

Adult
Sabbath School
Lessons

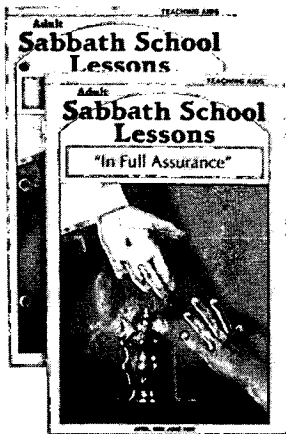
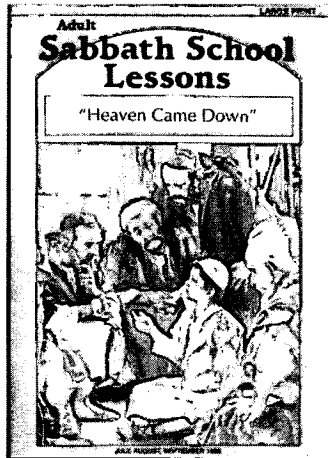
Bound for the Promised Land



January, February, March 1988

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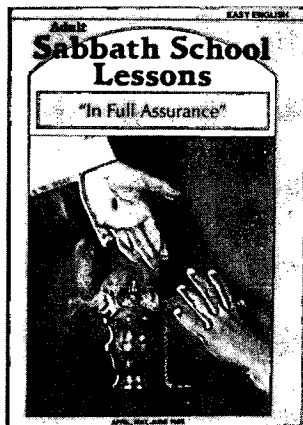
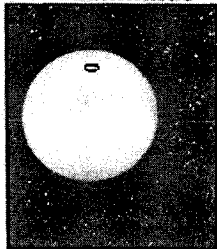
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COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS



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Meet the Author of This Quarter's Lessons



Russell Holt is associate editor of *Signs of the Times*. He has served as executive editor of *Ministry* and on the editorial staff of *These Times*. He began his denominational career as a pastor in Indiana and Arizona.

Elder Holt enjoys getting involved in do-it-yourself projects, reading, and studying the American Civil War era. He has written numerous articles for religious and secular periodicals. He and his wife, Judy, have a son and a daughter.

The Blessing of Daily Study

“Every day some portion of time should be appropriated to the study of the lessons, not merely in learning to mechanically repeat the words, while the mind does not comprehend the meaning; but to go to the very foundation, and become familiar with what is brought out in the lesson.”—*Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 53.

Daily Lesson Study Pledge

As one greatly desirous of improving my knowledge of the Scriptures and of the Lord to whom they point, I pledge to carefully and prayerfully study some portion of the Sabbath School lesson each day of the week.

Introduction to the Book of Exodus

Bound for the Promised Land

This quarter we will be studying two related Bible books—Exodus and Numbers. Our study will not include every chapter but will deal with the great themes of these books.

Exodus takes its English name from the Septuagint—a third-century B.C. Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The title reflects the book's major focus—the departure of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. It is the second of the five books (the Pentateuch) that Moses wrote and continues the story of God's people where Genesis leaves it.

Exodus divides itself almost evenly between the largely historical narrative of the first 18 chapters and the description in the final 22 chapters of God's covenant with the people and the construction of the tabernacle. Although the Exodus is the book's central focus, four major themes are evident:

1. *Redemption.* God's historical act in delivering Israel from Egypt established the Israelites as a nation of His chosen people. The Israelites considered this to be the pivotal event in their history and God's greatest act on their behalf. The Exodus symbolizes redemption from the slavery of sin by Christ, the Passover Lamb.

2. *Covenant.* Having delivered (redeemed) His people, God made a covenant to care for them and make a mighty nation out of them if they would be obedient to Him.

3. *Law.* The Ten Commandments (and other regulations) given at Sinai specify how those called to be His people can live the happiest and most productive lives.

4. *Worship.* The tabernacle and the setting apart of the priests provided for orderly worship by the Israelites who had been redeemed from Egypt.

Overview of Exodus

1:1—11:10	12:1—18:27	19:1—31:18	32:1—40:38
Israel in Egypt	Exodus to Sinai	Covenant and Law	Rebellion and Renewal

How to Get the Most Out of Studying These Lessons

Prayer: Because spiritual things are spiritually discerned, always pray for guidance of the Holy Spirit as soon as you have opened your Bible to the Scripture portion being studied.

Reading: At least twice during the quarter read through the Bible book being studied at one sitting in order to gain the overall picture and to understand better the context of the passage you are studying. At the beginning of each week read the passage for the week through at one sitting. Repeat this two or three times during the week in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the entire passage. Each time you do so you should discover something new that you did not notice previously. The Sabbath afternoon section of the study is designed to give you an overview of the week's lesson.

Analysis: Do not merely read a text to find the answer called for. Take time to study each text carefully, analyzing each word until the meaning of the text is clear. If you have questions, consult a Bible Commentary or Bible Dictionary.

Supplemental Reading: Each quarter a supplemental book is prepared in English for additional help in studying the lesson. If you do not have access to this volume, find a book or commentary that deals with the Bible book being studied and read the section that is relevant to what you are studying. In North America, a Spirit of Prophecy supplement is available from Hartland Institute. If you do not have access to this, check the *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* for additional Spirit of Prophecy insights.

Friday Lesson: The last section of each week's lesson is designed primarily as a review. Begin by rereading the Scripture portion designated for the week's study. Then read the "Further Study" suggestions if you have the recommended books available. An attempt is being made in this section to refer only to the most commonly available Spirit of Prophecy books. Before reading the printed "Summary," review the lesson then write your own two or three sentence understanding of what it is about. Do not pass over the "Application" section without giving it much thought. Applying the lesson is the most important aspect of your study. Yet you are not in a position to apply the lesson accurately until you are aware of what the Bible has to say on the entire topic being studied. Do not limit yourself to answering the few application questions for which there is room in the quarterly. Make your own applications and be prepared to share these in your Sabbath School class.

Leo R. Van Dolson, Ph.D.
Editor

God Prepares a Deliverer

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 1:1 through 2:25.



MEMORY TEXT: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment" (Heb. 11:23).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: No matter how hopelessly we seem to be held in the bondage of sin, God has provided a Redeemer who can deliver us.

OVERVIEW: Ex. 1:1—2:25

1:1-22 Bondage and Oppression	2:1-10 A Deliverer Is Born	2:11-25 Preparing for Deliverance
Israelites made slaves Death decree	The birth of Moses	Moses makes his choice Flight to Midian God does not forget Israel

INTRODUCTION: As we compare how God delivered Israel in the days of Moses with our experience, we will be dealing frequently with *types*. By this we mean that particular Old Testament events, persons, or institutions were designed by God and guided by Him in such a way that they would symbolize New Testament and last-day realities connected with the plan of salvation. For example, Paul indicates that the entire Exodus experience is a *type*, or representation, of the Christian's experience of being delivered from sin and finding eternal salvation. (See 1 Cor. 10:1-13.) In this week's lesson, we will examine Moses as a *type*, or representation, of Jesus Christ.

Typology is the way the New Testament itself interprets the Old. But we must be careful to distinguish typology from allegory. *Allegory* builds fanciful parallels from speculation and obscure similarities. Typology depends on clear analogies drawn in Scripture itself.

I. BONDAGE AND OPPRESSION (Exodus 1:1-22). (Be sure to read each Scripture section carefully before responding to the questions and comments.)

1. The Children of Israel Made Slaves (Exodus 1:1-14).

Verses 1-6 summarize information given in the last five chapters of Genesis in order to set the stage for what follows.

The 70 persons mentioned here and in Genesis 46:27 as the number of Jacob's family who came to live in Egypt does not include wives, daughters, male and female slaves, their dependents, or hired servants.

