in the heat of battle.

© The goodness of Moses appears also in his courage before Pharaoh when finally God called him for his work. Though he hesitated at first, he showed unusual courage in his demands upon Pharaoh.

(d) His goodness is seen also in his patience in dealing with the people. Perhaps no other man's patience, except that of Job, was tried so severely as was that of Moses. Only one time did he show impatience, though he was sorely tried during all the time of the forty years of wandering.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 2:1-10

1. Parents of Moses (Ex. 2:1-4)

A man of the house of Levi. This man of the house of Levi was Amram, and his wife, also of the house of Levi, was Jochebed. "And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were a hundred and thirty and seven." (Ex. 6:20.) The name of his mother, Jochebed, implied the knowledge of Jehovah in the midst of the family. Hence, in spite of the slavery they endured, the people had not completely forgotten Jehovah.

She hid him three months. It is said that Jochebed hid her son for three months because she saw that he was a goodly child. Jewish tradition has a lot to say about Moses and his birth, making them both somewhat miraculous. According to Josephus, the birth of Moses had been foretold to Pharaoh by the

Egyptian magicians. His birth, according to this source, had also been foretold to Amram in a dream. "The beauty of the new born babe -- in the later versions of the story -- amplified into a beauty and size almost divine --... induced his mother to make extraordinary efforts for his preservation from the general destruction of the male children of Israel." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

Ark of bulrushes. When Jochebed could no longer hide her baby safely, she made an ark of bulrushes in which to set him adrift in the water. The bulrush might be any of several large rushes growing in wet land or in water. In the margin here we have papyrus. A rush is a plant, usually round and hollow, and is largely used for the making of writing material.

Daubed it with slime and pitch. This was for the purpose of making the ark float on the water and yet give the baby a dry place in which to rest.

Laid it in the flags by the river brink. Only a mother can imagine the emotions which must have filled the heart of Jochebed as she placed her baby in the ark and set it adrift in the water. By putting it in among the flags, we see her fear for the welfare of the child. To place the ark in the current of the river would, of course, mean either destruction or carrying him so far away that she would probably never see him again. Whether she had any intimation of what was to follow, we have no way of knowing. But that she wished to keep in close touch with the child and to know what happened to it we may be sure by the fact that she put her daughter, Miriam, near by to watch.

His sister stood afar off. By the term afar off we are not to suppose that she was anything like a mile away. But at a sufficient distance that she might not appear to be guarding the baby. If she had been obviously guarding the baby, her offer of assistance might have aroused suspicion in the heart of Pharaoh's daughter. Miriam was the oldest of the three children of Amram and Jochebed. But how much older she was than Moses we are not told. Moses was the youngest of the three. Miriam must have been eight to twelve years of age at the time of the birth of Moses. The names Miriam and Mary come from the same word. In fact, Miriam is simply the Old Testament form and Mary is the New Testament form. Very few seem to have worn the name before it was popularized by the mother of Jesus.

2. Found and Adopted by Pharaoh's Daughter (Ex. 2:5-7)

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe. Josephus tells us that the name of this daughter of Pharaoh was Thermouthis. "Though not given in the Bible, the name of the daughter of Pharaoh has been handed down by tradition as Thermouthis, and also as Merris, both of which occur in the inscriptions. Thermouthis is the name of an Egyptian town, in a fragment of Byzantze; and in a list of princesses, the monuments name one as Meri, which is evidently identical with Meris; while they give Thermouthis, the very name in Josephus, as that of one of the wives of Rameses." (Geikie.) This maiden, attended by her servants, came down to the river where they were accustomed to bathe. Perhaps Jochebed knew of this custom and entertained the hope that the beauty of the baby might appeal to the maiden. Whether she had any divine direction, we have no way of knowing. But certainly no one can fail to see the hand of providence in the working out of these plans.

She had compassion on him. The helplessness of the child and his natural beauty worked together to the safety of the baby and the fulfilment of the wishes of the mother. Adam Clarke suggests that the extremely cruel edict of the Egyptian king to destroy all the babies was brought to an end by the

finding of Moses. “The daughter of Pharaoh, struck with the dark fate of the Hebrew children from what she had seen in the case of Moses, would probably implore her father to abolish this sanguinary edict.”

Shall I go and call a nurse of the Hebrew women? This is the language of Miriam who was left to watch for the safety of Moses. Undoubtedly this part of the happenings had been planned by Jochebed. This suggests that she placed her child where she knew Pharaoh’s daughter was in the habit of bathing. She expected this princess to find the baby and obviously had instructed Miriam as to what she would say when the baby was found. Whether Pharaoh’s daughter knew the connection between Moses and Miriam is not here stated, and whether she knew that Jochebed was the mother of Moses during the time she cared for her baby is not intimated.

3. Moses Has His Mother for Nurse (Ex. 2:8-10)

The maiden went and called the child’s mother. “Handed over to the care of his mother during the tender years -- thanks to the quick wit of his sister Miriam--Moses became a prominent inmate of the palace in his early childhood. Once there, he was adopted by Thermouthis and received the care and training of a king’s son; Rameses the oppressor becoming unconsciously his protector. Ebers has given us an idea of the splendor among which the wondering child must thus have grown up. The palace of Rameses, he tells us, was more like a little town than a house. The part of it used by the royal family commanded a view of the Nile, from which it offered to the passing vessels a pleasing prospect, for it stood, amidst its surrounding gardens, in picturesque buildings of various outlines. On each side, of a large structure which contained the state rooms and banqueting hall, three rows of pavilions of different sizes extended in symmetrical order. These were connected with each other by colonnades, or by little bridges, under which flowed canals that watered the gardens, and gave the palace the aspect of a town upon islands.” (Geikie.)

I will give you your wages. This is the language of Pharaoh’s daughter to Jochebed. She gave the baby to its own mother and offered to pay her wages for taking care of the child. This was the reward of Jochebed’s faith. “*By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command.*” (Heb. 11:23.) The writer of Hebrews says that the baby was hid by faith. We usually allow that one cannot do a thing by faith unless he was told to do that thing. Hence, we might safely conclude that the mother of Moses had been instructed by the Lord as to what she should do. She did what the Lord told her, expecting the child to be safe. Now that the child is delivered to her by the authority of the princess and she is paid wages for nursing it, she reaps the reward of her faith.

She brought him unto Pharaoh’s daughter. How long Jochebed was allowed to keep the child we do not know. But surely it was long enough to give Jochebed the opportunity of teaching the child some lessons which influenced him all during his life. We are told that it was by faith that Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. If our position be correct that to do a thing by faith one must do the thing as God directs, we know that Moses had some direction in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. This direction could hardly come from any other source than the mother. Hence, he was old enough when she returned him to Pharaoh’s daughter to receive teaching and to cherish that teaching in his heart until the time came for action. The splendor amidst which Moses grew up in the palace was far beyond the poverty which his family had to endure. We have a good description of the quarters occupied by the women in Pharaoh’s palace. “Passing through the gardens

in which a hundred gardeners watered the turf, the flower beds, the shrubs and the trees, and the quadrangles in which horses were being trained and broken, the princess and her maidens, on returning from the river, would be received as her leader entered the gates by a lord-in-waiting, and then led by the chamberlain to her rooms amidst low houses. One of her chambers commanded a view of the river, to envelop the beauty of which, a doorway, closed with light curtains, opened on a long balcony with a finely worked balustrade, to which clung a climbing rose with pink flowers. The carpets in the room itself were of sky blue and silver brocade from Damascus; the cover of the seats and couches had been richly embroidered with feathers by Ethiopian women and looked like the breasts of birds. The images of the goddess Hethor, which stood on the house altar, were an interpretation of emerald called Mefhet....” (Geikie.)

She called his name Moses. The term Moses means “drawn out.” “Josephus derives it from the Egyptian word Mo, water, and Uses, the saved one; “And this was obviously the opinion also, before his day, of the Alexandrian translators of the Bible, who gave the name as Mouses. It seems reasonable, therefore, to keep the old etymology of the Bible, since it was thus supported even in Egypt long before Christ.” (Geikie.) Many guesses have been made as to the physical appearance of Moses. Josephus tells us that he was “wonderfully tall when only three years old, and so beautiful that even the people stopped to look at him as they went by.” A shortened extract from another source preserved by a Jew stated that Moses was born at On, but that it was changed to Moses by Pharaoh’s daughter, and that Moses became a priest of Osiris in the great sun-temple of his native city. Josephus says that he was apparently a general of an Egyptian army and won some great victories over the Ethiopians. All that we can know for sure is that he was trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and may safely conclude that he studied in the great universities, the remains of the rooms of which may be seen today. From these rooms we may construct a fairly safe view of the environment in which the boy Moses must have grown up.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. There are few, if any, greater characters in all the Bible than that of Moses. His unselfishness stands out very prominently. When the Lord would destroy the people and make a great nation of Moses, he was unselfish enough to plead for the salvation of his people.
2. The magnanimity of Moses is also outstanding. When it was suggested that his duties were too great for him, he graciously consented to allow others to be appointed to help him. When it was pointed out that another was prophesying, Moses' associates expected him to express his objection. but he said “*would that Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put his Spirit upon them!*”
3. The meekness of Moses was unusual. It is said that he was the meekest man upon the face of the earth. (Num. 12:3.) If we would try to follow his example, in his unselfishness, his magnanimity, and his meekness, we would be more like our Lord than we are.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 2

THE BIRTH OF MOSES

1. How old was Joseph when he was made ruler of Egypt? _____
2. How long from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses? _____
3. In what part of Egypt did the Jews live? _____
4. What do you know of this section? _____

5. In what city was Moses probably born? _____
6. What other Old Testament character lived there? _____
7. What do you know of Moses' chance to get an education there? _____

8. According to what was the time for the birth of Moses determined? _____

9. What is meant by Moses being a goodly child? _____

10. Name and discuss four ways in which the goodness of Moses was manifested. _____

11. Can you name the parents of Moses? _____
12. What does the name of his mother suggest? _____

13. What does Jewish tradition say of the birth of Moses? _____

14. How did Jochebed hide Moses? _____

15. What did she do with him when she could hide him no longer? _____

16. What do you know of the name of Pharaoh's daughter? _____

17. What is suggested in this lesson as to the Providence of God? _____

18. What is said of the attitude of Pharaoh's daughter toward Moses? _____

19. Who was set to watch over Moses? _____

20. What did Miriam suggest to the daughter of Pharaoh? _____

21. What do you know of the splendor of the new home of Moses? _____

22. What statement of scripture suggests that God told Jochebed to hide Moses? _____

23. How was Jochebed's faith rewarded? _____

24. How long do you think Jochebed was allowed to keep her son? _____

25. Who taught Moses to refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter? _____

26. What is the meaning of the word Moses? _____

27. What do you know of the life of Moses during the first forty years? _____

28. What conclusions would you draw from this lesson? _____

LESSON NUMBER 3

GOD HEARS THE CRY OF HIS PEOPLE

Ex 2:23-25; 3:1-10

INTRODUCTION

“But as a whole, the Sinai mountains rank among the wildest regions. From a distance they rise, red and gray, in huge masses and peaks of porphyry and granite. On all sides lie heaps of dark ashes of burnt-out volcanic fires, or of fragments of porphyry, red as wax. Walls of rocks, with a green shimmer, rise naked and threatening: uncouth, wild crags tower steeply above mounds of black and brown stones, which look as if they had been broken by the hammers of giants. The horizon takes new forms with every short advance, as one closed-valley rises above another; the sublimity of the landscape increasing with the ascent. As each new level is reached the mountains rise in huge heights around, but as the journey leads on to the next plateau they seem to shrink into tameness before the new giants that encircle the way...

The influence of such a district on a mind like that of Moses must have been great. No region more favorable to the attainments of a lofty conception of the Almighty could have been found. Nature, by the want of water and the poverty of vegetation, is intensely simple; presenting no variety to dissipate and confuse the mind. The grand, sublimely silent mountain world around, with its bold, abrupt masses of granite, greenstone, and porphyry, fills the spirit with a solemn earnestness which the wide horizon from most peaks and the wonderful purity of the air tend to heighten. The wanderer looks down, for example, from the top of Jebel Musa, the Mount of Moses, with a shuddering horror, into the abyss below; and round, on the countless pinnacles and peaks, cliffs and precipices, of many colored rocks; white and gray, sulphurous yellow, blood red, and ominous black; entirely bare of vegetation. To the north, the desert of the Tih stretches out beyond the mountains in endless perspective. On the east and west the reflection of the blue sea shimmers up from the depths; beyond it, towards sunrise, are seen the pale sands of Arabia; while towards sunset the mountains of Egypt rise half veiled in the blue of distance. Such a place was far more fitted than the narrowly hemmed-in valley of the Nile, or than Palestine, to call forth great thoughts.

In such a desert region we take refuge in our own reflections from the monotony around; the senses are at rest. Undisturbed and uninfluenced from without, the mind follows out every train of thought to the end, and examines and exhausts every feeling to its finest shades. In a city there is no solitude: each is part of a great whole on which he acts, and by which he is himself affected. But the lonely wanderer in a district like Sinai is absolutely isolated from his fellows, and must fill up the void by his own identity. The present retires into the background, and the spirit, waked to intensity of life, finds no limits to its thoughts. In a lofty spiritual nature like that of Moses, the solemn stillness of the mountains and the boundless sweep of the daily and nightly heavens would efface the thought of man, and fill the soul with the majesty of God. As he meditated on the possible deliverance of his people, the lonely vastness would raise him above anxious contrasts of their weakness compared with power of Egypt, which might have paralysed resolution and bidden hope despair. What was man, whose days were a handbreadth, and whose foundation was in the dust, before the mighty Creator of heaven and earth -- the Rock of Israel? Even less lofty spirits than his had, indeed, been kindled, age after age, to

a nearer sense of the presence of God, amidst these magnificent and awful solitudes; for Serbal had been from the earliest times sacred to the worship of Baal, and, even still, the wandering Bedouin sacrifices lambs within stone circles raised on it, as thank-offerings for any special blessing received. So Horeb, already bore the name of “the Mount of God” when Moses came to live near it, and the whole group of mountains, like Ararat or the Himalaya, were holy among the tribes around.” (Geikie.)

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works.” (Acts 7:22)

1. His Egyptian Learning. Our text says that Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. We know very little of that wisdom, but we do have some intimations of the departments of learning covered by the Egyptians. Regarding the condition of Egypt at the time of the Hebrews' entrance into the land, Geikie says, “The temple was in its full glory in the days of Joseph and during the centuries of the Hebrew sojourn. Great colleges of priests lived in chambers especially built for them within its holy precincts and besides taking charge of the sacred animals, attended to the services of many gods honored in its worship. In addition to these, there were numbers of learned priests connected with the mythical theology, and historical faculties of the temple, there were depositaries of the scientific, religious, and secular achievements for which Egypt was renowned. The observatory of the temple was famous, and it is to its priest-astronomers we are indebted for the exact computation of the length of the year. Of the four great temple universities of the land -- Memphis, Thebes, Sais, and On -- that of On held the first rank.” With reference to the learning of Egypt, another source says that so high was the opinion entertained by antiquity that “the wisdom of Egypt” passed into a proverb. It was thought for a long time that the Egyptians invented a system of writing which served to hide their treasures of wisdom, but scholars finally found the key to the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and since that time much of their learning has come to Light.

2. Mighty in Words. Though Moses claimed to be slow of speech, Stephen says he was mighty in words. We are to understand that Stephen's statement is not to indicate his oratorical powers, but rather the weight or wisdom of the words spoken. We have but to examine the law as given through Moses to verify Stephen's statement that he was mighty in words. We may also come to this same conclusion by reading the prophecy which Moses made. He prophesied the coming of Christ by saying that the Lord would raise up a prophet like unto him to whom all the people must give heed. (Deut. 18:18,19.) He also gave a detailed prophecy concerning the future of the Jewish nation which proves him to be mighty in word. (Deut.28.)

3. Mighty in Works. There is tradition that Moses was a great military leader before he left the service of Pharaoh, but our inspired record of his deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage and his leadership of the people through forty years of wandering are sufficient to prove the truth of Stephen's statement that he was mighty in works.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 2:23-25; 3:1-10

1. God Hears Their Groanings (Ex. 2:23-25)

The king of Egypt died. As indicated before, we cannot be positive who this king was, but it is

generally believed to have been Rameses II. “Rameses II left behind him the reputation of being the greatest of the Egyptian kings.... His buildings and other great works would, in fact, probably excel those of any other Pharaoh. His reign was the longest, if we except one, of any upon record. ... After eighty years of life and sixty-seven of regal power, the great Rameses was gathered to his fathers ...thousands of wretches toiled incessantly to add to his glory and cover Egypt with buildings, obelisks and colossi which still show forth his greatness.” (Pulpit Commentary.)

Children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage. As indicated the Jews were used in the building of monuments and great storehouses and for the enrichment generally of the country. Human life was cheap in the sight of the taskmasters, and hence many of them died at their tasks.

Their cry came up unto God. The children of Israel are reported as crying under the cruelty of the taskmasters, and their cry reached heaven. We are told that God heard their groanings and had pity upon them because of the unreasonable treatment received from their masters.

God remembered His covenant with Abraham. The covenant to which reference is made here is probably the promise which God made to Abraham to make of his seed a great nation and to give his seed the land of Canaan. (Gen. 22:15,16; 26:2-5.) But another covenant might also be included. When God first promised Abraham a son, He told Abraham that his seed would sojourn in a strange land and be afflicted and that the nation who afflicted them would be judged. (Gen. 15:13,14.) At that time God promised Abraham that his seed would come out of bondage in the fourth generation. These promises were renewed to Isaac and Jacob on several occasions. In looking back on these matters David said, “*He has remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, Unto you will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.*” (Psalm 105:8-11)

God took knowledge of them. We are not to take this to mean that God had hitherto forgotten His people, but we are to understand that God knows the condition of His people, and that in His own wisdom He does that which is best for them. We may take comfort from the experiences of the people of old and remember that God knows our trials and that He works for our welfare as well as He did for theirs.

2. God’s Appearance to Moses (Ex. 3:1-4)

Moses was keeping the flocks of Jethro. Our text gives Jethro as the father-in-law of Moses. Adam Clarke says that Jethro was the son of Reuel, the brother of Zipporah, and so the brother-in-law of Moses. However, other eminent authorities agree with the translation of our text and speak of Jethro as being the father of Zipporah. Jethro is said to have been the priest of Midian. The Midianites were descendants of a son of Abraham by Keturah. They inhabited the land east of Egypt and south of Canaan.

Came unto the mountain of God, unto Horeb. Moses was employed as a shepherd keeping the flocks of Jethro. Our text says he led the flock to the “*back of the wilderness*” where he came to Mount Horeb. Horeb is another name for Sinai. “Sinai is mentioned, as a desert and a mountain, in thirty-five passages of the Old Testament. In seventeen passages the same desert and mountain are called Horeb or the waste. This term is chiefly used in Deuteronomy, though Sinai also occurs. (Deut. 33:2.) In the

other books of the Pentateuch, Sinai is the usual name, though Horeb also occurs.” (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.) Adam Clarke speaks of Sinai and Horeb as being two peaks of one mountain.

The angel of Jehovah appeared unto him. This angel of Jehovah is Jehovah Himself in a form adapted to man’s vision. This being identifies Himself in this same context as “*I am that I am*”, and “*Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*” A study of this character will reveal that He is the second person of the Godhead, which afterwards was made flesh and dwelt among us and known to us as Jesus Christ.

The bush was not consumed. This angel of Jehovah appeared in a burning bush and the peculiar thing about it was that the bush was not consumed. Some take this to be a suggestion of the suffering of Israel in bondage and their ability to resist destruction on account of the bondage. Whether the Lord intended to make any such suggestion to Moses is not known, but a bush burning without being consumed is certainly a fit illustration of the ability of the Jews to continue to increase in spite of indescribable suffering.

God called unto him out of the midst of the bush. When Moses saw the bush burning without being consumed, he turned aside to see why the bush was not burned. So far as the record goes, the burning of the bush was to serve only to attract the attention of Moses that the Lord might get his attention and engage him in the conversation which was to follow.

3. God Announces His Purpose to Deliver Israel (Ex. 3:5-10)

Put off your shoes from your feet. This is the language to Moses as he approached the bush. The reason given for the removal of his shoes is that the ground on which he stood was holy. It was made holy by the unusual presence of the Lord in that place. In one sense God is present everywhere at all times. This is the meaning of omnipresence. Yet, it must be true that God, though present everywhere may in another sense, manifest an unusual presence in certain localities.

I am the God of your father. Jehovah introduces Himself to Moses through the use of the names of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because of the promises made to these patriarchs and to indicate to Moses that His appearance at this time was in connection with the fulfilment of these promises.

He was afraid to look upon God. This is given as a reason why Moses hid his face. In another place it is said that no man can look upon the face of God and live. (Ex. 33:20.) In another place we read that no man has seen God at any time (John 1:18) and that no man has seen the Father. (John 6:46.) These passages must be understood as teaching that human eyes are not capable of beholding the full splendor of God’s glory. These appearances of the second person of the Godhead as the angel of Jehovah were adapted to man’s vision.

I have surely seen the affliction of My people. Moses had been gone from Egypt forty years. How much he knew of the condition of his people we have no way of knowing. But this statement of Jehovah would remind him of what he had seen before he left Egypt and would stir within him his compassion for his kindred.

I have come down to deliver them. Here we have an expression adapted to man’s way of thinking. God

announces His readiness to begin the work of deliverance by saying He had come down to do that work.

