

MOSES - A MAN CALLED MOSES
TEXT: EXODUS

INTRODUCTION. No nation can boast greater national heroes than the Hebrew people. For every great leader of another country Israel can show you a Hebrew counterpart of relatively equal stature. Or, greater. For every Washington there is an Abraham; for every Caesar there is a Joshua; for every Homer there is an Isaiah; for every Eisenhower, a David; for every MacArthur, a Maccabee; for every Joan of Ark, a Deborah; for every Churchill, a Joseph; for every Spurgeon, a Jeremiah. We could go on and on, but there is one Hebrew name that must always rank near the top in any number of categories: A Man Called Moses.

At every pivotal point in the Old Testament, God had a man to stand in the gap (and sometimes a woman) - either between God Himself and His chosen people - or between His chosen people and the forces of evil (the evil one). That person was called or sent by the Lord to move His covenant forward. He had called Abraham to leave the Ur of the Chaldees and go to a Promised Land. He entered a covenant with Abraham that was the most far-reaching covenant ever made until Jesus wrote the New Covenant with His own blood. Key figures in advancing the Abrahamic Covenant were Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The Lord promised Abraham the land of Canaan to his descendants, but only after they had lived in another country 400 years. After Joseph had risen to great power in Egypt he secured the fertile land of Goshen for his people. There were only seventy people in Jacob's family when they settled in the land of Goshen, but after 430 years they were a nation of some two million people.

In thinking of the man called Moses, just picture an eighty year old man straight from the desert of Midian being shown into the presence of the most powerful man in the world. Just imagine anyone coming in from the fields of Egypt, or from some foreign country, and getting an audience with the mighty Pharaoh! We can be sure that God sent Moses to stand before Pharaoh, He would be sure he would be shown into his presence. Did Pharaoh know that this eighty year old man was once an infant found by the daughter of an earlier Pharaoh floating in a basket near where she was bathing? If he had known that he may also have known that he was wanted for the murder of representative of an earlier king of Egypt. There one thing of which we can be sure: If God sent him to stand before Pharaoh, He would be sure he gained an audience with him.

God had promised Abraham that his descendants would go into another country and stay there for 400 years, and after that He would bring them back to possess the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. There were seventy descendants of Abraham living in the midst of Canaanite nations who could have wiped them out, had the Lord not been protecting them. They were prospering, so without war or famine why would they leave. They would not, so the Lord had to be sure that happened. But how? Do you remember A Man Called Joseph, the youth who had those disturbing dreams back when he was naive enough tell them to his ten older brothers, who rightly interpreted them to mean that they would someday bow down to him. Their intense hatred for the favored son of Jacob led them to sell him to a caravan of Midianites, who in turn, sold him to a man named Potiphar. If you find it hard to believe that God would set it up so that young Joseph would be the target of his brother's hatred just so He could get into Egypt, just remember that He would someday send His only begotten Son into a world that would crucify Him. That is not the way He normally works, but He will work to accomplish His purpose.

Little did those ten older brothers realize that one day they would indeed be bowing before a man in Egypt and hear him say, "I am Joseph." He would be the second most powerful man in the world at that moment. However, when we think of a youth who was targeted for murder by nine of his older brothers - Reuben had planned to rescue him. If Reuben had not objected Joseph would have been dead when his brothers sat down to eat. If the Midianite caravan had not arrived when it did, Joseph would have been killed as soon as those nine brothers finished their meal. Accident? Coincidence? Or the hand of God? The nine other brothers sold him to a caravan of Midianites, who in turn, sold him to Potiphar, a powerful servant of Pharaoh in Egypt. Then we recall his years in an Egyptian prison because of a lie told by the conniving wife of Potiphar. Once again, God took something evil and used it for His purpose.

What person who has read the story of Joseph has not wondered how the Lord could have put the young Joseph through such suffering and indignity. How cold it seem to have caused all of that just to get His man in power in Egypt in order to fulfill the promise to Abraham that his descendants would possess the Land of Canaan, but only after they had lived in another country for 400 years. Well, let me ask you another question: How could He have

sent His only begotten Son into such a cruel world and watch men hate Him, plot against Him, and finally crucify Him on a cruel Roman Cross? But, thank God for doing that for you and for me!

Joseph was God's servant, the man He used to accomplish His purpose for His chosen people. Joseph secured for his father, his brothers, and their families the ideal place for them to live, prosper, and grow into a nation He would use, after 430 years to conquer the Promised Land. That 430 year period was the incubation period He allowed for the children of Israel to grow into a nation that would have the power to conquer the land. In this message, A Man Called Moses, I would like for us to begin with a look at the first forty years of his life, from his birth to his flight to Midian.

I. CONSIDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN EGYPT AT THE TIME (Ex. 1:1-2:14).

A. A New Pharaoh Came to Power Who Did not Know Joseph (Ex.1:1-8).

1. He did not know of the covenant made with Joseph by an earlier Pharaoh. In the first place, this new Pharaoh could not have known Joseph personally because he had been dead for some 300 years. Unless he was well informed about Egypt's history he would not have known about the young Hebrew slave whose brothers had sold him to a Midianite-Ishmaelite caravan, who in turn had sold him to a man named Potiphar in Egypt. This young man had been such an outstanding and responsible man that Potiphar put him in charge of all his other slaves and over his entire house and all his business. Potiphar's wife made a play for this handsome, well-built slave, and when he fled from the house she told her husband that Joseph had tried to force himself on her. Joseph was thrown into prison, where, once again, the Lord blessed him and delivered him when he interpreted dreams for Pharaoh.

The Lord revealed to Joseph that Pharaoh's dreams meant there would be seven years of abundant harvests, followed by an intense and far reaching famine. Pharaoh named Joseph his number one officer and placed him over all Egypt. When the famine came, Egypt was ready because Joseph had the surplus grain stored in buildings that already existed for that purpose or in new buildings built to store the abundant harvest. Among Joseph's visitors who came to buy grain were his ten older brothers, the very brothers who had sold him into slavery. He recognized them but they didn't know Joseph. Before long, Joseph, with the approval of the Pharaoh, moved his father and the entire family into the fertile land of Goshen, where they grew from seventy in number to possibly two million people before a new Pharaoh came to power who knew nothing of the agreement that earlier Pharaoh had made with Joseph to settle his people in the land of Goshen.

2. Pharaoh feared the Israelites who were living in Goshen. God has blessed them and they continued to prosper and grow in number. In the first place, this Pharaoh could not have known Joseph because he had been dead for 400 years. However, his main problem was that when he came to power in Egypt and saw this great nation of slaves in the land of Goshen he realized that, should they rebel against Egypt, or join a foreign power in an attack on Egypt, they might help them defeat Egypt. Pharaoh, fearing they might join an enemy and help defeat Egypt, launched a particularly harsh form of slavery on the Israelites. It was so intense that the people of finally cried out to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel), and He chose Moses to deliver His people from bondage in Egypt so that they might move on to Canaan, the land of promise.

B. Pharaoh Came up with a Plan to Halt the Growth of the Israelites (1:9-22).

1. The Israelites were forced into slave labor. "They built Pithom and Rameses as supply cities for Pharaoh" (1:11). Slaves were trained in various arts and crafts, according to my longtime friend, Dr. Sam Gore, who was Head of the Art Department at Mississippi College decades. Dr. Gore and I had a lengthy conversation about Francis Schaeffer's research on the arts and crafts in Egypt at this time. They were trained to do some amazing things. My wife and I took our son Mark to see the Rameses Exhibit in Memphis a number of years ago, and they had jewelry on display that, according to the notes, would challenge modern day jewelers. Of course, if it took one slave years to make some piece for the Pharaoh or one of his chief officials, what difference did it make to them?

2. "They worked the Israelites ruthlessly" (Ex 1:13).

“But the more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and spread so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. They worked the Israelites ruthlessly and made their lives bitter with difficult labor in brick and mortar and in all kinds of fieldwork. They ruthlessly imposed all this work on them” (Ex 1:12-14)

The slavery to which this new Pharaoh subjected to Israelites to was a particularly cruel type of slavery. Well, you may ask, isn't all forms of slavery cruel? To me, it would definitely be cruel, but there was more to this slavery than usual. The purpose was to get all they could out of the Hebrews, and to work many of the Hebrew men to death! They wanted to reduce their numbers and they could do that in two ways: (1) work men until they could go no further, and (2) kill off all the male babies born among the Hebrews.

3. The more they oppressed them the more their numbers grew. This must have been frustrating to the slave drivers and Pharaoh's officials. Some may well have been killed in some of the building projects of which we may read, but the results of their labor may still be observed today. How, for example could they build pyramids with no mortar, and how could they have hewn those monstrous stones so that they would fit when dropped into place? Movies, like The Ten Commandments portray tremendous numbers of Hebrew men pulling one stone, moving an inch or two at a time toward a pyramid.

4. Pharaoh ordered mid-wives to kill all male babies (1:15ff). How can women, many with the support and encouragement of a baby's father, have killed millions of babies in America through abortion? Some report that more than 55 million babies have been murdered (did I say murdered? I think I did). Those babies were intentionally killed in what is supposed to be the safest place on earth for the unborn baby, the mother's womb. What a miracle place that is, and some do not hesitate to invade that sacred place and kill the baby.

In Egypt, they had their own method: as soon as the baby was born the midwives were supposed to kill the baby. Those mid-wives feared God more than Pharaoh (Ex. 1:17). When the population continued to increase Pharaoh stepped up his plan to have the male babies killed.

5. God protected the mid-wives when they disobeyed Pharaoh (1:19-22). “The midwives said to Pharaoh, “The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before a midwife can get to them.”

“So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied and became very numerous. 21 Since the midwives feared God, He gave them families. (22) Pharaoh then commanded all his people: “You must throw every son born to the Hebrews into the Nile, but let every daughter live.” (Ex 1:19-22, HCSB)

Pharaoh intensified his effort to have all the male babies destroyed. The mid-wives had avoided killing the male babies and they had answered Pharaoh's questions. Now, Pharaoh gave them a new command. Even if the baby is born before you arrive you must throw him into the Nile River. Surely, no infant could survive that.

II. THE LORD SAVED A BABY FOR A SPECIAL PURPOSE (Ex. 2:1-14).

A. The Lord Chose an Infant to Save His Chosen People (2:1-4).

1. A child was born. All right, children were being born - but one particular child was born, a baby boy. His mother, who was from the tribe of Levi, hid her son for three months. She knew well the order to throw all male babies into the Nile River where critters there would eat the flesh from the babies. How horrible, we protest - but is that any more horrible that taking a baby who is born alive after a botched abortion and setting it aside to starve to death - or sticking a sharp instrument into his brain to be sure he is dead? Killing babies is so shocking to me that I hardly know how to express my feelings about it.

Just remember that the Israelites were experiencing about the most vicious attacks Satan could contrive. The people were going through about the vilest form of slavery imaginable and the people cried out to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for help. And God sent a baby! Of course, there would be another time when the nation of Israel was being severely oppressed and they cried out to the Lord for help, even though many of the religious leaders were more concerned about their position than the Covenant promise God had made with Abraham and

David - the Abrahamic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant. What did God do? He sent a Baby! He sent a miracle Baby, born to a virgin! Moses grew up and God, Yahweh of the burning bush, gave to Moses a system of worship that pointed to the birth of the Promised One in a stable in Bethlehem. Moses would be the one God would use to answer the prayers of the Israelites, and they were going to get a lot more than they had prayed for while in Egypt.

2. His mother hid him in a papyrus basket and placed him among reeds in the Nile. She knew where the daughter of Pharaoh bathed, with entourage of maids. The mother placed her young daughter, Miriam, to watch the baby. She, no doubt, realized the gravity of the situation and watched faithfully.

B. Pharaoh's Daughter Discovered the Baby (2:5-10).

"Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe at the Nile while her servant girls walked along the riverbank. Seeing the basket among the reeds, she sent her slave girl to get it. (6) When she opened it, she saw the child—a little boy, crying. She felt sorry for him and said, "This is one of the Hebrew boys."

(7) Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Should I go and call a woman from the Hebrews to nurse the boy for you?"

(8) "Go," Pharaoh's daughter told her. So the girl went and called the boy's mother. (9) Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages." So the woman took the boy and nursed him. (10) When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water." (Ex 2:5-10, HCSB)

Reading the story from the Book of Exodus provides us with a brief account of what happened when Moses was discovered in the basket and, at the direction of Pharaoh's daughter, her maids retrieved the basket for her. She knew it was "one of the Hebrew boys." Just think of her options. She might have thrown the infant back into the Nile. She might have had him killed and then thrown him into the river.

C. The Baby's Sister Came to Pharaoh's Daughter with a Suggestion (2:7).

His sister, Miriam, ran to the daughter of the most powerful man in the world at the time, and asked, if she wanted her to find a Hebrew mother to nurse the infant. The suggestion pleased Pharaoh's daughter and she told her to find a Hebrew mother to take care of the baby. She did. She, of course, went to her mother Jochebed, who agreed to nurse the infant. I would be interesting to know

more about this person and, while there is little information, the Holman Bible Dictionary has this note:

JOCHEBED (jahk' eh buhd) Personal name meaning, Yahweh's glory. In Exodus 6:20, the wife of Amram and the mother of Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. She was a member of the tribe of Levi. Her name includes the divine name Yahweh, evidence that the name Yahweh was known before the time of Moses. [—Holman Bible Dictionary - HBD after this]

D. Moses Grew up in Pharaoh's Court.

1. Jochebed took Moses to Pharaoh's daughter when he was weaned. Samuel's mother Hannah, took him to Eli the priest to give him to the Lord when he was old enough to both learn and communicate with others. He may have been five years old at the time. We are, however, talking about two very different cultures, and two different times.