How were the movement of the children of Israel into Egypt, their bondage and oppression, their mighty deliverance from slavery, and their establishment in the land of promise foretold to Abraham by God when He made His covenant with the patriarch? Gen. 15:7-16.

In the opening verses of Exodus, we see the continuing fulfillment of these predictions and the outworking of the great controversy theme introduced in Genesis—the ongoing struggle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

Does the struggle brought to view so quickly in Exodus have personal application to Christians today? Are we involved, and if so, how? Gal. 3:29; Rev. 12:7-18.

The Bible refers to sin as slavery and to those who are caught up in it as slaves. (See John 8:34; Rom. 6:16.) Just as the Israelites were in bondage in Egypt, we are in bondage in the land of sin from which God has promised to deliver us. In Christ, we are descendants of Abraham. God's promises to Abraham are promises to us as well.

In God's provisions for Israel's deliverance, we can see how He works today to fulfill His promises to us. He has prepared a Redeemer for us—One mightier than Moses—and He will lead us out of sin to the Promised Land.

THINK IT THROUGH: Does sin exact any less galling service from those who are its slaves than Pharaoh did of the Israelites? What wages does sin pay? Why, then, does Scripture speak of "the pleasures of sin" in Hebrews 11:25?

The pleasures sin provides for its followers seem real, but they are perversions of those things that God has given to make His creatures happy. Viewed from this true perspective, "the way of transgressors is hard" (Prov. 13:15), despite the pleasure the sin-perversed nature finds in serving evil. Sin is a taskmaster that demands an increasingly burdensome service, resulting at last in eternal death. All who are born into this world find themselves in a bondage far more terrible than that of the Israelites in Egypt. It is from this slavery to sin that Christ has delivered us.

What was the extent of population growth among the Israelites by the time they left Egypt? Num. 1:46; Ex. 38:26.

The numbers given imply a total population, counting women and chil-

dren, of at least two million. Exodus 1:7 uses five different expressions to emphasize the fact that the Israelites experienced a rate of population growth in Egypt beyond what ordinarily might be expected.

2. A Death Decree (Ex. 1:15-22).

Satan's plan to destroy Israel failed. The harder the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Hebrews multiplied. God's blessing overruled Satan's attacks. Satan then influenced Pharaoh to order all male infants to be killed. Pharaoh's actions in this matter demonstrate the way sin draws its victims deeper into its grasp. Note the progression in Pharaoh's treatment of Israel: (1) forced labor (verse 11), (2) labor combined with cruelty (verses 13, 14), (3) the order to the midwives to destroy male infants (verse 16), (4) a general decree for all Egyptians to take part in killing male Hebrew babies (verse 22).

THINK IT THROUGH: The Israelites had come to Egypt under the guidance of God through His miraculous intervention at the time of Joseph. Why, then, did they find themselves suffering such cruel oppression? Does following God's directions prevent affliction from falling on us? Does God promise to keep us from trouble at all times, or does He sometimes allow us to experience trouble for reasons that He knows best? (See Ps. 34:19; 1 Cor. 10:13.)

The situation of God's people will become increasingly difficult as the world nears its end. This will be due partly to deteriorating conditions in the world as a whole. But more specifically, persecution and oppression similar to that experienced by ancient Israel will break out against God's last-day people. This will not indicate that God has forsaken us, however. Only after sin has been allowed to develop to the full will God intervene to bring the history of sin to an end.

In what sense are persecution and hardship indications of approaching deliverance? Luke 21:12-28.

ILLUMINATION: "Satan was the mover in this matter [death decree]. He knew that a deliverer was to be raised up among the Israelites; and by leading the king to destroy their children he hoped to defeat the divine purpose."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 242.

In what later incident did Satan attempt to destroy another Deliverer by the same means? Matt. 2:16-18. How was Satan's plan thwarted in both cases?

II. A DELIVERER IS BORN (Ex. 2:1-10).

When it seemed that Israel's hardships were at their peak, God brought a deliverer or redeemer into the world. Moses is a type, or a prior representation, of Jesus Christ. (See Deut. 18:15; John 1:21-23; 5:46; Acts 7:37.) Of

course, Moses' experience is not a type of Christ in every respect, but notice these striking parallels in their lives and work:

1. Satan tried to destroy both Moses and Jesus at birth through a death decree by the ruling monarch (Ex. 1:15, 16; Matt. 2:16).

2. Both were commissioned to set the captives free (Ex. 3:9, 10; Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:18).

3. Moses relinquished all rights to the throne of Egypt in order to identify himself with God's people. Jesus gave up heaven's throne in order to become one with humankind (Heb. 11:24-26; Phil. 2:6-8).

4. Moses esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11:26). Jesus resisted Satan's temptation to accept the kingdoms of earth, and "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb. 12:2).

5. Moses spent 40 years in Midjan preparing for his mission; Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness preparing for His ministry (Acts 7:29, 30; Matt. 4:1, 2).

6. Both Moses and Jesus stood as mediators between God and sinful humanity (Ex. 32:31, 32; Heb. 3:5, 6).

SEARCH AND LEARN: What other parallels can you discover between Moses and Jesus?

Ex. 32:32; Luke 22:41, 42 _____

Ex. 2:13, 14; John 1:10, 11 _____

Others? _____

THINK IT THROUGH: What would have happened if Moses' family had failed to cooperate with God's plan? Can you think of any instances where God substituted someone else when His first choice did not accept?

Our actions and choices affect our personal relationship to God and our salvation, but they cannot ultimately make or break God's plans. If Moses' family had failed to cooperate with God's plan, the divine purpose would still have been accomplished in a different way. However, Moses and his family would have suffered irreparable loss. God seldom does for us what we can do for ourselves by His grace. But He works with us, blessing our efforts with His divine power.



What precipitated Jochebed's decision to place Moses in the ark made of bulrushes? Ex. 2:3.

Pharaoh had commanded that male Hebrew babies must be thrown into the river. (See Ex. 1:22.) Very well, Moses' mother would obey! She put her son in the river—in an ark made of reeds. The fact that Egyptians made boats of papyrus reeds may have suggested the plan to Jochebed. She may also have had direction from God in the plan she made. (Angels guided Pharaoh's daughter to the spot where Moses' ark lay. See *Patriarchs and*

Prophets, p. 243.) What actually did happen seems to have been in her mind from the beginning. She put the ark where she knew Pharaoh's daughter customarily bathed. She stationed Miriam nearby and obviously coached her in what to say if Pharaoh's daughter found the baby.


The princess realized immediately what was happening and who the "woman" would be whom she would hire to care for the baby. The plot was plain enough, but she entered into the spirit of it. The fiction must be maintained, for she could not admit that she was helping a Hebrew evade her father's command. The wages she offered signified a legal relationship—Moses was to belong to her.

ILLUMINATION: "It was with deep gratitude that she [Jochebed] entered upon her now safe and happy task. She faithfully improved her opportunity to educate her child for God. She felt confident that he had been preserved for some great work. . . . All this rendered her more diligent and careful in his instruction than in that of her other children."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 243.

III. PREPARING FOR DELIVERANCE (Ex. 2:11-25).

1. Moses Makes His Choice (Ex. 2:11-14).

Moses' mother was allowed to direct her son's training for the first years of his life. When he was 12 years old (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 244), Pharaoh's daughter claimed him, taking him to live with her in the court. The priests of Egypt took over his education. Moses received instruction in theology, astronomy, medicine, mathematics, military science, law, and all other subjects considered to be in the intellectual domain of the world's most civilized culture of that day.