Land flowing with milk and honey. This is the Lord's way of describing the land which He had promised to give to the seed of Abraham. It simply meant a land abounding in the things that would contribute to man's health and happiness. This land is described as the place of six different nations: the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Critics have accused God of wrong in displacing these six nations, but the children of Israel were left in Egypt until the fourth generation "*for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full*" (Gen. 15:16), indicating that at the time of their entrance into Canaan the cup of iniquity of these six nations was full and that justice demanded their destruction.

I have seen the oppression. It is not to be thought that the oppression was unexpected, for God had foretold this oppression in the days of Abraham. (Gen. 15:13,14.)

I will send you unto Pharaoh. Moses is told that it will be his duty to go to Pharaoh to negotiate the deliverance of the people of Israel. He must go without money or arms to deliver a nation of people from the greatest ruler of the world. It took considerable faith and trust to undertake such a task without any visible means of accomplishing his purposes. However, our Lord asked His disciples to build a kingdom that would stand forever without the use of any visible means such as are usually considered necessary to the building of great institutions. God's presence was all that Moses needed. If we conduct ourselves so as to enjoy the presence of God, we may be sure of succeeding in whatever task God lays upon us.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. God schooled His people in Egypt, welding them into a nation and giving them the benefit of coming in contact with the best civilization of their day.
2. While schooling His people in adversities, their intended deliverer was receiving the best education in the arts and sciences of his day, and for forty years was disciplined in patience and steadfastness. It is sometimes more difficult to learn the lesson of patience than it is to perform feats of daring in the heat of battle.
3. The faithfulness of God in keeping His promises is an outstanding lesson in these passages. The fact that hundreds of years are consumed is no indication of God's slowness or lack of interest in these affairs. From these lessons we should take courage that God will keep His promises to us in His own good time and that if we wait for the fulfilment of these promises, we develop the patience that we need to be like Christ.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 3

GOD HEARS THE CRY OF HIS PEOPLE

1. What do you know of the scenes around Sinai? _____

2. What is suggested as to the influence such scenes would have on the mind of Moses? _____

3. What was Mount Horeb called even before Moses went there? _____

4. In what was Moses instructed? _____

5. What do you know of the learning of Egypt? _____

6. Where were the four great universities located? _____

7. Why was Egyptian learning late in coming to light? _____

8. What did Stephen mean when he said Moses was mighty in words? _____

9. Can you give some examples of his mighty words? _____

10. Can you mention some of his mighty works? _____

11. What do you know of the Pharaoh of the oppression? _____

12. How did this Pharaoh value human life? _____

13. Which of God's covenants with Abraham did He remember at this time? _____

14. What is meant by God taking knowledge of the condition of His people? _____

15. In what work was Moses engaged when God appeared to him? _____

16. Where was Moses working at the time? _____

17. What do you know of the angel of Jehovah as used in this text? _____

18. What is suggested in the fact that the bush burned but was not consumed? _____

19. Why was Moses to put off his shoes? _____

20. What lesson does this suggest to us with reference to our worship? _____

21. How did Jehovah introduce Himself to Moses? _____

22. Why did Moses hide his face at the appearance of Jehovah? _____

23. What did Jehovah say He had seen? _____

24. What did Jehovah say He proposed to do for Israel? _____

25. To what land did He propose to take Israel? _____

26. Who dwelt there at that time? _____

27. What characteristics did the task God gave Moses call for? _____

28. Did Moses have them? _____

29. What was the biggest asset Moses had for the accomplishment of his task? _____

30. What conclusions would you draw from this lesson? _____

LESSON NUMBER 4

MOSES AND AARON

Ex. 4:27-31; 5:1-7

INTRODUCTION

When the Lord appeared to Moses and called him for his work of delivering the people of Israel from Egypt, Moses made a number of excuses. The first excuse was, *“They will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Jehovah had not appeared unto you.”* (Ex. 4:1.) But God did not propose to send Moses to perform such a work without giving him the ability to convince people that he was sent of God, so He told Moses to cast his rod upon the ground. When he did so it became a serpent and when he picked it up it became a rod again. He was told to put his hand into his bosom. When he did so it became leprous and on taking it out again it was whole. With these signs Moses was equipped to convince the people that Jehovah had sent him. When God sent His son into the world He gave Him power to work miracles so that people said, *“We know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do except God be with him.”* (John 3:2.) And when Jesus sent His apostles He equipped them with signs to convince the people of the truth of what they preached. (Mark 16:17-20; Heb. 2:3,4.) The next excuse Moses gave was his inability to speak fluently. But God answered that by saying, *“Is there not Aaron your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well ... and you shall speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. And he shall be your spokesman unto the people.”* (Ex. 4:14-16.) God never expects one to do something without giving that one the ability to do it. Hence, it is undoubtedly an indication of unbelief for one to admit that he should perform certain duties and then complain that he is unable to do so.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“He sent Moses His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen.” (Psa 105:26).

1. In a Discussion of the Character of Moses, one cannot lose sight of the fact that he chose to give up wealth, luxury, and the highest position that government and society could offer him to become identified with and a part of a people being oppressed in the most cruel kind of slavery the world knew anything about. From a physical and visible point of view Moses was making a very poor choice. No doubt his Egyptian associates thought he had lost his mind, or was at least being a fool. But Moses was walking by faith and not by sight. To him, the real and enduring things of life were the things which are unseen. *“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* (2 Cor. 4:18.) The writer of Hebrews tells us that Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible. (1) He endured the temptations of the country. The wealth, luxury, and social impurities of the country in which he was reared constantly tempted Moses to give up his intention of delivering his slave kindred and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. (2) He endured temporary rejection by his people. When he attempted to deliver them, he was rejected by his people. Stephen gives us some insight to the feelings of Moses when he was repulsed by his brethren when he says, *“He supposed that his brethren understood that God by his hand was giving them deliverance; but they understood not.”* (Acts 7:25.)

(3) He endured forty years of waiting with nothing better to do than herding sheep. The writer of Hebrews indicates that it was his vision of the invisible that made it possible for him to endure these trials for more than forty years.

Another thing which cannot be overlooked when thinking of Moses is his unusual death. (1) We see him dying in the midst of unfinished business. His failure to accomplish all that he set out to do does not indicate that his whole life was a failure. (2) Good health today is no indication that we may not be called to meet God tomorrow. We are told that at the time of his death “*his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.*” (Deut.34:7.) Hence, none of us needs to presume on long life simply because of good health today. (3) We see life ending at the bidding of God and in connection with sin. This shows God’s sovereignty over life and our complete dependence. It also shows that sin may rob us of our blessings.

2. Though Aaron Was Three Years Older Than Moses He Had Neither the Character nor Ability of His Younger Brother. He took part with the people in the sin of making the golden calf (Ex. 32), and he joined with Miriam in a rebellion against Moses (Num. 12:1-3). He was a good speaker and was made the mouthpiece of Moses to deliver God’s message to the people. No doubt he was the best material available as the first high priest, but when we have said this we have said about all that can be said for Aaron. No doubt he did well, considering his lack of opportunities for mental and spiritual development.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 4:27-31; 5:1-7

1. Moses and Aaron Meet in the Wilderness (Ex. 4:27-28)

Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. This is the language of Jehovah to Aaron. How or by what means this message was conveyed to Aaron we have no way of knowing. If an angel was used, it would still be correct to say that Jehovah said this to him. Adam Clarke says, “By some secret but powerful movement on Aaron’s mind, or by some voice or angelic ministry, he was now directed to go and meet his brother Moses.”

Meet him in the mountain of God. God had given instructions to Moses to go toward Egypt, saying, “*He comes forth to meet you: and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.*” (Ex. 4:14.) Here again we see the overruling providence of God in the lives of these two men. Had it not been for God’s direction of them, they would have had less than one chance in a thousand to meet as the one journeyed eastward and the other journeyed westward in the wilderness. By the mountain of God we suppose Mount Horeb, as it is called by this name in Exodus 3:1. However, quite a portion of country was known by the term Horeb. Hence, we need not conclude that Moses and Aaron met in the very place where later the ten commandments were given.

Moses told Aaron all the words of Jehovah. So far as we know, this is the first time the brothers had met in forty years. God told Moses that Aaron would be glad in his heart to meet him, and in our text their affectionate greeting of each other indicates as much. Moses unfolded the plans which God had made known unto him concerning the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage. Undoubtedly Moses told Aaron the part that he was to play in the delivery. Moses told Aaron of the signs which they were empowered to perform, but whether these miracles were performed there in the mountain of God for the benefit of Aaron is not stated.

2. Moses and Aaron Meet the Elders of Israel (Ex. 4:29-31)

Moses and Aaron gathered together all the elders. Who these elders were we may not be able to learn for sure. It seems that even in the darkest days of oppression that the Jews maintained some sort of local self-government. There were priests among the people before the law was given on Sinai. (Ex. 19:22-24.) These elders were either hereditary heads of families, or they were men of influence and authority in the various districts of Egypt in which the people lived. At any rate, they had considerable influence with the people.

Aaron spoke all the words which Jehovah had spoken to Moses. It seems that Moses was not merely alibiing when he gave the excuse that he was a poor speaker, for the very first time there is an occasion for a speech Aaron does the speaking. But the matter of Aaron's being only the speaker is kept clear by the statement that Aaron spoke the things which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses.

And did the signs in the sight of the people. From verse 29 it seems there was a meeting held with the elders before an assembly of the people was called. While no mention is made of the calling of a second meeting, it is very probable that when the elders had been convinced they called a general assembly before which Moses and Aaron performed the signs given to them.

And the people believed. This must have been a relief and an encouragement to Moses. Having been repulsed by his people on a similar attempt to become their deliverer and having affirmed that the people would not believe him this time, Moses must have derived considerable satisfaction from the results of that meeting. Though the lives of Moses and Jesus correspond in many details, here is one where there is no correspondence. The common people both in the case of Moses and of Jesus believed, but in the case of Moses even the elders of Israel believed while Jesus failed to convince the religious leaders of His day that He was sent of God to do His work.

They bowed their heads and worshipped. Two things are said to be the cause of this worship. (1) They realized that God had seen their affliction. (2) They believed that God had visited them in mercy. No doubt many of them wondered about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Young people heard their elders talk of God visiting the patriarchs and how He blessed them, but the drudgery of slavery and the cruelty of the taskmasters no doubt had a tendency to cause the younger generation to wonder and sometimes disbelieve. What a satisfaction it must have been to the old people who still clung to their faith and what a revelation it must have been to the younger generation who had their doubts to be assured that Jehovah was among them again to bless them and lead them. As they showed their faith and appreciation by appropriate acts of worship, so we today should not lose faith in the presence of God with us nor be negligent to manifest that faith in regular periods of worship.

3. Moses and Aaron Meet with Pharaoh (Ex. 5:1-7)

Moses and Aaron said unto Pharaoh. The Moses who once fled in fear now comes boldly into the presence of the King of Egypt. "According to the bulk of modern authorities, and according to our own views of Egyptian history, this was Menephtah; the son and successor of Rameses II. Menephtah was a weak prince, whom events had favored and who would be thus led to have an exalted opinion of himself. A great invasion of Egypt had occurred at the beginning of his reign, which had been met and completely repulsed, not by his own skill or valor, but by that of his generals. Menephtah himself had pointedly avoided incurring any danger. He claimed to be in direct communication with the Egyptian gods, who revealed themselves to him in visions, and pleaded a

distinct command of Phtha as preventing him from being himself at the head of his army. Still, he counted as his own all the successes gained by his generals, and was as vainglorious and arrogant as if he had himself performed prodigies of valor.” (Pulpit Commentary.)

Who is Jehovah? This was Pharaoh’s reply to the request of Moses and Aaron that he allow the people to go that they might hold a feast in the wilderness. The form of the question could be that of asking the identity of this god, but most likely it is intended as an insult that some petty tribal god should make demands of the great Pharaoh. His answer was, “*I will not let Israel go.*”

The God of the Hebrews. Jehovah is often spoken of as the God of Israel, and as the God of the patriarchs of Israel. This is not to be taken to mean that God is merely a tribal or national God, but at that time the Hebrews were the only people of whom we have any record who worshipped Jehovah.

Three days journey into the wilderness and sacrifice. Some have had difficulty in understanding why the Israelites had to leave Egypt to sacrifice. It should be remembered that some of the animals which were required in sacrifice were held sacred to the Egyptians. Hence, they would not have been allowed to make their sacrifices without being disturbed in their worship. There is, however, a difficulty in this explanation since we can hardly conceive of their staying in Egypt 215 years without burning animals in sacrifice. The most probable explanation is that their sacrifices were on small scale and with no set regularity. Their worship to this time had been of patriarchal or family type. This worship which they must go three days journey into the wilderness to perform was to be of national proportions. The urgency of their request is seen in the statement, “*Lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.*”

Wherefore do you loose the people from their works. Pharaoh looked upon Moses and Aaron as being meddlers in other people’s business and as interfering with the work of his slaves. Hence, he commanded the people, including Moses and Aaron, to get back to their burdens.

The people of the land are now many. This is another statement of Pharaoh in which he indicates his view of the seriousness of the interference which Moses and Aaron were making. Had the people been few in number, their interference would not have been so serious.

Let them go and gather straw for themselves. This is the language of Pharaoh to his taskmasters who drove the slaves to their work. Hitherto straw had been furnished the slaves to mix with the mud for the making of bricks. Now the slaves are compelled to gather the straw and yet to make the same number of brick per day they had been making. Hence, their labors were about doubled. It is interesting to read that archeologists have uncovered buildings and walls of cities containing brick mixed with straw in the foundations, but higher in the wall they find brick with little or no straw, proving the story as told by Moses.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Since Moses and Aaron were of the same parents, we may conclude that the better education Moses had gave him the advantage over Aaron.
2. When God has a big work to be done, He selects one who has made big preparations. Paul in the New Testament and Moses in the Old Testament are sufficient proof of this.
3. Only a great character could be as thoughtless of his own good and as free of ambition for himself and sons as was Moses.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 4

MOSES AND AARON

1. What was the first excuses Moses gave for hesitating to accept his task? _____

2. How did God answer this excuse? _____

3. Give other examples of God equipping His servants for their work. _____

4. What other excuse did Moses offer? _____

5. How did God answer it? _____

6. What did Moses sacrifice to become identified with his people? _____

7. What were the real and enduring things in the estimation of Moses? _____

8. Name and discuss three things Moses endured by the help of God. _____

9. Discuss three lessons suggested in the death of Moses. _____

10. What do you know of Aaron's character and work? _____

11. How is the providence of God seen in the meeting of Moses and Aaron? _____

12. Were the brothers glad to see each other? _____
13. How long had they been separated? _____
14. In what section of the country were they to meet? _____

-
15. Who were these elders of Israel? _____
-
16. Who did the speaking before these elders, and why? _____
-
17. Why is it probable that there was a second meeting with them? _____
-
18. How did the people of Israel receive Moses? _____
-
19. What two things caused the people to bow their heads and worship? _____
-
20. What did the worship indicate as to the attitude of the people? _____
-
21. What do you know of the character of this king? (Keep in mind that scholars differ as to who was on the throne at this time.) _____
-
22. What reply did Pharaoh make to Moses and Aaron? _____
-
23. Why was Jehovah called the God of the Hebrews? _____
-
24. What request did Moses and Aaron make of Pharaoh? _____
-
25. Why was it necessary for them to leave Egypt to worship Jehovah? _____
-
26. Of what did Pharaoh accuse Moses and Aaron? _____
-
27. How did Pharaoh increase the labors of the people? _____
-
28. What evidence do we have outside the Bible to prove these statements of Moses? _____
-
29. What conclusions would you draw from this lesson? _____
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LESSON NUMBER 5

MOSES AND THE MAGICIANS

Ex. 7:8-19

INTRODUCTION

By the human standard of reckoning time in relation to matters of interest, God is sometimes slow in carrying out His purposes; but our standard of reckoning time is not a good standard by which to measure God in the accomplishment of His purposes. *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* (2 Peter 3:9.) When the time was ripe according to God’s standards, He remembered His covenant with the fathers and moved to fulfill His promises to them. In Exodus 6:2-13, we have the account of God remembering His covenant and taking proper steps to fulfill the promises which He made to the patriarchs before the time of Moses. In verse 5 He says, *“I have heard the groanings of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant.”* He continues in this talk to Moses to renew the promise of deliverance from bondage to redeem His people with an outstretched arm, and to bring judgment upon the nation enslaving His people. He makes them this promise, *“I Will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and you shall know that I am Jehovah your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land which I sware to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am Jehovah.”* (Ex. 6:7,8.)

When Pharaoh added to their burdens because of the agitation of Moses (Ex. 5:6-9), the people seemed to prefer bondage to the suffering necessary to gain their freedom. So we read in Exodus 6:9 that the people of Israel *“hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.”* So strong was their influence that Moses hesitated to go before Pharaoh again, saying that if his own people would not believe him, surely Pharaoh could not be expected to let the people go at his request.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.” (Psa 105:29)

1. Contest Between Jehovah and the Gods of Egypt. All of the ten plagues were direct thrusts at the gods which the Egyptians worshipped. In connection with the slaying of the firstborn, Jehovah said, *“For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am Jehovah.”* (Ex. 12:12.) Pharaoh started out by asking haughtily, *“Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go?”* (Ex. 5:2.) But before the contest was over, Pharaoh was forced to say, *“I have sinned this time: Jehovah is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.”* (Ex. 9:27.) A little later he was made not only to confess that he had sinned against God, but to plead, *“Now therefore forgive, I pray you, my sin only this once, and entreat Jehovah your God, that He may take away from me this death only.”* (Ex. 10:17.)

The plague with which our text deals in this lesson, the turning of water into blood, was directed against the Nile River. The Nile was regarded as divine and was worshipped under various names. A

poem extant in the day of Moses has been preserved, and the following lines will be sufficient to prove that they worshipped the Nile.

“Thou it is who coverest all the land with water.
Thy path, as thou comest, is from heaven!
Thou art the God Set, the friend of bread!
Thou art the God Nepra, the giver of grain!
Thou art the god Ptah, who lightest every dwelling
Bringer of good!
Creator of all good things!
Lord of all things choice and delightful,
If there be offerings, it is thanks to thee
Oh, Nile, hymns are sung to thee on the harp;
Offerings are made to thee: oxens are slain to thee;
Great festivals are kept for thee: fowls are sacrificed to thee
Incense ascends unto heaven: oxen, bulls, fowls are burned.” (Geikie.)

Not only was the Nile considered a god, but it furnished practically all the drinking water fit for human consumption. We are told that water from wells could hardly be used, but that water from the Nile was so palatable that Egyptians preferred it to any other drink. One author says, “In truth, when one drinks of it the first time, it seems to be some water prepared by art.” (Harmer.) When the Nile and all its tributaries were turned to blood, Jehovah was shown to be greater than the Nile, or any god connected with it; and before seven days were ended, the stench of the blood was unbearable and the Egyptians were made to loathe the river they once worshipped. No greater demonstration of the power of Jehovah could have been made than this which struck not only at their system of worship, but imperiled their very lives. Since their gods were unable to deliver them from their dilemma and they must appeal to the mercy of Jehovah, they should have realized the folly of continuing to worship such gods and turn to Jehovah.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 7:8-19

1. First Encounter with Magicians (Ex. 7:8-13)

Show a wonder. Since Moses and Aaron claimed to be representatives of Jehovah, it was expected that Pharaoh would demand a sign in proof of their mission. When Jesus came He performed miracles that the people might believe that He was from God. When He sent His apostles to preach the gospel He qualified them to perform miracles to prove that they were representatives of God.

Take your rod. Moses was instructed to use the rod which he carried and which God had turned to a serpent for him at Horeb. With this he would be able to perform sufficient miracles to establish his identity as God’s messenger. Unbelievers have quibbled as to the reality of this miracle, but the God who was able to create a serpent in the first place would certainly be able to change a rod into a real serpent. Because a different Hebrew word is used here from that which is used in other places, some think that a creature larger than the ordinary snake such as the crocodile is intended. Adam Clarke is inclined to this view and those who are interested should read his discussion in his commentary on this chapter.

Pharaoh called for the wise men and sorcerers. Egyptians were unusually well versed in secret and

hidden arts. Some have thought that they performed miracles by the power of the devil. There seems to be no positive evidence for or against the idea that the devil works miracles through men. “The commonest view in the present day regards them as simply persons who had a knowledge of many secrets of nature which were generally unknown, and who used this knowledge to impress men with the belief in their supernatural power.”

“On the whole, we regard it as most probable that the Egyptian magicians of this time were jugglers of a high class, well skilled in serpent charming and other kindred arts, but not possessed with any supernatural powers.” (Pulpit Commentary.)

Did in like manner with their enchantments. In the margin we have the words “secret arts” instead of enchantments. A Hebrew authority says that the Hebrew word translated enchantments is one which means “Secret or hidden arts.” However, it is hardly satisfactory to say that the Egyptians turned their rods into serpents by secret arts. In view of this, some commentators suggest that God furnished the power necessary to change these Egyptians’ rods into snakes that He might show the superiority of Moses and Aaron over the Egyptians. Unless we grant that the devil has power to perform miracles through men, it seems that this is the most probable explanation of the success of the Egyptians in turning their rods into serpents.

Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods. “Others think by the power of evil angels, artfully substituting serpents in the room of the rods; God permitting the delusion to be wrought by wise and holy ends that they might believe a lie, who receive not the truth wherein the Lord was righteous. Yet this might have helped to frighten Pharaoh to compliance with the demands of Moses. Note, God suffers the lying spirit to do strange things, that the faith of some may be tried and manifested (Deut. 13:3; 1 Cor. 11:19) that the infidelity of others might be confirmed (2 Cor. 4:4).” (Matthew Henry) The fact that Aaron’s rod swallowed the rods of the magicians should have convinced the Egyptians that the God of Aaron was greater than the god of the Egyptians. It is possible that the names of two of these magicians have been preserved for us. Paul says, “*And even as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also withstand the truth.*” (2 Tim. 3:8.)