2. Pharaoh's daughter named him Moses because she drew him out of the water. Did Pharaoh's daughter name him as soon as she looked into the basket and saw that he was an infant, or did she name him after Jochebed returned him to her? Sadly, there have been some professing Christians who have waged a war against the Word of God for a long time, dating back to possibly the seventeenth century in Germany when "higher critics" began claiming, and writing that many of the people mentioned in the Old Testament never actually lived, and certainly not as early as the Bible claims. They insisted, for example, that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego were not historical figures, but the creation of story tellers at a later date who sought to motivate the Israelites to remain faithful to the Mosaic Law.

Before falling for that lie, let me encourage you to order a copy of Dr. Bill Cooper's book, *The Authenticity of the Book of Daniel*, and read about the cuneiform tablet from that period which records the rental contract between Abednego, his son, and his grandson for a house owned by a Persian woman which they rented for a slave who would prepare 12 meals a day, among other things. Dr. Cooper and I have been in almost daily contact for a number of years, thanks to the Internet. We cover everything from serious biblical issues to trivial issues, like the difference between my iced tea with lemon and his cup of tea which he eats with biscuits (which, by the way, are not the kind of biscuits my mother used to make). We call them cookies, but I would not want either in my tea! Dr. Cooper has found in his research that Daniel and his three friends were not simply the figment of someone's imagination. He also points out that Abednego was no eunuch, not if he had a son and grandson.

Bob Cornuke and Larry Williams are explorers who found a way to get to Mt. Sinai. Bob Cornuke took his Bible and followed the account of the Exodus in order to find the way from the Red Sea across the desert to Mt. Sinai. Once, when they were lost they saw some Bedouin Arabs and asked them how to get to Mt. Sinai. They could not speak English, but when they heard Mt. Sinai, they began pointing and saying, "Moshee, Moshee!" Moses was a real person, living at a real time, in a real place. And he is just getting started here.

3. Moses grew up with all the advantages Pharaoh's grandson might expect. Most of us who are familiar with this story, probably have questions we would like to have answered. One question I have wondered about is, "How old Moses was when Jochebed took him to the daughter of Pharaoh?" He would have needed attention and supervision, but he would not have needed the attention required for an infant. After growing up with other royal children and receiving the most advanced education in the world at the time, he was well aware of the fact that he was a Hebrew. We just do not know when he came to know that.

Moses had an opportunity for the best education offered anywhere in the world. When my wife and I took our son Mark to see the Rameses Exhibit in Memphis, Tennessee a number of years ago, we were amazed to see what those Egyptian were able to do in that ancient time. They designed and built the pyramids, using Hebrew labor and their own ingenuity to shape huge stones so that they would fit together without mortar. I read somewhere that the Egyptian physicians actually diagnosed brain tumors and surgically removed some of them, with about a fifty per cent success rate.

Not only did he receive the best education available in the world at the time, he would have received the best military training available. He probably practiced with the weapons of war as did other youth of his day. He would have learned to use the sword, throw a spear, and shoot arrows at targets. He would have learned hand to hand combat as well as battle strategies and tactics.

III. MOSES FLED TO MIDIAN AFTER KILLING AN EGYPTIAN OFFICIAL (2:11-25).

A. He Became the Enemy of Pharaoh When He Defended an Israelite (2:11-14).

Moses lived in Midian while the stage was being set for the deliverance of his people. There was a major turning point in his life when he was about forty years of age:

(11) Years later, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his own people and observed their forced labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. (12) Looking all around and seeing no one, he struck the Egyptian dead and hid him in the sand. (13) The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you attacking your neighbor?"

(14) "Who made you a leader and judge over us?" the man replied. "Are you planning to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?"

"Then Moses became afraid and thought: What I did is certainly known. (15) When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian, and sat down by a well." (Ex 2:11-15, HCSB)

The Bible Knowledge Commentary, OT, (after this, BKC) offers the suggestion that “The events described in these verses took place 40 years after Moses’ birth (cf. Acts 7:23); the year was about 1485 B.C. in the reign of Hatshepsut (see “Historical Background” in the Introduction). By this time Moses was highly educated (Acts 7:22) and probably spoke fluently in both Egyptian and Hebrew.”

As I recall, my long time friend and brother in the Lord, Dr. Leon Hyatt, offers the probably date for the Exodus as 1447 B.C., and because I know something of the depth of Dr. Hyatt in Hebrew and the Old Testament Scriptures, I will accept his suggested date. In which case, the date for Moses flight from Egypt may well have been in 1487 B. C.

We are not told why Moses went out to see his own people, we are just told that he did. Did he remember something his mother had taught him when she was caring for him for the daughter of the Pharaoh? That is not likely because his mother might have been punished or put to death for teaching him that he was a part of the Hebrew nation. Furthermore, it is not likely that he would have remembered anything she had taught him at such an early age. However, he did know that these were his own people, and that they were being subjected to forced labor (vs. 11).

We are not given Moses’ age in this account, but Stephen said, “As he was approaching the age of 40, he decided to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel” (Acts 7:23, HCSB), and if this Hellenistic Jew knew that (1) Moses was 40 years old, and (2) that Moses knew that these people were his “brothers”, then the Jews in Palestine had probably been taught that. Interestingly, some speculate that Moses was moved by “Divine inspiration” to go check on his people” [Adam Clarke].

Clearly, he was identifying with his own people when he slew an Egyptian overseer who was abusing a Hebrew laborer. The next day, he saw two Hebrew men fighting and tried to play the role of a peace maker when he asked why one was attacking his neighbor and the man bluntly demanded to know who had given him authority over them, and then asked, “Are you planning to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Moses knew the word was out and it would soon be known to the Egyptian authorities. Why, however, was he afraid and why did he flee? Was he not a part of the royal family? He was, but he had clearly identified himself with the Hebrew slave and that apparently made him an enemy of the Pharaoh. What was there to do but flee?

To summarize, we have seen:

1. The birth of Moses.
2. The rescue of Moses.
3. The training of Moses.
4. The courage of Moses.

And now we shall see:

5. The flight of Moses.
6. The Shepherd life of Moses.
7. The call of Moses.

B. He Fled to Midian.

1. We can be sure his was an all out flight. However, did he set out to find and settle in Midian, or did he simply run until he found a place where he might hide from Pharaoh? He could not fight the mighty armies of Egypt. No, could he escape them indefinitely. His only hope was in flight to some country where the Egyptians would not be likely to follow. He had declared himself for a Hebrew slave, which made him the enemy of Pharaoh, a fugitive who knew he would die a miserable death if arrested and taken back to stand before Pharaoh. This would not be forgiven. You and I may question that, but Moses knew his grandfather, the court, and the mind of the king a little better than you and I. Knowing what he did, Moses did not head for a city in Egypt, he fled to Midian - but where was Midian? It was a distant land, the desert country we know today - or know about - as Saudi Arabia. It was also the land of Sinai.

2. Moses escaped to Midian, where he protected the daughters of the priest of Midian.

When I was growing up I would hear someone discuss a man who had escaped one problem and found himself in a worse problem. The person telling the story would say, “He jumped out of the frying pan into the fire.” In this case, Moses may well have jumped out of the fire into the frying pan! He had escaped certain death in Egypt for a fight with a group of Midianite shepherds.

“When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian, and sat down by a well.

(16) Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. (17) Then some shepherds arrived and drove them away, but Moses came to their rescue and watered their flock. (18) When they returned to their father Reuel he asked, “Why have you come back so quickly today?”

(19) They answered, “An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock.”

(20) “So where is he?” he asked his daughters. “Why then did you leave the man behind? Invite him to eat dinner.”

(21) Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses [in marriage]. (22) She gave birth to a son whom he named Gershom, for he said, “I have been a stranger in a foreign land.” (Ex 2:15-22)

3. In Midian, He married the daughter of Reuel, priest of Midian. Reuel is almost certainly the Jethro of 3:1. In a desert area like Midian, the most popular place to meet, rest, and visit would be at a well where sheep were watered (Jacob met Rachel at the well where Laban’s sheep were watered). Jethro had seven daughters, but no mention is made of a son. Other shepherds simply arrived at the well and drove off their sheep and the daughters of Jethro with them. That is, they drove them away from the well so they could water their own sheep. Little did they realize what kind of man they faced at this well. Moses had no doubt been trained by Egypt’s greatest military instructors and he was well trained in combat. These Midianite shepherds were no match for him. Is there any wonder Jethro wanted him for a son-in-law?!

Both biblically and historically speaking, this is about all we need to know about Moses and how he spent his forty years in Midian. He was safe from Pharaoh’s vengeance, he was married and for forty years he helped care for his father-in-law Jethro’s sheep. During that period he must have learned a lot about the area to which he would one day lead Israel during the Exodus.

C. The Lord Appeared to Moses in a Burning Bush that Was not Being Consumed.

“Meanwhile, Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. (2) Then the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire within a bush. As Moses looked, he saw that the bush was on fire but was not consumed. (3) So Moses thought: I must go over and look at this remarkable sight. Why isn’t the bush burning up? (4) When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called out to him from the bush, “Moses, Moses!” “Here I am,” he answered” (Ex. 3:1- 3).

NOTE: The HCSB translators were convinced that when the pre-incarnate Christ is intended by the words, “the Angel of the Lord”, they would capitalize the word Angel. In other places where they did not believe the reference was to the pre-incarnate Christ, they did not capitalize it. After spending some time in a question and answer situation with the General Editor, Dr. Ed Blum, and then visiting with him at lunch, I was convinced both of his genuine love for the Lord and his commitment to the original intent of the message.

I would like to add another note here. Sometime around 2012 or 2013, some people, possibly of a liberal or moderate persuasion, began claiming that HCSB stands for Hard Core Southern Baptists. Those people must not know that the General Editor, Dr. Ed Blum, is a hard core Presbyterian! He may well have disappointed some Southern Baptist Greek professors when he did not ask them to serve on the translation team. He sought solid Greek scholars and, for the first time ever, they had the use of computers and the Internet in doing the translation and checking problems. Someone might ask, “How many times did we translate a certain Greek word?” With the click

of a button every all the passages in which that word is found comes up on the screen. Then they could check for inconsistencies and make corrections when necessary.

LifeWay tried to get permission to use the New American Standards Bible, but the copyright to that translation is now in the hands of a secular owner and LifeWay could not get them to work with them. Finally, they turned to Dr. Blum and he recruited a team and they translated the entire Bible and called it the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

1. The Lord attracted Moses through a bush that was burning but not being consumed. Just as there is a progressive revelation of God's Messianic Covenant in the Old Testament, so is there a progressive revelation of His presence and power, beginning with this experience. He had revealed Himself in power and redemptive love to Noah, and He had revealed His mighty power at the Tower of Babel. He had revealed His presence and purpose to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had revealed His presence, power and sovereignty to Joseph, but that had been some 430 years before He met Moses at the burning bush.

The location of this revelation was Horeb. Where is Horeb? If you look at the traditional site of the Sinai peninsula, you will see a designation for Mt. Sinai, and another for Horeb a little to the north of that. Some students of the Exodus are not convinced that the traditional site, is not the real site, and some point to a mount to the north east of the traditional site, while others have suggested a place far to the north because of the battle with the Amalakites. Who is right? Is it possible that they are all wrong? Well, Paul was inspired to write, "...Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia..." (Gal 4:25), which casts a whole new light on the subject. However, we will look at this subject more closely a little later.

2. Moses met the Lord at a burning bush. The Believer's Study Bible Notes are helpful here:

"In Semitic thought one always faced east instead of north when giving directions. The Hebrew phrase "the back of the desert" may thus be translated "the west side." The verb "led" is a participle indicating a continuing occupation. Moses had not traveled there expecting to find God; he was looking for fertile valleys. Thus, Horeb is called "the mountain of God" only as Moses writes in retrospect. It has been suggested that Horeb may be the mountain range and Mount Sinai a peak of that range, or Horeb and Sinai could be another example of two names for the same mountain (v. 12; Deut 5:2). Here the Sinai covenant was to be established. A tradition as old as the fourth century a.d. identifies Jebel Musa ("the mountain of Moses," elevation 7,363 feet), at the southern end of the Sinai peninsula, as Mount. Sinai/Horeb. Although many different locations have been proposed in various parts of the southern, central, or northern peninsula, in Midian (Arabia), and in Edom (e.g., Jebel Sin-Bisher and Jebel Helal), the southern Sinai is still the most likely location for "Horeb, the mountain of God." [BSB Notes]

He went over to see the burning bush and saw that it was burning but not being consumed. I have never ceased to be amazed at how those who seemingly have declared war on God reject the Word of God, but embrace, and even celebrate almost anything someone finds written on a clay tablet or a piece of an ancient scroll. In the story of Moses we find numerous historical statements that declare the authenticity of the material we are reading. We understand why pagans, atheists or agnostics look for something that will, in their minds, justify their rejecting not only that which is miraculous, but also anything that glorifies the Lord God of the Bible.