 **On what basis did Moses make his choice to cast his lot with his oppressed countrymen? Heb. 11:24-27.**

What constituted Moses' faith? He had faith in the teachings learned from his mother, faith in God's promise of deliverance, faith in his conviction that God had raised him up for this very work, and faith that God would sustain him in it. Looking at the situation rationally, he could see nothing to cause him to cast his lot with the Hebrews. But he looked with the eye of faith to eternal realities, esteeming "the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11:26). This is the kind of faith that we must have in these last days. Every worldly inducement will be offered to blind our eyes to "the recompense of the reward." Only by an abiding faith, developed and nurtured now, will we be able to make the right choice. By his action in killing the Egyptian, Moses irrevocably announced his choice, identifying himself with God's suffering people. He anticipated that they would welcome him as their leader and revolt against the Egyptians. But neither he nor they were ready. Sin and self must be faced and overcome by God's grace.

2. Flight to Midian (Verses 15-22).

Moses fled east and south to a region of the Sinai peninsula known as Midian. The people there were descendants of Abraham through Keturah.

Moses spent the second 40 years of his life there (see Acts 7:23, 30) herding sheep and learning lessons that even the advanced education of Egypt could not teach him. Moses' attitude and his growth in spiritual understanding during the 40 years spent in Midian can be seen perhaps in the names he gave the two sons born to him there—*Gershon*, meaning "a stranger here" (Ex. 2:22), and *Eliezer*, meaning "God is my help" (Ex. 18:3, 4).

3. God Did Not Forget Israel (Ex. 2:23-25).

What led the Israelites to recognize their need of God's help? Ex. 2:23.

In Egypt the Israelites had to a large extent begun to worship Egyptian gods. The knowledge of Jehovah had become dim. The 40 years of preparation not only were needed for Moses, but also for Israel. When the old pharaoh died, they hoped that his successor would alleviate their oppression. But when their hardships continued without change, they finally realized that the God of heaven—the God of their fathers—was their only hope. They cried to Him, and He heard them. God did not forget His people during this long period of waiting, but He could not work for them until they realized their need and turned to Him for leadership.



What does this period of waiting in Egypt indicate about the apparent "delay" in Jesus' second coming? 2 Peter 3:3-13.

Some are disturbed because time has continued long beyond what they thought possible. But God does not forget His people—not in Egypt nor in these last days. Jesus would have returned before now if His people had been ready.

When Moses was prepared to fill the place God had in mind for him, and when the people were receptive to His leading, God worked in a mighty way for their deliverance. So it will be today.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the first part of the chapter entitled "Moses" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 241-251.

SUMMARY: In the providential care God showed His people in ancient Egypt, we can see how much He cares for us and can have the assurance that He will be with us in the difficult days that will precede our deliverance. God has provided a Redeemer for us who is far greater than Moses. He will lead us to the heavenly Canaan.

APPLICATION

- Am I so receptive to God's leading that I will recognize Him at work even if He does not do what I expect Him to do?
- Have I made the conscious choice to look beyond the reality of everyday existence and to focus on the greater reality of eternity?
- What specific opportunities do I have to witness for Christ?

Called at a Burning Bush

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 3:1 through 4:31.



MEMORY TEXT: "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God uses ordinary things and humble people to accomplish extraordinary results in His cause. God has a plan in life for each of us that is as specific as was the responsibility to which He called Moses.

OVERVIEW: Exodus 3:1—4:31

3:1-10	3:11—4:17	4:18-31
God calls Moses at a burning bush	Moses makes excuses	Moses returns to Egypt

INTRODUCTION: The conductor of a great orchestra suddenly stopped the music in the midst of a crescendo. "Where is the piccolo?" he cried, missing the faint notes of the tiniest instrument. Every instrument has its place and importance in God's work as well as in an orchestra.

Each Christian has a work for which God has set him or her apart as truly as God called Moses to deliver Israel. No task God assigns is insignificant. The best preparation for fulfilling God's call to a greater work is to continue faithfully doing the daily work we already have been given. Notice how often God's call came to individuals while they were going about their routine duties—Peter, James, and John while fishing; Saul while looking for lost livestock; David and Moses while caring for sheep; and Matthew while collecting taxes. By God's grace we can turn routine duties into exciting, vibrant service for Christ. Ordinary Christians, in God's hands, can overthrow the wisdom and might of the world.

Dramatic or not, the specific work to which God calls us forms an important part of His general purpose for the deliverance of earth in these last days. This week we will learn significant lessons about filling our place in God's work as we study Moses' call and his reaction to that call.

I. GOD CALLS MOSES AT A BURNING BUSH (Ex. 3:1-10).

God's appearance to Moses is significant. The last such appearance recorded in the Bible was Jacob's night vision before he entered Egypt. (See

Gen. 46:2-4.) At that time God had repeated His promise that Jacob would become a great nation. Now He appeared to Moses to reaffirm that promise and to initiate its fulfillment.

Verse 1. Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai (see Ex. 19:11; Deut. 4:10) where Moses would later meet with God and receive the Ten Commandments. (See Ex. 3:12.)

Verse 2. The “angel of the Lord” is Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Godhead. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 252, 311, 366.)

In what unusual form did God choose to manifest Himself to Moses? Ex. 3:2. What is the significance of a flaming bush which did not burn up? 1 Cor. 1:27.

“The thorn bush may be compared to the people of Israel in their humiliation, despised by the world. The fire, burning but not consuming the bush, may be thought of as representing the refining affliction of slavery. But the bush was not consumed; and in the chastening flame the Lord does not give His people over unto death.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 509. In the same way, God’s people at the end of time will be subjected to fiery trials, but the Lord’s sustaining hand will bring them safely through. (See Ps. 91; Isa. 43:1-3.)

ILLUSTRATION: The Church of Scotland, to remind itself how it was cradled in persecution, has put the emblem of a burning bush on its banner along with the motto: “Yet it was not consumed.”

Perhaps God also intended Moses to realize that, if He could use a common thorn bush in such an unusual, miraculous manner, He could use Moses in an extraordinary way as well. God was calling Moses to a great responsibility as deliverer of Israel. He wanted to assure him that with God all things are possible. God calls each of us to serve as He directs. This assurance particularly was appropriate in the light of the excuses Moses made when confronted with God’s call to deliver Israel.

Verse 10. Coming as it did 40 years after Moses had last been in Egypt, God’s call must have been as startling as a thunderclap to the 80-year-old shepherd. God often calls us to tasks that seem impossible.



II. MOSES MAKES EXCUSES (Ex. 3:11—4:17).

1. Who Am I? (verse 11).

Moses did not always have such a humble opinion of himself. Forty years earlier he had been anxious to seize the responsibility God was now placing upon him. Running ahead of God’s leading, he had killed an Egyptian overseer. He expected then that the Hebrews would rally around him. But they did not do so. At this point in his life Moses hesitated to become Israel’s deliverer, even when God clearly called him to do so.

Which of the following factors do you think was the major reason why Moses’ attitude had changed from impetuous overconfidence to reluctance and a sense of insignificance?

1. The 40 years as a shepherd away from the Egyptian court had caused Moses to see himself and his responsibilities in a different light.
2. He was now 80 years old, out of touch with events in Egypt, accustomed to the quiet solitude of the wilderness and the pastoral life of a shepherd.
3. Moses may have felt that the potential of his younger years had been wasted.

His objection, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh," may have arisen from a healthy sense of his own inadequacies, but it also implies a sense of failure. The implication seems to be: "Don't You remember, Lord, what happened 40 years ago when I tried to deliver Israel? I failed."

We sometimes become discouraged by past failures and present circumstances. When this happens, we are tempted to cry out as Moses did, "Who am I, Lord, to accept the responsibility to which You have called me?"

THINK IT THROUGH: When Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10), did He refer only to eternal life in the future, or did He include life here and now?