Pharaoh’s heart was hardened. Nowhere is there an indication that God operated in any miraculous way to harden Pharaoh’s heart. He simply shut his eyes to a miraculous demonstration of the superior power of Jehovah over the gods of the magicians. On this point Adam Clarke remarks, “He receives no conviction, notwithstanding the clearness of the light which shines upon him.” We all know the power of prejudice; where persons are determined to think and act after a predetermined plan, arguments, demonstrations, and even miracles themselves are lost on them, as in the case of Pharaoh here, and that of the obstinate Jews in the days of our Lord and His apostles.

2. First Plague Brought on Egypt (Ex. 7:12-19)

Pharaoh’s heart is stubborn. The King James Version uses the word harden instead of stubborn. This word stubborn means dull or heavy. The consequence of this dullness or heaviness of heart was that he refused to allow the people of Israel to go out from Egypt.

As he goes out unto the water. This is the instruction of the Lord to Moses that he may contact Pharaoh. The purpose of Pharaoh’s going to the water is not certainly known, but was probably for the purpose of worshipping the water. We have shown that the Nile was an object of worship; and since the superiority of Jehovah is to be manifest over the Egyptian gods and since the Nile was

worshipped as a god, it seems probable that the purpose of Pharaoh's going to the water was to worship. Moses was to remind Pharaoh of the request which had been made to allow the people to go into the wilderness to worship and he was to renew the request.

I will smite with the rod upon the waters in the river. This is the threat which Moses was to make in order to move Pharaoh to submission. Mention is made of the rod. Moses was to smite the waters with the rod. This was the rod that Pharaoh had seen turn to a serpent; it was the rod which Pharaoh had seen as it devoured the serpents of the magicians. That incident was to be recalled to Pharaoh's mind, that, remembering the superior power of that rod, he might be moved to grant the request of Moses.

They shall be turned to blood. Unbelievers have made any number of attempts to explain away the miraculous powers of Moses on this occasion. One man tells of his experience on approaching the Nile and says that as the sun was rising, its beam struck the water to make a deep red reflection, the intensity of which increased with the increasing light until "the entire mass of the waters was opaque, and of a dark red, more like blood than anything else to which I could compare it." Others have sought to explain this phenomenon by the presence of an inconceivably rapid growth of infusoria and minute cryptogamous plants of a red colour. It is said that these minute plants increase so rapidly that they seemed to flow. Those who are interested in a lengthy study of this matter should read "Hours with the Bible" by Geikie, volume 2, chapter 5.

The river shall become foul. This statement is sufficient to disprove the theories that have been suggested as an explanation of this miracle. When the sun shines upon the river and its waters reflect the red rays, the taste of the water is not changed. In fact, the Arabs claim that the water never tastes better than when it is red. They refer to it as the "Red Nile." Neither does the multiplication of these minute plants of a reddish color affect the taste of the water. According to the statement of our text, the fish in the river died, and the water became foul so that the Egyptians loathed to drink the water from the river. Harmer tells of the delicious taste of the water of the Nile and says that it was not uncommon for the Egyptians to drink several gallons daily. If the water was so affected that they would loathe that which they had formerly so much enjoyed, something more was done to the water than could be done by the shining of the red rays of the sun upon it. If we believe that God created the blood that runs in the bodies of man and animals, why should we hesitate to believe that He could change the water to blood? If we believe that the Son of God had power to change water into wine, why hesitate to believe that God could change water into blood? Those who question the miraculous power of God through Moses are the same people who question the miraculous power of God through Christ and His apostles. The safe course is to believe that which we read in the Bible. Until man can write a book that will compare with the Bible or that will accomplish as much good as the Bible has accomplished, we will be safe in accepting what it says as the truth.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Contrast the beginning of the work of Moses and Jesus. Turning water into blood versus wine.
2. The tendency to explain these plagues as unusual natural phenomena is plain infidelity. People who hold such views either hold such views with reference to the resurrection of Christ, or soon will hold such views.
3. The God who created blood to run in the arteries of Adam could change the water of a district into blood. To disbelieve the one is to pave the way for disbelief of the other.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 5

MOSES AND THE MAGICIANS

1. What is said of God's readiness to keep His promises? _____

2. Does God's time for fulfilling His promises always seem right to man? _____

3. What promise did Jehovah make to Moses at this time? _____

4. How did the people react to the added burdens which Pharaoh put upon them? _____

5. How did their reaction affect Moses? _____

6. Against what were the ten plagues directed? _____

7. Describe the change of mind which was brought about in Pharaoh by the plagues. _____

8. Against what was the plague of our text directed? _____

9. What was the attitude of the people of Egypt towards the Nile? _____

10. How did this plague magnify Jehovah above the Nile? _____

11. What sign did Moses perform before Pharaoh? _____

12. What do you know of the wise men of that time? _____

13. Were they able to duplicate the miracle of Moses? _____

14. How was the miracle of Moses shown to be superior to their miracle? _____

15. Do you know the names of these magicians? _____

16. What effect did these miracles have upon Pharaoh? _____

17. What do you know of the process of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart? _____

18. What does the word "stubborn" as used in our text mean? _____

19. Why would Pharaoh be going out to the water? _____

20. Why did Moses make mention of his rod when speaking to Pharaoh? _____

21. How have critics attempted to explain this miracle as a natural happening? _____

22. Can you prove that the water was actually turned to blood? _____

23. What is said of the pleasure the Egyptians got from drinking water from the Nile? _____

24. What is said of their change in attitude toward the river? _____

25. Is it more difficult to believe that God turned the water into blood than it is to believe that He put blood in our body? _____

26. What would you conclude from this lesson? _____

LESSON NUMBER 6

THE LAST PLAGUE

Ex. 11:1-10

INTRODUCTION

The plagues which God brought upon Egypt have furnished material for criticism by the enemies of God and the Bible. Some have said that they may all be explained on natural grounds; that they were unusual, but not miraculous. Others have said that if we admit they are miraculous they are an indictment of God, proving Him to be cruel and destructive. Those who make such contentions overlook the purposes God may have had in bringing the plagues upon Egypt. (1) Moses needed to be strengthened for the work before him, and these plagues were calculated to educate and discipline him for that work. They served to give him confidence and courage to replace the timidity and reluctance which characterized him when God called him in Mount Horeb. (2) The people of Israel had been held in bondage so long that they needed demonstrations of God's power and glory to educate them to the point where they would turn their backs upon Egypt and follow Moses into the wilderness. They needed to see great signs and wonders wrought through Moses to be assured that he was God's servant and that he was capable of taking care of them in spite of the power of Pharaoh. (3) We may well conclude that God designed to produce a salutary effect upon the people of Egypt and cause them to realize His power and majesty as superior to that of their national gods. We are told that a "*mixed multitude*" went up with the Israelites. (Ex. 12:38.) No doubt they felt like Jethro, who said, "*Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods.*" (Ex. 18:11a.) Everyone of the plagues was calculated to destroy the faith of the people of Egypt in one or more of their gods. They worshipped serpents. When the rod of Moses was turned to a serpent and it destroyed the rods of the magicians which were turned to serpents, the power of the God of Moses was demonstrated to be superior to the gods of the Egyptians. The Egyptians worshipped cattle. When all the cattle of Egypt were plagued with murrain, the objects of their worship were made contemptible. When Moses called for these plagues to cease, they ceased. This showed that Moses was greater than their gods who were powerless to stop the plagues. (4) No doubt the plagues were designed to give Pharaoh sufficient warning of the intentions of God to free His people from bondage and furnish him sufficient motive to free them from bondage without the destruction of the nation. Had Pharaoh heeded these warnings instead of hardening his heart, he could have saved himself and his nation from a lot of sorrow. There was never a time during the course of these plagues that Pharaoh could not have repented and allowed the people to go without further harm to Egypt. We must not think that God forced Pharaoh to be stubborn so He might manifest His power. It is true that God foreknew Pharaoh's stubborn attitude and that God planned His action in the light of that foreknowledge; but still Pharaoh was as free to choose his course of action as we are free to choose our course of action today.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

"He smote also the first-born in their land, the chief of all their strength." (Psa. 105:36)

1. The Sovereignty of God Over All. How can we justify the act of God in killing all the first born of Egypt? They were not responsible for enslaving the people of God. Nor were they responsible for keeping them in Egypt against their expressed desire to go into the wilderness. Why, then, were the first born killed? Only in the fact that God is the sovereign Ruler of all the earth can we see any justification of His course of action in this matter. The first born who were of age, who had reached

the age of accountability, were in sin and rebellion against God and deserved to die on account of their sins. The first born who were not old enough to be accountable for their deeds would fare better to die and go to heaven than they would fare if they lived in that evil environment of Egypt, learned the ways of sin, and were finally lost. None but God had the right to call the former to account at that or any other time, and none but God could take the innocent without involving Himself in sin. The fact that all men are His creatures, sustained by Him, and answerable to Him at all times gives Him the right to dispose of them in any way His wisdom and holiness may direct. He had given the first born their life; He had the right to take it. (Job 1:21; 2:10.) The foolish man said he had goods laid up for many years, but God said his soul was required that night. (Luke 12:20.)

2. The Resourcefulness of God in Accomplishing His Purposes. God's resources are unlimited. He is all-wise; He is all-powerful. He makes the mountains, the seas, the rivers-- all creation, animate and inanimate, to serve Him and His purposes. In His dealings with Pharaoh we see Him using serpents, frogs, flies, disease, the elements, and even death to accomplish His purposes. When the Egyptians would have overtaken His people to harm them, God took their chariot wheels off. He placed a cloud between the people and the Egyptians which was darkness to the Egyptians and light to His people. When His people were hungry in a desert waste, He rained manna from heaven and sent the quails in the evening. When the people would need precious metal with which to build sanctuary, God gave them favor with the Egyptians who furnished all the gold and other precious metals they would need. If the people needed water to drink, God caused an abundance of fresh water to flow from the flinty rock. There is no limit to His resourcefulness to accomplish His purposes. When He tells us that He will give us a home in heaven far beyond our poor power to imagine, we may well believe Him if we judge the future by the past. His wisdom and power are sufficient to do whatever He pleases to do for His people.

3. The Wisdom of God Is Seen in the Timing of the Events of Our Lesson with the Men Necessary to Accomplish His Purposes. God had to have a leader for His people. He had to have that leader at the time Egypt had a ruler of the character of this very Pharaoh. This leader of His people had to be prepared for his work, and time was required to develop such a leader. Foreknowledge as well as power was required to bring these men together at such a time as would serve the purposes of God. If God so ruled in the affairs of men and nations at that time, and if He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, may we not conclude that He rules in the affairs of the world today?

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 11:1-10

1. Israel Prepares (Ex. 11:1-3)

Yet one more plague. Students of Hebrew tell us that the first verse should read, "*Jehovah had said unto Moses ...*" Moses does seem to have had this information when he met Pharaoh as recorded in Ex. 10:24ff., for when Pharaoh told Moses that Moses should see his face no more, Moses told him he was right about that. (Ex. 10:29.) So Moses must have known at that time that there would be but one more plague.

He shall surely thrust you out. Jehovah told Moses that when Pharaoh finally decided to let Israel go, he would literally thrust them out, and compel them to go in haste. On account of this warning, Moses would naturally have the people prepare themselves and stay prepared to go in haste at a moment's notice. Considerable plans and organization were required to get more than two millions of people ready for such an exodus, but there had been plenty of time to make such plans and to perfect such an organization. Moses had been in Egypt working with Pharaoh for nearly a year before the tenth

plague was brought upon Egypt.

Let them ask jewels of gold and silver. Moses was told to encourage the Israelites to ask of the Egyptians pieces of jewellery. The King James Version has *borrow* instead of *ask*. Infidels have criticized the Bible, and God, for the fact that the people were told to borrow as if they intimated they would return the jewellery when they knew they would never see the Egyptians again. But the Hebrew word is poorly translated by our word *borrow*. The people were simply to, ask the Egyptians to give them jewellery, and God gave them such favor in the eyes of the people that their request was granted. In speaking of these critics Adam Clarke says: “Let these men know that there was no borrowing in the case; and that if accounts were fairly balanced, Egypt would be found still in considerable arrears to Israel. Let it also be considered that the Egyptians had never any right to the services of the Hebrews. Egypt owed its policy, its opulence, and even its political existence, to the Israelites. What had Joseph for his important services? Nothing! He had neither district, nor city, nor lordship in Egypt; nor did he reserve any to his children. All his services were gratuitous; and being animated with a better hope than an earthly possession could inspire, he desired that even his bones should be carried up out of Egypt ...and had built treasure cities or fortresses, we know not how many; and two whole cities, Pithom and Raamses, besides; and for all these services they had no compensation whatever, but were besides cruelly abused, and obliged to witness, as the sum of their calamities, the daily murder of their male infants. These particulars considered, will infidelity ever again dare to produce this case again in support of its worthless pretensions?”

Jehovah gave the people favor. It is not necessary that we understand that God moved miraculously upon the hearts of the Egyptians. It is known that Pharaoh was not loved by his people. His treatment of the Israelites was so cruel that the sympathy of the people generally was stirred; and the plagues had created an impression in favor of the God of the Israelites. In these ways Jehovah gave the people favor.

Moses was very great in the land of Egypt. The reputation Moses had in Egypt was due to the miracles he had worked. Many of the servants of Pharaoh had long been convinced that Moses was superior to Pharaoh and that God was superior to the gods of Egypt. We are told that the servants of Pharaoh “*feared the word of Jehovah*” and saved their cattle from the hail. (Ex. 9:20.) Pharaoh’s servants also advised him to allow the people to go lest the nation be destroyed. (Ex. 10:7.) And the people generally believed Moses to be the servant of a greater power than the gods of Egypt, hence they were willing to give their jewellery. It is also possible that the Egyptians were afraid to refuse the request of the Israelites for jewellery lest some calamity come upon them. So great was the reputation of Moses and the favor which Jehovah gave the people with the Egyptians that when time came to build the tabernacle the people had more than enough jewellery of gold and silver that they could give all that was needed to build the tabernacle and its furniture. (Ex. 35:20ff.)

2. Moses Warns Pharaoh (Ex. 11:4-8)

Thus says Jehovah. Moses used this solemn form of expression each time he announced the coming of a plague upon Egypt. It served to let Pharaoh know that Moses was acting and speaking as Jehovah’s representative and was calculated to cultivate in the heart of Pharaoh, a respect for God.

About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt. There is something about night that adds to the horror of disaster. The weeping and wailing of people in the night carry farther and stir the imagination because of the inability to see what is causing the trouble. It should be noticed that Jehovah said He would smite the first born. People usually talk about the “death-angel” going over Egypt as if the Bible used that expression. Whether Jehovah used an angel or not is not told. Some commentators argue

whether Jehovah used a good or an evil angel for this work of destruction when no mention is made of any kind of an angel.

All the first born of Egypt shall die. This meant a death in every home in the nation. Every home in the nation was to be bowed in grief at the same time. Throughout all Egypt the names of Jehovah and Moses were to be in the minds of all people and the fear of Jehovah was to be forced upon all the people. The first born of Pharaoh was to be the next on the throne and all first-born sons were to take the place of their fathers, hence this was the greatest blow short of absolute destruction that could be brought upon the nation. Not only were the first born of human beings to be taken, but also of all beasts. Since the Egyptians worshipped cattle, this was a blow at their religion. It showed Jehovah superior to the god which presided over their cattle.

There shall be a great cry. Moses predicted that there would be such a great cry as Egypt had never known and such as would never be known at any later time. With death striking in every home at the hour of midnight, the cry could be heard from one end of the nation to the other.

A dog shall not move his tongue against man or beast. Moses said harm would come to every home of the Egyptians, but absolutely no harm would come to the homes of the Israelites, not so much as a dog barking at them. Adam Clarke gives considerable space to the discussion of this statement and suggests that since dogs often howl when their master's home is disturbed, the lack of barking of the dogs in Israel would be proof that no harm had come to those homes.

Jehovah does make a distinction. Some of the plagues were not felt in Goshen where the Israelites lived so that people might know that Jehovah cared for His people and that the gods of Egypt were not able to care for them. (Ex. 8:22.) Since one main purpose of these plagues was to show the superiority of Jehovah over the gods of Egypt, this statement may be viewed as meaning that Jehovah makes a difference in the way He blesses the people who serve Him and the people who worship idols. This would be an inducement for the people of Egypt to forsake idolatry and worship the true God. We must not think of God as ceasing to use every means possible to reclaim His creatures from idolatry as long as there is any possibility of doing so. Hence, these plagues served as means of punishing Pharaoh and his servants for their cruelty to the Israelites and as a means of reclaiming as many as possible from the curse of idolatry which was practised in Egypt. Often we view Jehovah as a national Deity, caring for the people of Israel and as being against all other nations. God had a peculiar purpose for the people of Israel to fill and special providence was exercised over them for the accomplishment of that purpose; but other than that God loved and cared for the people of all nations then as He does now.

Your servants shall come down unto me, and bow down. Moses predicts that the servants of Pharaoh will come to him and ask the people to leave, but he does not say that Pharaoh himself will come to him. In fact he said in Ex. 10:29 that Pharaoh would never see his face again. He also predicts that the servants of Pharaoh will bow down to him and honor him as the real ruler instead of Pharaoh, or superior to Pharaoh.

Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee. This is the statement which Moses predicted the servants of Pharaoh would make after the death of the first born. The last plague would be such a terrible visitation that it would not merely gain the consent of Pharaoh to let the people leave, but it would cause him to thrust them out. Looking upon Moses as the king, ruler, of the Israelites, Pharaoh speaks of the people as those that followed him.

He went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. Feeling between Moses and Pharaoh was as high and intense

as was possible. Pharaoh had threatened to kill him. (Ex. 10:28.) Perhaps only the providence of God had prevented his death already. It is difficult to conceive of Pharaoh allowing a man to live who had caused as much trouble in the kingdom as Moses had caused. However, in spite of the intense feeling on this occasion, Moses spoke calmly to Pharaoh. He did not indulge in bitter railing and abuse as men are tempted to do under similar circumstances.

3. Obstnacy of Pharaoh (Ex. 11:9,10)

Pharaoh will not hearken unto you. This is what Jehovah said to Moses, and like verse 1, is to be viewed as having been said to Moses before the time Moses left Pharaoh for the last time. This was to fortify Moses against the delay caused by the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

That My wonders may be multiplied. Here again we have what seems to be a statement of purpose contrary to what we know of the nature of God. Some have accepted this as meaning that God hardened Pharaoh's heart for the sole purpose of showing His wonders in Egypt. The truth is that God took advantage of the hardness of Pharaoh's heart to; make a display of His wonders, His power and majesty. Pharaoh was perfectly free to determine his own course, as free as we are today to determine what we will do. The obstnacy of Pharaoh, though it delayed the departure of the people of Israel for about one year, served several good purposes. "(1) It gave them time to organize themselves, and make all necessary preparations for a sudden departure. (2) It deeply impressed the Egyptians, and led them to abstain from all interference with the Israelites for above three centuries. (3) It impressed the neighboring nations also to some extent, and either prevented them from offering opposition to the Israelites, or made them contend with less heart, and so with less success against them." (Pulpit Commentary.)

Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh. The presence of Aaron and the work he did in connection with the miracles and plagues on Egypt were mentioned more frequently in the beginning of this series of contests between Israel and Egypt than during the latter part. It will be remembered that Moses was timid and somewhat lacking in self-confidence when he was called and when he began his work. Aaron was given to him as his mouthpiece and helper. No doubt he was needed more at the beginning than he was later. When Moses got into his work and gained self-confidence and assurance he soon assumed positive leadership, a thing which Aaron was never capable of doing. He was never capable of being anything more than a helper, and at times seemed unfit for that position.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Study Paul's use of this experience of Pharaoh in Rom. 9:14-18.
2. Moses was held in favor by the people of Egypt. This is an indication that the men who governed Egypt were not popular rulers. People usually think for themselves and if allowed to do so will give expression to their thinking.
3. The fact that Moses was able to predict the action of Pharaoh was enough to prove to the Israelites and the Egyptians that he was a servant of God. This is one thing that caused him to be great in the land of Egypt, and it no doubt contributed to the favor which all the Israelites had in the eyes of the Egyptians.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 6

THE LAST PLAGUE

1. How did the ten plagues affect Moses? _____

2. How were the Israelites benefited by the plagues? _____

3. What effect did the plagues have upon the people of Egypt? _____

4. What was the purpose of the plagues with reference to Pharaoh? _____

5. Was Pharaoh free to let the people go after the third or fourth plague? _____

6. What does our text suggest as to the sovereignty of God? _____

7. How does our text teach the resourcefulness of God in accomplishing His purposes? _____

8. How is the wisdom of God suggested in our text? _____

9. What did Moses predict with reference to their leaving Egypt? _____

10. What use did the Israelites make of the favor God gave them with the Egyptians? _____

11. What use have infidels made of this matter? _____

12. Can you justify the Israelites in what they did? _____

13. Suggest some ways in which God gave the People favor with the Egyptians. _____

14. What made Moses great in the sight of the Egyptians? _____

15. What solemn expression did Moses use when telling Pharaoh of the plagues? _____

16. Why did Moses use this solemn expression? _____

17. What was to be the last and most terrible plague? _____

18. How extensive was the plague? _____

19. How did Jehovah show a distinction between Israel and Egypt? And why? _____

20. Is there anything to indicate that some of the Egyptians came to believe in and serve Jehovah? _____

21. What relationship did Pharaoh look upon Moses as having with the Israelites? _____

22. What was the attitude of Moses when he left Pharaoh the last time? _____

23. Did Moses allow his anger to cause him to be ugly towards Pharaoh? _____

24. Did Moses expect Pharaoh to hearken to his last appeal? Why? _____

25. Give and discuss three ways in which the obstinacy of Pharaoh benefited the people of Israel. _____

26. Discuss the relationship of Aaron to Moses. _____

27. Did Moses need Aaron as much at the time of our lesson as he did when he first began to talk with Pharaoh? Why? _____

28. What would you conclude from this lesson? _____

LESSON NUMBER 7

THE PASSOVER

Ex. 12:1-12

INTRODUCTION

In the Jewish writings there is a distinction made between the Egyptian Passover and the permanent Passover. There was something added by Moses and by tradition that was not found in the Egyptian Passover. Moses ordained that all male members of Israel were to appear in the sanctuary of the Lord with the offering of firstlings. (Ex. 23:14-19.) The waving of the first fruits of the harvest was also an addition by Moses. (Lev. 23:4-14.) And if there were any who were not ceremonially clean or who were travelling and unable to attend the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, they might celebrate it one month later. (Num. 9:1-14.) The Egyptian Passover had to be consumed in haste and the eaters were to be dressed in their travelling clothes, while no such requirement was made concerning the permanent Passover. The women were not required to come to Jerusalem for the Passover although they were at liberty to do so if they chose. Since Jerusalem was the central gathering place, there was always the difficulty of finding places to stay during these feasts. The hospitality of the people of Jerusalem was taxed to the limit and it is said that guests left the skins of the paschal lambs and the vessels which they used in their religious ceremonies to their hosts in return for the hospitality. In commenting on the number of people attending these feasts Josephus says that there were 3,000,000 attending the Passover of A.D. 65 and on another occasion, there were nearly as many and they required 256,500 lambs to make their offerings. During this feast, no leaven was allowed to be used; everyone eating only unleavened bread. The time for beginning to use unleavened bread is said to have been determined as follows: "Two desecrated cakes of thanksgiving offering were placed on the bench in the temple: as long as they were thus exposed, all the people ate leaven; when one of them was removed, they abstained from eating but would not burn it; and when the other was removed, all the people began to burn the leaven." This was on the 14th day of Nisan. This was the first month of the Jewish sacred year and the 7th month of their civil year. It had 30 days and answers generally to the last part of March and the first part of April.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

"For our Passover also has been sacrificed, even Christ." (1 Cor 5:7b)

Our Passover Is Christ. Jesus as our Passover Lamb is similar to the lamb offered by the Jews in that He was appointed a sacrifice. John the Baptist spoke of Him as the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29.) That a lamb should have been used in the original Passover instead of some other animal is due only to the appointment of God. In the wisdom of God it was thought best for the purpose. In like manner, by the appointment of God and because He was the only sacrifice adequate, Jesus became our Passover.

There is another suggestion as to similarity in the innocence of the two. The lamb has always been considered a type of innocence and so our Passover, though slain in connection with sin was Himself

perfectly innocent of sin. Another requirement of the Passover lamb was that it must be without blemish. And so Peter says that we have been redeemed not with silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish. (1 Pet. 1:19.)

Another resemblance between the two is that they both were slain and that they offered no resistance. The lamb is characterized by lack of resistance to ill-treatment and Isaiah refers to that when he predicted that the Messiah would be *“as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.”* (Isa. 53:7.)

The blood of the paschal lamb was sprinkled on the doorposts. This sprinkling of blood was for the preservation of the first born when God came over to slay the first born of Egypt. So the blood of Christ our Passover, is to be sprinkled for the salvation of our souls. The Hebrew writer exhorts us to *“draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our faith that it waver not.”* (Heb. 10:22,23.)

The flesh of the paschal lamb was eaten. The whole of it was to be eaten or burned. This perhaps suggests our reception of Christ our Passover. He is to be accepted wholeheartedly without any reservation. Those who go through the form of accepting Christ but have certain mental reservations as to the way they conduct themselves will find that they have not in reality accepted Christ as their Passover lamb.

The offering of this paschal lamb in Egypt was for the purpose of saving the first born in each family from destruction. So the purpose of the offering of Christ our Passover is for our salvation from eternal destruction. If the Jews had depended on their relation to Abraham instead of the blood which was commanded to save their first born from destruction, they would have perished the same as the first born among the Egyptians that first Passover night. It matters not what our relationship is to any individual or group of individuals, if we are found in disobedience to the commandments of the Lord, we must suffer the penalty. So our safety lies not in our wealth or our social and political positions. But our safety lies in humble submission to the commandments of the Lord. It is entirely probable that some Israelite might have argued that his moral standards were so high and so perfect that it was not necessary for him to sacrifice a lamb. Surely everyone will agree that one's moral attainments would not have saved him from destruction. So there are people today who refuse to accept Christ because they think they are so nearly perfect in morals that they do not need Christ. Living a clean moral life is very important, but it cannot take the place of the blood of Christ as an atonement for our sins. And anyone who depends upon it and rejects the blood of Christ, will be disappointed in the day of Judgment.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 12:1-12

1. The Passover Instituted (Ex. 12:1-4)

This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. The Jews had two calendars, the Civil and the Sacred. “It is supposed that God now changed the commencement of the Jewish year.” The month to which this change refers, the month of Abib, corresponds to a part of our March and April; as it is supposed that previous to this, the year began with Tisri which corresponds to part of our September; for in this month the Jews supposed God created the world, when the earth appeared at once with its

fruits in perfection. From this period, the Jews have formed a twofold commencement of the year, which have given rise to a twofold denomination of the year itself; to which they afterwards attend in all their workings: this which began with Tisri or September, was called their Civil year; that which began with Abib, or March, was called the Sacred or Ecclesiastical year. (Adam Clarke.) Clarke calls the month Abib instead of Nisan. Moses used the term Abib, but the later books, Nehemiah and Esther, use Nisan.

In the 10th day of this month. This was the day on which they were to begin their preparation for the Passover. This was when the lamb was to be selected, but it was not until the 14th day that it was to be killed.

A lamb for a household. The critics of the Passover have attacked this and similar points on the grounds that since a household would not contain more than 5 to 10 persons and since there were some three million Jews in Egypt, too many lambs would have been required to satisfy the demands. Not that there was an insufficient number of sheep, but that there would not be enough of the age and character required. The lamb must be without spot or blemish and must be one year old. But the God who could foresee the bondage of Israel and who could make His plans hundreds of years before time to deliver them would have no difficulty in supplying a sufficient number of lambs to serve His purpose.

If the household be too little for a lamb. The Lord would not intend that there should be any waste of the meat. If there are not sufficient people in a household to consume a lamb, another household was to be invited to share the lamb. Some writers in meeting the arguments that there were not enough yearling lambs, have suggested that this Passover meal was observed somewhat as we observe the Lord's Supper in our time and that one lamb would accommodate a large number of households. This argument, intended to defend the Bible statement, seems a little farfetched.

You shall take it from the sheep or from the goats, The original word used for lamb may mean either a young sheep or a young goat, though our English word according to common usage, does not permit of this meaning.

2. Instructions for Preparation (Ex. 12:5-7)

This lamb shall be without blemish. This refers to the physical condition of the lamb, which was to have no natural imperfections; it was not to be diseased; it was not to be torn; and no bones were to be broken. This was intended as a type of Jesus Christ and consequently, must have no imperfections. The Jews in this matter, as in nearly every thing else, went to extremes in their traditions. They made a list of some 50 things which render a lamb unfit as an offering. The lamb was to be a male a year old. According to the Jewish practice, this meant that it was not to be more than one year old. In fact, it was acceptable to the Jews any time within the age of 8 days and 12 months.

You shall keep it until the fourteenth day. The lamb was to be taken from the herd and kept apart until the fourteenth day. Why this was required, we have no way of knowing. Moses made no such requirement as putting the lamb up on the tenth day and keeping it until the fourteenth, and if the Jews have practised it after this first Passover there is no record of it.

The whole assembly shall kill it at even. This does not mean that there was only one lamb put up

before the whole assembly and that all the people were to take part in killing it. It simply means that each family was to put up one and that any person in Israel might do the work of offering the lamb. The killing of the lamb was not, at that time, looked upon as a priestly act. The lamb was to be killed at even. The margin says that it is to be between the two evenings. There has been much controversy on the meaning of this expression. The Samaritans and a number of modern scholars understand it to mean the space of time between the setting of the sun and the moment when the stars become visible, at the time when darkness sets in. However, there is a tradition which interprets the phrase to mean “from afternoon to the disappearing of the sun, the first evening being from the time when the sun begins to disappear from its vertical or noon day point: towards the West; and from the going down and vanishing out of sight, which is the reason why the daily sacrifice might be killed at 12:30 p.m. on Friday ... but as the paschal lamb was slain after the daily sacrifice, it generally took place from 2:30 to 5:50 p.m.” Those who wish to read a lengthy discussion should see McClintock and Strong, Volume VII, page 735.

Take of the blood and put it on the two side posts and on the lintel. The blood of the Passover lamb was to be sprinkled on the two door facings and the part at the top connecting them which was called the lintel. Someone has said that no blood was sprinkled on the threshold because this blood was typical of the blood of Christ and that His blood is not to be trampled underfoot. This, however, seems to be a rather farfetched argument. The blood was caught in a vessel and a mop made of hyssop was dipped in the blood to scatter it upon the door facing. This blood was to serve to identify the house as one belonging to God’s people. When the Lord saw the blood, He passed over that house leaving the first born alive, but if no blood was found on the door facing, the first born in the house was killed. A lamb was substituted for the first born of the house. This is typical of Christ as our Passover. He was substituted for us in death. He took our sins upon Himself and died for us. When the people of Jerusalem chose Barabbas to be set free instead of Jesus, there must have been rejoicing in the heart of Barabbas, that someone took his place in death. So there ought to be rejoicing in our hearts today that Jesus took our place and suffered the penalty for our sins.

3. Instructions for Eating the Passover (Ex. 12:8-12)

They shall eat the flesh roasted in fire. The Egyptians ate raw flesh in honor of one of the gods. Some think that specific instruction was given here to roast the flesh that they might not be like the Egyptians.

Unleavened bread with bitter herbs. Leaven has always been considered a kind of corruption being produced by fermentation. Hence, it has been used as a type of corruption, moral and spiritual. It is in harmony with this thought that Paul urged the church at Corinth to “*purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened. For our Passover also has been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore 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.*” (1 Cor. 5:7,8.) It is not possible for us to be certain as to the meaning of the bitter herbs, but the unanimous opinion as to the reason for the use of these bitter herbs is that they were to remind the Jews of the terrible bondage they had experienced. Throughout their generations they ate this Passover lamb and unleavened bread with bitter herbs in order to remind them that their fathers had been held in cruel bondage and that God remembered His covenant with them and delivered them.

Eat not of it raw nor boil it with water. Some have supposed that this command was given because

the Jews were in the habit of eating raw flesh, but for this supposition there is no proof. It is known that the Jews commonly boiled flesh as many of us do today. Perhaps it was to be roasted on account of the haste in which they were to cook it and eat it.

Its head with its legs and all the inwards thereof. This indicates that the lamb was to be roasted whole. It was not to be cut in parts. For this reason, if a family was too small to consume it, another family was invited to share it. There is some difficulty from our point of view in understanding how the inwards were not to be removed. Adam Clarke is of the opinion that the inwards refer only to the heart, lungs, and liver, and kidneys, and so on, and not the intestinal tract.

Let nothing of it remain until the morning. That which remained such as the inedible parts, was to be burned. It is supposed that this was done so that none of it would corrupt. Since it was typical of Christ as our Passover, there was to be no corruption about it.

Your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand. This is the instruction the people had with reference to their dress while eating the Passover. They were to eat in haste and be ready to move at a moment's notice.

For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite the first born in the land of Egypt. This was the climax of the punishment brought upon Egypt for their enslavement of the Jews. It was also the climax of the contrast between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt. Since the Egyptians worshipped animals, the slaying of the first born would show the superiority of God over the things which the Egyptians worshipped.

I am Jehovah. God's judgments are never for His selfish pleasures. He was interested in His own people realizing His might and His holiness. He was also anxious that the Egyptians should understand these things as well as to suffer punishment which they so richly deserved. National punishments had a good purpose as well as punitive reasons. The punishment of one generation for its misdeeds may open the eyes of the next generation so as to bring about salvation. This undoubtedly was the purpose of the punishments brought upon Egypt.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Memorials always have facts back of them. Since the Passover was observed throughout the ages by the Jews, it would be foolish to deny the reality of which it is a memorial.
2. In times of low spirituality in the national life of the Jews they forgot to keep the Passover and showed a lack of appreciation for God's blessings upon them. So when people today forget to observe the memorial of the death of Christ, they betray a low tide of spirituality.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 7

THE PASSOVER

1. Name some ceremonies added to the Passover which were not observed in Egypt? _____

2. What do you know of the difficulty of caring for crowds at the Passover in Jerusalem? _____

3. What was not allowed in Jewish homes during Passover week? _____

4. What was the signal for the time to get rid of the leaven? _____

5. In what month was the Passover? And what do you know of the Jewish calendar? _____

6. Name and discuss several ways in which the paschal lamb was typical of Christ. _____

7. Was the paschal lamb offered to save all the Israelites from death? _____

8. Would the social position or wealth of a first born have saved him from death? _____

9. What lesson should those who depend upon their morals get from this today? _____

10. What do you know of the civil and ecclesiastical calendars of the Jews? _____

11. When did the preparation for the Passover begin? _____

12. What do you know of the number of lambs consumed on this occasion? And of the difficulty in finding sufficient number that would meet the requirements? _____

13. Could a goat be offered at the Passover? _____

14. What was required in the Passover lamb as a fit offering? _____

15. On what day of the month was the offering made? _____

16. At what time of the day was the lamb to be slain? _____

17. What was to be done with the blood of the lamb? _____

18. Of what is this ceremony typical? _____

19. How was the lamb to be cooked? _____

20. What was to be eaten with the lamb? _____

21. Of what is the unleavened bread typical? _____

22. Of what are the bitter herbs typical? _____

23. What was to be done with that which could not be eaten? _____

24. How were the people to be dressed while eating? And why? _____

25. How did Jehovah show His superior strength over the gods of Egypt? _____

26. What were the reasons for punishing Egypt? _____

27. What would you conclude from this lesson? _____

LESSON NUMBER 8

ISRAEL CROSSES THE RED SEA

Ex. 14:21-31

INTRODUCTION

Before the Israelites left Egypt, some very important ordinances were given. First, they were told to observe the passover annually. For seven days they were to eat unleavened bread, and the seventh day was to be a feast unto Jehovah. They were to recall their experiences in Egypt, especially their deliverances at the Red Sea and tell these experiences to their children. (Ex. 13:3-10.) And the purpose of this memorial feast was *“that the law of Jehovah may be in your mouth: for with a strong hand has Jehovah brought you out of Egypt.”*

The next ordinance given the people was that of the consecration of the first born to Jehovah. (Ex. 13:11-16.) God said that all first born, both of man and beast, belong to Him. The first-born males of all unclean beasts had to be redeemed or killed. They had no choice in the matter of the first-born male children, they had to be redeemed. There was a tradition among the Jews that if a father neglected to redeem his first-born son, the son had to pay the redemption price when he reached his majority. This ordinance was also a memorial, for they were told to tell their children that the first born were redeemed because of the slaying of the first born in Egypt.

Another thing of interest in making arrangements for their journey is the cloud which attended the Israelites. By night it was a pillar of fire to give them light and by day it was a cloud. (Ex. 13:21,22.) This cloud served three purposes. (1) It was a guide by day. They were to move when the cloud moved; they were to stop and camp when the cloud stopped; and they were to turn when the cloud directed them to do so. (2) They would need light at night for the camp. Among more than two millions of people there would always be need for light in the camp. (3) The cloud served as a covering from the intense heat of the desert. The children and the aged needed protection from the desert sun. David said, *“He spread a cloud for a covering.”* (Psalm 105:39.)

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up; so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.” (Psa. 106:9)

The origin of the name of the Red Sea has given rise to much study and discussion. Some scholars contend that the name Red was given it because of some natural phenomenon, such as the reflection of the mountains to the west of the sea. And it is generally admitted that there is such a reflection at certain times. Others say the term Red is given because of the great amount of red sea weeds which abound in parts of the Sea. Still others say that red storks are so numerous on the water that the term was given the Sea. But according to Smith's Bible Dictionary, the reason that has the best foundation is that the Sea took this name from a great king who reigned in the country adjacent to the Sea. He was of a family named “Himyer,” which means red. Added to this tradition, there is the fact that these “Himyerites” were descendants of Shem, so were called “red men.” And Smith concludes, “The Red Sea, therefore, was most probably the Sea of the Red men.” (Vol. 3, p. 2685.)

The place of the crossing of the Red Sea has been much disputed and with our present information it is not possible for one to be positive that he knows the exact location. The Sea lacks several miles extending as far north as it did in the time of Moses and reliable authorities think the place of crossing

may not now be in the Sea. Pulpit Commentary says the crossing was somewhere between the Bitter Lakes and the present location of Suez which is on the extreme northern tip of the Red Sea. While McClintock and Strong Encyclopaedia says the crossing was south of Suez a few miles.

“The importance of this event in Biblical history is shown by the manner in which it is spoken of in the books of the Old Testament written in later times. In them it is the chief fact in Jewish history. Not the call of Abraham, not the rule of Joseph, not the passover, not the conquest of Canaan, are referred to in such a manner as this great deliverance. In the book of Job it is mentioned with the acts of creation. (26:10-13.) In the Psalms it is related as foremost among the deeds that God had wrought for His people. The prophet Isaiah recalls it as the great manifestation of God’s interference for Israel and an encouragement for the descendants of those who witnessed the great sight. There are events so striking that they are remembered in the life of a nation, and that, like great heights, increasing distance only gives them more majesty. So no doubt was this remembered long after those were dead who saw the Sea return to its strength and the warriors of Pharaoh dead upon the shore.”

“Endeavors have been made to explain away the miraculous character of the passage of the Red Sea. It has been argued that Moses might have carried the Israelites over by a ford, and that an unusual tide might have overwhelmed the Egyptians. But no real diminution of the wonder is thus effected. How was it that the Sea admitted the passage of the Israelites, and drowned Pharaoh and his army? How was it that it was shallow at the right time, and deep at the right time? This attempted explanation would have never been put forward were it not that the fact of the passage is so well attested that it would be uncritical to doubt it were it recorded on mere human authority. Since the fact is undeniable, an attempt is made to explain it away. Thus the school that pretends to the severest criticism is compelled to deviate from its usual course; and when we see that in this case it must do so, we may well doubt its soundness in other cases, which, being differently stated, are more easily attacked.” (Smith’s Bible Dictionary.)

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 14:21-31

1. Jehovah Parts the Waters (Ex. 14:21-23)

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. Infidels deny that Moses had anything to do with the dividing of the water on this occasion. Certainly no one thinks Moses did the work of his own power, but that God used him as an instrument like He used the apostles in the working of miracles is clearly indicated in this lesson.

Caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind. Here again infidels have tried to account for the division of the water of the sea. They claim that the crossing was made at a time when the tide was going out. And with the blowing of the east wind added to the ebbing tide a path sufficiently wide was opened for the passage. However, a wind of sufficient velocity to open a path wide enough to allow more than two million people to cross the sea within six or eight hours would have been so strong that it would have blown the people away. God uses nature to accomplish His purposes, and certainly the wind performed a useful purpose on this occasion. The east wind of this section is known to be very dry and hot, so would tend to dry the ground very rapidly. The term “*east wind*” refers to the wind that blows from the east to the west. Since the Israelites were going from west to east in crossing the sea, they were facing the wind. If the wind was the sole cause of the dividing of the water it would have blown the water in the face of the people. The infidel needs a strong south wind to blow the water northward.

All the night. It will be noticed that the children of Israel crossed the sea by night. The cloud which accompanied them stood between them and the Egyptians. To the Egyptians it was a black cloud, but to the people of Israel it was a pillar of fire which gave sufficient light to enable them to make the

crossing.

Waters were a wall on the right hand and the left. This passage has been a thorn in the side of infidels of all ages. If the waters actually stood in a wall on both the left hand and the right, the dividing of the waters was miraculous. If the waters were parted by means of low tide and the blowing of the wind, it would not have been possible for the waters to stand in a wall on either side. "An infidel may deny the revelation in toto, and from such we expect nothing better; but to hear those who profess to believe this to be a divine revelation endeavoring to prove that the passage of the Red Sea had nothing miraculous in it, is really intolerable. Such a mode of interpretation requires a miracle to make itself credible. Poor infidelity! How miserable and despicable are your shifts!" (Adam Clarke.) Pulpit Commentary attempts to take the miraculous out of this passage by saying that the division of the water can be accounted for by natural means; and that since no miracle is needed, no miracle was used. But it is necessary to deny the statement of Moses that the water stood in a wall. Paul's use of this incident demands that we take the word wall in its ordinary meaning. He says the people were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Cor. 10:2.) If the sea formed a part of the element in which the people were immersed it had to stand in a wall on either side. With the water on both sides and the cloud above and behind them they were completely immersed from the sight of the Egyptians. If the water did not stand in a wall, the cloud was the thing which hid the people from the Egyptians, and therefore, Paul should have said they were baptized in the cloud only.

The Egyptians pursued. It is difficult to see how people can become so enraged and determined as were the Egyptians on this occasion. It seems they should have known that if Moses could bring the ten terrible plagues upon them, and if he could divide the waters, he could also cause the waters to come back in such destructive force as to take their lives. Only a man maddened by greed and revenge could have urged his army and himself on in the face of certain destruction. This army seems to have been composed wholly of cavalry. Mention is made only of horses, chariots, and horsemen. Again, in their song of triumph, it is said, "*The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.*" (Ex. 15:1b.)