We find a good example of the a liberal treatment of Scripture in the claim made by some skeptic who claimed that the burning bush was not really on fire, but Moses looked at the sun through the bush and thought it was on fire. And I suppose they would say Moses imagined that he heard the Lord speaking to him! Maybe he was dreaming that his rod turned into a serpent. If I had been in his place and the Lord told me to pick up the serpent that is what I would call a nightmare, especially if it was a cobra! As a matter of fact, Moses started to run, but the Lord told him to turn back and pick it up, and it turned back into a staff.

Those are some of the little details that make the account more believable. Consider two things: (1) the volume of detail recorded some 2500 years ago on material that must have been extremely rare in this vast desert, compared to a trip through Office Depot, and (2) the slow, meticulous process of recording it with the ink and quill of the day. This, of course, was no challenge to the Lord. However, the absurdity of the claim that Moses was looking at the sun through a bush and thought it was on fire is especially ludicrous when we consider the fact that we are talking about an eighty year old man in excellent health, with forty years of experience in this desert. Would you have trusted your sheep with a man who couldn't tell a reflection of the sun from flames in the branches of a bush? I don't think so.

Moses would have paid particular attention to anything that seemed inconsistent with his environment. He had tended sheep in this area for forty years. When he went over to look at the bush, he would have known the difference between a bush that was on fire but not being consumed and a refraction of the sun through the bush.

3. God called to him by his name, “Moses” (3:4). Moses may have needed an introduction to God but God needed no introduction to him. Moses’ life had been preserved, he had received the most sophisticated training in the world at the time, and he had herded his father-in-law’s sheep for another forty years in the same area to which the Lord would lead the Israelites upon their Exodus from Egypt. In spite of that, we still have those who are trying to find out where Cain got his wife.

4. The Lord warned Moses that he was on holy ground (3:5). “Do not come closer,” He said. “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” One can understand why some pagan, or one who calls himself an atheist would try to disprove this. The simple fact is that people have been aggressively trying to disprove the Word of God for centuries, yet the Word stands untarnished. Archaeologists have been documenting proof for Biblical claims for centuries, yet some who should know better reject what the Bible says and rejoice in claims by pagan religions.

5. Next, the Lord identified himself to Moses: “Then He continued, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.” (Ex 3:6) The Lord identified Himself as the God of Moses’ well known ancestors. There was Abraham, whom He had called in his homeland of Ur of the Chaldees and told him to move to a distant land, which He would give to Abraham’s descendants - but only after they had lived in a foreign land for 400 years. He entered a covenant with Abraham which was far more reaching than the average descendant of Abraham might have imagined. Abraham’s wife, Sarah, could have no children but God promised her a son and He delivered on that promise. The life and experiences of those early patriarchs are so amazing that one wonders how any of the Israelites could have rejected His Word or even the proof of what He was doing for His people. The really amazing thing is how modern man, with all the ancient manuscripts, can look at the Word of God and then, figuratively speaking, look God in the face and say, “I don’t believe you!”

6. God assured Moses He had observed His people in Egypt. The Lord explained to Moses that (1) “I have observed the misery of My people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors, and I know about their sufferings (3:7). (2) I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians, (3) and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex 3:8).

D. Yahweh Commissioned Moses to Deliver the Israelites from Egypt.

“Then the Lord said, “I have observed the misery of My people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors, and I know about their sufferings. (8) I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey —the territory of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. (9) The Israelites’ cry for help has come to Me, and I have also seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. (10) Therefore, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you may lead My people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” (Ex 3:7-10, HCSB)

This is amazing! God first announced to Abraham that his descendants would live in a foreign land for 400 years before He would bring them back to possess the Land of Canaan. He made that announcement to Abraham around 2000 B. C., and now, in around 1447 B. C. He announces to Moses that He is sending him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, which means they would soon begin their journey to the Land of Promise.

IV. MOSES RETURNS TO PHARAOH’S COURT.”

A. He Went to See the Israelites First.

The Lord told him that Aaron would meet him, and for the first time in forty years he saw his brother. He told Aaron about his meeting with the Lord, whom he now knew as Yahweh, and His announcement that He had heard the cries

of the Israelites in their misery and that He was sending Moses to deliver them. He was also going to send Aaron as his spokesman because Aaron was more articulate than Moses. Moses and Aaron then went back and gathered the elders of the Israelites together and explained to them that Yahweh had heard their cries and He was sending Moses to deliver them.

(27) Now the Lord had said to Aaron, "Go and meet Moses in the wilderness." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. (28) Moses told Aaron everything the Lord had sent him to say, and about all the signs He had commanded him [to do]. (29) Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites. (30) Aaron repeated everything the Lord had said to Moses and performed the signs before the people. (31) The people believed, and when they heard that the Lord had paid attention to them and that He had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped." (Ex 4:27-31)

B. Moses and Aaron Stand Before Pharaoh.

"Later, Moses and Aaron went in and said to Pharaoh, "This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: Let My people go, so that they may hold a festival for Me in the wilderness."

(2) But Pharaoh responded, "Who is Yahweh that I should obey Him by letting Israel go? I do not know [anything about] Yahweh, and besides, I will not let Israel go."

(3) Then they answered, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go on a three-day trip into the wilderness so that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God, or else He may strike us with plague or sword." (Ex 5:1-3)

Moses and Aaron appealed to Pharaoh to let the Israelites go into the wilderness to worship Him, but Pharaoh refused, declaring that he knew nothing about Yahweh. Pharaoh imposed more demanding regulations on the Israelites. This was not a surprise to Yahweh. Nothing a godless person does surprises the Lord. Furthermore, He knew exactly what He was going to do to Pharaoh and to the people of Egypt.

C. Yahweh Sends Ten Plagues on Egypt.

What was the purpose of the ten plagues? God was going to show that false gods of Egypt were powerless because they didn't even exist. Those who served those gods rejected the true God for false gods. The power behind them was the same one who tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Why were there ten plagues? Why not five, or eight? For one thing, ten is the number for human completion. We have ten fingers and ten toes. Normally, that is. George had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. The farm manager on one of the plantations owned by a family in the Mississippi Delta told me about George. George was sitting in the back of the pick-up truck with another farm hand and they were "pulling the chain" for me as I plotted cotton fields onto an ariel photograph so they could measure them with a planimeter at the local ASCS office (USDA). I worked my way through Mississippi college part of the way through seminary doing this work. George showed me his hands and told me that people in Memphis "used to pay a dime to see me."

How could these plagues effect the Egyptians and not the Israelites? Yahweh so designed them to demonstrate His power to both the Egyptians and the Israelites. All the gods of Egypt could not protect them from Yahweh, and Pharaoh and all his gods could not touch the Israelites as long as He was protecting them. If only these pagan people had learned the great lesson demonstrated in their presence it would be hard to believe they would have ever bowed before a pagan god again.

Why did the confrontation with Pharaoh seem so personal with Yahweh? In the first place, it was a personal confrontation, and at first Pharaoh hardened his heart against God, and then God began to harden His heart. Also, Pharaoh claimed to have been a god. Is there a warning in this for those who persist in their rebellion against Him? What do you think?

[The brief outline and notes which follows is copied from this writer's Exodus series posted on SermonCity.Com under Articles (study number 2 of 26)]

1. Turning the water to blood, 7:14-25.

a. "This is what the Lord says: Here is how you will know that I am the Lord. Watch. I will strike the water in the Nile with the staff in my hand, and it will turn to blood. The fish in the Nile will die, the river will stink, and the Egyptians will be unable to drink water from it" (Ex 7:17-18).

b. "But the magicians of Egypt did the same thing by their occult practices. So Pharaoh's heart hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said" (Ex 7:22).

c. This plague was directed against the god of the Nile River. The Nile was worshiped as the giver of life and nourishment. In this plague Yahweh declares His sovereignty over the Nile.

2. Invasion by frogs (except in Goshen), 8:1-15.

a. This plague was directed against the goddess Hekt, represented by a frog-headed statue, was believed to have power of creation.

b. The reason for this plague is stated: "...Moses replied, "As you have said, so you may know there is no one like the Lord our God, the frogs will go away from you, your houses, your officials, and your people. The frogs will remain only in the Nile" (Ex 8:10-11).

c. Pharaoh again hardened his heart, 8:15.

3. The land was stricken with gnats (lice), 8:16-19.

a. This plague was directed against the priests and magicians of Egypt.

b. Their satanic power was limited.

c. "The magicians tried to produce gnats using occult practices, but they could not" (8:18).

d. "This is the finger of God,' the magicians said to Pharaoh" (8:19a).

e. "But Pharaoh's heart hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said" (8:19b).

4. The plague of flies follows, 8:20-32.

a. The plague of flies was an attack against the Egyptian god, Khephera.

"But on that day I will give special treatment to the land of Goshen, where My people are living; no flies will be there. This way you will know that I, the Lord, am in the land. I will make a distinction between My people and your people. This sign will take place tomorrow" (8:22-23).

b. " But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also and did not let the people go" (8:32).

5. The fifth plague targeted livestock, 9:1-7.

a. This plague was directed against animal worship. Apis the bull, Mnevius the cow, and Hathor, a cow-headed goddess.

"But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that the Israelites own will die" (9:4).

B. "But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not let the people go" (9:7).

6. The next plague was boils, 9:8-12.

- a. The plague of boils was directed against Inhotep, the god of healing.
- b. “The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians” (9:11).
- c. “But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had told Moses” (Ex 9:12). Until now Pharaoh had hardened his heart; now God hardens it.

7. The harvest is destroyed by hail, 9:13-35.

- a. This plague was directed against the so-called gods of nature.
- b. “However, I have let you live for this purpose: to show you My power and to make My name known in all the earth” (9:16).
- c. “So Pharaoh’s heart hardened, and he did not let the Israelites go, as the Lord had said through Moses” (9:35).

8. The eighth plague was locusts, 10:1-20.

- a. This plague was directed against the gods that insured a good harvest.
- b. “And so that you may tell your son and grandson how severely I dealt with the Egyptians and performed miraculous signs among them, and you will know that I am the Lord” (10:2).
- c. “But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the Israelites go” (10:20).

9 Total darkness upon the land was the ninth plague, 10:21-29.

- a. This plague was directed against the sun god Amen-Ra.
- b. “One person could not see another, and for three days they did not move from where they were. Yet all the Israelites had light where they lived” (10:23).
- c. By now the Lord was hardening the heart of Pharaoh to the point that he could not believe (10:27).

10. The death of the first born son in every family in Egypt.

“So Moses said, “This is what Yahweh says: ‘About midnight I will go throughout Egypt, (5) and every firstborn [male] in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the servant girl who is behind the millstones, as well as every firstborn of the livestock. (6) Then there will be a great cry of anguish through all the land of Egypt such as never was before, or ever will be again. (7) But against all the Israelites, whether man or beast, not [even] a dog will snarl, so that you may know that Yahweh makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. (8) All these officials of yours will come down to me and bow before me, saying: Leave, you and all the people who follow you. After that, I will leave.’” And he left Pharaoh’s presence in fierce anger.” (Ex 11:4-8) [bold added]

They would soon “know that Yahweh makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.” There was no death among the Israelites who killed a lamb and smeared the blood of the lamb on the lintel of the door, and on the door facing on either side of the door. Even Pharaoh could not protect his son from the wrath of Yahweh.

In the first nine plagues, the Lord demonstrated His power over all the so-called gods of Egypt. Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let the Israelites leave, even to go a short distance into the wilderness to worship Yahweh. In each of the first nine plagues, the Lord attacked nine of the so-called gods of Egypt.

The tenth plague was directed against Pharaoh himself. This time there was a visit by a death angel from the Lord, and every first born male in every home, including that of Pharaoh, was killed, while in the homes of the Israelites, there was not one death to anyone who had speared the blood of a lamb on the lintel of the door. Yahweh sent a tenth plague which was directed against the king, who claimed to be one of the chief gods. Each of the plagues was directed at a particular false god of the land of Egypt, but now, the final plague was directed against Pharaoh, who thought he was a god. Pharaoh could not protect his own son from the death angel of Yahweh, and he paid an awesome price for resisting the Yahweh.

In deep grief, Pharaoh and all Israel saw the Israelites leave the land of Egypt. Not only did they leave Egypt, the plundered the land of anything they thought might be of value to them.

V. GOD DELIVERED ISRAEL THROUGH THE RED SEA.

A. These Israelites Had Witnessed Something No One Else Had Ever Seen.

1. God parted the waters and let the Israelites walk across on dry land. An estimated two million left the Land of Goshen and moved out in one direction and then changed it, which made it seem to Pharaoh that the Israelites were wandering aimlessly. That motivated him to pursue them to try to recapture them and force them back into slavery.