Think of what Moses would have missed if he had insisted on staying with his sheep: stirring scenes of confrontation in Egypt, the Passover and Exodus, the miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea, water from a rock, manna from heaven, the tablets of stone containing the Ten Commandments written with God's own finger, the building of the sanctuary. It is true that Moses had hardships, trials, and tears. But how immeasurably richer and more satisfying his life was as a result of following God's will!

From a human standpoint, it does seem foolish to ask a man who had spent the last 40 years herding sheep, to go on such a demanding mission. Facing the world's most powerful monarch, he was to demand the release of a large portion of the nation's labor force and source of its wealth. No wonder Moses responded, "Who am I, Lord, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Ex. 3:11).

How did God answer Moses' first excuse? Ex. 3:12.

God did not argue with Moses' self-assessment. Instead, He gave him a promise. "It's true, Moses. You *are* weak and unqualified and inadequate for this task. But I will be with you. You won't have to go to Pharaoh alone. I'll go with you."

And this is God's response to us when we cry out, "Who am I, Lord, to accept this responsibility You have placed on me?"

SEARCH AND LEARN: Study God's assurances found in the following scripture portions. Then phrase in your own words what these assurances mean to you: Joshua 1:5; Isa. 41:10; Isa. 43:1-5.



2. Who Are You? (Verse 13).

Moses' next excuse grew out of God's answer to his first. There still was some hesitation on his part to accept the divine call.

Why did Moses ask God's name? Did he really not know who God was? Was he asking for information?

Moses knew God's name and who He was. But he "thought of the difficulties to be encountered, of the blindness, ignorance, and unbelief of his people, many of whom were almost destitute of a knowledge of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 252. There probably is a sense here in which Moses was questioning God's sincerity and ability. "Will You truly go with me? Can I trust You?" were the implied questions behind this excuse.

Perhaps Moses thought of his abortive attempt to deliver Israel 40 years earlier. "Where were You then, Lord? Why didn't You help me? How can I be sure that You will help me now? Who are You? What kind of God are You?" Do we sometimes have similar questions?

STUDY AND LEARN: Read 2 Kings 6:8-18. How does the experience outlined in this passage relate to the questions we sometimes have about God's trustworthiness?

Elisha's servant was dismayed to see the Syrian army surrounding Dothan, intent on destroying the prophet and himself. The servant's problem was not that he had seen too much. He had not seen enough. So Elisha prayed that the Lord would open the young man's eyes. The prayer was answered. The servant then was able to see what Elisha had known from the beginning. The Lord's mighty angelic army was encamped about the city to deliver the prophet and his servant.

We may be sure that, if we fail to see God leading us in all the affairs of life, the problem is not with God. Perhaps we need to pray, "Lord, open my eyes." When we do, we will see daily occurrences of His providential care. We need never doubt His love and concern for us.

What was God's reply to Moses' second excuse? Ex. 3:14-16. Why did God answer this way?

Moses had raised the issue of God's trustworthiness and dependability. So God reminded him of His dealings with his forefathers—the mighty deeds He did for them when they trusted Him and followed Him.

"You want to know what kind of God I am? You wonder if you can trust Me? Look at My record. I am the God who led Abraham from his father's home in Ur to a strange country that I gave him as an inheritance. I am the God who prospered him and gave him a son long after it was thought biologically possible. I am the God of that promised son, Isaac. I gave him a wife by direct guidance and led his life. I am the God of Jacob who, in spite of that patriarch's deceit and manipulative behavior, delivered Israel from famine through Joseph. And I will be *your* God, too, Moses. I'll do the same mighty works for you. My name is *Yahweh*. *I am* present. *I am* where you are. *I really am*." It was the second member of the Godhead who was

speaking. It is the same Jesus who says to us today, "I am with you, whatever your need, whatever your circumstances."

When difficult times come the Lord will work for us in the same wonderful way that He worked for men and women of faith in ancient times.

3. They Won't Listen (Exodus 4:1).

Moses' third excuse focused on his inability to command the attention and respect of the Israelites.

"Even if I go, and even if You go with me, the people won't take me seriously. They didn't rally around me when I had prestige and authority. They surely won't listen to me now when I'm a shepherd. I'm simply not equipped to do what You ask of me."

What was God's response to Moses' third excuse? Exodus 4:2-9.

THINK IT THROUGH: Moses was a divine messenger equipped by the Lord to use supernatural means to verify his commission. Should what God did with Moses lead us to expect God to miraculously solve the problems and decisions that we face in our daily living?

God at times intervenes miraculously to solve our problems or to indicate His will. More often, however, He guides us in less spectacular ways—impressing our minds; sending providential guidance; using the counsel of others of His servants; opening opportunities for us, or shutting doors that have seemed to open before us. But these means, although not as clearly supernatural as the miracles Moses was enabled to perform, are no less from God. "Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

4. I Can't Speak (verse 10).

It seems strange that Moses, who had been so eloquently voicing his objections, would try to excuse himself because he was not a ready speaker! Some Bible scholars feel that Moses was referring to the fact that he had been away from Egypt for 40 years and thus was no longer fluent in the Egyptian language. Like Moses, we may feel that our limited abilities disqualify us for large responsibilities and great challenges. But God was no more ready to accept this excuse than He had been to accept Moses' earlier ones.

What was God's response to Moses' fourth excuse? Ex. 4:11, 12.

Our part in carrying out God's plans for us is to accept them; then to go forward in faith, trusting Him for success. After we have cooperated with Him by doing all that we are able to do, success in spiritual matters is God's

responsibility. Our part is to be willing to go and speak; God's part is to tell us what to speak and to make our words effective through the Holy Spirit. We remove a great burden from ourselves by keeping the responsibilities where they belong.



5. Send Someone Else (verse 13).

Moses' final excuse is more of a desperate plea. The Revised Standard Version says, "Oh, my Lord, send, I pray, some other person." The New International Version says plainly, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."

God had countered each objection successfully. Moses had no more excuses to offer. But he still was unwilling to go. In desperation he begged God to look elsewhere for a deliverer. His last excuse simply is a request that God find someone—anyone—else, someone more qualified and with more influence. Of course, God can always find someone else. But He wanted Moses to go. If God calls us to a particular task, it is because He wants *us* to carry out that purpose in His plan. Is it possible that no one else, even if he or she is more talented, can accomplish that purpose in just the way God designs that we should?

What was God's response to Moses' final excuse? Exodus 4:14-17.

God agreed to send Aaron, Moses' brother, but He still did not excuse Moses. Moses must go too. Aaron would help, but the responsibility still rested on Moses.

SEARCH AND LEARN: How much support did Aaron turn out to be to Moses? How much did Moses depend on Aaron to be his spokesman? Ex. 4:30; 5:1; 6:9; 7:10; 8:9, 26, 29; 9:29; 10:9.

After chapter 12, Moses takes over center stage, and Aaron drops out of the main picture—except for infrequent appearances such as agreeing to the people's request for a golden calf like the one they had worshiped in Egypt and his jealous union with Miriam in murmuring against Moses' leadership. Although faithful in the end, Aaron did not provide the consistent support that Moses needed.

God has promised to be with us in our work for Him. But we need human support—someone we can see, another person to work with us. God may grant our request and send someone along with us. He did so for Moses. Jesus later sent His disciples out two-by-two. But Moses came to realize, as we will, that when God places responsibility upon people they do not need to depend on human support. God has promised to provide the help we need. He may, and often does, use other people as channels of that support, but we must learn to look to Him rather than to others.

III. MOSES RETURNS TO EGYPT (Ex. 4:18-31).

God answered each excuse. Moses could muster no further objections. His subsequent actions show that he accepted God's will. He made his prep-

arations to leave Midian and return to Egypt to carry out the role of Israel's deliverer.