2. Jehovah Hinders the Egyptians (Ex. 14:24-28)

In the morning watch. The night was divided into four divisions called watches. Usually the morning watch is said to begin at three a.m. and end at six a.m. However, there is a difference between the Jewish and Roman systems of reckoning time. According to the Jewish method there were three watches in the night; they were from sunset to ten p.m.; from ten p.m. to two a.m.; and from two a.m. to sunrise. So the watch of our lesson was likely according to the Jewish reckoning and was two a.m. to sunrise.

Jehovah looked upon the Egyptians. Our text says that God looked upon the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud. Most commentators do their best to get rain clouds into the text. David makes mention of clouds pouring water and of the voice of thunder in the whirlwind; he mentions lightnings that lightened the world and thunder that caused the earth to tremble. (Psalm 77:17-20.) Mention is also made of the Egyptians being discomfited. Moses gives no details as to how this was brought about. Possibly David's description might fill in some of the details of how the Lord produced disorder in the ranks of the Egyptians. However, this does not justify men in saying that the cloud over the Israelites was a storm cloud; nor does it justify them in saying that any rain at all fell upon the Israelites.

Took off their chariot wheels. Here again the critics try to explain away the miracle. They cite the Septuagint and the Syriac version which use the word clog to suggest that the wheels were clogged with mud. In this way they account for the hindrance to the Egyptians in a natural way.

Jehovah fights for them. This is the language of the Egyptians when, in spite of their mad

determination to reclaim their fleeing slaves, they realize that the God who sent the plagues upon them was still the God of the Israelites. No doubt they remembered their helplessness during the time the plagues were visited upon them. Realizing now that the same God was causing their chariots to drive heavily, they attempted to do the only thing they knew to do-- to flee from the presence of Jehovah. The infidel finds it difficult to explain why the Egyptians thought that God was fighting for the Israelites.

Stretch out your hand over the sea. Moses was commanded to exercise the same power to bring the waters together again which he used in dividing them. There was as much of a miracle in the latter as in the former. Moses was told to bring the waters together again that they might come together upon the Egyptians.

The sea returned to its strength. The infidel's natural explanation reads as follows: "At the appointed sign, the east wind ceased to blow, and the waters of the Bitter Lakes, no longer driven to the northwest by its forces, flowed back with something of a reflux, while at the same time, the tide having turned, the Red Sea waves came rushing on at unwonted speed." There are several things wrong with this explanation. First, it has an east wind blowing the water toward the north. Next, it has the east wind ceasing to blow at exactly the right time, not to say anything about the strength of a wind which could hold back millions of tons of water yet not obstructing the march of the Israelites. Next, it has the tide on the south returning at exactly the right time and with "unwonted speed." There is no more difficulty in believing that God worked miracles on this occasion than there is in believing that all these unusual natural phenomena occurred at the same time.

Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. How large an army Pharaoh had with him is not known, but surely not all the soldiers of Egypt. A nation as great as Egypt would have several armies. And since no infantry is mentioned we conclude that he had only a few cavalry. Our text says that not one of the soldiers that followed escaped alive. Whether this statement is to be taken literally or to mean an overwhelming disaster it is difficult to determine. However, Moses says "*There remained not so much as one of them.*"

3. Jehovah Saved the Israelites (Ex. 14:29-31)

The waters were a wall unto them. Some significance should be attached to the fact that Moses repeats this statement. Obviously Moses intended to convey the idea that the waters provided protection to the people. If the waters merely receded, as infidels say, they could not possibly have afforded any protection to the people. In that case the statement of Moses in this connection would be meaningless.

Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day. Our denominational friends try to evade the force of this figure by saying that the Jews were saved by the sprinkling of blood on the doorposts back in Egypt. They make this experience only a symbol of the salvation obtained by the sprinkling of blood. However, it should be remembered that only the first born were saved by the sprinkling of blood; but all Israel was saved at this time. Next, the first born were saved from physical death by the sprinkling of blood, while here all Israelites were saved from Egyptian bondage. The Bible nowhere says, or indicates that the salvation spoken of in our text was intended as a symbol of the salvation which the first born enjoyed back in Egypt. Paul teaches us this experience of the Israelites was, from one point of view, to them what our baptism is to us. He says they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. This experience of the Israelites is called a baptism, and is said to bring them into Moses, that is, into a new relationship to Moses. In this new relationship he was their lawgiver, deliverer and mediator. So when we are baptized into Christ, He becomes our deliverer from sin, our lawgiver and king, and our mediator between us and God. When those people were baptized into Moses they were entitled to the blessings of the priesthood inaugurated by Moses; so we, when we are baptized into Christ are entitled to the blessings of the priesthood of Christ. If we suppose that an Israelite refused to go through the

Red Sea, would anyone suppose that Moses was his deliverer? His mediator? Or that he was entitled to the blessings of the Jewish priesthood? So if one refuses to be baptized into Christ he has no right to claim Christ as his deliverer, savior, mediator, or high priest. We can say that Jehovah saved all Israel only because all Israel was baptized into Moses; so we can say that Jehovah saves all today who are baptized into Christ. Salvation for Israel was found in Moses and they enjoyed that salvation only when they were baptized into Moses. Salvation from sin today is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10), and we can enjoy that salvation provided into Christ. (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27.)

And the people feared Jehovah. When the people saw the terrible destruction visited upon the Egyptians and realized the fact of their salvation from bondage it is said that they feared Jehovah. The word fear is to be taken in the sense of reverence; it was a godly fear. With this destruction as a climax to the ten plagues which preceded, we should expect the people to have such an abiding respect for God and His power and majesty that they would live godly lives the balance of their days. However, such was not the case. Not many days after these terrible scenes they forgot the goodness of God and complained that Moses had led them out in the wilderness to die. They forgot the power of God and complained that there was no food to keep their children from starving.

They believed in Jehovah, and His servant Moses. Since they had seen such mighty demonstrations of the power and majesty of God we would naturally expect them to believe in Jehovah as long as they lived. But again we are disappointed, for we find them being overthrown in the wilderness on account of their unbelief. The writer of Hebrews says “*We see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.*” (Heb. 3:19.) This reminds us of what Jesus said about the seed which fell on rocky ground. He says, “*Who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*” (Luke 8:13.) So these Israelites believed in Jehovah for a while, but when these temptations incident to the life in the wilderness came upon them they forgot the demonstrations of power and majesty and longed in their hearts to return to Egypt. They would have been willing to suffer the bondage in Egypt in order to escape the hardships in the wilderness. They wanted the rest and freedom promised in Canaan, but were unwilling to suffer the hardships that lay in their path to Canaan. So there are people today who wish to enjoy the glories and pleasures of heaven but they are not willing to endure the trials and tribulations which are encountered in the pathway to glory.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Pharaoh may be looked upon as a type of Satan. As Pharaoh was bent upon holding the Israelites in bondage, so Satan is determined to hold each one of us in his service. But as Jehovah was able to give the Israelites victory over Pharaoh, so He is able to give us the victory over Satan, provided we wish that victory enough to be faithful to Him.

2. Egypt may be viewed as a type of the world, or Satan’s kingdom. The people of Israel were not saved from Egypt until they had left Egypt. They left Egypt by being baptized into Moses. So we leave the world by being baptized into Christ. One is in the world so long as he refuses or neglects to be baptized into Christ.

3. The wilderness is a type of the church and Canaan is a type of heaven. Those who were unfaithful in the wilderness were not allowed to enter Canaan. Not even Moses was allowed to enter Canaan because he sinned. So people in the church who are unfaithful to God will not be allowed to enter heaven. However, the figure must not be pressed too far, for we might conclude that even one mistake would keep one out of heaven as one mistake kept Moses out of Canaan.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 8

ISRAEL CROSSES THE RED SEA

1. Name and discuss two important ordinances given Israel before they left Egypt. _____

2. What miraculous manifestation of God's presence attended the people from Egypt to Canaan? _____

3. In what three ways did this cloud serve the people? _____

4. What do you know of the origin of the name of the Red Sea? _____

5. What do you know of the place of the crossing of the Red Sea? _____

6. What is said of the importance of this event in Biblical history? _____

7. By what means were the waters of the sea divided? _____

8. What useful purpose did the wind serve? _____

9. What is said of the position of the water of the sea? _____

10. What does Paul say of the water on this occasion? _____

11. What act of Pharaoh shows his rage and determination? _____

12. What do you know of the division of the night into watches? _____

13. Do you know the details of how God discomfited the Egyptians? _____

14. Were there any rain clouds over the Egyptians? Over the Israelites? _____

15. What did God do to slow down the progress of the Egyptians? _____

16. When the wheels came off, what did the Egyptians conclude? _____

17. Give three things wrong with the infidel's explanation of the return of the waters. _____

18. Of what did Pharaoh's army consist? _____

19. What is meant by the water being a wall on the right and the left? _____

20. Was Israel saved by the sprinkling of blood? _____

21. From what were the first born saved? And from what were all the people saved? _____

22. Into whom were the Israelites baptized? _____

23. Into whom are we baptized today? _____

24. Can you show the necessity of baptism as suggested in our lesson? _____

25. Did the people fear Jehovah? And for how long? _____

26. Can people believe for a while and then cease to believe? If they cease to believe, will they be saved in spite of the unbelief?

27. Can you use the Israelites' experience to prove this point? _____

28. What conclusions would you draw from this lesson? _____

LESSON NUMBER 9

THE MANNA AND QUAILS

Ex. 16:2-14

INTRODUCTION

Some of the first experiences of Israel, after crossing the Red Sea, are significant and typical of what we may expect in our spiritual lives. They were on the mountain peak of joy and success as they sang the song of deliverance. Miriam led the women as they sang and danced in celebration of their salvation from the bondage of Egypt. As they turned their back upon the Red Sea and their face toward the wilderness, there was not a cloud of trouble or sorrow in their sky. No doubt they felt that their troubles were all past. And when they travelled for one day without finding water they thought but little about it. They went another day and found no water, and still another day. In the hot desert country, this is quite a trial. Then they came to Marah, or the bitter waters. There the water was not fit to drink, so the people murmured. Their sky was overcast with the boiling clouds of trouble and disappointment. Such is life. Victory was sweet; disappointment was bitter. As one followed the other in quick succession in the experiences of Israel, so do they follow in our experiences today. When the people murmured, Moses took the matter to God and was told to cut down a certain tree to throw into the water. When this was done, the water became sweet and satisfying to the people. Since these experiences were written for our learning, we may draw a lesson from them. When they took their bitter experiences to God, He helped them. So we should take our experiences to Him. If we nurse them to ourselves, if we try to get along without His help, they harden and embitter our souls. When the people left Mara, they came to Elim, where there were, twelve springs of good water. This was a pleasant place to camp. They went from sweet to bitter, and from bitter to sweet. Such is our experience today. The sweet and pleasant experiences of life are for our encouragement, and to make us realize and appreciate the goodness and kindness of God. The bitter experiences of life are to remind us that this world is not our eternal home, to wean us from this world and help us center our affection upon heaven, to teach us to depend upon God to make the experiences of life bearable.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“And He rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them food from heaven.” (Psa. 78:24)

1. Dependence upon God. Moses was either a man of great faith in God and God’s willingness to care for His people, or he gave very little thought as to how the life of the people was to be sustained during their journey through the desert. How could more than two million people find enough food in the desert and still have time to travel on toward Canaan? The wilderness could not furnish enough to feed that many people if it were cultivated and caused to produce to its greatest capacity. How could they expect to take enough from the desert country to feed a multitude of people merely passing through it? The people of Israel had not gone far when they became hungry and longed for the food which they enjoyed in Egypt. Why did God allow them to become hungry? Why did He not begin feeding them from heaven the first day out? He wished to teach them the lesson of dependence upon God. We have to be denied our blessings; we have to experience a real need before we can appreciate the gift from God as deeply as we should. So God allowed Israel to consume their supply of

provisions, and allowed them to feel the pinch of hunger before He supplied them food from heaven that He might teach them to look to Him to fill their needs. So we today are to learn to depend upon Him. It is difficult for us to learn that dependence during days of prosperity. Some people cannot pray for daily bread as long as they have a big bank account. They have to feel the pinch of hunger and wonder where their next month's supply is coming from before they can learn to depend upon God. Some people never learn that God is the Giver of good health of mind and body until they are brought near death's door, or see a child linger between life and death for days.

2. God's Faithfulness in Spite of the Lack of Appreciation. Man's lack of appreciation seems to be unlimited. Man may be distinguished from all other creatures by his ingratitude. Ten men were cleansed of leprosy, but only one returned to give thanks. (Luke 17:15.) It seems that gratitude for deliverance from Egyptian bondage would have enabled the people to accept any and all circumstances in the wilderness with gratitude. Freedom in the wilderness while hungry was better than having all they could eat in Egypt while in bondage. But the Israelites did not feel that way about it. They thought they preferred to be full in bondage rather than be free and hungry. So they murmured and complained at their lot. God's faithfulness to them is seen in that He did not cease to feed them when they complained, and when they showed their utter lack of gratitude. When we go out of our way to be nice to people, we expect them to show some gratitude. If they do not make some response to show gratitude for what we have done for them, we are inclined to cease helping them. But God fed the Israelites for forty years regardless of whether they sang His praises or complained of the bitter experiences through which He led them. So God gives us our daily bread; He gives us good health of mind and body; He sends the rain, the sunshine, and the fruitful seasons whether we serve and worship Him or live for the world and the devil. But those who murmured and complained and rebelled at their lot in the wilderness died in the wilderness; they were denied the pleasures of Canaan. So those lacking in gratitude for the goodness of God may fail to reach heaven.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 16:2-14

1. Murmuring for Food (Ex. 16:2,3)

The whole congregation murmured. At the time of our lesson the people had been in the wilderness just about one month. Some have thought that some of the people, the poorest, had time to feel the pinch of hunger, but that the people who had plenty of sheep and cattle had not and therefore were in no condition to murmur. No doubt the poorest of the people were destitute and had just grounds for their complaints. However, those who brought sheep and cattle (Ex. 12:38) could see by this time their supply would not last long in the wilderness.

Murmured against Moses and Aaron. The people blamed these two men because they were the men who agitated the exodus. Had it not been for the work of Moses, the people would never have tried to get away from Egypt. Aaron did not have the ability to organize such a movement, and would never have attempted it without the help and encouragement of Moses.

Would that we had died by the hand of Jehovah. Perhaps this refers to the manner in which the first born died in Egypt. It was a painless death. They preferred to die painlessly in Egypt rather than die of starvation in the wilderness. Though their feeling in the matter was natural, they are to be blamed for their lack of faith in God who had manifested His ability to care for them. They were utterly at fault because they had observed the goodness and power of God in so many ways during the plagues and

their deliverance that there was no excuse for a lack of faith.

Did eat bread to the full. They spoke of gathering around the fleshpots in Egypt. Some think that the Egyptians fed them in community style, cooking their food in large containers and allowing families to get what they needed. At any rate, they seemed to have been well fed in Egypt. They ate flesh, fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. (Num. 11:5.) If they were provided with a sufficient quantity of such food, with milk and bread, they had a good diet. They would soon miss such a variety of food in the wilderness.

To kill this whole assembly. This seems to be the first time this accusation was hurled at Moses, but it is by no means the last time he heard it (Num. 16:13.) He was also accused of bringing them into the wilderness that he might have a people over which to rule. "Human nature can never be reduced to a more abject state in this world than that in which the body is enthralled in political slavery, and the soul debased by the influence of sin. These poor Hebrews were both slaves and sinners, and were therefore capable of the meanest and most disgraceful acts." (Adam Clarke.)

2. Food Promised from Heaven (Ex. 16:4-8)

I will rain bread from heaven for you. This was called bread from heaven because it was miraculously given. Like every other miracle in the Bible, infidels have tried to account for this in a natural way. But if it was caused by natural means why did the people not have it during the first month they were in the wilderness? And why did it continue to come as long as the people were in the wilderness, but stop when they went into Canaan? Why is the same material not to be found there today? Until these questions can be answered satisfactorily, unbelievers should admit the possibility of miracles.

Gather a day's portion every day. A day's portion for each person was an omer, which is equal to about one tenth of a bushel in our measure. And it mattered not how much a man gathered, or how little, he had no more than he needed. "And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less. And when they measured it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating." (Ex. 16:17,18.) They were taught in this manner to trust God for their daily bread. The selfishness of men would lead them to gather great quantities and hoard it, or sell it for a big profit. But God did not allow that. Nor could one eat less than he needed and in this manner save a great quantity of the manna, for that which was left over night bred worms and spoiled. (Ex. 16:20.)

That I may prove them. God has always required people to live by certain regulations for the purpose of proving whether they will be submissive to Him. He thus tried Adam and Eve by a commandment with reference to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their gathering of the manna showed their trust or their lack of trust in God. If they gathered much today, they showed their lack of trust in God to give them their portion the next day. Many people today would fail such a test.

Whether they will walk in My law. The law here is not that given by Moses on Sinai, for that had not yet been given. The law under consideration here is that with reference to the gathering of the manna. However, the principle is the same. The test was whether the people would be obedient to the law of Jehovah.

It shall be twice as much on the sixth day. Here is something else that gives the infidel a lot of trouble.

If a man was selfish enough to gather much on the first day, when he measured it with an omer he had nothing over; but on the sixth day he was to gather twice as much, so when he measured it by the omer he had twice as much as usual. Furthermore, if he had some left over any night in the week except Friday, it spoiled, but the extra omer on Friday night did not spoil. If Moses told the truth, we have evidence of a miracle; but if Moses did not tell the truth about this, we cannot afford to believe him on any point.

Then you shall know that Jehovah has brought you out. Moses was anxious that the people understand that he had not brought them out of Egypt simply to have a people to rule, to satisfy his lust for power and position. He promised that next day they should see the glory of Jehovah. Some have taken this to refer to the glory of Jehovah in the cloud mentioned in verse 10, but the connection seems to indicate that he had in mind the appearance of the manna in the morning and the quails in the evening.

He hears your murmurings against Jehovah. The people did not intend to murmur against Jehovah; in fact they likely would have denied that they were murmuring against Jehovah. However, when they murmured against God's servant, they were sinning against God. People often treat the position and authority of elders lightly today, refusing to co-operate with them in church work because they do not agree with the plan as set forth by the elders. Often people rebel against the rule of the elders. If the elders are scripturally qualified and acting within the limits of their authority, those who rebel against them and criticize them openly are sinning against God the same as these Israelites were murmuring against Jehovah when they criticized Moses and Aaron. Moses plainly told them that their murmurings were not against him and Aaron, but against Jehovah.

In the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full. The promise of food both morning and evening is said to be on account of the fact that God had heard the murmuring of the people. The need of the people was real, but the manner in which they went about getting what they needed was not good. They were criticized and corrected for the latter, but heard and supplied on account of the former.

3. The Promise of Food Fulfilled (Ex. 16:9-14)

Come near before Jehovah. The people had murmured against Jehovah, so some act of homage or adoration on their part was in place. They were required to gather in the presence of Jehovah to acknowledge their sin against Him and to recognize their dependence upon Him for the necessities of life. And still it is good for people today to gather before Jehovah to acknowledge Him as their God and to praise and adore Him for His goodness and mercy

The glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud. Whether this was the cloud which accompanied the Israelites we are not told. It may have been a special cloud which veiled the glory of Jehovah on this special occasion. At Sinai Jehovah came to the people in "a thick cloud." (Ex. 19:9.) The appearance of God in the cloud was still a part of the proof that Moses had not led them out of Egypt on his own authority; it was to convince the people that their God was directing Moses and that any criticism of Moses and his work would be a sin against Jehovah.

I hear the murmurings of the people. This is the language of Jehovah to Moses in the presence of the people. Speaking to Moses from the cloud so the people could see His glory and hear His voice was

calculated to convince them that Moses was the servant of Jehovah and that all he did was at the bidding of Jehovah. It seems that after such a demonstration of His presence with and directions of Moses the people would never doubt that God was with him. However, such was not the case. They soon forgot this demonstration and sinned against God by rebelling against Moses. Even Aaron and Miriam were guilty of this sin in later years. (Num. 12:1-8.)

The quails came up. There is some uncertainty as to whether the quails came every day with the same regularity as the manna came. There is no further mention of quails to eat until after the people left Sinai. When they had gone three days' journey into the wilderness of Paran (Num. 10:12), the mixed multitude lusted, exceedingly and the Israelites, influenced by their example, murmured again because they did not have the variety of food they enjoyed in Egypt. (Ex. 11:4-6.) On that occasion it is said that a wind from Jehovah brought quails from the sea and let them fall round about the camp. Authorities tell us that quails fly over the sea in certain seasons of the year, migrating from one country to another, and that they are well exhausted by their long flight and that they literally fall to the ground near the sea so that they may be picked up by people. Others tell of natives spreading their nets to catch them in great quantities during this migrating season. While quails come in the migrating season in great numbers, this would not account for enough of them to satisfy the hunger of two million people. Hence, we must conclude that God miraculously brought enough quails into the camp to feed the people of Israel. And if the matter was repeated anything like as often as the appearance of the manna, it would be absolutely necessary to conclude that the coming of the fowls was miraculous.