The Lord led them to the shore of the Gulf of Aqaba where He protected them from the pursuing army of Pharaoh by moving the pillar of fire to stand between the Israelites and the Egyptians. Then, He provided for their escape. The people escaped across what may well have been a land bridge under surface of the Red Sea. There is definitely a land bridge, or shallow strip across the Gulf of Aqaba, beginning near the southeastern tip of what we know today as the Sinai Peninsula and running slightly to the northeast to the land of Midian (Arabia). Out in the main channel, the water was deep enough for ships to sail through it, but it was not so deep that steep banks would have created problems for the Israelites, their carts and livestock in crossing. It was, however, deep enough to drown the Egyptians and their horses when they chased after them.

God parted the waters of the Red Sea and allowed the Israelites to cross over on dry land, as the waters stood like a mountain on either side of them. The Lord sent a pillar of cloud to guide the people by day and a pillar of fire to light the encampment by night. He had placed that pillar between the Israelites and the Egyptians so they could not attack them before they crossed the Red Sea. Once they had crossed over to the other side, the Egyptians pursued them with all the force of their chariots and cavalry, and then the Lord dropped the two walls of water onto them and they perished. The Hebrews watched the bodies wash up upon the shore. They were free! They were delivered from the death that was Egypt by the mighty hand of God. It took a miracle to set them free, just as it takes a miracle to set the spiritually dead person free from death, hell, and the grave.

If explorers Bob Cornuke and Larry Williams are right, and I think they may be, the Lord led them to the ideal place for them to cross the Red Sea, a place where a ridge stretched all the way across the sea, from the southeastern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, across the Gulf of Aqaba in a northeasterly direction to the coast of Midian. The Midianites seemed to have been located in various places in the region at various times, but one place they had settled was in Arabia. Now, that is interesting because Paul, in Galatians 4:25, refers to, "Mount Sinai in Arabia." This adds support to the claims of Cornuke and Williams that the real Mount Sinai is in Midian, or Arabia.

2. Those ancient Israelites witnessed something the world had never seen before. Have you ever seen the waters of the Mississippi River part like that? Of course not, but if we had been there when the earthquake juggled the New Madrid Fault and the Mississippi River ran backward for a while you might have wondered if the world was coming to an end. However, the only time the world had seen anything more amazing than this was when the Lord sent the great Flood in Noah's day. So, what did the Israelites do after they crossed the Red Sea? They stopped to sing a song! They sang praises of the Lord, Who by His mighty hand had delivered them (Ex. 15).

3. Now, let me share a little story with you. Actually, it is a great story. In the first place, I was taught, like most everyone else, that the traditional site of Mount Sinai was in the tip of the Sinai peninsula between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba. Explorers, Larry Williams and Bob Cornuke set out to find the biblical Mt. Sinai, after Bob Cornuke and Astronaut Jim Irwin had climbed to the top of the traditional site and found nothing like that which is described in Exodus. Bob Cornuke is a retired police detective who had spent years investigating evidence in

criminal cases. He says evidence does not tell you anything, the interpretation of the evidence does. (For more on this, see this writer's series on the Exodus experience posted under Articles on SermonCity.Com)

Larry Williams, a highly successful investment broker, financed this and other explorations. Through his Bible study, Bob Cornuke was convinced that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea at the point where the land bridge mentioned previously runs beneath the surface of the Gulf of Aqaba. He says that if you get the crossing point right you don't have to worry about Mt. Sinai, and if you get Mt. Sinai, the Mountain of Moses, right you will have the crossing point right.

4. These Israelites were a part of one of the most amazing things the world has ever seen. They saw it "up close and personal." They lived it! They had been delivered from the place of death and slavery by the mighty hand of God: Don't forget that point: by the mighty hand of God. No other people had ever been delivered like this, and no other people had ever been protected from an enemy quite like they had. Nor, has this same miracle ever been repeated. However, there is a valuable lesson here we should not miss. As the Israelites were dead to everything God had planned for them, so is the lost person today dead in sin. The Israelites could not save themselves, any more than the person who is dead in sin free himself. They were (1) dead to the life of Canaan, (2) dead to the land flowing with milk and honey, (3) dead to joy, (4) dead to freedom, (5) dead to voice of God, (6) dead to the covenant of God, (7) dead to a life without the control set by the Egyptians. The lost person today is dead to peace, joy, assurance, and to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. There are many parallels between death in Egypt and death in sin. There is more: just as there are parallels between the slavery and death of Egypt, and spiritual death and the death to sin, there are parallels between deliverance from bondage in Egypt and the deliverance of one who has been a slave to sin today. That has an application to every one of us.

B. They Left the Red Sea and Began Their Long Journey.

"Then Moses led Israel on from the Red Sea, and they went out to the Wilderness of Shur. They journeyed for three days in the wilderness without finding water" (15:22).

1. They must have been in a high spirit as they began their march. A long day's march can take a lot out of people, but of course in ancient time most people did a lot of walking. The Lord's presence was with the Israelites as they marched and they had to sense it. He gave them a pillar of cloud which testified to the presence of the Lord during the day, and the pillar of fire to illuminate the camp at night. The Lord provided everything they needed to survive in the wilderness. Just imagine two million people camped out in a desert area with no light, no indoor bathrooms, no refrigerators, and hundreds of children crying out for water or asking to go to the bathroom! Imagine all those adults who had to get up at night! I don't even want to think about what it would have been like in the dark. The Lord took care of that problem by providing light for them.

These free people may have had enough water for the first day or two, and perhaps they assumed there would be enough water along the way. Little did they realize their faith was being put to the test. One never knows just how he will respond when his faith is put to the test.

2. Then came day two. Surely, Moses knew where to find water. They marched on and on, but they found no water. No matter how many miracles they had seen in Egypt, no matter how great a miracle they had seen at the Red Sea, no matter how they had sung the Lord's praises by the sea side, they were marching into the desert - away from water. The temperature was perhaps 128 degrees in the day time and it was extremely dry. Breathing dried the mouth and throat. There was no water along the way and their faith began to falter.

3. Then day three came and still they found no water. And then they did. Bob Cornuke and Larry Williams had carefully calculated the distance of a three day march as about 33 kilometers. They drove that distance and there they found the spring.

"(23) They came to Marah, but they could not drink the water at Marah because it was bitter—that is why it was named Marah. (24) The people grumbled to Moses, "What are we going to drink?"

The word Marah means bitter and according to Cornuke and Williams, the water was extremely bitter: “We tasted the water and three or four hours later we still had a bitter taste in our mouth.” Notice what happened when this great multitude of escaped slaves finally reached Marah, the bitter spring. Before condemning the people you and I should remember what these people had experienced. There is no doubt that these people were like a lot of believers today: as long as the going is easy their faith seems strong, but let their faith be tested and many will begin to complain, criticize their leadership, and try to come up with their own solutions.

The people grumbled to Moses, “What shall we drink?” Imagine the frustration when they finally found water and it was not drinkable. This is the first indication we have that these people were Baptists! Ask any experienced pastor what happens when the latest plan for the church does not meet all the benefits the program promised. People begin to grumble and complain.

4. God told Moses to throw a tree into the water. “So he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he threw it into the water, the water became drinkable” (15:25). Did they have to throw a tree into the water in order to make it drinkable? No. The Lord could have simply spoken the word, or just thought it and it would have happened. When the world He created was dark all He had to do to throw light into it was say, “Be light,” and there was light.

5. The Lord made a statute for them at Marah (15:25-26). So often, people follow Bible stories about the better known or more colorful people in the Bible, but skim on by a lot of important details. It is significant that Yahweh is teaching the people as they move forward.

“He made a statute and ordinance for them at Marah and He tested them there. (26) He said, “If you will carefully obey the Lord your God, do what is right in His eyes, pay attention to His commands, and keep all His statutes, I will not inflict any illnesses on you that I inflicted on the Egyptians. For I am Yahweh who heals you.” (Bold added by this writer)

6. Not only did the people need water, they needed food.

“The entire Israelite community departed from Elim and came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had left the land of Egypt. (2) The entire Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. (3) The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the Lord’s hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat and ate all the bread we wanted. Instead, you brought us into this wilderness to make this whole assembly die of hunger!” (Ex 16:1-3)

These people had been delivered from slavery and death by the mighty hand of God, so what did they do? They sang His praises and then set out for Mt. Sinai. After a day or so, the excitement faded and soon it was replaced by fear and complaints. They complain that Moses had led them out of Egypt and now he would let them die of thirst or hunger. Never mind that they had seen the hand of God in the ten plagues, or that they had experienced a kind of deliverance no other people had ever known: They had seen Yahweh part the waters of the Red Sea and they had crossed on dry land. Not only that, they had seen the monstrous walls of water collapse upon the Egyptians, destroying man and beast. But now, they complain, charging Moses with starving them.

The Lord told Moses to tell the people that He would provide meat for them that evening and all the bread they could eat the next morning, and “Then you will know that I am Yahweh your God.” (Ex 16:12) The God who created man can feed man. When He has provided for them He expects them to acknowledge Him and thank Him. He still expects those to whom He has given eternal life to acknowledge Him, praise Him, obey Him, and serve Him.

7. He gave them a victory over the Amalekites, 17:8-16. Some time after the Lord had provided the quails and manna, they were attacked by the Amalekites, descendants of Esau, brother to their ancestor Jacob (Israel). It paid the nations of the region to know what was happening throughout the area and they had spies, as well as the caravans which traveled from one nation to another. The Amalekites still harbored the same hatred for the Israelites that their ancestor held for his twin brother. As soon as they learned about the deliverance of the Israelites they marched out after them and attacked them. The Lord gave the Israelites a great victory, but assured them that

Amalekites would continue to attack them. They were still attacking the Israelites when Saul was king over Israel 300 years later.

VI. THE LORD IS THE ANSWER.

A. He Answers Moses.

1. He has an answer for Moses and for Israel. Have you noticed that, whatever the problem might have been, God always had an answer for His chosen people. He not only had an answer for Israel, He had the answer. We can go even further than that: He is the answer! Those of us who understand that the Lord was the answer for Israel may not appreciate the fact that He is also our answer, the answer to our deepest problems. Ultimately, and most importantly, He answered our most serious need when He sent His Son, Jesus, to this world to take our sins upon Himself and die on a cruel cross in our place. When they were without water - completely without water - where did they find water? God gave them water from a rock - "and that rock was Christ." (1 Cor.10:4)

2. The people continued to challenge Moses over water. No matter what the problem was, Yahweh never failed to provide for them. The people griped and complained when they had no water. Once again, the Lord answered Moses, His chosen leader. The Lord spoke to Noah and Abraham, but never had He spoken to any individual since Adam and Eve as he had spoken to Moses. Moses was the Lord's chosen leader. There would be other times when the Lord would demonstrate His sovereign right to choose their leader. See Numbers 16 to see how the Lord confirms His choice of Moses as their leader when Korah and others usurped his position of leadership.

3. The people complained to Moses, "Give us water to drink" (17:2a). The Lord was never caught by surprise. He knew they would need water, but He also knew their hope was in Him. All they people needed to do was to trust Him, but they did not understand that at this point. They would constantly rebel against Him, no matter how many times He had delivered them and blessed them.

So, Moses took their cries to the Lord, and, "The Lord answered Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you. Take the staff you struck the Nile with in your hand and go" (Ex. 17:5). This sounds like something monumental was about to happen, doesn't it?

(a) There was a problem and the people complained to Moses. "Why are you complaining to me?" Moses replied to them. "Why are you testing the Lord?" (Ex 17:2) They were putting Yahweh to the test. Note that they were not rebuked here for testing the Lord. However, when Jesus, following His baptism, was tested by Satan He did have something to say about it: "Jesus told him, "It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God." (Matt 4:7) The Lord did not condemn the people for putting Him to the test here, but there is no contradiction here for the simple reason that they had not been to Sinai and they had not entered a covenant relationship with Him. After that time, they were commanded, "Do not test the Lord your God as you tested [Him] at Massah." (Deut 6:16)

(b) They complained against Moses. Think about it: They were in a desert and they complain to Moses, "Give us water to drink." Had they seen Moses drinking water? Did they think he had water stored somewhere? Perhaps they knew he had tended his father-in-law's sheep for 40 years in the land of Midian and assumed he would know where to find water. They knew he was familiar with some parts of Midian (Saudi Arabia today), so they must have been convinced that he would lead them to water. The Lord was directing this trek into the wilderness and on to Sinai, and He as putting them to the test. Moses was following Him because he trusted Him.

(c) They tested the Lord. "Why are you complaining to me?" Moses replied to them. "Why are you testing the Lord?" (Ex 17:2b). Up until this time the Lord had said nothing about putting Him to the test, but they have not yet been to Sinai where they would receive Laws, ordinances, and statutes. Jesus rebuked Satan for trying to put Him to the test. Is it not interesting that Satan knows more about Jesus than a lot of people who profess to be Christians? He has certainly had his experience with the Lord, and he has a great day of judgment coming when he will be cast into the lake of fire that burns with intense heat day and night forever.

(d) "But the people thirsted there for water, and grumbled against Moses" (17:3a). Apparently, the complaints were becoming more and more intense. They were attacking Moses, but they were questioning God, too. We may picture mothers and fathers demanding that Moses do something for their children or for the elderly, but of course they

wanted water to quench their own thirst. Did these people really believe the Lord had led them out into the wilderness without any plans for food and water for the multitude? How naive could they be. And how naive are we when we doubt that the Lord will take care of our needs?