Verses 24-26. This strange incident may be a remnant of a longer narrative. We may not have all the facts to fully understand what happened. The story seems to indicate that Moses had neglected to circumcise his younger son in accordance with God's command. Now that he had assumed the role of Israel's deliverer and was to symbolize Jesus, the Redeemer from sin, Moses could not be successful while neglecting to follow a known requirement of God. An angel appeared to him as if to take his life. The story suggests further that Moses' neglect was the result of his wife's opposition. When the angel attacked her husband, Zipporah knew the reason. Without being told, she circumcised the boy herself, although she apparently thought it cruel. Her words indicate that she did so only to save Moses' life and as an unwelcome duty required by her marriage to a Hebrew.

ILLUMINATION: "In his mission to Pharaoh, Moses was to be placed in a position of great peril; his life could be preserved only through the protection of holy angels. But while living in neglect of a known duty, he would not be secure; for he could not be shielded by the angels of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 256.

Verses 29-31. Moses and Aaron found the Israelites receptive to their mission in a way they had not been 40 years before. Both Moses and the people had learned necessary lessons. The time had come for God's deliverance to be manifested.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, the chapter entitled "Moses," pp. 241-256.

SUMMARY: God's established method of operation is to take people and things that the world considers weak and foolish and use them to bring down the things that the world considers wise and strong. God takes ordinary Christians and uses them in extraordinary ways. He calls each of us, as He called Moses, to witness for Him.

APPLICATION

- Do I accept God's claims on my life even in minor areas, or do I make excuses for not following God's commands?
- Do I trust God to provide me the means and power to fill successfully the role He has assigned me in witnessing for Him?

What Are You Doing?

Clarence collected aluminum cans; Ruby did crochet. Ron planned a silent auction, and invited all his friends. Marion recycled newspapers; Minnie made some dolls. Willie took his loose change and kept it in a cup. The quarters, dimes, and pennies soon added up. What are you doing for Sabbath School Investment?

“Let My People Go”

THIS WEEK’S STUDY: Exodus 7:14 through 10:29.



MEMORY TEXT: “Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways” (Ps. 91:9-11).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God’s promise to deliver His people will be carried out, regardless of human opposition. Those who resist Him will be lost while those who accept Him and bring their lives into harmony with Him will be saved, no matter what earthly power may be directed against them.

OVERVIEW: Ex. 7:14—10:29		
7:14—8:19 First Three Plagues	8:20—9:12 Second Set of Three	9:13—10:29 Third Set of Three
Water to blood (7:14-25) Frogs (8:1-15) Gnats (8:16-19)	Flies (8:20-32) Murrain (9:1-7) Boils (9:8-12)	Hail (9:13-35) Locusts (10:1-20) Darkness (10:21-29)

INTRODUCTION: The Bible records fewer miracles than we might think. Most of them can be grouped into three periods, each of which was a critical period that required divine intervention: the time of Moses, when Israel was to be formed into a nation; the time of Elijah and Elisha, when the authority of the prophets was to be established; and the time of Christ, when the world was to be redeemed. This quarter’s lessons deal with the first of these three crisis periods. Today’s lesson takes up God’s miraculous intervention in Egyptian affairs—designed to deliver His people.

When Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh with God’s demand to release Israel, the haughty monarch responded by increasing the labor demanded of the Hebrew slaves. (See Ex. 5.) It seemed to Moses and the Israelites that the situation had become worse than ever. In answer to Moses’ perplexity, God repeated His assurance that He would deliver Israel and explained that Pharaoh would not submit until forced to. This would give God the opportunity to present Himself as the only true God, offering mercy for every honest-hearted soul, Hebrew or Egyptian.

The situation parallels the experience of God's people just before Jesus returns. God's intention to free them from a sinful world and their determination to be faithful to Him will result in harsh measures being taken against them. Like Pharaoh, the world will boast, "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Ex. 5:2). To the saints, their loyalty to God will appear to result in making a bad situation worse. But once again, God will demonstrate His power in a series of plagues that will culminate in the deliverance of His people. In chapter 16 of Revelation, John draws on the Exodus story to describe the final terrors that will be hurled at an unbelieving world. Of the seven final plagues mentioned in that chapter, five have definite counterparts among the plagues that befell Egypt.

Today's lesson looks at the first nine of the ten plagues poured out on the Egyptians. The tenth will be the subject of next week's lesson.



GENERAL NOTES ON THE PLAGUES: Before we take up each plague, notice these points:

1. The plagues were given not only to demonstrate God's power and judgment, but also to reveal His mercy. Although the Egyptians had "long rejected the knowledge of God, the Lord still gave them opportunity for repentance. . . . The long-suffering One, slow to anger, and full of compassion, gave each judgment time to do its work; the Egyptians, cursed through the very objects they had worshiped, had evidence of the power of Jehovah, and all who would, might submit to God and escape His judgments."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 333.

2. Who hardened Pharaoh's heart? Although verses such as Exodus 8:15, 32 and 9:34 say that Pharaoh hardened his heart against the evidence of God's power, other texts speak of *God* hardening the king's heart so that he would not agree to let Israel go. (See Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:20.) This has perplexed many Bible students because it implies that Pharaoh was a pawn in God's hand—being manipulated by God to resist Him and then being punished for doing so.

First, we must keep in mind that many in Old Testament times viewed God as in ultimate control of all things. Therefore, nothing happened apart from His knowledge and for which He was not, in a sense, responsible. For this reason, the Old Testament sometimes speaks of God as actively doing that which He permits others to do. (See 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:1; Isa. 45:7.)

Second, it was God's manifestation of His power in the plagues that led to Pharaoh's stubborn resistance. As the same sunshine can melt wax and harden clay, so the judgments of God and the influence of His Spirit produce different effects on different hearts.

3. The nine plagues studied in this lesson can be arranged according to the following chart. The sets of plagues grew progressively worse. The first three plagues, although loathsome, did not actually threaten life. The second set inflicted bodily harm and affected property. The third set did not originate from agencies within Egypt, but from the general system of universal nature as if the elements themselves were warring against the Egyptians. Within each set, the individual plagues increased in seriousness. Study the chart carefully in order to discover other relationships.

	Plague	Warning	Goshen	Magicians	Pharaoh	Method
First Triad	Water to blood	Full	Not exempt	Imitate	Refuses	Aaron's rod
	Frogs	Less full	Not exempt	Imitate	Refuses	Aaron's rod
	Gnats	None	Not exempt	Fail	Refuses	Aaron's rod
Second Triad	Flies	Full	Exempt		Yields slightly	No rod used
	Murrain	Less full	Exempt		Refuses	No rod used
	Boils	None	Exempt	Withdraw	Refuses	No rod used
Third Triad	Hail	Full	Exempt		Confesses sin	Moses' rod
	Locusts	Less full	Exempt	Interpose	Confesses sin	Moses' rod
	Darkness	None	Exempt		Promises falsely	Moses' rod

4. Each plague, although painfully literal, was at the same time aimed at challenging some aspect of Egypt's religious beliefs. The main issue was the reality of Jehovah and His power in contrast to the false gods of Egypt.

5. The first nine plagues were miraculous acts of God, but they also had some relationship to naturally occurring diseases and pests to which Egypt was normally liable. They were shown to be divine judgments by their unprecedented intensity and also by the fact that they appeared and disappeared at the word of God's spokesman, Moses.

In addition, they contained distinctly supernatural characteristics that set them apart from similar natural phenomena.

6. The plagues probably lasted for some nine or ten months. The final plague and the Passover took place in what was to become the first month of Israel's religious year. Abib, or Nisan as it was later called, corresponds to the last of March and the first of April. That would mean that the plagues began in early summer of the previous year.