A small round thing, small as the hoarfrost. Moses tells us that in the morning the dew lay on the ground, and that when the dew was gone up there lay on the face of the wilderness a small round thing resembling hoarfrost in size. In Num. 11:7 it is compared to "*coriander seed*" for size. Again, unbelievers try to explain the appearance of this manna by natural means. There is a substance which forms on the leaves of grass and trees in that country, but it is neither of the nature of manna nor does it appear in anything like the quantity in which the manna appeared. And undoubtedly this substance existed both before and during the time the Israelites were in that country. But manna did not exist there until the second month they were in the wilderness, and it ceased to appear when they no longer needed to be fed miraculously. Since this natural substance continues to be found in that country, we conclude it was not the manna which ceased to appear when no longer needed.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Some of the principles of true democracy had their rise in the experiences of the children of Israel. The dignity of man and the sanctity of the individual, as well as the equality of men were new principles in the time of Moses. And we may be grateful that Moses did not insist on his son ruling the people.
2. Moses taught the people that they were accountable to God for their morals. Heathen religions were little concerned with moral standards. A few offerings and ceremonies would satisfy the demands of their gods regardless of how great a crime they committed
3. Moses taught the people that they were made in the image of God and shared in the divinity of God. This caused them to have such respect for themselves and for one another that they would not submit to bondage and the degradation that goes with it.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 9

THE MANNA AND QUAILS

1. How long did the children of Israel go without water? _____

2. When they found water, what was wrong with it? And how was it made sweet? _____

3. How does this resemble our spiritual experiences? _____

4. What do we learn from the sweet experiences of life? And from the bitter? _____

5. Discuss the problem of feeding the people in the wilderness. _____

6. Why did God let them go until their supply of food was consumed before He gave them manna from heaven? _____

7. Can we feel dependence upon God better in days of prosperity or adversity? _____

8. How may man be distinguished from all other of God's creatures? _____

9. How did the people of Israel show their ingratitude? _____

10. How did God show His faithfulness in spite of their ingratitude? _____

11. How long had the people been in the wilderness before God sent manna? _____

12. Why did the people murmur against Moses and Aaron? _____

13. What did they prefer to starvation in the wilderness? _____

14. What do you know of their diet in Egypt? _____

15. For what reason did the people accuse Moses of bringing them into the wilderness? _____

16. Why was the manna called bread from heaven? _____

17. How would you answer the infidel claim that this manna was a natural product of the wilderness? _____

18. What was a day's portion of manna? And why could one not get more than his share? _____

19. What lesson was this intended to teach? _____

20. How did God prove them? And for what reason? _____

21. Did manna fall on the Sabbath? And what provision was made for it? _____

22. What effect does this have on the infidel's natural explanation? _____

23. How was the glory of Jehovah manifested? _____

24. In what way were the people murmuring against Jehovah? And how may we do the same now? _____

25. Why were the people gathered before Jehovah? _____

26. Why did Jehovah appear to the people in a cloud? _____

27. Did God's appearance to the people cause them to accept Moses as His servant? _____

28. How did God give the people flesh to eat? _____

29. What do you know of the habits of quails in that country? _____

30. Would the natural supply of quail be enough to feed the Israelites? _____

31. What is said of the appearance of manna? _____

LESSON NUMBER 10

ISRAEL AT MOUNT SINAI

Ex. 19:1-11

INTRODUCTION

There are three things of interest between our last lesson and the one for this week. First, the people soon needed water again, and again they murmured and accused Moses of bringing them into the wilderness that their children and their cattle might die. So enraged did they become on this occasion that they were about ready to stone Moses. (Ex. 17:4.) Jehovah told Moses to take his rod with which he had divided the water of the Red Sea and strike the rock that was in Horeb. When Moses did so, water came from the rock in such quantity that the people had plenty for themselves and their cattle.

Next, the armies of the Amalekites came out against Israel in Rephidim. The battle was long and the men of Israel were not sufficiently armed and trained to win against the men of Amalek. So Moses took his rod in his hand and went up on the top of a hill overlooking the battle. When Moses held up his hands in supplication to Jehovah, Israel prevailed; but when his hands got heavy and he let them down, Amalek prevailed. So Aaron and Hur stood by Moses and allowed him to put his arms on their shoulders so they might be held up in supplication to God long enough for Israel to win the battle. (Ex. 17:8-15.) On account of this aggression on the part of Amalek, Jehovah swore to destroy the nation later. This was done in later times. (1 Chron. 4:43.)

Third, Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses came to see him in the wilderness. He heard a recital of all the things Jehovah had done for the people and he said, *“Now I know that Jehovah is greater than all gods.”* (Ex. 18:11.) Jethro observed Moses as he judged the people and advised him to appoint several men to help him in the work. He suggested that Moses concern himself with the important matters only, but that he allow other men to judge all the trivial matters. The counsel seemed good, so Moses appointed men to be rulers and judges over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens who feared God, men of truth, hating unjust gain.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“Sinai itself trembled at the presence of God, the God of Israel.” (Psa. 68:8)

1. Nature in the Presence of Jehovah. In our text, nature is said to be responsive to the presence of Jehovah. Sinai is said to have trembled when Jehovah came down in a cloud to give the law to Moses. Speaking of the time the law was given, Moses said, *“And mount Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.”* (Ex.19:18.) Deborah also sang of the glory and majesty of Jehovah and made mention of the responsiveness of nature to the presence of God, saying, *“Hear, O you kings; give ear, O you princes I, even I, will sing unto Jehovah; I will sing praise to Jehovah, the God of Israel. Jehovah, when You went forth out of Seir, When You marched out of the field of Edom, The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped, Yes, the clouds dropped water. The mountains quaked at the presence of Jehovah, Even Sinai at the presence of Jehovah, the God of Israel.”* (Judg. 5:3-5.)

David calls upon all nature to praise Jehovah. In this connection the student should read Psalms 145 through 150. In Psalm 148, David reaches his climax of praise when he calls upon all nature in these words, “*Praise Him, sun and moon: Praise Him, all you stars of light. Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For He commanded, and they were created. He has also established them for ever and ever: He has made a decree which shall not pass away. Praise Jehovah from the earth, You sea-monsters, and all deeps; Fire and hail, snow and vapour; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word; Mountains and hills; Fruitful trees and all cedars; Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and flying birds; Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth; Both young men and virgins; Old men and children: Let them praise the name of Jehovah; For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and the heavens.*” (Psalm 148:3-13.)

2. Our Obligation to Be Responsive. David said Sinai trembled in the presence of Jehovah, and then identified Him as the God of Israel. This does not indicate that He is simply and only a national God, but it emphasizes the fact that He is the God of Israel, and therefore Israel should be as responsive to His presence as was nature. If nature trembled in the presence of Jehovah, certainly Israel should praise, adore, and obey Him. Any number of reasons might be assigned why people should respond in this manner to Jehovah, but there are three chief reasons why Christians should do so. (1) God has created us, given us a being in the world. If we have had any pleasure in this life, we owe the Giver of our lives the praise for it. (2) God has preserved us all the days of our lives. If we have good health of mind and body, we are indebted to God for it and owe Him praise and thanksgiving. Were it not for His providence we could not continue to exist. In Him all things consist. (Col. 1:17.) And (3) all Christians should praise and adore Him for the fact that He has redeemed us from sin and death. We were condemned to eternal death on account of our sins, but He has redeemed us and made it possible for us to live with Him in heaven forever and ever.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 19:1-11

1. Arriving at Sinai (Ex. 19:1,2)

In the third month. The arrival at Sinai is said to be in the third month after they left Egypt. It will be remembered that Israel left Goshen on the night of the fourteenth of the first month. (Ex. 12:6.) But since they left at midnight, it is usually said that they left Egypt on the fifteenth of the month.

The same day came they into the wilderness. The meaning of the term “*same day*” is difficult to determine. Some say it means the same day of the third month as the day of the month they left Egypt, that is, the fifteenth. According to this, they were exactly two months getting to Sinai. Others say the term means the third day of the third month. And according to this interpretation, the people were forty-eight days going from Egypt to Sinai. The Jews account for the time between the passover and the giving of the law as follows: “From the departure out of Egypt to the coming to Sinai were forty-five days; for they came out on the fifteenth day of the first month, from which day to the first of the third month forty-five days are numbered. On the second day of the third month Moses went up into the mountain, when three days were given to the people to purify themselves; this gives the fourth day of the third month, or the forty-ninth from the departure out of Egypt. On the next day, which was the fiftieth from the celebration of the passover, the glory of God appeared on the mount; in commemoration of which the Jews celebrated the feast of Pentecost” (Adam Clarke.)

There Israel encamped before the mount. One writer thinks the very lay of the ground and the position

of Sinai before the great plain on which the people gathered were such as to suggest that God had such a gathering in mind in the creation. And another says, "The awful and lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, would have been the fittest preparation for the coming scene. The low line of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff exactly answers to the 'bounds' which were to keep the people from 'touching the mount.' The plain itself is not broken and uneven and narrowly shut in, like almost all others in the range, but presents a long retiring sweep, against which the people could 'remove and stand afar off.' The cliff, rising like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of 'the mount that might be touched,' and from which the voice of God might be heard far and wide over the plain below, widened at that point to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the contiguous valleys." (Dean Stanley.) If the plain before the mount did not afford sufficient room for the people to camp and have a gathering place, there was plenty of room in some of the valleys leading into the plain. And the mount is in full view of people for long distances up these valleys. The location served the purpose for which it was used as it had been made with the purpose in mind.

2. Moses in the Mount with God (Ex. 19:3-6)

Moses went up unto God. When God called Moses to deliver the people from bondage, He told Moses that He should bring the people to this place and that he should serve God upon this mountain. (Ex. 3:12.) Stephen says that Moses spoke with the angel of Jehovah on this occasion. (Acts 7:38.) Here we have another instance where one writer of the Bible speaks of the second person of the Godhead as Jehovah and another writer speaks of Him as the angel of Jehovah.

I bare you on eagles' wings. Jehovah reminded Moses to tell the people of the things in their immediate past that they might give the most earnest heed to what He was about to say to them. They were to remember how He had delivered them from Egypt and what He had done to the Egyptians who had held them in bondage. And they were to remember that He had carried them as on the wings of eagles. The figure of speech was intended to convey at least two ideas to the Jews. (1) It was to remind them of the power and might of Jehovah in delivering them and in bringing them thus far on their journey. (2) It was to suggest the tender care of their heavenly Father. "This expression... has been understood by Rabbinical writers and others to mean that the eagle does actually carry her young ones on her wings and shoulders. This is putting on the words a construction which they by no means are intended to convey; at the same time, it is not improbable that the parent bird assists the first efforts of the young by flying under them, thus sustaining them for a moment, and encouraging them in their early lessons." (Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

Brought you unto Myself. This vicinity was called the mountain of God. (Ex. 3:1.) So when Jehovah brought them to the place where He told Moses they would serve Him, He spoke of bringing them unto Himself. He had brought them out of bondage to a place where they were free to serve Him.

If you will obey My voice. God's blessings have always been contingent upon man's obedience to God. There are many natural, or physical, blessings which man can enjoy without ever obeying God. And there are some by-products of the spiritual blessings of God which men can enjoy without ever obeying Him. Many people enjoy freedom from slavery, a greater degree of moral purity than could be enjoyed were it not for the refining influences of Christianity, and a better system of law and order than is enjoyed by nations that know not God. These may be said to be by-products of God's dealing with His people on earth. Millions of people in our nation enjoy these and other blessings while they live in rebellion against God. But there are spiritual blessings which none but obedient children of God

can possibly enjoy. Redemption, the forgiveness of sins, the hope of eternal life, the peace of God that passes understanding, and that degree of the love of God enjoyed by the cheerful giver are blessings known only to obedient children of God.

Mine own possession from among all peoples. All people belonged to Jehovah by right of creation and preservation, but the Israelites were promised that they would belong to Him in a peculiar way and for a special purpose. This did not mean that Jehovah became a national God and that He did not continue to rule over all nations. The Jews soon came to adopt the view that Jehovah was their God and theirs only; but He did not cease to be the God of all nations. However, He was the God of the Israelites in a manner and for a purpose that He was not the God of any other nation.

A kingdom of priests. This promise was made on the condition that the people would obey Jehovah and keep His covenant. This promise was never actually realized as it is now realized under the gospel of Christ. We are said to be a kingdom of priests, a kingdom in which every citizen is his own priest and makes his sacrifice to God through his high priest. (1 Pet. 2:5,9.) This promise involved a theocracy, that is, a kingdom in which God was the sole ruler and every citizen a priest capable of offering his own sacrifice. Man's lack of preparation made it necessary to have a priesthood, and finally, man's rebellion against Jehovah and his desire to be like the nations about him caused God to allow them to have a king. (1 Sam. 8:1-9.)

A holy nation. (1) They were to be a nation. Up to this time they had simply been thirteen tribes bound together only by the ties of kinship. Now they were to be a nation under their own laws administered by their own people for their welfare. (2) They were to be a holy nation, a nation consecrated to God's service. The word holy suggests that which belongs to God, and since things which belong to Him must be pure, the word came to have the meaning of purity or freedom from moral filth. If the people had obeyed the voice of Jehovah and kept His covenant as He required of them, they would have been a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. "They should be a holy nation, saved from their sins, righteous in their conduct, holy in their hearts; every external rite being not only a significant ceremony, but also a means of conveying light and life, grace and peace, to every person who conscientiously used it. Thus they would be both a kingdom, having God for their governor, and a nation, a multitude of peoples connected together; not a scattered, disordered, and disorganized people, but a royal nation, using their own rites, living under their own laws, subject in religious matters only to God; and in things civil, to every ordinance of man for God's sake." (Adam Clarke.)

3. The People Promise to Obey (Ex. 19:7-11)

Called for the elders of the people. These were the heads of the tribes and the chief men of the families among the people. They were men who by reason of age and position among the people were respected by the people. It is probable that they were used for the purpose of getting the message to all the people in the quickest way possible. Some think that they acted on this occasion in behalf of the whole assembly, but the next verse suggests that all the people had a part in the decision they made and in voicing their approval of the covenant which was being made at this time.

All that Jehovah has spoken we will do. These are said to be the words of "all the people." The proposition God had made to them was laid before them by Moses through their elders. The proposition was this, that if they would obey God and keep His covenant, God would hold them as His peculiar possession and they would be to Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The commandments which they were to obey had not been revealed to them, but they were willing to trust

Jehovah to be just and fair in the things He demanded of them. This was their act of entering into the covenant with Jehovah, they promised to obey His laws and keep His covenant.

I come unto you in a thick cloud. God's presence must always be veiled when He appears to man. The angel of Jehovah, the second person of the Godhead, was in the form of man; deity was veiled by what appeared to be human form. When the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, deity was veiled in human flesh. When Jesus was transfigured before three of His apostles, the divine nature was allowed to shine through the veil of flesh more brightly than usual. At Sinai Jehovah was veiled by a thick cloud.

That the people may hear when I speak with you. God wished to talk with Moses in the hearing of all the people so that they might be impressed again with the truth that Moses was the servant of God. By this means Jehovah wished to make the people believe Moses forever. If the plagues in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the miracles of manna and quails and the miraculous provision of water would not cause the people to believe Moses to be the servant of God, it seems that nothing would make them believe. And following events serve to prove that nothing God and Moses could do would cause many of them to continue long in the belief that Moses was actually a true servant of Jehovah.

Go unto the people and sanctify them. This was to be done in preparation for the coming of Jehovah upon Sinai to give the law. The method of sanctifying was by washing their garments, and according to later custom, their bodies. The student should read verse 15 of this chapter in this connection, and compare with this 1 Sam. 21:4,5; 1 Cor. 7:5. The process of sanctifying the people was to impress them with the holiness of Jehovah and the significance of this occasion.

The third day Jehovah will come down. Two days were to be consumed in the process of sanctifying the people, and the third day refers to the next day after they were sanctified. Jehovah was omnipresent, that is, present everywhere all the time. However, He is able to manifest His presence at one place in ways in which it is not manifested anywhere else. Not being capable of understanding the nature of God, we must in reverence refrain from trying to explain some things He does which involve His inscrutable nature.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Sinai as a meeting place with God has been prominent. Moses met God there when the bush burned but was not consumed. He brought Israel there to hear the law given by the Lord. Elijah went there when threatened by Jezebel. (1 Kings 19:8.) And some think Paul went there when he spent three years in Arabia.

2. A covenant is an agreement between two persons in which one binds himself to do certain things for the other provided the other complies with certain conditions. God promised to bless Israel provided they obeyed His commandments. Israel continued not in His covenant, so God regarded them not. (Heb. 8:9.)

3. God required the people to sanctify themselves in preparation for His appearance before them. He requires us to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit (2 Cor; 7:1), to lift up holy hands without wrath and disputing. (1 Tim. 2:8.)

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 10

ISRAEL AT MOUNT SINAI

1. How did Moses obtain water from the rock? _____

2. Tell of the battle with the Amalekites. _____

3. Tell of the visit of Jethro with Moses and what advice he gave Moses. _____

4. What is said of Sinai at the time the law was given? _____

5. What did Deborah say of the responsiveness of nature to Jehovah? _____

6. Read and discuss some things David said about all nature praising Jehovah. _____

7. What is suggested by calling Jehovah the God of Israel? _____

8. Name and discuss three reasons why Christians are obligated to praise Jehovah. _____

9. How long was Israel going from Egypt to Sinai? Can you account for the days? _____

10. What do you know of the lay of the land about Sinai? _____

11. What is said of room for so many people to camp? _____

12. Did Moses expect to bring the people by Sinai? Why? _____

13. With whom did Stephen say Moses spoke in the mount? _____

14. What is meant by the statement that God bare them on eagles' wings? _____

15. On what condition was Israel to be blessed by Jehovah? _____

16. What blessings can people now enjoy while in disobedience? _____

17. What peculiar blessings are available only to the obedient? _____

18. Did Israel belong to Jehovah in any way that other nations did not belong to Him? _____

19. What is meant by a kingdom of priests? _____

20. Did Israel ever attain to that? Why? _____

21. What two thoughts are suggested in the statement "a holy nation"? _____

22. Do we enjoy these blessings to any greater extent than the Jews did? Why? _____

23. To whom did Moses give the words of Jehovah? _____

24. Who were the elders of the Jews at this time? _____

25. How did the people respond to the proposition God made to them? _____

26. How did God appear to talk with the people? And in what ways has deity been veiled on other occasions? _____

27. For what purpose did God speak with Moses from the cloud? _____

28. Did God accomplish this purpose? Why? _____

29. How were the people sanctified to meet Jehovah? _____

30. How could God come down to the people if He is omnipresent? _____

LESSON NUMBER 11

THE GIVING OF THE LAW

Ex. 20:1-17

INTRODUCTION

Paul says some interesting things about the law of Moses in his letter to the church in Galatia. First, he says that no one could be justified by the law. (Gal. 3:11.) In Antioch of Pisidia, Paul said that through Jesus remission of sins was granted, and *“by Him every one that believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”* (Acts 13:39.) The reason people could not be justified by the law is that law operates on the basis of perfect obedience. *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.”* (Gal. 3:10.) If one rendered perfect obedience, he could be justified by that obedience to law; but since no one can render perfect obedience, he is left to the mercy and grace of God.

Next, the law, given 430 years after the promise to Abraham, did not make that promise void, and our inheritance in Christ is of promise and not of the law. (Gal. 3:17,18.) The law was added because of transgression until Christ should come that the promise might be fulfilled. The Jews had about lost sight of the promise to Abraham and were exalting the law beyond that which was right.

Third, the law was only a tutor to bring humanity to Christ that they might be justified by faith in Him. The word tutor is from a Greek word which means footman. It was the business of the footman to bring the pupil to the teacher. So the law served as that footman to bring people to Christ that they might learn the truth that makes men free.

Fourth, men who insist on keeping the law given through Moses today are living in disobedience to God and have fallen from grace. (Gal. 5:2-4.) Paul said if people keep circumcision, which is one point of the law, they are obligated to keep the whole of the law; but if they keep all the law, they are fallen from grace and Christ is become of no effect to them.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

1. The Law Came Through Moses. Our text indicates that the law mentioned in it is inferior to grace and truth which came through Christ, and that it came to an end in Christ and His work. Since the term law includes the ten commandments given through Moses, many people refuse to grant that all the law ended in Christ. Hence, they divide law into ceremonial and moral. The former they say has been taken away, but the latter is eternal because of its nature. They further say that the ceremonial law is called the law of Moses, and the moral law is called the law of God, or Jehovah. However, this distinction will not stand investigation. Luke speaks of the ceremony of purification according to the law of Moses, and says it is written in the law of the Lord. (Luke 2:22,23.) In these verses the law of Moses is obviously the law of the Lord. In Nehemiah we learn that the people gathered to hear the priest read from the law of Moses, while in the same connection the book is called *“the book of the law of God.”*

(Neh. 8:1,8,18.) That the ten commandments are a part of the law given by Moses is clearly taught by the Lord Himself. Jesus accused the Jews of not keeping the law given by Moses when they were planning to kill Him. (John 7:19ff.) The commandment against killing is one of the ten. Again, Jesus was debating with the Jews about the law as compared with their traditions, and He said, "*Moses said, Honor your father and your mother ...*" (Mark 7:10.) Everybody knows that this is one of the ten commandments, yet Jesus gives Moses credit for it. Hence, we conclude that Jesus recognized the ten commandments as a part of the law of Moses.

2. Grace and Truth Came Through Jesus Christ. Here law is contrasted with grace and truth. Paul says we are not under law, but under grace. (Rom. 6:14.) Again law and grace are contrasted. Law says, Do and live; grace and truth say, Be faithful and live. Law makes no provision for mercy; there is no forgiveness on the basis of justification by law. Salvation by grace according to truth permits of human frailty and ignorance and provides for remission of sins in the mercy of God. Law demands that we merit our salvation by perfect obedience; grace offers us salvation on the merits of Christ, provided we love and obey Him, and remain faithful to Him to the end of life.