(e) The great multitude of people said, “Why did you ever bring us out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” (17:3b). The people are now verbalizing their fears. They are remembering the food and water they drank in Egypt, but they have apparently forgotten the intense labor, the harsh treatment of family members, and the orders to kill the male babies. They have moved from complaining, to grumbling, to confronting Moses. This is the way mob scenes begin. The only difference here is that hundreds of thousands of adults are confronting Moses.

We should remind ourselves that we are not talking about a western movie in which twenty or twenty five people who are threatening the local sheriff. How could Moses possibly provide enough water for two million people, plus their livestock? Only Yahweh could consider such a mighty challenge, which, of course was no challenge to Him. It is easy to criticize those Israelites, but how much have we learned from their experience? A number of years ago I had a sprained left foot and my secretary asked me if I would like for her to call their foot specialist. I did and she did. The foot specialist nearly destroyed both of my feet, and another one made them both worse. I prayed day after day and night after night for healing. I remember quoting Scripture to the Lord - hoping that would help. My entire ministry was at stake - didn't the Lord know that?! Why didn't He act? Well, He did. He just didn't do it my way.

(f) Moses cried out to the Lord for answers. “Then Moses cried out to the Lord, “What should I do with these people? In a little while they will stone me!” (17:4) Understandably, Moses had no answer. He was also without water. His brother and his family were out of water. His sister Miriam was out of water. If he couldn't help them how could he help the great multitude of people. He had a reason to fear that the people might stone him. Mobs are not given to reason.

B. The Lord Pointed Out a Rock.

(6) I am going to stand there in front of you on the rock at Horeb; when you hit the rock, water will come out of it and the people will drink.” Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. (7) He named the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites complained, and because they tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?” (Ex 17:6-7)

Yahweh declared that He would stand in front of Moses on the rock at Horeb, which is Sinai. Horeb was an alternate name for Mt. Sinai, not a neighboring mountain peak. They had arrived at Sinai, they were not in route when these people rebelled again. Let me share just a little of the story Jim and Penny Caldwell tell about their experience at Sinai. In the study on the Exodus Experience, posted under “Articles” on the SermonCity.Com web site, I prepared the following comments on this. The following material will be found in that study.

The Caldwells, with their young son and daughter, visited Mt. Sinai 14 times over an eight year period. Jim Caldwell worked in Saudi Arabia and they had to leave the country for 24 days each year, and during the Desert Storm War leaving was a problem, so they went to Egypt and to the traditional Mt. Sinai. When they got there they were as convinced as Bob Cornuke that this site, St. Catherine's, didn't match the biblical description of Mt. Sinai. The mother of Constantine had designated it as Mt. Sinai and who was going to argue with the mother of the emperor?

While on that vacation the Caldwells bought a book by Sir Richard Burton in which he had a map that showed Sinai in Madayan (Midian), which meant that it was in Arabia, just as the New Testament identified it as: “Mount Sinai in Arabia...” (Gal 4:25) The modern name of the mountain, they are convinced is Mt. Sinai, is Jabel Al Lawz. From a distance there was a high mountain peak that stood between four and five thousand feet above where the Caldwells stood, and checking the altitude, they found that they were at 4000 feet when they viewed it. Based on this they declared that the peak of Mt. Sinai is something like 8,000 feet above sea level.

The Caldwells arrived at Mt. Sinai from the east and Cornuke and Williams from the west. They were all amazed at what they saw when they arrive at Jabel Al Lawz. The top of the mountain was black (evidence of fire on the mountain!), but the rest of the mountain has a reddish tint to it.

They looked out across the desert before approaching Jabel Al Lawz and saw one of the most amazing things they could have imagined: The Rock! They were convinced that it was “the rock” in the miracle in which Yahweh provided water for the great host of Israelites camped at Mt. Sinai. They described it, and the video supports what they say, as the most amazing thing one can imagine. There are various hills throughout the area and atop one hill is a rock that they knew had to be “the rock.”

You may be wondering how they could pick out one rock from a desert full of rocks and say that was it. Have you ever thought of how big that rock was? The Caldwells say it was at least four stories high! They climbed the hill and approached the base of the rock and saw that it was indeed split, and they were convinced that it had split from the bottom to the top as the water gushed from beneath the surface, splitting the giant rock. How did the water get to the base? It had to come, like a super-charged artesian well, through the soil, or possibly through solid granite, to get to that rock. An artesian well in the Mississippi Delta may be over one thousand feet deep.

The video shows Penny Caldwell standing in the cleft of the rock, examining the surface on either side. When I saw that scene in the video I thought, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.” Both sides of the split rock show wear, which would have been caused by the water gushing forth under pressure - in a desert that might get one-half inch of rain in ten years, according to Bob Cornuke. The Caldwells are convinced that the rock’s sides showed flaking - now, get this - flaking from bottom to top. In granite. Normally, granite will wear or flake from top to bottom.

Jim Caldwell is convinced that the miracle that happened when the water gushed forth from this rock is a miracle every bit as great as the parting of the waters of the Red Sea. There was, before the rock, a depression that was soon turned into a lake - right in the middle of the desert. Significant evaporation would have been expected in a desert with daytime temperatures at around 128 degrees. Yet, there was enough water in that lake for two million Israelites, if estimates are correct, and I believe they may be. There was also a plain that would have accommodated the thousands of tents in which the people lived for many months.

The water Yahweh provided for the Israelites was good water. It was fresh water. It was probably cool water when it came forth from the rock. It never failed. The supply was always adequate, from day one to the day they marched away from Sinai. That reminds me of the declaration Jesus made on the last and most important day of the Feast of Festivals on one occasion:

“On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! (38) The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him.” (39) He said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were going to receive, for the Spirit had not yet been received, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.” (John 7:37-39)

Jesus offers an eternal supply of living water. That well will never run dry and the children of God will never thirst. So it was for the months the Children of Israel camped at Sinai. They never ran out of that water. Those who place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ will have a well of water springing up unto eternal life (John 4). We will never thirst again. When I was working for the ASCS (USDA) I often stopped by one artesian well or another, and I never found one in which the the water supply was at risk. I recall one where the owner of a plantation ran water to his home and to home of a few other homes and then let the water run into a large concrete box or trough, and then spill over into ditch that carried the water on to a bayou. I would stop and let the water run over my arms and hands until it cooled me off, without any change in temperature. I would fill my thermos can and drink from that supply for the rest of the day. Jesus assured us that those who trust in Him will find that “streams of living water flow from deep within him.” Jesus is the water of life.

C. The Lord Permitted Himself to Be Tested.

“He named the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites complained, and because they tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?” (Ex. 17:7)

This is a good place to remind ourselves of something already noted concerning testing the Lord. A little repetition here may be worth our time. As previously mentioned, when Jesus went into the wilderness to be tested by the devil, He refuted Satan by quoting Scripture: “Jesus told him, “It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God.” (Matt 4:7). The Scripture He quoted was: “Do not test the Lord your God as you tested [Him] at Massah” (Deut 6:16). Interestingly, at Massah Yahweh did not condemn the Israelites for testing him, but in Deuteronomy 6:16, He specifically says, “Do not test the Lord your God as you tested Him and Massah.” Why did He not condemn them at Massah? They were approaching Sinai at that time, but they had not yet entered a covenant relationship with Yahweh. After that, they were commanded never to put Him to the test again. They still had not learned the kind of God they were following, even though He, by His mighty right hand, had delivered them from Egypt. In all the history of the world no other nation had ever been delivered from slavery to a powerful nation in this manner.

VII. THAT ROCK WAS GOD’S GIFT OF LIFE.

A. The Rock in the Wilderness Meant Life to the Israelites.

1. Actually, the water that flowed from that rock meant life. As long as no water flowed from that rock there was no hope for those two million people whom Yahweh called His Chosen People. Sadly, those people kept forgetting that it was Yahweh who chose them and not the other way around. We should be able to identify with that. How often do we hear people identify themselves by a particular denomination and not as a child of God? How often do we hear someone on TV say, “I’m a Catholic.” How many times do we hear the man or woman in the supermarket or department store say, “I go to First Methodist Church,” or “I am a Presbyterian.” How many times do we hear someone say, “I am a Baptist,” or “I go to the Church of God?” What is wrong with saying, “I belong to Jesus Christ”?

2. The Lord told Moses what to do. In fact, He made a practice of telling Moses what to do. He revealed His will to him in various ways. Sometimes He spoke verbally to His servant, and at other times He demonstrated His will and purpose, as in the destruction of those 250 people who rebelled against Moses, when the earth opened up and swallowed them, their families, and all their possessions (Numbers 16).

Here, once again, the Lord gave specific directions:

“The Lord answered Moses, “Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you. Take the staff you struck the Nile with in your hand and go. (6) I am going to stand there in front of you on the rock at Horeb; when you hit the rock, water will come out of it and the people will drink.” (Ex 17:5-6)

The Lord stood on the rock at Horeb. The people did not see God, but they saw evidence of His presence when He provided water for that vast multitude. Here, we are talking about a real place, with real people, real circumstances, and real provisions. And we are talking about a real God. Without God and His provisions everyone of those two million people would have died a miserable death. Without God, all people will perish (and hell is a lot worse than Sinai). You think those two million people were in a desperate position? What about the millions in America who do not know the Lord? What about the billions around the world who are dying in a desert of sin, rebellion and false worship and cannot see that they are in danger of eternal consequences. No, they cannot see that they are already dead! They are dead in sin.

B. That Rock Was Christ (1 Cor. 10:4).

1. That rock gave life to two million people. We know, of course, that the people did not have their thirst satisfied by fragments of this huge monolith. It was the water that quenched their thirst, but without the rock there would have been no water. Actually, it was God, who was standing on that rock who gave them water. God became a source of water for them. They were in a hot, arid desert, where, according to Bob Cornuke, as I have already mentioned, they get about one half inch of rain in ten years. The sun was bearing down on them and they felt the intense heat from the rocks and sand.

2. Paul tells us “that Rock was Christ.” Of course, we know Jesus is not a rock, and Christians understand that when they sing “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.” No one saw Yahweh stand on that rock, but when that giant monolith split a mighty stream came gushing forth with such a volume that two million people soon had their thirst quenched. There was, we should remember, a huge depression before that rock and it was filled with enough water for some two million people plus their livestock. The people had water for drinking, and no doubt for bathing and washing their clothes. These people, even in the intense heat, gathered around a fresh water lake in the middle of an intensely dry desert, with temperatures averaging around 128 degrees.

VIII. THEY ARRIVE AT MT. SINAI.

A. Here They Will See the Glory of God.

Some of you may remember that picture that was hanging above the teacher’s desk in you classroom. It was the picture of a man. He was General George Washington, who has been called The First American, and The Greatest American. When I saw a book about George Washington many years ago I bought it and read it. The title of that book is, ALL CLOUDLESS GLORY. Think about it: ALL CLOUDLESS GLORY.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, General Washington, American’s hero, rode up to the Capitol building (in all cloudless glory!), with people possibly wondering if he would declare himself King George I of America. He resigned his commission and went home. Our Founding Fathers tell us George Washington was a godly man, a man of character, courage, dignity, and wisdom. In a human sense, the title of the book, ALL CLOUDLESS GLORY, may seem appropriate. However, as a student of the Word of God, I must reserve that title for One who absolutely deserves it. In fact, when you look at the entire history of the world, only One Person actually does deserve it and He is the One who created the world and sustains it. He is our Creator, our Redeemer, our Lord, our Judge, our Friend. He is the One who possesses ALL CLOUDLESS GLORY. What an appropriate title for the One who spoke to Moses from the burning bush that was not being consumed! What a title for the One who parted the waters of the Red Sea so the Israelites could walk across on dry land. What a title for the One who caused the waters to collapse upon the Egyptian army and destroy them. On the way to Sinai, the Israelites saw the glory of God: “As Aaron was speaking to the entire Israelite community, they turned toward the wilderness, and there in a cloud the Lord’s glory appeared.” (Ex 16:10, HCSB) And what a title for the God who came down upon Mount Sinai in fire and smoke. ALL CLOUDLESS GLORY!

We accept the fact that His is an “all cloudless glory,” but what does glory mean? Perhaps the words, “...His majestic splendor” (Isaiah 2:10) will help us to understand a little better what the glory of God denotes.

B. His Glory Is Revealed By His Work (Genesis 1).

1. His glory is witnessed in what is seen. The God of Creation reveals His glory in His creation. I am convinced that creation was a testimony to the Holy Trinity, based, in part, on the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the Prologue to the Gospel According to John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created.” (John 1:1-3). Paul assured Timothy that “All Scripture is inspired by God...” (2 Tim 3:16) If the Holy Spirit inspired Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, and Jeremiah He had to be a presence in the Old Testament period.