I. THE FIRST TRIAD OF PLAGUES (Ex. 7:14—8:19).

1. Water to Blood (Ex. 7:14-25).

From June through the autumn, the Nile normally took on a reddish color, either from chalk particles whose source was the red soil upstream or from microscopic algae that gave the water an appearance of blood.

What characteristics make it clear that this plague was more than just a natural occurrence?

It would not have made much impression on the Egyptians if Moses had called down upon the river something that happened yearly, even if in an intensified form. Nor did the annual "red Nile" kill the fish within it, as did

this plague. Verses 19-21 indicate that water in ponds and even previously drawn water left in jars turned to blood. This certainly would not be the case if only the normal reddening of the river had taken place.

For seven days (verse 25) this disgusting change in the water caused intense hardship and discomfort. The Egyptians obtained some relief apparently by digging sandpits to filter the water (verse 24).

Beyond the physical discomfort was the attack on the sacred Nile, the great water god, Hapi, and the sacred fish which died in the polluted water. The Nile, source of fertility for Egypt, was worshiped under several names and symbols. The pharaoh sometimes officiated at religious festivals honoring the Nile-god. Hymns to the river are preserved in inscriptions.

Pharaoh boldly proclaimed, "I know not the Lord." Now the challenge was clear. The God of heaven defeated the sacred river god of Egypt, the source of life for the nation.

Which of the seven last plagues correspond to this first plague on Egypt? What reason is given for this affliction? Rev. 16:3-7.

The similarity of Egypt's first plague with the second and third of earth's final plagues is unmistakable. The fact that the Egyptian plagues were literal argues that the seven last plagues are literal events as well. These plagues come as a result of persecution against God's people. Having shed innocent blood, the unrepentant world receives the just reward of its actions. (See Rev. 13:10.)

2. Frogs (Ex. 8:1-15).

Frogs were numerous following the annual flooding of the Nile. Plagues of the amphibians were not uncommon in ancient times. But the miraculous intensity and the fact that the frogs appeared and died at God's word indicate the supernatural quality of the event. Although the magicians imitated this plague to a degree (as they had the first), they were not able to rid the country of the influx of frogs. Pharaoh had to acknowledge God's power by asking Moses to remove the plague.

This plague also was an attack on Egypt's gods. The Egyptians believed that Hequa, the frog-headed goddess, had a part in creating the world. Frogs were worshiped as symbols of fertility in Egypt. Because they were forbidden to kill them, the people had to endure the swarms of frogs that invaded their homes.

NOTE how Pharaoh began the process of hardening his heart. Under the pressure of this plague he unwillingly promised to obey God, but then refused to do so when the plague was lifted. This pattern continued throughout his confrontation with Moses.

THINK IT THROUGH. Do we sometimes make promises to God as a result of His providential leading that later we fail to carry out when life becomes more "normal"?

3. Gnats (Ex. 8:16-19).

This plague is called *lice* in the King James Version in harmony with the

description of the Jewish historian Josephus and the thoughts expressed by Hebrew commentators on Scripture. The Hebrew word is more accurately translated as “gnats” or “sand fleas.” Such vermin were especially detested by the Egyptians. The priests shaved their entire bodies every other day to make sure that they harbored none of these insects. During this plague, however, they and the entire nation suffered from them, as did the sacred animals of the temple.

How did the magicians explain their failure to imitate this miraculous plague? Verse 19.

This plague, like the third in each set, came without advance warning.



II. THE SECOND TRIAD OF PLAGUES (Ex. 8:20—9:12).

In this second grouping, property as well as persons were involved. The portion of the land where the Israelites lived was spared these plagues. Moses no longer made use of the rod, as if to confirm that no magic resided in that piece of wood.

1. Flies (Ex. 8:20-32).

The Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, uses a specific word meaning “dog flies.” These were large, venomous insects whose sting caused bloody swellings on animals. They often attacked the nose and eyelids of humans, causing eye diseases and blindness. Others have identified this plague with beetles. The beetle was considered to be the incarnation of a sun-god, Khepra. Egypt’s most sacred symbol, sculptured and painted everywhere, was the common dung beetle.

Moses warned Pharaoh fully of this coming plague and of the fact that God would make a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites. The implication is that the Israelites had suffered under the first three plagues along with the Egyptians. The issues were now being more clearly drawn. The Israelites would share the blessing of their King even as the Egyptians would share the curse of their ruler.

What important principle regarding the effect of sin is demonstrated in Pharaoh’s attitude? Prov. 5:22; 1 Tim. 4:2.

Repeated disregard of God’s convicting Spirit results in greater insensitivity to Him. This helps explain how Pharaoh could persist in his rebellion in the face of ever-clearer evidence and ever-increasing calamities. Sin’s bewitching effect makes sinners less aware of their true situation. This will be most evident in the days just before Jesus returns.

2. Murrain (Ex. 9:1-7).

The general Hebrew word for “plague” is used here, indicating a contagious disease affecting all the livestock in Egypt. This was a fundamental assault on the worship of animals. Among other things, the Egyptians worshipped calves, the bull Apis, a cow goddess, and the ram.

How is this experience repeated in the last days? What specific warning is given to God's people? Rev. 18:1-4.

In these last days people also are making gods of their possessions and their luxuries. God will destroy last-day Babylon and the riches men have amassed by bringing destructive plagues upon them. God urges us to separate ourselves now from Babylon in order to escape her plagues.

3. Boils (Ex. 9:8-12).

This plague finds an end-time counterpart in Revelation 16:2 where a "noisome and grievous sore" ("foul and evil sores," RSV) falls upon those who bear the mark of apostasy to God and worship the image of the beast. This plague not only affected property but for the first time came directly on the people themselves—"boils breaking out in sores" (Ex. 9:10, RSV).

ILLUMINATION: "The priests and magicians had hitherto encouraged Pharaoh in his stubbornness, but now a judgment had come that reached even them. Smitten with a loathsome and painful disease, their vaunted power only making them contemptible, they were no longer able to contend against the God of Israel. The whole nation was made to see the folly of trusting in the magicians, when they were not able to protect even their own persons."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 267.

III. THE THIRD TRIAD OF PLAGUES (Ex. 9:13—10:29).

In this last grouping, Moses resumed the use of the rod in initiating the plagues on Egypt. These three scourges include a terrifying aspect because they come from nature itself.

1. Hail (Ex. 9:13-35).

Verses 31, 32 specify the crops growing at the time of the hail. This gives a clue to the fact that this plague occurred in late winter, either in late January or early February, two or three months before the Exodus.

How clearly did God warn Pharaoh as to what would happen? What specific issues were involved? Ex. 9:14-19.

For the first time clear mention is made of Egyptians who, unlike their king, feared God and by their obedience avoided the plagues. (See verses 20, 21.) The unprecedented hail, accompanied by thunder and lightning so severe that it seemed to run along the ground, destroyed people, beasts, and crops exposed to it. The last of the seven final plagues—the events that surround the battle of Armageddon—is accompanied by thunder, lightning, and a "great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail" (Rev. 16:21).

2. Locusts (Ex. 10:1-20).

February or early March is the usual time for locusts to appear in Egypt. These insects still cause serious problems in that part of the world. At

Moses' warning, Pharaoh's officials urged him to allow Israel to leave. "Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" they asked (verse 7). Although Pharaoh appeared to negotiate with Moses, his rebellious heart was unchanged.