Since Paul says we are not under the law, but under grace, we conclude that we are not subject to the law as given by Moses. Moses once had authority to command, and people who refused to obey him were punished even unto death. (Heb. 10:28ff.) However, we can refuse to obey him today without any evil consequence. In fact we would be lost if we obeyed Moses now. (Gal. 5:2-4.) The authority of Moses continued until the time of Christ, for Jesus commanded people to keep His commandments. (Mark 1:44; Matt. 23:1-3.) When Jesus arose from the dead, He said all authority in heaven and on earth was given unto Him. That left no authority for Moses, or any other man on earth to exercise, except as Jesus delegated it to him through His teaching. (Matt. 28:18-20.) So we are obligated to hear and heed all that Jesus commands us to do. Moses told the people of his day that the Lord would raise up a prophet like unto him from among the people and all who refused to hear Him would be destroyed. (Deut. 18:15ff; Acts 3:23.) Peter said Jesus is that prophet which Moses said would come. Hence, the importance of obeying all that He commands us to do.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 20:1-17

1. Israel's Duty to Jehovah (Ex. 20:1-11)

I am Jehovah your God. On the meaning of the word Jehovah there is a great variety of opinion. Some scholars claim that it is "utterly inexplicable" and so do not try to explain it. Adam Clarke says that Exodus 34:6,7 contain "the proper interpretation of the venerable and glorious name of JEHOVAH." There are found eleven attributes of the divine nature, the only passage in the Bible containing so many of the essential attributes of God in so small a compass. The eleven are: (1) Jehovah, or LORD; (2) the strong or mighty God; (3) the merciful Being; (4) the gracious One; (5) the Being who suffers long; (6) the bountiful Being; (7) the great One; (8) the true One; (9) the Preserver of bountifulness; (10) He who bears away iniquity and transgression and sin; (11) He who visits iniquity. The word translated God in our text is Elohim, plural, indicating the plurality of the godhead. Clarke says that this word is derived from an Arabic word which means he worshipped, adored, was struck with astonishment. From this he concludes that the name taught people that their God was the only Being worthy of worship and adoration.

That brought you out of the land of Egypt. This would suggest (1) that He was a Being of great power who could execute vengeance upon all who oppose Him; (2) that He was capable of delivering His

people from trouble and of blessing them richly if they obeyed Him; and (3) that He had not deserted them as soon as He got them out of Egypt, but had kept His promise to go with them on their journey and be their God.

You shall have no other gods before Me. The word before is to be understood in the sense of addition. God does not demand that He be adored above all other gods; He demands that His people worship no gods in addition to Him; He will divide His love and honor with no other beings, animate or inanimate. “The very first commandment of the whole series is divinely calculated to prevent man’s misery and promote his happiness, by taking him off from all false dependence, and leading him to God Himself, the fountain of all good.” (Clarke.)

You shall not make any graven image. This second commandment is to prevent idolatry. The first commandment prohibits all mental idolatry and this one prohibits the outward or physical forms of idolatry. The commandment is extended to include (1) likeness of anything in heaven; (2) anything on earth; (3) or anything in the water under the earth. And in Deut. 4:15-19, Moses breaks these down in more detail saying they are not to make graven images of (1) any beasts; (2) winged bird; (3) anything that creeps; (4) or the likeness of any fish. The Roman Catholic Church leaves this commandment out of their writings, but in order to maintain the number ten, they divide the tenth into two and so have two commandments against covetousness. And yet they claim to be the sole preservers the word of God.

For I am a jealous God. As a jealous husband will not share the love of his wife, so Jehovah will not allow His people, to whom He is married, to divide their love for Him and make creatures the object of their love and adoration. He continues by saying that His jealousy causes Him to “*visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,*” even to the third and fourth generation. This refers to national sins, and even then He does not hold the children guilty of the sins of the father; they simply bear the consequence of the sins of their fathers. His jealousy is also shown in His loving-kindness to all who keep His commandments.

You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain. (1) This forbids using Jehovah’s name in connection with falsehoods. Oaths were common; and the name of God might be used in connection therewith, but since He is the God of truth, His name must not be connected with falsehood. (2) It forbids common swearing, or profanity. Business and judicial oaths were allowed under Moses, and may be under Christ, but people have never been allowed to use the name of Jehovah in connection with vulgar conversation. (3) This commandment forbids a loose unnecessary use of the sacred name. Many people use this name, or a derivative thereof in such expressions as: “The good Lord knows I intended to do thus and so.” The seriousness of violating this commandment is suggested in the fact that “Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain.” By this He means one is guilty and will suffer for such careless use of the name whether he intended to do wrong or not. We should measure our conversation in the light of this teaching and see whether we need to exercise care in this respect. The name is as sacred now as it was in the time of Moses.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Some have supposed that the word remember is proof that the Lord gave the Sabbath commandment in the beginning and that it had been binding ever since that time. However, we have no mention of anyone keeping the Sabbath before the deliverance from bondage, and we have no mention of anyone being punished for not keeping it. Nehemiah said Jehovah came down on Sinai and made known His holy sabbath to the people. (Neh. 9:13,14.) If the Sabbath was binding before the deliverance from bondage, no one knew anything about it for Nehemiah says

that God made it known on Sinai. To keep the Sabbath holy was to observe it as the Lord required through the law. See verses 9-11 for some of these instructions.

2. Israel's Duty to One Another (Ex. 20:12-17)

Honor your father and your mother. To honor parents includes two things. (1) To obey them. In connection with this commandment Paul tells children to obey their parents. (Eph. 6:1,2.) Children cast a great reflection on their parents in the community when they disobey them. (2) When parents are old, the children should see that their needs are supplied; and Jesus teaches that a child dishonors his parents when he refuses to help them. (Matt. 15:4-6.) Paul teaches that children should take care of aged mothers that the church be not burdened. (1 Tim. 5:4-8,16.)

That your days may be long. Honoring parents contributes to long life. The Lord does not mean to say that all obedient children will live a long life, for there are other things that enter in for consideration; but He does mean that such a manner of life will be blessed by the Lord.

You shall not kill. The sense of this commandment is to prohibit murder. The same Lord who gave this commandment gave Saul the commandment to kill all the Amalekites, men, women, and children. And when Saul failed to kill Agag, the king, Samuel slew him with his own hands. (1 Sam. 15.) Paul teaches us that the government does not bear the sword in vain, but is a minister of God to punish evildoers. (Rom. 13.) This commandment was given to regulate the private lives of people, not to regulate the government. One may be guilty of violating this commandment in various ways. (1) One who hates is guilty of murder. (1 John 3:15.) (2) One who kills his fellow man. If the act is premeditated, he is guilty of murder in first degree; if the act is not intentional, he is not guilty of so great a crime. (3) One who neglects to save a life. There is such a thing as criminal negligence, and one who refuses to administer first aid, or take an injured person to get assistance, is guilty.

You shall not commit adultery. This commandment may be violated in three ways: (1) by the overt act of illicit intercourse; (2) by looking lustfully upon one of the opposite sex (Matt. 5:27); and (3) by marrying a second time after getting a divorce for any reason other than fornication. (Matt. 19:9.) While the word adultery does not usually include such ugly sins, such things as Paul mentions in Rom. 1:27 and Moses forbids in Lev. 20:13-16 are probably intended to be included in this commandment. They are certainly forbidden by the law whether the specific term adultery includes them or not. The term fornication as used in Scripture would include them. Churches should restudy the subject of adultery and teach the young people that a marriage which the Lord disapproves will make it impossible for them to get to heaven. And people who divorce for trivial reasons and marry another are said by our Lord to commit adultery. There is little hope of getting people out of such actions, even to save their souls, but there is a possibility of saving young people from performing such adulterous actions. Hence, the necessity of teaching young people what the Lord teaches on the subject.

You shall not steal. The primary meaning of this commandment is that people are not to take from others that of value which belongs to them. It has been suggested that it is a violation of this commandment to charge more than an article is worth, or to buy something for less than it is worth, and no doubt this is true if one is in position to force such a bargain. Others have suggested that this commandment is violated when one deprives another of his good name. Paul teaches us that we should labor, working with our hands the thing that is good, that we may have whereof to give to him that has need, rather than steal. (Eph. 4:28.) Agur prayed that the Lord would not give him poverty lest

he should steal and profane the name of God. (Prov. 30:8,9.) Stealing is usually brought on by greed or need, though some steal for the pleasure they derive from it. In times of depression men will steal before they allow their families to suffer. Some will steal rather than work for a living for themselves and their families.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. This may be done either in court or in private life. Under the law a false witness was to receive the punishment he tried to bring upon his neighbor by his false testimony. (Deut. 19:15ff.) This was calculated to restrain a witness who wished to see his fellow man suffer punishment. The law was not always applied righteously as in the case of the men who testified against Jesus. This law was flagrantly violated when Jezebel hired men to bear false witness against Naboth so Ahab could get the vineyard he coveted. (1 Kings 21.) This commandment forbids the circulation of false charges, insinuations which tend to cast suspicion on a man, and all whispering campaigns intended to hurt a man and lessen his influence. Some people think they are innocent so long as they do not resort to outright lying, but they may insinuate enough to ruin one's reputation.

You shall not covet. This commandment implies that God knows the hearts of men, for otherwise He could not judge man with respect to this law. This was a long step in advance of any law or any code of religion in the time of Moses. We sometimes hear it said that the law of Moses sought to control only the outward and overt acts of man, but the law of Christ seeks to control the heart. This is not strictly true, for this tenth commandment dealt entirely with the heart. People have difficulty in distinguishing between legitimate desire and covetousness. Legitimate desire never seeks to do harm to another, but covetousness is an inordinate, or excessive, desire which causes one to get the object of his desire regardless of the welfare or pleasure of others. This law specifies several things which belong to others which are not to be desired by us. This is not a complete list, as is evident by the words "*nor anything that is your neighbor's.*" The Roman Catholic Church divides this commandment, separating one item from the rest to make the coveting of another's wife a separate violation. This is done because they dropped the commandment against the making and bowing down to graven images. This one dishonest use of God's word should be enough to convince all honest Catholics that there is something wrong with the system which they have accepted and which they are asked to support. If a document so important as the ten commandments has to be mutilated in the interest of a system of religion, there is necessarily something wrong with the system.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all our hearts and the second is like the first, to love our neighbor as ourselves. On these two commandments, He said, hang all the law and prophets. (Matt. 22:34-40.) If we love God with all our hearts, we will keep the first three commandments, and will observe the Lord's day as directed in the place of the fourth commandment. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will keep the last six commandments.

2. Jesus gave a deeper meaning to some of these commandments. If we hate, we are guilty of murder; if we lust, we are guilty of adultery.

3. The law was given (1) to bind the tribes together into one nation; (2) to serve as a code of morals which would lift them above the nations round about them; (3) to bring them to and prepare them for Christ and His conception of living; (4) to teach them what sin is and to make them realize their need of a Savior from sin.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 11

THE GIVING OF THE LAW

1. When and in whom did the law of Moses come to an end? _____

2. What division do people make of the law? And what is included in each? _____

3. Give proof that the expressions “law of Moses” and “law of God” mean the same thing. _____

4. Show that Jesus recognized the ten commandments as part of the law of Moses. _____

5. What is the difference between law and grace? _____

6. How did Jesus teach that the authority of Moses was binding in His day? _____

7. How did Moses teach that his authority would cease and the authority of another would be binding? _____

8. What do you know of the meaning of the word Jehovah? _____

9. Why did Jehovah remind Israel that it was He who brought them out of Egypt? _____

10. What is meant by no other gods before Jehovah? _____

11. Contrast the teaching of the first and second commandments. _____

12. What is included in the second commandment? _____

13. How is God’s jealousy manifested? _____

14. Name and discuss three ways of taking Jehovah’s name in vain. _____

15. How is the seriousness of violating this commandment emphasized? _____

16. Do we have evidence that the Sabbath law was not binding before it was given on Sinai? _____

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-
17. How was the Sabbath to be kept? And who was to keep it? _____
-
18. What is meant by honoring father and mother? _____
-
19. What is the promise attached to this commandment? _____
-
20. What is meant by the word kill in the sixth commandment? _____
-
21. Name and discuss three ways in which one may be guilty of violating this commandment. _____
-
-
22. Name and discuss three ways one may be guilty of adultery. _____
-
-
23. Why should there be more teaching on this subject in churches today? _____
-
24. How may one violate the commandment against stealing? _____
-
25. What did Paul recommend in the place of stealing? _____
-
26. Why do people steal? _____
-
27. Why did Agur pray that he not come to poverty? _____
-
28. In what two situations may people bear false witness? And what does the law of Moses teach about one who would give false testimony to convict another? _____
-
-
29. How was the commandment violated in connection with Jesus? And with Naboth? _____
-
-
30. What is the difference between legitimate desire and covetousness? _____
-
31. What does this commandment suggest with reference to the heart? _____
-
32. How does the Roman Catholic Church treat this and the second commandments? _____
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-

LESSON NUMBER 12

THE GOLDEN CALF

Ex. 32:1-8,30,35.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of our lesson we have a very fine contrast of the characters of Moses and Aaron. Aaron was a weak character, lacking in faith, loyalty and steadfastness. He was easily influenced by the people to do wrong. He seems to have offered no resistance at all when the people requested him to make an image for them to worship. And when Moses charged him with the sin, he laid the blame on the people, saying, "*you know the people, that they are set on evil.*" And further to excuse himself, he gave the childish explanation of the making of the golden calf, saying, "*I said unto them, whosoever has any gold, let them break it off: so they gave it me; and I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.*" However, in his favor we must remember that Aaron was brought up in slavery like the balance of the people and perhaps we should not expect any more of him than of the average man.

In Moses we find an altogether different character. He was able to make decisions and stand by them. His faith in God never wavered but once. (Num. 20:12.) Though he was brought up among idolatrous people, he never was inclined to forsake Jehovah for other gods. He was humble; he had no ambition to become the head of a great nation, for when the people sinned, Jehovah suggested that they be slain and a great nation made from Moses. However, Moses begged Jehovah to spare the people instead. Moses manifested a disposition like that of Jehovah in his response to the sin of the people in making the golden calf. First, he became so angry when he saw the people worshipping the calf that he threw down the tables of stone and broke them. His anger at sin in the people shows his likeness to God. Next, Moses destroyed the image by burning and grinding it to powder. He then mixed the powder with water and made the people drink it. When people hate sin in this manner, there is not much danger of their being involved in sin. We should develop a hatred for sin. Paul tells us to abhor that which is evil. (Rom. 12:9.) If we can learn to hate all that is evil and love all that is good, we will have the problem of right living solved. We learn to hate evil through a study of God's word, thus learning God's attitude toward evil. (Psalm 119:104)

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

"Neither be idolaters, as were some of them." (1 Cor. 10:7a)

1. The Evils of Idolatry. (1) The people broke a solemn covenant which they had made with Jehovah. They had agreed to obey the voice and keep the covenant of Jehovah (Ex. 19:5), and Jehovah had spoken the law against idolatry in their hearing. When they made the golden calf and worshipped it, they broke this solemn covenant. When we today love something more than we love God, we break our agreement with Him to put Him first in our hearts and lives. (2) Idolatry is degrading and debasing in its effects upon humanity. People tend to partake of the nature of that which they worship. People who worship licentious gods become licentious in their lives; people who worship Jehovah sincerely tend to be holy. The animal worship of the Egyptians is known to have been degrading in its nature. "In Egypt, the dancers appear to have been professionals of a degraded class, and the dancing itself to have been always sensual and indecent.... We must suspect that it was this sort of dancing in which

the Israelites were engaged, whence the terrible anger of Moses.” (Pulpit Commentary.) (3) Idolatry robs God of the glory which rightly belongs to Him. *“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.... For that they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.”* (Rom. 1:22,25.)

2. Some Present Day Forms of Idolatry. (1) Paul repeatedly says that covetousness is idolatry. (Col. 3:5.) People who love their money more than they love the Lord are guilty of idolatry. Wealth in all its forms is alluring and deceptive. People think they are masters of their fortunes when they are slaves and are giving their wealth the love and services which rightly belongs to Jehovah. (2) Paul predicted that the time would come when men would be lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. (2 Tim. 3,4.) That which we love supremely is our god. Paul’s prediction has come true in our generation, for there are many people who love pleasure more than they love God, and they show it by giving more money, time, and energy to pursuing pleasure than they spend in serving and worshipping God. (3) Others make their business, or their home, or their family their god. Whenever we allow these things to have first place in our hearts and lives, they become our gods and to that extent we are idolaters. (4) Some today worship idols, images of Christ, Mary, and many saints. They contend that they only use these images to represent the beings back of them. That is the only use anyone ever made of an image. But the making of such images is forbidden, and bowing ourselves down to them is strictly forbidden. (Ex. 20:4-6.)

3. Consequences of Idolatry. We have learned already that idolatry tends to degrade humanity in that it brings one down to the level of the one he worships. However, the final consequence of idolatry in the world to come is far worse. Paul says the idolater has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Eph. 5:5.) It is a work of the flesh and those who practice such shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:20.) Idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Rev. 21:8.) Idolaters and fornicators are said to be outside the city prepared for the faithful. (Rev. 22:15)

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 32:1-8, 30, 35.

1. The Making of the Calf (Ex. 32:1-4)

Moses delayed to come down from the mount. After the Lord came down upon Sinai and spoke to the people, they were so frightened that they did not wish to hear the voice of Jehovah any more, lest they should die. So they asked that Moses commune with Jehovah and relay His messages to them. *“Go near and hear all that Jehovah our God shall say: and speak unto us all that Jehovah our God shall speak unto you; and we will hear it, and do it.”* (Deut. 5:27.) Then Moses went back to the mountain to commune with Jehovah. It was at this time that he was away forty days and nights getting the two tables of stone and further instructions contained in Exodus 21 through 31.

Up, make us gods, which shall go before us. This is the language of the people to Aaron when they had grown weary waiting for Moses to return. Stephen says they had turned back in their hearts to Egypt and suggests that this is what accounts for their request for gods, intending that these gods should take them back to Egypt. (Acts 7:39,40.) And since they made a calf after the manner of Egyptian gods it is possible that they had such thoughts in their minds. The suggestion is also made in our text that they wanted gods made because they did not know what had become of Moses.

Jehovah had made such demonstrations of power on Sinai that the people may have thought him destroyed or taken away to be with God. Ignorant, superstitious, slave people could well imagine many things which would seem ridiculous to us.

Break off the golden rings. When the people asked Aaron to make gods to go before them, he told them to bring their jewellery. This is the jewelery they asked of the Egyptians the day before they left Egypt. (Ex. 12:35,36.) One commentator thinks that Aaron did not wish to make the gods, so when the people demanded he countered with the proposition that he would make them if they would part with their newly acquired jewelery, thinking they would not do so. This seems a little farfetched. We are told that both men and women wore rings as ornaments, hence enough to make the image. Since they acquired this jewelery through the favor which God gave them in the eyes of the Egyptians, they should have refrained from using it to dishonor God. But do we not all use blessings we get through the grace of God to dishonor Him? When we spend our money for sinful pleasures, we use that which God gives us in ways which dishonor Him.

All the people broke off the golden rings. The men and the women, the sons and daughters are mentioned as giving their rings. We have no idea how large the calf was, so do not know how much gold was required. Some have suggested that the calf was not made of solid metal; either it was mixed with alloy, or was made of wood and covered with gold. This last opinion seems not well founded. At any rate, the people did not use all their jewelery to make the calf, for they had plenty left to make the coverings of the furniture of the tabernacle. (Ex. 35:21ff.)

Fashioned it with a graving tool. This differs greatly from Aaron's story as to how the calf came into existence. Aaron said, "I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." (Ex. 32:24.) This shows how men will stretch the truth in order to justify themselves and escape the blame for something wrong which they have done. And for this sin Moses later says that Jehovah was very angry with Aaron, so angry that He would have destroyed him, but Moses prayed for him and Jehovah spared him. (Deut. 9:20.)

Made it a molten calf. This statement seems to suggest that the calf was all metal instead of being wood covered with gold as some have suggested. The terms used to describe the making of the calf are not sufficiently clear for us to know just how it was done.

These are your gods. This is the language of the men who made the calf, including Aaron; the language was directed to the people of Israel. Why was the idol made in the shape of a calf? Some think the calf was selected because the Egyptians worshipped such, but the people had seen the Egyptian gods so thoroughly discredited so recently that we can hardly believe they would wish to worship them. And if they had wished to fashion their worship after the Egyptians, they would have used live bulls like the Egyptians did. No one says the Egyptians worshipped images of bulls, but the living animals. One author suggests that the calf was selected because such images were worshipped by the ancestors of Abraham, and these are the gods which Joshua warned the people not to worship when they went into the land of Canaan. (Josh. 24:2,3,14,15)

2. Worshipping the Calf (Ex. 32:5,6)

He built an altar before it. How far Aaron went along with the people in this sin is difficult to determine. How much pressure the people brought upon him to do what he did we can never know. He is not to be excused on account of the pressure regardless of how great it was, but there are things which follow that will show that he did not intend that the people should forsake Jehovah entirely.

Tomorrow shall be a feast to Jehovah. This indicates that Aaron did not intend that the worship of this calf should take the place of the worship of Jehovah. Surely he intended that the people should worship Jehovah through, by the aid of, this image. And people who use images today say they do not consider the image a god, but only an aid in worshipping the true God. That is what Aaron had in mind, but his act was viewed by Jehovah as a great sin. If some object to this view of the matter and say that Aaron said “*these are thy gods, O Israel,*” they should remember that such language is often used when only a symbol or representation is meant. Jesus said, “*This is my body,*” when talking of the bread of the supper. No one thinks it was actually His literal flesh. Again, Paul says the rock that followed the Israelites was Christ. Surely he does not mean to say the literal rock was Christ; it was a symbol or representation of Christ. (1 Cor. 10:4.) So Aaron intended that the people should worship Jehovah, but that they should use the calf as an aid to that worship.

Offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings. This is further indication that Aaron did not intend for the people to forsake entirely the worship of Jehovah. These are two of the offerings which God required of the people. Though they were a part of the law later revealed to the people, they were a part of Jewish worship before. Jethro knew about burnt offerings. (Ex. 18:12.) These burnt offerings were wholly consumed by fire, but peace offerings were only partially consumed; the balance going to the priest who made the offering and the man offering the animal, which might be eaten by them. (Lev. 3:1ff.)

Sat down, to eat and drink. Being allowed to eat a part of the peace offerings, they sat down to a feast. This was common with all idolatrous people. Paul had trouble with the church at Corinth over the same matter. They viewed the Lord’s supper as a feast to God, so they were making an actual feast of it. And some were making gluttons and drunkards of themselves just as they had done formerly in their heathen feasts. It is well known that the Egyptians also had such feasts in which they went to excess in several ways.

And rose up to play. This play consisted of dancing in a sensual fashion. (Ex. 32:19.) Adam Clarke tells us that the same Hebrew word is used in Gen. 39:14 where Potiphar’s wife accused Joseph of immoral intentions. “This ‘play’ was scarcely of a harmless kind. The sensualism of idol-worship constantly led to sensuality; and the feasts upon idol-sacrifices terminated in profligate orgies of a nature which cannot be described.” (Pulpit Commentary.) In the King James version, we read that the people were naked during the dance. (Ex. 32:25.) The Pulpit Commentary says that the original Hebrew word used here has naked as its primary meaning, “so that there is no reason for changing the expression used in the Authorised Version.” If this reading be the correct one, we must conclude that the play, or dance, was of a most sensual nature. Nor is it unreasonable to suppose that the Israelites were at this time capable of such lascivious exhibition of sensual pleasure.

3. Jehovah Punishes Idolatry (Ex. 32:7,8,30,35)

Your people . . . have corrupted themselves. Notice that Jehovah calls the people of Israel “*your people,*” the people of Moses. Does He mean to disown them on account of their idolatry? In the latter part of this chapter and the first part of the next, Jehovah tells Moses that He will not accompany the people on their journey, but that He will send an angel. So we may conclude that the term “*your people*” is to be taken seriously. Jehovah charges that they have corrupted themselves. This was done in two ways. (1) They had practised idolatry. No doubt many of them went farther than Aaron in their conception of the calf and its worship, but even using the calf as an aid to the worship of Jehovah was a revolting corruption of the true worship. (2) They had practised immorality and indecency in connection with the worship of the holy God. This was as corrupting as any practice can possibly be,

hence the obvious truth of Jehovah's statement that the people had corrupted themselves.

They have turned aside quickly. Human nature has always been capable of such quick departures. Adam and Eve did not live long in the garden until they sinned against God. Solomon had not been king long until he had turned in his heart from Jehovah. Saul was a bashful young man when he came to the throne, but soon became a self-willed and headstrong rebel in the sight of God. The people who returned from Babylonian captivity had to be reproved by the prophets often to get them to remain faithful to God. Paul reproves the Galatians for being so soon removed from Him who called them in the grace of Christ unto another gospel. (Gal. 1:6.) No doubt each one of us can find at least a tendency in our own hearts and lives to turn back to worldly things after experiencing the grace of God in so many ways we cannot count them.

You have sinned a great sin. These are the words of Moses to the people. This is his estimate of their actions. Moses loved the people and was willing to be blotted out rather than see them perish, but still he could see their mistakes and judge them for what they really were. A level head and clear judgment is required to see the sin of people we love. The fact that Moses had a clear conception of their sin and the enormity of it, and yet loved them enough to be blotted out rather than see them perish, is an indication of his true greatness of character.

Peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin. Moses seems to have had a plan in mind which he does not reveal to the people. Three thousand men had been slain for this sin, but Moses feels that Jehovah will not be satisfied. And when he goes back to the mountain to Jehovah he is told that all who have sinned must bear the consequences. It was at this time that Moses asked the Lord to forgive the people or else blot him out of the book which God had written. What this book was is difficult to determine. Adam Clarke thinks it was a muster roll, or register, showing who were entitled to go to Canaan and the part they were to play in the land. Blotting men out of that book would mean that they would not be allowed to go there on account of their sin. So Moses prays God to forgive, or to allow the people to go on to Canaan in spite of this great sin they had committed.

And Jehovah smote the people. Perhaps this refers to the death of the three thousand mentioned in verse 28, as that is the extent of the punishment so far as we know. The Jews, in their writings, accounted for many severe judgments of later date by saying they were brought upon them on account of this sin of idolatry.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. All sin tends to debase and degrade humanity. Idolatry especially debases humanity because of the tendency of man to become like his idol, or the object of his worship.
2. This lesson should impress us with the fleetingness of religious impressions and resolutions. It should warn us to be careful lest we quickly drift away from our steadfastness of purpose to serve God all the days of our lives.
3. Each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts. (Jas. 1:14.) This lesson demonstrates the strength of the lusts within us and the danger of being drawn away by them quickly after soul-satisfying experiences in communion with God.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 12

THE GOLDEN CALF

1. What do you know of Aaron's character? _____

2. What do you know of the character of Moses? _____

3. How did Moses show his humility and lack of personal ambition? _____

4. How did Moses show his anger for the sin of the people? _____

5. Give and discuss three evils of idolatry. _____

6. What common sin does Paul call idolatry? _____

7. How can innocent pleasures become our idols? _____

8. Wherein is the sin of using images to aid us in worshiping God? _____

9. According to the Scripture, what is the consequence of idolatry? _____

10. Why did the people ask that Moses speak with the Lord for them? _____

11. What did the people request Aaron to do for them? _____

12. What does Stephen suggest as a reason for this request? _____

13. Where did the people get enough jewelry to make an image? _____

14. Did Aaron use all the jewelry the people had in making the calf? _____

15. From Aaron's experience, illustrate how men will stretch the truth to justify themselves. _____

-
16. Why was this image made in the likeness of a calf? _____
-
17. Do you think Aaron intended that the calf worship should take the place of the worship of Jehovah? Why? _____
-
18. What kind of offerings were made to Jehovah in connection with this calf worship? _____
-
19. What is the difference between a burnt offering and a peace offering? _____
-
20. Their eating a feast to Jehovah is similar to what New Testament incident? _____
-
21. What is meant by the people rising up to play? _____
-
22. What statement in the Authorized Version indicates licentiousness? _____
-
23. How did Jehovah indicate to Moses His rejection of the people? _____
-
24. In what two ways had the people corrupted themselves? _____
-
25. Give several instances of humanity turning quickly from Jehovah. _____
-
26. Can we find present-day illustrations of the same tendency in humanity? _____
-
27. In what words did Moses express his estimate of their sin? _____
-
28. How did Moses seek to atone for the sin of the people? _____
-
29. What was the immediate consequence of this sin? _____
-
30. What ultimate consequence is suggested in the intercession of Moses? _____
-

LESSON NUMBER 13

THE TABERNACLE SET UP

Ex. 40:1-11

INTRODUCTION

Moses gives the sum of the things which went into the building of the tabernacle. (Ex. 38:24ff.) According to the value set on the talent and shekel, the cost of the tabernacle was a little more than one million dollars. Adam Clarke says it amounted to 244,127 pounds sterling in English money. This does not take into account the fine cloth and skins which went into the making of the tent.

When we remember that the Israelites got all this gold and silver by asking the Egyptians to give it to them, we can realize what is meant when we read that God gave them favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. Not only did they get this material to build the tabernacle, but all the gold which went into the making of the golden calf. But since there were at least one million adults among the Israelites, they would not have to get much more than a dollar per head to have the amount needed to make these things.

Since the Jews were used for slave work, we would not expect any of them to be capable of doing such delicate work as we find in the tabernacle. So we read that God selected and inspired men to do the fine finishing work that was required in the tabernacle. A man named Bezalel was chosen to oversee the work. Of him God said, *“I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work all manner of workmanship.”* (Ex. 31:3-5.) Another man named Oholiab was appointed and inspired to work with him. Bezalel was of the tribe of Judah; Oholiab was of the tribe of Dan.

I. KEY SCRIPTURE

“Who serve to the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, see, said He, that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you in the mount.” (Heb. 8:5)

1. The Tabernacle Was Made According to a Pattern. When Moses was with Jehovah in Mount Sinai, he was shown a model, a pattern, in the likeness of which Moses was to build the tabernacle. Just what Moses actually saw we may not be able to determine. Some contend that he saw something real and tangible; others say that he was given a vision of what he was to build. Ezekiel was given a vision of a great temple much more complicated than the simple tabernacle. (Ezek. 40ff.) Regardless of what Moses saw, he was to build the tabernacle according to instructions from God and not according to his own ideas.

2. The Tabernacle Was a Shadow, or Type, of Heavenly Things. (Heb. 8:5.) Jehovah wanted the

tabernacle so constructed as to be a type of the church and of heaven. The holy place was a type of the church; the most holy place was a type of heaven. And the services of the tabernacle performed by the priests and the high priest were typical of the services we perform in the church today, and of the service which Jesus performs for us in heaven. The furniture in the holy place had its typical meaning. In all these ways the Lord was preparing His people for the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the church and the worship to be conducted in it. This was one way in which the law served as a tutor to bring the world to Christ. (Gal. 3:24,25.)

3. The Necessity for Making the Tabernacle According to the Pattern. Moses could never have made a tabernacle according to his own ideas which would have served as a type of the heavenly things, hence the necessity for following the pattern which God showed him in the mount. Man's thoughts and ideas are not those of God, for God's thoughts are higher than man's as much as the heavens are above the earth. (Isa. 55.) So if the tabernacle served its ultimate purpose it had to be built according to the plan of God. In some way that plan was shown to Moses for him to follow.

4. This is Another Example of Doing Things by Faith. In order to do a thing by faith it is necessary to do it like God commands. It is said that Noah built the ark by faith (Heb. 11:7), and yet we read that he built it according to all that God commanded him. (Gen. 6:22; 7:5.) There is no other way to do a thing by faith. If we do contrary to the way God commands, we do not walk by faith. Faith comes by hearing God's word. (Rom. 10:17.) The individual who does not hear and heed God's word does not have faith, nor does he walk by faith. Many people claim to be saved by faith who flatly refuse to hear and heed what the Lord tells them to do to be saved. There can be no such thing as salvation by faith when people walk according to what seems right to them. "*There is a way which seems right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.*" (Prov. 14:12.) Had Moses been like some people of our day, he would have said he could not see any sense in making certain pieces of furniture for the tabernacle, so would have left them out. Or he would have said he thought some idea of his would work as well as that which God commanded, so he would have substituted his idea for that which God commanded. People today think sprinkling will do just as well as burying and raising people in baptism, so they substitute. In order to keep Moses from doing such as this, Jehovah strictly charged him to make all things according to the pattern showed him in the mount. However, he had no clearer instruction on this point than we have today. God has strictly forbidden us to add a word to His revelation or to take away a word. (Rev.22:18,19.) Those who make any changes do so at the peril of their souls for all eternity. We have no more right to deviate from the pattern than Moses had, and dire consequences are bound to follow if we do.

II. A COMMENTARY ON EXODUS 40:1-11

1. The Furniture of the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:1-5)

On the first day of the first month. When the people began building the tabernacle we have no way of knowing, but from this statement we conclude that they finished it within the first year after they left Egypt. They left on the fifteenth day of the first month (Ex. 12), and since they erected the tabernacle on the first day of the first month, we know that it was built within the year. This was a short period for the building of a tabernacle of such costly and curious workmanship, but we must remember that the whole multitude had little else to do and that all of them might have been organized and pressed into service.

Tabernacle of the tent of meeting. The tabernacle and the tent are two separate things and must be distinguished in our minds. The tabernacle was the small house which consisted of the holy place and the most holy place. The tent was a covering which was placed over the tabernacle. Later in this chapter we read, “*Moses reared up the tabernacle and he spread the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it.*” (Ex. 40:18,19.) It was called the tent of meeting because that is the place where Jehovah promised to meet Moses and the people. Important gatherings for the consideration of matters of interest were held before the door of the tent of meeting.

The ark of the testimony. This was to be placed in the tabernacle, in the most holy place. In Exodus 25 we find a minute description of this ark. It was made of acacia wood, which is said to have been the most durable wood known to represent the immortality and eternity of Jehovah. This ark was two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and the same in height. The wood was covered with gold both inside and outside. It was called the ark of the testimony because the tables of the testimony were kept in it. These were the two tables on which the ten commandments were written by the finger of God. Above this ark and at either end was a cherub, and between these cherubim was the mercy-seat; in fact the lid of the ark was the mercy-seat. It was above this mercy-seat that God’s presence was to be manifested, and it was there that God promised to meet and commune with Moses. (Ex. 25:22.) A pot of manna was put in the ark to be preserved for future generations that they might know that God fed His people from heaven for a period of forty years. And at a later date Aaron’s rod budded as proof that God had chosen him in preference to certain other men, and that rod was placed in the ark. (Num. 17:1-10.)

You shall screen the ark with the veil. This is the veil which separated the holy place from the most holy place. We know but little about the veil. It was made of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cherubim worked on it. This was the veil in the temple that was rent in two pieces when Jesus died. (Matt. 27:51.)

You shall bring the table. This was the table which held the showbread which none but the priests were allowed to eat, and which must be replaced every Sabbath with fresh loaves. This was made of acacia wood which was covered with pure gold. It was two cubits long, one cubit wide, and one and a half cubits high. All these pieces of furniture were to be carried with staves covered with pure gold. All the dishes used in connection with this table were made of pure gold also. (Ex. 25:23ff.)

You shall bring in the candlestick. This candlestick was of beaten gold and all in one piece. There were seven lights, three on either side of the center light. And there were a number of cups and snuffers and snuff dishes to be used in connection with the service of this candlestick and they were all made of pure gold. This piece of furniture was to furnish all the light which the priests had in the holy place. They were to keep these lights burning all the time, and were to trim and replenish the lamps both morning and evening. This seems to be typical of the Bible which is the only light we have in the church today; and the trimming of the lights may suggest our reading and meditating upon the teaching of the Bible daily. We are told that the Roman leader, Titus, after the destruction of Jerusalem, took these vessels to Rome to display during his triumphal entry into the city. The Jews held to the types and refused to believe in him who was prefigured by these types, and they were destroyed for their unbelief and rebellion.

You shall set the golden altar for incense. This altar was to be made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. The top of it was to be one cubit square and it was two cubits high. Moses said this was

to be placed before the ark of testimony with only the veil between them. The writer of Hebrews says this altar of incense was in the most holy place with the ark of the testimony. (Heb. 9:3,4.) Some account for this by the fact that when the high priest went into the most holy place he took the altar of incense with him. From Ex. 30:7 we learn that sweet incense was to be burnt every morning on this altar, but the most holy place was to be entered only once a year, so we know that it was usually in the holy place where the priests were allowed to go daily.

Put the screen of the door to the tabernacle. This refers to the door to the holy place, the entrance. No permanent door was made for the holy place: it was only a screen which might be moved easily. The tent which covered the tabernacle was enough to protect the entrance, so only a screen was necessary to shut out the vision of the curious.

2. The Furniture of the Court (Ex. 40:6-8)

You shall set the altar of burnt offerings. This was to be placed between the entrance to the court around the tabernacle and the laver; it was the first thing to be seen upon entering the court on the east side. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with brass. This altar was simply a box five cubits square and three cubits high with a grating over the top. The Jews say that when it was to remain in one place for any length of time, it was filled with earth. Priests were not to use an altar which was approached by steps (Ex. 20:26), so it is probable that they made a ramp of earth on the south side of this altar on which they stood to make their offerings. On this altar was burnt all the offerings of the Jews except those which were to be carried and burnt without the gate. (Heb. 13:11.) From this altar the priests were to get the fire with which they burnt their incense: all who used strange fire, fire from any other place, were punished. (Lev. 10)

And you shall set the laver. This piece was between the altar of burnt offerings and the door of the holy place. Nothing is known of the size of the laver, but it was made of mirrors given by the women who ministered at the door of the tent of meeting. (Ex.38:8.) The laver was kept filled with water in which Aaron and his sons were to wash before they were allowed to enter the service of the tabernacle. Some have denied that the bodies of these men were washed, but their denial rests upon no good foundation. (Lev. 8:6; Ex. 29:4.) As these priests were not allowed to minister in the holy place without being washed with water, so we are not allowed today to minister as priests in the holy place, the church, without having our bodies washed with pure water and our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. (Heb. 10:22.) There were times when the priests were to wash only their hands and feet in the laver that they might perform certain works. (Ex.30:17-21.) However, in the services of consecration when they were entering upon their life of service in the tabernacle, they were to be washed in the laver. (Ex. 40:12)

You shall set up the court round about. This court around the tabernacle was one hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide; it was a wall five cubits high. For a detailed description of how this wall was made see Ex. 27:9-19. The court was accessible to all Israelites, but no Gentile was allowed to go inside. In later temples a Gentile court was added, but there was a wall between the courts which had to be respected. It was this wall between the court of the Jews and the court of the Gentiles to which Paul referred as the "*middle wall of partition*" which had been done away in Christ, so that there is no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile in Christ. (Eph. 2: 14ff.)

3. Sanctifying the Tabernacle and Furniture (Ex. 40:9-11)

You shall take the anointing oil. This was not mere olive oil which was used for many purposes in Palestine. This holy anointing oil was a special preparation made by directions given by Jehovah. *“Take also the chief spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty, and of cassia five hundred, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin; and you shall make it a holy anointing oil, a perfume compounded after the art of the perfumer: it shall be a holy anointing oil.”* (Ex. 30:23-25.)

Anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein. We do not know all the details of this anointing service. However, in Lev. 8:6-13 we have some details given. In connection with the anointing of the altar it is said that the anointing oil was sprinkled seven times upon the altar and all its vessels. So we may reasonably conclude that the other pieces of furniture were sprinkled seven times when they were anointed. Being simply a ceremony there was no need for covering the pieces with the anointing oil.

And it shall be holy. For a thing to be holy it had to be separated to the use of Jehovah by a ceremony prescribed by the Lord. When the holy anointing oil was put on these pieces of furniture and vessels used in connection with the worship of God, they were accepted by Jehovah as fit to be used in worship offered to Him. In one verse we read that when the holy anointing oil was put on a piece of furniture it was holy, while in another verse we read that it was sanctified when the anointing oil was put upon it. That which was sanctified was holy.

It is interesting to notice that Jehovah did not allow the Jews to make and use this anointing oil for their personal use. *“Upon the flesh of man shall it not be poured, neither shall you make any like it, according to the composition thereof: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. Whosoever compounds any like it, or whosoever puts any of it upon a stranger, he shall be cut off from his people.”* (Ex. 30:32f.) If the Lord was so careful about the use of that which was holy, and if He was so careful that His anointing oil be properly compounded without adulteration, surely He is no less careful that His gospel, His saving power today, be preserved pure without human mixture and be used for the accomplishments of His holy purposes.

III. SOME APPLICATIONS

1. The tabernacle was for a dwelling place of God, where His people might have access to Him. So the church is God’s dwelling place today; it is that institution where we may meet and commune with Jehovah.
2. As the tabernacle was built according to the pattern, so the church today is to be built and kept functioning in harmony with the divine pattern. To deviate from that pattern is to reject the authority of Jesus Christ and to turn from God.
3. As Moses could never have built a tabernacle to please God by following his own wisdom, so no man today can build a church which will be acceptable to God unless he follows the pattern set by the apostles in building churches under the direction of the Holy Spirit. All who reject the pattern set by the apostles and build churches after their own wisdom are building on the sand and will see their work destroyed.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 13

THE TABERNACLE SET UP

1. How did Moses know how to build the tabernacle? _____

2. Do you know what this pattern was? _____

3. Of what was the tabernacle a type? _____

4. Why did the Lord want the tabernacle to be a type of the church and heaven? _____

5. Why was it necessary for Moses to follow the pattern instead of his own ideas? _____

6. Why is this an example of doing things by faith? _____

7. How do people today substitute their ideas for what God has commanded? _____

8. How long had the people been out of Egypt when the tabernacle was set up? _____

9. How could such a complicated building be built in less than a year? _____

10. Describe the ark of the testimony, and why was it so called? _____

11. What was kept in this ark? _____

12. What do you know of the veil and its location? _____

13. What do you know of the table of showbread and its use? _____

14. Describe the candlestick. Of what was it made and for what used? _____

15. Of what in the church is the candlestick typical? _____

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16. What do you know of the altar of incense and its use? _____
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17. What do you know of the location of this piece of furniture? _____
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18. What was used for a door to the holy place? _____
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19. Describe the altar of burn offerings. _____
-
20. For what was this altar used? _____
-
21. What did Jehovah forbid as a part of this altar? _____
-
22. What do you know of the size and shape of the laver? _____
-
23. Of what was the laver made? And where did they get such material? _____
-
24. For what was the laver used? _____
-
25. Of what is the laver typical? And why do you think so? _____
-
26. Give the dimensions of the outer court. _____
-
27. Who were not allowed in this court? _____
-
28. What do you know of the court of the Gentiles? And the middle wall of partition? _____
-
29. Of what was the holy anointing oil compounded? _____
-
30. What do you know of the ceremony of anointing the tabernacle? _____
-
31. What words are used to describe the condition of the tabernacle and its furniture after this ceremony of anointing? _____
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32. What restriction was placed upon this holy anointing oil? And what lesson does this suggest to you? _____
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