The Bible begins with the God Who has no beginning and no end. No world existed until God said, “Let there be... and it was so.” The six days of creation declare the glory of His wisdom, His power, and His sovereignty. In fact, the very name for God in the first verse of the Bible, Elohim, declares His power, and another name for our Lord, Adonai, declares His sovereign right to rein over all He created. The name He gave Moses at the burning bush, YAHWEH (Jehovah in the NASB), is the Covenant name for God, and as such an especially holy and glorious name. You can usually tell which name is used when you read an English translation of the Bible because the word Elohim is rendered, “God”; whereas the name Adonai is translated “Lord” (capital “L” and lower case “ord”); and YAHWEH (we actually have only the consonants YHWH) is the verb, “I AM”, but it actually means, I am that which I am, I was that which I was, and I will be that which I will be.” A noted Hebrew scholar, the late Dr. H. Leo Eddleman, whom I had the privilege of knowing, and one with whom I spent a considerable amount of time, assured me that YAHWEH means that, but it means more than that. He said, “it carries the idea that “I am the source of My

existence and I am the source of your existence.” He is the source of all that exists. Creation is a testimony to the Creator’s power, presence, and preeminence. It testifies to one with all cloudless glory.

2. The glory of God is declared by that which He created for His pleasure. Everywhere we look around us we see things that are truly amazing. That He created it all in six literal days is enough to blow one’s mind. For those who really know and believe the Bible it is mind boggling to observe the extent to which non-believers will go to dispute special Creation for theories that simply will not hold water. If you ever have an opportunity to watch a video of a debate between the late Dr. Henry Morris and some evolutionist, you may well see some evolutionist speak authoritatively about some discovery that disproves special creation. In time you will hear Dr. Morris quote another evolutionist whose research disproves what the earlier evolutionist supposedly discovered. We do not have to worry about that when we go to the Word of God.

God created the heavens and the earth, and all that inhabit the earth, just as the Bible says He did. Furthermore, if we don’t have a Creator at the beginning we don’t need a Redeemer in the middle, because we will not need a Judge at the end. I also believe He created everything identified in Genesis One in six literal 24 hour days. The Hebrew word for “day” generally means a 24 hour day. If you don’t believe God created this world the way He said He did, I would encourage you to spell your god with a small “g”; I spell my God’s name with a capital “G”.

NOTE: For more on what I believe about Creation and the Creator, please go to SermonCity.Com and click on Authors, then my name. Select Commentaries and scroll down to Genesis, Vol. I, in my Bible Notebook study of Genesis, Chapters 1-3.

3. The creation of man declares God’s glory in a special way. All we have to do to sense the glory of God and the glory of His creation is to look at the first chapter in Genesis, verses 26-28:

(26) “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.” (27) So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female. (28) God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.”

A man wrote a Letter to the Editor in a local newspaper around the end of May, 2013, in which he took Christians to task for believing in God and in His creation. First, he arrogantly challenged them on the grounds that the name for God in Genesis 1:1 is plural, and then asked, does that mean that God and (he listed several false gods) created the world? Actually, the name for God in Genesis 1:1, Elohim, does have a plural ending. Some hold that the plural underscores the greatness of God. If that were true it would certainly emphasize His glory. In reality, I am convinced there is the possibility that, as I have already mentioned, the plural allows for, or even demands our awareness that Creation was the work of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

The most amazing thing about the special creation of which we read in Genesis 1 is the fact God did something completely different when He created Adam and Eve than when He created the plants of the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and the animals that walk on the earth. He created man in His own image. God’s glory is manifested in His creative work up until He created man, but then it reaches new heights. He created man in His Own image, making human beings the most glorious part of His creative activity. He created man with the ability and privilege of communicating with the Creator, just as Adam and Eve talked with Him in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. Today, we hear a lot about “wireless communication.” There has been wireless communication between God and human beings since the creation of Adam and Eve. He gave man the ability to think logically, philosophically, analytically, and deductively. He gave him the ability to communicate with other people, and to communicate to some degree with domestic animals. Above all, God created man a living soul, capable of communicating with his Creator, as well as the privilege of knowing the Creator personally.

C. The Sabbath Day Declares God’s Glory, Genesis 1, Ex. 20:8.

As God is different from all things He has created, so is the Sabbath different from all other days. It is so significant that one of the Ten Commandments is, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” (Ex 20:8). God did all His

work of creation in six days and then desisted from work on the Sabbath day. God had not exhausted Himself with the labor of creation, but after all creation was completed the Bible tells us that He desisted, or ceased His work on the Seventh Day.

The Sabbath is the Lord's Day, a day of rest, a day for worship, a holy day. In Matthew, we read that the, " Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." (Matt 12:8) The Sabbath is a holy day, a day for worshipping the Lord of the Sabbath. However, only true believers can appreciate that fact. True worshipers will recognize the glory of God when they worship Him. Only true believers can fully appreciate His glory because only true believers can appreciate the significance of the Sabbath Day.

For an outstanding example of a godly man who recognized the fact that the Sabbath Day is a holy day, I would urge you to get a copy of the book, WASHINGTON'S GOD, by Michael Novak and Jana Novak (with the sub-title: Religion, Liberty, and The Father of Our Country). The authors clearly understand our desire to see a stronger proclamation of his faith in God, his doctrinal position on various issues, and his use of the name Jesus, or his title, Christ more freely. George Washington was an Anglican living at a time when men spoke of God in different tones than they have since that time. I recently heard someone say that he wanted to go to a church where you heard about the Holy Ghost. For some, that might simply be a desire for worship, but for some it might indicate a need for a deeper appreciation for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We pray to God our heavenly Father in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit (and Spirit is the correct translation of the word). The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to focus our attention on God the Father, through the Person of Jesus and we pray in the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

George Washington spoke often about divine Providence. I had a neighbor when I was growing up who spoke of The Man Upstairs, or The Old Master, but never in a light or joking way. He was simply one of those men who left certain words to the women in our church. George Washington's faith was never questioned when he ran for president, or during his service as our first president. They knew his faith. How could they explain all those bullet holes in his uniform apart from the protection of our Almighty God?

George Washington, on days when the weather would not permit them to go to their church, would read the Bible, read sermons to his family (he had a lot of volumes of sermons), and spend quite time with the Lord, often walking and meditating. He always made a distinction between the Lord's Day and other days. The father of our country set a worthy example for us- in more ways than one.

D. Even the Flood Declares the Glory of God.

The greatest judgment the world has ever seen was the world-wide flood often referred to by archaeologists as the Deluge, and to you and me as Noah's Flood, or simply as the Flood. The Flood was indeed a testimony to the holiness of Almighty God. The people of the earth looked God in the face and said, "We don't want anything to do with you!" With the exception of Noah, Mrs. Noah, their three sons and their wives, the entire population of the earth was destroyed in the most earth shaking judgment the world has ever seen, or will see until God's end-time judgment when all elements will melt, not in water but in fire.

In spite of that judgment, and in spite of the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B. C., the people of Judah continued to say, "we will not obey You!" The Babylonian Captivity went a long way toward ridding Judah of idolatry, but they still did not obey him faithfully. People in Jesus' day rejected Him and people are still rejecting Jesus, even though the Lord has declared both His salvation and His judgment. However, while the masses reject Him, the saints still sing, "To God be the glory, great things He hath done."

I have a question for you. How could a worldwide flood which destroyed all life on earth, except for those on the ark, possibly manifest the glory of God? That may seem like a fair question, and it would be if He was no more than one of the pagan gods worshiped by the enemies of Yahweh. The pagan gods were powerless to do anything about it when their worshipers rebelled against them. Yahweh was not powerless! The gods made from sticks and stones were powerless because they were lifeless. They couldn't think, they couldn't speak, they couldn't send an enemy against their worshipers. The Lord God of Israel was not made of sticks and bricks, of stones and bones.

He was not sightless, He was not deaf, He was not without reason, He was not without a brain. If the people of Judah refused to listen when He spoke through Isaiah or Jeremiah, He could point out what happened to Israel, their brothers and sisters in the Northern Kingdom. Yahweh could deal with a sinful and rebellious people. Their besetting sin from the Exodus on to the days of Jeremiah was idolatry. God sent them into captivity in Babylon for seventy years, but the remnant that returned, returned without idols. They had other sins, but resisted every effort to impose idolatry on them again. Idols were lifeless, mindless, thoughtless, objects, but when blessed by Satan they became vile, evil, and deadly. Pagan gods were without glory. Yahweh could manifest His glory any time He willed it. In fact, His presence declares His glory, either in blessings or in curses.

Here is another question for you. Why is it that anywhere you go on earth you will find people who will be worshiping. They will either be worshiping the one true God, or they will be worshiping some worthless stick or stone. Why is that? The stick did not call them. The stone did not send them out to serve it. Why then do they do it? The answer is that the same enemy who tempted Eve has been tempting people ever since. His temptations normally come in two forms, either of which serves Satan and dishonor God. Satan encourages the worship of false gods, and the false worship of the true God.

The devil appeared before the Lord to challenge Him for His servant Job and “The Lord asked Satan, “Where have you come from?” “From roaming through the earth,” Satan answered Him, “and walking around on it.” (Job 1:7) Satan Is Alive and Well on Planet Earth, just as Hal Lindsey proclaimed in his book with that title. When it came out I knew professors who dismissed him as a right-wing nut case. Some didn’t believe in the existence of Satan. I know this because when the professor who taught my Intensive in Revelation was pinned down he finally admitted that, to him, Satan was nothing more than “the personification of evil.” Satan is real, and he still advocates and promotes evil. When the United States Supreme Court hands down a ruling that the federal government will have to pay benefits to those living in a same-sex “marriage”, we know Satan is prevailing in the highest courts in the land. There is no glory in lying, killing, prostitution, or homosexuality, but the God of glory will someday manifest His full glory and those who doubt it should read Revelation 21:8.

E. Yahweh Reveals His Glory at Sinai (Ex. 17:4; 17-18; 24:16-17).

1. God Manifested His Glory through a burning bush. Moses saw the burning bush that was not being consumed in Midian, and it was from that burning bush that God identified Himself to Moses I AM. Since the scribes preserved only the consonants YHWH, we cannot be absolutely sure how they pronounced it since the Hebrew people would not have said “Jehovah” because they did not write the letter “J” or pronounce it. They, for example did not call the name of Moses’ successor Joshua, they called him Yeshua, just as the Jews for Jesus identify themselves as Jews for Yeshua. Those of us who seek to know Him in His All Cloudless Glory will not be distracted by that debate.

2. The ten Plagues declared the glory of Yahweh. I have a study on Exodus posted on the SermonCity.Com web site by Editor, Dr. J. Mike Minnix, and in it there is a review of the ten plagues. Each was an attack by the Lord on some form of pagan deity in Egypt. The God Who is (I Am) destroyed the gods that did not, and could not exist (the God Who is destroyed the gods who ain’t!). Those ten plagues swept the land of Egypt, inflicting discomfort, pain, and defeat upon the false gods of Egypt and upon those who worshiped the gods who did not exist instead of the God who identified Himself as I Am. In the final plague, He sent His death angel to kill the first born of all in Egypt who did not smear the blood of a lamb on the lintel of their door. Only the Jews knew to do that.

3. The Exodus itself manifested His glory. That is a fact, but rather than trying to prove it, or even explain it, we will let the Lord Himself declare it:

“Then I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh.” So the Israelites did this.” (Ex 14:4)

“I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh, all his army, and his chariots and horsemen. (18) The Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh when I receive glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.” (Ex 14:17-18)

4. The Lord manifested His glory from Egypt to Sinai. Time after time in the Exodus experience, Yahweh revealed His glory. When do we see the glory of God exhibited as often and as powerfully as we see it in Exodus and at

Sinai? Think about it: there is (1) the burning bush, (2) the ten plagues, (3) crossing the Red Sea, (4) The bitter springs of Marah made sweet, (5) manna, (6) Rephidim, and (7) water from a rock in the desert.

Paul was inspired to write: “For they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.” (1 Cor 10:4) Jesus, unlike the false gods of the pagan people of the world, is not a literal rock, but “a spiritual rock” Who provided them the water they needed for their journey through the wilderness. In the Gospel according to John, Jesus is seen as the Water of Life, the Living Water. He was the water of life in the wilderness.

5. The Glory of the Lord Is Revealed at Sinai.

“This evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt; (7) in the morning you will see the Lord’s glory because He has heard your complaints about Him. For who are we that you complain about us?” (Ex 16:6-7)

“As Aaron was speaking to the entire Israelite community, they turned toward the wilderness, and there in a cloud the Lord’s glory appeared.” (Ex 16:10)

This was a momentous occasion. What an amazing experience! Two million people, God’s Chosen People, turned toward the wilderness and saw a cloud and in that cloud there appeared something they somehow knew was a manifestation of the glory of God. But what does that mean? How do you define the glory of God? What was the revelation of the glory of God? How did He do that? I have asked various people to define the glory of God for me and it seems that they, too, must search their minds for an answer. In a sense, we know what it is, but have a problem defining it. The point is, He revealed His glory to them and they recognized it.

At Sinai, the glory of the Lord was manifested dramatically and miraculously, at specific times, as in this cloud: “the Lord’s glory appeared.” Clouds may cover or conceal, as clouds cover the moon and stars at night and the sun in the daytime, but the One who created the clouds may reveal Himself in and through them. All cloudless glory!

6. Yahweh continued to reveal His glory at Sinai (Ex. 24:16-17).

“The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day He called to Moses from the cloud. (17) The appearance of the Lord’s glory to the Israelites was like a consuming fire on the mountaintop.”