3. Darkness (Ex. 10:21-29).

An eclipse cannot account for this darkness because of the three-day duration of the plague. Many commentators have pointed out the fact that about this time of year—April—a wind called "el hamsin," a hot, south wind that often blows for a 50-day period, afflicts Egypt. Even more intense is the "samum," a hot, deadly wind that rarely lasts more than 15 or 20 minutes at a time. It carries clouds of dust that obscure the sunlight. A "darkness that may be felt" (verse 21) suggests the clouds of obscuring dust carried by such a wind. In connection with this plague, Ellen White speaks of an "atmosphere [that] was very oppressive, so that breathing was difficult."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 272. If God used the wind to bring the darkness, it was no less supernatural both in duration and intensity as well as being timed with Moses' announcement. If it were not supernatural it would not have made an impression on the Egyptians.

The miraculous darkness was a direct attack on Ra, the sun god and chief Egyptian deity. Every Egyptian king considered himself the "son of Ra." Under the signal defeat of the sun, Pharaoh made his final concession—the women and children could go with the men to sacrifice to God, but the livestock must stay behind. When Moses rejected this offer, Pharaoh revealed his true animosity, warning Moses that the final showdown was at hand. Moses was commanded not to come into his presence again.

What spiritual truth does Matthew 5:14-16 bring out? How does it relate to the plague of darkness?



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:

1. Psalms 18:4-14; 78:42-52; 105:27-38. These poetic accounts of the plagues on Egypt show how later generations of Israelites remembered and interpreted God's great acts.

2. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, the chapter entitled "The Plagues of Egypt," pp. 257-272.

SUMMARY: The terrible plagues Egypt endured were not arbitrary punishments by a vengeful God. They were the inevitable results of Egypt's treatment of the Israelites and of Pharaoh's refusal to accept God's will. The seven last plagues will be poured out on an unrepentant world as the result of worldwide apostasy and persistence in sin.

APPLICATION

- What have I learned from studying the results that follow persistent rebellion against God's will?
- What should I do about warning others about the judgments to come?
- Have I yielded my will in total commitment to God?

Set Free by the Lamb

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 11:1 through 13:16.



MEMORY TEXT: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:7, 8).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Israel's most important festival, the Passover, commemorated deliverance from slavery and the deliverance of the firstborn through the death of the lamb. This yearly festival pointed forward to the time when Jesus would become the Passover sacrifice that sets us free.

OVERVIEW: Exodus 11:1—13:16

11:1-10	12:1-28	12:29-42	12:43—13:16
Pharaoh warned	Israel warned	Israel freed	A memorial established

INTRODUCTION: Less than a year before leaving Egypt a free people, Israel had no clear indication that their deliverance would come soon. For some time they had been slaves to Pharaoh, serving under cruel oppression with no hope of release. In a short period of months, God's judgments had fallen upon their captors. Now they found themselves at liberty, traveling to the Promised Land, although they did not enter for more than 40 years.

When just before his death Moses reviewed with the people God's wonderful leading in setting them free, he reminded them, "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Deut. 7:7, 8).

God did not deliver Israel because they earned it. In fact, they repeatedly failed to respond to His love. He delivered them solely on the basis of grace. He loved them and had promised them mercy.

God has saved us for precisely the same reasons. We do not deserve His grace. We do not merit His love or promised deliverance from sin. In spite of our rebelliousness, He loves us and has sent His Son to be the Passover Lamb who died in our place. His undeserved grace, wonderful beyond our comprehension, has set us free from Satan and sin and started us on the road to the Promised Land.



I. PHARAOH WARNED (Ex. 11:1-10).

Through nine devastating plagues Pharaoh stubbornly resisted God's will. The land was in ruins, yet he still refused to give in. One plague was yet to be poured out, the most horrible plague of all.

To what previous action of the Egyptian rulers does this tenth plague have reference? What spiritual principle does it illustrate? Ex. 1:15, 16; Gal. 6:7; Luke 6:38.

A pharaoh had decreed that all Hebrew male infants should die. Now a pharaoh was to reap the harvest of that cruelty in the death of his own first-born son. Nothing less drastic would bring about even temporary acceptance of God's will. By Pharaoh's continued opposition to God, he had forfeited the Lord's protection. Sinners who reject God's mercy must accept the inevitable results of their choice. But God first warned Pharaoh through Moses of the awful consequences of continued resistance.

What special relationship did Israel hold to God that made this final plague so appropriate? Ex. 4:22, 23.

"When the demand for Israel's release had been first presented to the king of Egypt, the warning of the most terrible of the plagues had been given. Moses was directed to say to Pharaoh, 'Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born.' Exodus 4:22, 23. Though despised by the Egyptians, the Israelites had been honored by God. . . . In the special blessings and privileges accorded them, they had pre-eminence among the nations, as the first-born son had among brothers."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 273.

Pharaoh had hardened his heart almost to the point of no return. Refusal this time apparently would place him beyond the possibility of repentance. When he let Israel go at last it was because he was forced to submit, not because he chose to follow God's will.

When in mercy God gave Pharaoh final opportunity to yield to His will what was Pharaoh's response? Ex. 10:28, 29.

Pharaoh had sinned away his day of grace. Nothing more could be done for him. God would now work to bring His people out of slavery.

Likewise, near the end of time, God will plead with sinners, but most will stubbornly harden their hearts and banish His Spirit from their lives. When probation closes for the world, God will speedily lead His people out of their bondage.



II. ISRAEL WARNED (Ex. 12:1-28).

Because the Exodus marked a new beginning for Israel as a chosen na-

tion, God decreed that the month in which they went free (Abib, later called Nisan) would become the beginning of the sacred year. In that month the Passover, first and most important of the yearly festivals or sabbaths, would be commemorated every year. Not only was the Passover commemorative but it also was typical. It commemorated their miraculous deliverance from Egypt and pointed forward to the deliverance from sin that was to be brought about by the Passover Lamb—Jesus Christ.

After warning Pharaoh of the coming death of every firstborn, God gave Israel instructions on how they could avoid the disaster that was to fall on the Egyptians. These instructions not only were given for the first Passover observed in Egypt but also were given for a continuing memorial to be observed throughout their history. (See Ex. 12:14-20; 13:1-16.)

The time for their deliverance had come! Notice that their preparation involved both spiritual and physical aspects. They were to prepare the Passover lamb and apply the blood to their doorposts. This symbolized spiritual acceptance of God's salvation. They were also to be dressed with staff in hand ready to leave at a moment's notice. We who wait for the Lord's appearing in these last days need to be prepared spiritually and physically for eternity.

How much did Israel understand of the symbolism of the Passover?

No doubt the Israelites did not grasp the fullness of all that the Passover symbolized. The revelation of the Lamb of God and His role in the plan of salvation was progressive. However, they must have known that the service had meaning beyond merely commemorating their escape from Egypt. The symbol of the sacrificial lamb had been instituted in Eden along with the promise of a "seed" that would bruise the serpent's head. The patriarchs had continued to use the simple altar and to sacrifice lambs. During the years of bondage, Israel to a large degree had lost sight of God and His worship. Their freedom was to be spiritual as well as physical. God planned to re-educate them in His ways. He began with the institution of the Passover feast.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What parallels can we discern this side of the cross that demonstrate how strikingly Jesus fulfilled the symbol of the Passover Lamb?

Ex. 12:3; John 1:29; Isa. 53:7 _____

Ex. 12:5; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19 _____

Ex. 12:6; Matt. 27:46-50 _____

Ex. 12:7; 1 Pet. 1:2 _____

Ex. 12:10; John 19:31 _____

Ex. 12:46; John 19:36 _____

In *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 277-279, Ellen White draws these addi-

tional lessons from the Passover event: (1) The hyssop used in sprinkling the blood was a symbol of purification. (2) In the same way that the lamb not only was to be killed but also eaten, God's people not only must believe on Jesus for forgiveness, but also must receive constant nourishment through His Word. (3) The bitter herbs eaten with the lamb represented the sorrow God's people should feel because of their sins. (4) The putting away of leaven during Passover represents the putting away of sin. (5) The Israelites showed their faith by actually applying the blood to the doorpost. In the same way, we who are saved through our faith in Jesus' blood will demonstrate our faith by our works.