The people did not seek out the glory of the Lord, nor did they accidentally stumble upon it. He displayed His glory before all Israel for six days, and then on the seventh day “He called out to Moses from a cloud.” This experience was so special, so amazing, that it is hard to believe these people would ever complain against the Lord again. Even today, after some 3500 years, both explorers Bob Cornuke and Larry Williams, and the Caldwell family tell us they have stood before Mt. Sinai (in Arabia, Gal. 4:25) and looked at the black top of the mountain. Everything around the mountain is a sandy reddish color, but the top is black, like the color of coal. They show us their pictures from afar and from up close. Williams and Cornuke tell us they picked up some of the black rocks and broke them and found that the insides were the same color as the rest of the mountain. These people have seen the evidence of a real fire that burned for days on the top of the mountain - and nowhere else!

I questioned all claims about the discovery of Sinai in Midian, rather than on the Sinai Peninsula, until I watched the video of their experience over and over. Let’s face one simple fact: if the Israelites had crossed from Egypt, through the Red Sea at the traditional location, they would have come out on what we know as the Sinai Peninsula. They would have crossed that arm of the Red Sea, fleeing from Egypt into Egypt! I finally became convinced that this is the mountain (Sinai in Arabia, Gal. 4:25) upon which the Lord came down in a great fire and manifested His presence to the Israelites. However, the Lord did not confine His presence to one seven day period on top of the mountain. He continually revealed His presence and therefore, His glory to the people. His glory was revealed in His presence on the mountain, as His glory is always revealed in (1) His Presence, (2) His Name, (3) His Law (the Ten Commandments), (4) His power, (5) His Spirit, (6) His Word, (7) His Holy Day, and (8) His worship, (9) His creation, and (10) in ways we cannot explain.

7. Aaron's robe showed the glory of the Lord.

The Lord told Moses to "Make holy garments for your brother Aaron, for glory and beauty" (Ex 28:2). Yahweh continued His to instruct Moses:

"You are to instruct all the skilled craftsmen, whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom, to make Aaron's garments for consecrating him to serve Me as priest. (4) These are the garments that they must make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a specially woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. They are to make holy garments for your brother Aaron and his sons so that they may serve Me as priests. (5) They should use gold; blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; and fine linen" (Ex 28:3-5)

In 28:40, the Lord told Moses to tell the craftsmen to "Make tunics, sashes, and headbands for Aaron's sons to [give them] glory and beauty." (Ex 28:40) The Sinai experience was filled with references to the presence and glory of Yahweh, whether the word "glory" is mentioned or not. The presence, or any manifestation of the presence of the Lord, proclaimed the glory of the Lord.

8. Moses Asked the Lord to Let Him See His Glory (Ex; 33:12-23). He asked the Lord to teach him His ways.

"Moses said to the Lord, 'Look, You have told me, 'Lead this people up,' but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. You said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.' (13) Now if I have indeed found favor in Your sight, please teach me Your ways, and I will know You and find favor in Your sight. Now consider that this nation is Your people.'" (Ex. 33:12-13)

Moses had walked with the Lord and served him faithfully for some time. He had seen the manifestation of God's presence and glory and he knew what the Lord wanted him to do. He did not want His people Israel to flounder in the wilderness for years. He wanted them in Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey, a land where they would not have to live on manna for forty years.

Yahweh answered Moses: "Then He replied, 'My presence will go [with you], and I will give you rest.'" (Ex. 33:14) In the Scripture, as we have seen, to know the Lord's presence is to see or sense His glory. There is no way a true believer can sense the presence of the Lord without some awareness of the glory of the Lord - that is, if the believer has any knowledge whatsoever of the presence and glory of the Lord. If he lacks that knowledge he is a babe in Christ - teach him!

Moses knew he could not lead these people into the Promised Land on his own. He made one of the defining statements of his entire Sinai experience when he declared:

(15) "If Your presence does not go," Moses responded to Him, "don't make us go up from here. (16) How will it be known that I and Your people have found favor in Your sight unless You go with us? I and Your people will be distinguished [by this] from all the other people on the face of the earth." (33:15-16)

9. The Lord assured Moses of His presence. His words are recorded: "The Lord answered Moses, 'I will do this very thing you have asked, for you have found favor in My sight, and I know you by name.'" (33:17) Wouldn't be glorious if the Lord answered us in such a manner today? If we do not sense the presence of the Lord, and if we do not recognize the voice of the Lord in our daily life, we need to confess our sin (1 John 1:9) and repent. Now, let me add that if someone begins telling me that the Lord speaks audibly to him I may have some doubts about that. However, I am positive that the Lord speaks to us all the time, whether we hear Him verbally or not. He speaks to us through the Holy Spirit, Whom He places in the heart of every believer at the point of salvation. Sadly, a wrong translation of Acts 19:2 has led many to adopt a faulty view of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Authorized Version reads, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2, KJV) Correctly translated, it reads, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2, HCSB) The NASB also has, "'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?'"

The Holy Spirit is placed in the believer's heart at the time of his or her salvation and His purpose is outlined in the New Testament, with special emphasis in our Lord's Farewell Address (John 14-16). When I do not sense that the Holy Spirit is speaking to me I know I need to find a quiet place and begin reading the Bible (prayerfully). The Holy Spirit miraculously inspired every word of Scripture, He has miraculously preserved it, and when I read it He miraculously illuminates my heart in order to help me understand what I am reading. When I sense the presence of the Holy Spirit in my heart I sense the glory of the Lord in my heart and in my mind. When I read a passage I have read dozens of times, if not hundreds of times, and suddenly see something I have never seen before, I know the Holy Spirit is revealing something fresh to me. When I see that, I sense the presence of the Lord, and when I sense the presence of the Lord I sense the glory of the Lord. It just doesn't get any better than that!

In the reference to Acts 19:2, I mentioned two very good translations. Most people are familiar with the New American Standard Bible. The Holman Christian Standard Bible which is newer, is published by the oldest Bible publisher in America (Holman, which was purchased by Broadman, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources). This was the first translation done with computers and the Internet as tools some one hundred translators were able to use. They were able to check words for consistency with the click of a button, and through e-mail or conference calls, instantly check with other translators.

IX. THE LORD REVEALED HIMSELF IN HIS HOLINESS AT SINAI.

A. First, He Revealed His Glory.

This writer is conscious of some repetition here, but it should be worth the effort to continue to pursue this subject. How do we define glory? The Holman Bible Dictionary has a lengthy article on glory, beginning with this statement: "The weighty importance and shining majesty which accompany God's presence. The basic meaning of the Hebrew word *kabod* is heavy in weight." (Holman Bible Dictionary, after this, HBD] God's glory is usually associated with His presence, and in many cases it relates to times when He had manifested His glory in the presence of an individual, a group of individuals, or, as in this case, to a multitude of people. It denotes His majestic splendor, His limitless knowledge, and His awesome power.

Yahweh manifested His glory at the Red Sea: "The Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh when I receive glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen." (Ex 14:18) An especially awe inspiring manifestation of God's glory is seen at Sinai:

"The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day He called to Moses from the cloud. (17) The appearance of the Lord's glory to the Israelites was like a consuming fire on the mountaintop. (18) Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain, and he remained on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights." (Ex 24:16-18, bold added by this writer)

B. He Gave the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20).

NOTE: The first four commandments deal specifically with our responsibilities to God and the last six focus on our responsibilities to one another.

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3, KJV).
2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (20:4).
3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain" (20:7).
4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (20:8).
5. "Honor thy father and thy mother..." (20:12).
6. "Thou shalt not kill" (20:13)
7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (20:24).
8. "Thou shalt not steal" (20:15).
9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (20:16).
10. "Thou shalt not covet" (20:17).

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (HCSB - WITH NOTES):

1. "Do not have other gods besides Me" (Ex 20:3). He is a jealous God and will tolerate no other.
 2. "Do not make an idol for yourself" (20:4). This included graven images and anything you place between yourself and God (houses, cars, clothes, position, people, fame, recreation).
 3. "Do not misuse the name of the Lord your God" (20:7). Not only are we not to use God's name in profanity, we are not to take it lightly, as a casual, "Oh, my God," or to show surprise, as "My God!"
 4. "Remember to dedicate the Sabbath day" (20:8). It is His day and if we are acknowledge Him we will honor His day. Violation of the Sabbath day may throw the door to hell wide open for your children or grandchildren! All you have to do is distract them and Satan will take it from there!
 5. "Honor your father and your mother" (20:12). First, God demands it, and it should be in the heart of the believer to do so. Second, You are teaching your children by the way you treat your parents.
 6. "Do not murder" (20:13). This commandment focuses the light on the value God places on life. Do no murder at all. Those who commit murder are to be put to death by the state. What does that say about one who takes the life on an unborn baby? Euthanasia? What does Jesus have to say on the subject? See Matt. 5:21-24; 5:38-48.
 7. "Do not commit adultery" (20:14). Jesus expands this to include lust (Matt. 5:27-32). Today, in this post-Christian era, all forms of sexual sins, including homosexuality, are treated lightly, and society is paying the price for it. "True Love Waits" will help our young people adopt the proper attitude toward sexual fulfillment according to God's plan for His people.
 8. "Do not steal" (20:15). This demands total honesty in all things. One may rob a bank, stick up another person, burglarize someone's home, cheat another person, or step across the line and pick up a neighbor's pecans. I was with a friend, another ten year old boy, when he dropped a dime, and I helped him look for it, even though there was very little need to look - as long as I was standing on his dime! I was going to give it back to him, but after waiting until he gave up the search I was too embarrassed to give it to him. The longer I waited, the more disturbing it was to my mind to try to come up with a way of explaining that it was a joke. I saw my friend fifty years later and said, "I owe you a dime!"
- There are many ways to steal, and with electronic theft the opportunities have grown exponentially. I was advised recently to make my pen number long and complicated. Mine is short, sweet, and simple! I need to do something about it. Because electronic theft is less personal there is one less barrier to hinder the thief.
9. "Do not give false testimony against your neighbor" (20:16). One is never more like Satan, the father of liars, than when he lies. This sin seeks to hide other sins. Why do people lie? Check out the other commandments and see if there is a connection. An old proverb says that a thief will lie and a liar will steal.
 10. "Do not covet" (20:17). This sin breeds other sins. It is closely related to stealing and lying, but it goes beyond that. The second great commandment tells us that we should love our neighbor as ourselves, but how do you love a person whose house, car, and business you covet?

C. He Gave the Levitical Law.

The Lord gave Moses the Ten Commandments to give to the people. They are applicable for any people of any age. Afterwards, He gave practical applications of the Ten Commandments. America has a Constitution which was written in the earliest days of the nation. Since the Constitution came into force in 1789, it has been amended twenty-seven times (Wikipedia) but the Constitution still stands. People can memorize, or carry a copy of the Ten Commandments, but a lot of study and many applications and interpretation have been added to help people to apply them under certain circumstances. Nothing in the Levitical Law, or the laws of any nation today cancel or nullify any one of the Ten Commandments.

D. He Gave Israel a System of Worship.

Worship is essential, and substantive worship includes some specifics. In the first place, the people must come into the presence of the Lord with the right purpose and in the right way. All true worship is in the fear of the Lord, which means that the worshiper must come into His presence in a spirit of reverential awe, just as Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah humbled them in the presence of Yahweh. In the second place, those who worshiped Him during under the Old Covenant had rules and laws they had to follow. Specific instructions were given to the people concerning the offerings they took to the high priest so he could offer sacrifices or make atonement for the people. The lamb taken for sacrifice, for example, must be without spot or blemish.

While we might go on and on with lists of laws and rules governing worship, I would like to share something that came to me one time while I was studying this material. If we could load the entire sacrificial system of the Hebrew people onto one DVD and then insert it in a player that which it might reflect on the screen might well be a picture of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The Passover specifically points to Christ and Him crucified. Did Paul wrote, "...Christ our Passover has been sacrificed." (1 Cor 5:7)

If we would spend more time making this connection, we must compare the Mosaic Law with the Sermon on the Mount. "Thou shalt not kill" finds a fuller application with Jesus, for name calling and hate may lead to murder, neither honors the Lord. Adultery is a sin, but lust leads to adultery, so it is a sin for those who are in Jesus Christ. A right relationship - a personal relationship - with Jesus is the best answer to stealing, lying, envy, and covetousness.

Another comparison between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. We have the duties of the earthly high priest spelled out in the books of the Law, but the Holy Spirit inspired the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews to write that Jesus is a superior High Priest to those under the Old Covenant (Heb. 5:1ff). He ministered under a superior Covenant to the old Covenant under which Aaron served. Aaron was the high priest, but he rebelled against Moses at one point (Num. 12:1ff). For another thing, the earthly high priest had to go into the Most Holy Place once each year to offer an atonement for himself and for the people. Jesus made atonement for all who would be born again by His grace. However, Jesus never had to make atonement for Himself, and He made atonement for us once for all time. He never had to repeat His atonement.

X. THEY LEFT MT. SINAI TO CONQUER CANAAN.

A. They Received Their Marching Orders.

1. Now, they are ready to conquer Canaan. But, are they? Once again we see the importance of the historical dates and events in the Word of God: "During the second year, in the second month on the twentieth [day] of the month, the cloud was lifted up above the tabernacle of the testimony." (Num. 10:11). They had been at Sinai one year, two months, and 20 days. Yahweh commanded their travel plans and their destination.

(12) The Israelites traveled on from the Wilderness of Sinai, moving from one place to the next until the cloud stopped in the Wilderness of Paran. (13) They set out for the first time according to the Lord's command through Moses." (Num 10:12-13)

From time to time we hear someone say that the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, but that statement should be qualified: They did move from place to place, but they never wandered aimlessly. The Lord commanded their journey and sanitation alone would demand a move from one place to another from time to time. God ordered the moves and they were controlled moves. It was never a matter of aimless wanderings.

2. They were told to send spies into Canaan. In one of the Exodus Series Articles posted on SermonCity.Com, I mentioned the fact that I had asked the late General Dutch Shoffner (three star) to explain the difference between strategy and tactics. I felt that he had done a good job, but in writing about the Conquest of Israel, I asked his son, COL Andy Shoffner, if I had been right in assuming that (1) divide and conquer was Joshua's strategy, and (2) that the plan the Lord gave him for conquering Jericho would fall under tactics. COL Shoffner assured me that seemed to be about right. Then he went on and explained that in attacking an enemy he liked three to one odds, but preferred six to one odds). He shared other details, including he fact that water was a key consideration. I might add here that the late LT General Dutch Shoffner was a man of genuine faith in Jesus Christ and he was deep in the Scripture. I have found COL Andy Shoffner's faith in the Lord and love for His Word to be refreshing and inspiring.

Joshua was about to launch his attack, with assurance of victory in the conquest of Canaan. Yahweh had assured Joshua that He would give them success in all that they did as long as they obeyed Him. Moses sent twelve spies, one from each tribe, to spy out the land.

“The Lord spoke to Moses: (2) “Send men to scout out the land of Canaan I am giving to the Israelites. Send one man who is a leader among them from each of their ancestral tribes.” (3) Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran at the Lord’s command. All the men were leaders in Israel. (Num 13:1-3)

B. They Refused to Enter Canaan to Conquer the Land, Number 14:1-9

When the 12 spies returned, ten of them announced that the land of Canaan truly was a land “flowing with milk and honey.” However, they insisted that they could not conquer the land, because the land was filled with some powerful armies. They even mentioned giants who lived in the land. They insisted that they could not conquer the land, and in spite of the testimony of Joshua and Caleb that God would give them the victory, the people listened to the 10 spies who insisted that they could not conquer the land.

These people who had witnessed the greatest miracles anyone since Noah had seen on planet Earth, doubted that the Lord would give them a victory in the conquest of the Land of Canaan. Their doubt was an open and direct rejection of the One who had blessed them and delivered them from the Pharaoh, protected them from the army of Pharaoh, delivered them by parting the waters of the Red Sea so they could cross on dry land, caused the walls of water to collapse upon the Egyptians who pursued them, and provided water for two million people at Sinai for one year. Yet, they refused to enter the land and possess the land of Canaan. They would pay dearly for this sin.

The reports of the ten faithless spies so influenced the people that they refused to enter Canaan and possess their possessions. For their unfaithfulness, God announced that the spies spent 40 days scouting out the land of Canaan, and now these unfaithful people would spend forty years wasting away in the wilderness, and only those under 20 years of age would ever enter the Promised Land, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. See Numbers 14 for more details.

After God announced His judgment, stressing that all those 20 years of age and older would never enter the land, those unfaithful people decided to begin the conquest of Canaan without the Lord, or Moses, Joshua and Caleb. They were soundly defeated (Num. 1:39-33).

C. Moses Became the Great Intercessor.

The nation, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, refused to enter Canaan to try to conquer the Land promised to Abraham. The price for their rebellion was severe, but then, rebellion against God is a severe offense. There was a price to pay, and no doubt the severity of the penalty was a shock to the people. Up until this point, had the Children of Israel shown that they deserved all Yahweh was doing for them? Of course not. After all they had learned at Sinai had they changed their hearts and minds toward the Lord? Had the miracle of the changing of the bitter water into pleasing water made a lasting impression on these people? Had the water flowing from the rock convinced them to love Yahweh and obey Him? Not so you would notice it. However, if the parting of the Red Sea, their deliverance, and the destruction of the Egyptian army not been permanent lessons for them, what would it take?

To put it another way, did these people deserve all the Lord was doing for them? No! No more than you and I deserve what Jesus did for us at Calvary. When the Israelites might have been in Canaan, the Land Flowing with Milk and Honey, they were bickering in the wilderness for forty years. It was their fault. It was not God’s fault. He had done for them things no god had ever done for Egypt, Edom, Amalek, or any other country. The Chosen People floundered, fussed, and complained for forty years - forty wasted years. They could have been building homes, planting vineyards, and establishing businesses in the Promised Land, but because of their disobedience they were wasting away, waiting for death. In a sermon entitled, Wilderness Believers, which I believe is posted on SermonCity.Com, I describe the life of the Israelites in the wilderness and compare it to the life of the person who professes faith in Jesus Christ, but walks daily in the wilderness (the flesh). I have seen church members act like that! How long would God tolerate the rebellion, griping and fussing of these people? What could he have done? Were there any options? Yes, and He did not miss any of them.

Their rebellion brought Israel under the judgment of God. (11) “The Lord said to Moses, “How long will these people despise Me? How long will they not trust in Me despite all the signs I have performed among them? (12) I will strike them with a plague and destroy them. Then I will make you into a greater and mightier nation than they are.” (Numbers 14:1-2)

(13) But Moses replied to the Lord, “The Egyptians will hear about it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from them. (14) They will tell [it to] the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, Lord, are among these people, how You, Lord, are seen face to face, how Your cloud stands over them, and how You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. (15) If You kill this people with a single blow, the nations that have heard of Your fame will declare, (16) ‘Since the Lord wasn’t able to bring this people into the land He swore to [give] them, He has slaughtered them in the wilderness.’

(17) “So now, may my Lord’s power be magnified just as You have spoken: (18) The Lord is slow to anger and rich in faithful love, forgiving wrongdoing and rebellion. But He will not leave [the guilty] unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers’ wrongdoing on the children to the third and fourth generation. (19) Please pardon the wrongdoing of this people, in keeping with the greatness of Your faithful love, just as You have forgiven them from Egypt until now.”

(20) The Lord responded, “I have pardoned [them] as you requested. (21) Yet as surely as I live and as the whole earth is filled with the Lord’s glory, (22) none of the men who have seen My glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tested Me these 10 times and did not obey Me, (23) will ever see the land I swore to [give] their fathers. None of those who have despised Me will see it. (24) But since My servant Caleb has a different spirit and has followed Me completely, I will bring him into the land where he has gone, and his descendants will inherit it. Num 14:11-24 (HCSB)

Centuries later, Jeremiah made intercession for the people of Judah, and he recorded the Lord’s response:

Then the Lord said to me: “Even if Moses and Samuel should stand before Me, My compassions would not [reach out] to these people. Send them from My presence, and let them go. (2) If they ask you, ‘Where will we go?’ you must tell them: This is what the Lord says:

Those [destined] for death, to death;
those [destined] for the sword, to the sword.
Those [destined] for famine, to famine;
those [destined] for captivity, to captivity.
Jer 15:1-2 (HCSB)

This implies that Moses and Samuel were recognized as the great intercessors of the Old Testament. Remember when the people demanded a king like the Philistines had, and the Lord told Samuel to anoint a king for them. Then the people appealed to Samuel, “Pray for us.” Do you remember how Samuel replied to them? He said, “As for me, I vow that I will not sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.” (1 Sam 12:23, bold added for emphasis) There were others, but Moses and Samuel are great examples.

CONCLUSION. It would be interesting to know how many books, children’s Bible Story books, cartoons and movies have been made about Moses. Movies, like THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, a movie of an earlier era, starring Charlton Heston, awakened a lot of interest in the Exodus, including the escape through the Red Sea, and the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai. Many commentaries have been written on the first five books of the Bible, which Moses was inspired to write. No, Moses was not a witness to Creation, or to the Flood, but the One who inspired him to write the material was there. Countless sermons have been preached from those five books.

We have, in this study, looked mostly at a relatively brief period in the life of Moses, who was about 80 years old when the Lord called Him to go back to Egypt and stand before Pharaoh and ask him to let His people go. Of course, we read about the birth of Moses and his being nursed by his mother and reared by the daughter of Pharaoh. We read about the visit of Moses to see his Hebrew kinsmen, and his flight from Egypt after killing an Egyptian who was abusing a Hebrew slave. At around 40 years of age, He escaped to Midian where he befriended and then married the

daughter of Jethro, a priest of Midian. Then, we lose sight of Moses until, at 80 years of age, he sees a burning bush that was not being consumed by the fire. You know the story: God revealed Himself to Moses and commissioned him to go back to Egypt and lead His people out of Egypt and bring them to meet Him at Mt. Sinai in Midian.

At Mt. Sinai, Elohim provided food and water for the Israelites. He revealed His glory to Moses and to the Israelites, and gave them the Ten Commandments. He gave them both system of worship and a sacrificial system, as well as a legal system to maintain peace among the people, not only in the wilderness, but until the coming of the Messiah. At Sinai, they built the Tabernacle and all the furnishings associated with the sacrificial system, all according to Yahweh's plans. That sacrificial system pointed ahead to the coming of the Messiah who would fulfill the promises, hopes, and expectations of all that covenant, and provide a New Covenant, written in His blood.

The Lord gave Moses the marching orders for the trip to Canaan where they would conquer the land and fulfill the promises the Lord had made to Abraham many years before. However, because the people refused to trust the Lord to give them a victory over the nations of Canaan, the Lord told Moses that they would remain in the wilderness for some 40 years, or until all those who twenty years of age and older were dead.

Now, let us concentrate on what happened at Sinai at this time:

“During the second year, in the second month on the twentieth [day] of the month, the cloud was lifted up above the tabernacle of the testimony. (12) The Israelites traveled on from the Wilderness of Sinai, moving from one place to the next until the cloud stopped in the Wilderness of Paran. (13) They set out for the first time according to the Lord's command through Moses.” (Num 10:11-13, bold added for emphasis)

During the final forty years of Moses' life he led the people, encouraged worship, trained Joshua, and served the Lord faithfully. He also had to deal with their complaints, bickering, and rebellion.

He, as we shall see, made one serious mistake. When the people arrived at the Wilderness of Zin, and “The entire Israelite community entered the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and they settled in Kadesh . Miriam died and was buried there.” (Num. 20:1)

There was no water there and the people complained against Moses and Aaron:

“(4) Why have you brought the Lord's assembly into this wilderness for us and our livestock to die here? (5) Why have you led us up from Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It's not a place of grain, figs, vines, and pomegranates, and there is no water to drink!” (Num. 20:4-5). “The Lord spoke to Moses,” (8) “Take the staff and assemble the community. You and your brother Aaron are to speak to the rock while they watch, and it will yield its water. You will bring out water for them from the rock and provide drink for the community and their livestock.” (20:7-8)

You remember the Scripture: Moses struck the rock rather than speaking to it and the Lord was displeased and told him he would never enter Canaan because of his disobedience. In his anger with the people he sinned against the Lord. He let his frustration with the people get the best of him, and while it may seem like a trivial thing to you and me, it most certainly was not viewed that way by the Lord:

(12) “But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust Me to show My holiness in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this assembly into the land I have given them.” (13) These are the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the Lord, and He showed His holiness to them.” (Num 20:12-13)

God's ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thought (Is. 55:8). It would be easy for the casual reader to miss something very important here. The Lord wanted to show His holiness, but what Moses did violated His purpose. People may be concentrating on a sermon today, but when someone suddenly lifts his cell phone above to shoulder level, all the people around him or her are distracted. They take their eyes off the Lord. The penalty seems severe, but we can be sure the Lord knew exactly what He was doing.

In spite of the many times the people rebelled against the Lord and against Moses and Aaron, He saw them through the wilderness and into Canaan. In the same way, there may be times when we wonder where the Lord is, or what He is doing when we cry out for help. Why does He allow a child to have seizures? Why does He allow evil people

to oppress His people? How long will He put up with Islamic terrorism? How long will he allow us to suffer from sickness, disease, financial disaster, or family problems? We can be sure the Lord knows where we are, and He knows when and how to act to help us. We must continue to walk with the Lord and trust Him to see us through the trials of this life.

If you are oppressed by sin and feel that Satan is throwing more at you than you can bear, trust Jesus Christ to deliver you from that oppression to joy that is beyond your understanding. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt, dead to God's plan and purpose for them. They could not deliver themselves from slavery and death, but God could, and did deliver them. If you are not a born-again Christian, you are a slave to sin. You are dead in your sins and you cannot deliver yourself. Jesus Christ paid the price for your salvation and He stands ready to forgive you and give you eternal life right now if you will only trust Him.

(11) "Now the Messiah has appeared, high priest of the good things that have come. In the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (that is, not of this creation), (12) He entered the holy of holies once for all, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. (13) For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who are defiled, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, (14) how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God?"

(15) Therefore He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, because a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions [committed] under the first covenant." (Heb 9:6-15, HCSB)

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