III. ISRAEL FREED (Ex. 12:29-42).

At midnight the destroying angel did as God had warned—the firstborn of every unrepentant Egyptian and the firstborn of their livestock perished. This, the most dreadful of the plagues, climaxed the attack on Egyptian gods (see Ex. 12:12). Pharaoh was considered divine. As the heir to the throne, his firstborn would have been deified as well. The Egyptians worshiped a sacred bull, Apis, as well as sacred rams, cows, snakes, crocodiles, cats, and other animals. These firstborn animals died, powerless to protect themselves or their worshipers from the plague.

ILLUMINATION: “Just as truly as the destroying angel passed through Egypt and laid the icy hand of death upon the brow of every first-born child who was not shielded by the blood, so the second death, from which there will be no resurrection, will fall upon every one who has not been cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ.”—Stephen N. Haskell, *The Cross and Its Shadow* (South Lancaster, Mass.: The Bible Training School, 1914), p. 95.

THINK IT THROUGH: Why did God require the blood on the doorpost in order for Israel to be spared? Did He need this sign to recognize the homes of the Israelites? (See Ex. 12:13, 22, 23.)

ILLUMINATION: “And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. . . . And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men” (Ex. 12:29, 33). “The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity.”

“It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 634, 636.

Accompanying the Israelites as they left Egypt was a “mixed multitude” (Ex. 12:38)—Egyptians who had learned to worship the true God. Among them, no doubt, were many who hoped to avoid further plagues, slaves and prisoners of war who took advantage of the confusion to escape, and some who simply became caught up in the excitement. This multitude caused continual problems for Israel on their journey, attempting to turn their hearts

from God. When God's last-day people leave their captivity, no mixed multitude will accompany them into the Promised Land. Only those who have truly had the blood of the Lamb applied to their hearts will be set free.

Verses 40, 41. All that God had predicted to Abraham regarding his posterity and their sojourn in Egypt had been fulfilled.

IV. A MEMORIAL ESTABLISHED (Ex. 12:43—13:16).

God made it clear to Israel that the Passover instructions were not one-time instructions. The service was to have continuing significance until the Passover Lamb Himself would institute a new service that would fulfill the symbolism and give it deeper meaning.

How widespread was the application of the Passover? Was it for the Israelites only? Ex. 12:43, 44, 48, 49.

ILLUMINATION: "No stranger could partake of the Passover feast; but there were provisions made in the old Levitical service whereby a stranger, by complying with certain forms and ceremonies, could become an Israelite, and then partake of the Passover. Sin debars mankind from sharing in the blessings promised the children of God, but there is a remedy for sins: . . . 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' [1 John 2:1]."—Stephen N. Haskell, *The Cross and Its Shadow*, p. 99.

What service did Jesus institute just before His death to take the place of the Passover? Matt. 26:1-29.

ILLUMINATION: "Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages.

"The Passover was ordained as a commemoration of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God had directed that, year by year, as the children should ask the meaning of this ordinance, the history should be repeated. Thus the wonderful deliverance was to be kept fresh in the minds of all. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was given to commemorate the great deliverance wrought out as the result of the death of Christ. Till He shall come the second time in power and glory, this ordinance is to be celebrated. It is the means by which His great work for us is to be kept fresh in our minds."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 652, 653.



**What dual significance does the Lord's Supper have for us today?
1 Cor. 11:23-26.**

As was true of the Passover, the Lord's Supper points both backward and forward. It symbolizes the death of the Passover Lamb on the cross, but it also points forward to the coming of the Lamb of God the second time to give final freedom to His people. At the cross the Lamb overcame Satan and victory was assured. (See Heb. 2:14, 15.) But the freedom won there will not be realized in its fullness until He comes in glory.

Taking the unleavened bread and the unfermented wine, Jesus said, "This is my body which is broken for you, . . . my blood which is shed for you" (1 Cor. 11:19, 20). In this way, the Lord took the familiar symbols of the Passover and filled them with fresh meaning. He transformed the Passover into a new service celebrating the saving work of the Passover Lamb. The disciples did not fully understand His words that evening, but they came to realize their significance later.

What did Jesus mean when He said in John 6:54, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life"?

This symbolism can be applied to participating in the Lord's Supper. When we do, we reaffirm our decision to accept Jesus' death as our own. In the same way that the bread and wine are taken into our bodies and become a part of us in a literal sense, in a spiritual, but no less real manner, Jesus' body and blood which they represent become a part of our lives. By receiving His Word and doing the things He has commanded we receive His life, which is eternal. By faith we see fresh meaning in His sacrifice, and our souls assimilate the spiritual life of Christ.

In John 15 Jesus uses a different illustration of the same truth. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. . . . If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered" (verses 4, 6). We have life only through Christ. By taking His life into our own—by abiding in Him through faith—we have eternal life.

What attitude does Paul say we should bring to our relationship with Christ, our Passover Lamb? 1 Cor. 5:6-8.

All leaven was removed from Jewish homes prior to the Passover. On the evening before the service, the father of the house made a symbolic search with a candle to remove any leaven found. After his search, he recited, "All manner of leaven that is in my possession which I have not seen nor removed, shall be null and accounted as the dust of the earth."

This is the practice Paul is referring to here. "Purge out therefore the old leaven . . . let us keep the feast, not with . . . leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (verses 7, 8).



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-30 and *The Desire of Ages*, the chapter entitled "In Remembrance of Me," pp. 652-661. Also study *The Great Controversy*, the chapter entitled "God's People Delivered," pp. 635-652.

"It was not by chance that the Saviour was crucified upon Friday, the sixth day of the week. For centuries God had ordained that the day following the Passover, the fifteenth day of the month Abib, should be kept as a ceremonial sabbath, thus typifying the fact that Christ, the real Passover, would be offered the day before the Sabbath. The Passover lamb was slain between the two evenings, or about the ninth hour of the day. The great antitypical Lamb, as He hung between heaven and earth an offering for sinful man, about the ninth hour, cried, 'It is finished,' and yielded up His life an offering for sin. At this hour the priests were preparing to slay the lamb at the temple, but they were arrested in their work. All nature responded to that cry of agony from the Son of God. The earth reeled to and fro, and unseen hands rent the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom, showing by an unmistakable sign that type had met antitype. The shadow had met the substance which had cast the shadow. No longer was man to approach God by means of offerings of animals, but he was to come boldly to a throne of grace, and present his request in the precious name of 'Christ our Passover.'"—Stephen N. Haskell, *The Cross and Its Shadow*, pp. 97, 98.

SUMMARY: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, setting us free. The victory won on the cross will be ours in its fulness when Jesus comes to lead us to the heavenly Canaan. Meanwhile, we live free in Him, looking forward in faith.

APPLICATION

- Have I experienced the freedom from guilt that Christ has provided for me by His sacrifice?
- Have I applied the blood to my heart, thus making it possible for me to follow all of God's known will?
- Do I take advantage of every opportunity to participate in the Lord's Supper?
- What can I learn from this lesson about Jesus that I can share with my friends and neighbors?

God Multiplies the Principal

A little boy invested five loaves and two fishes and left the results to the Master. He multiplied the principal, and fed 5,000. What are you doing for Sabbath School Investment this year?

Sabbath School Investment raised \$3.5 million for missions last year. Choose a project and take God into partnership. Watch Him turn your efforts into money for missions.

Crisis at the Red Sea

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 13:17 through 15:21.



MEMORY TEXT: "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isa. 43:1, 2).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God delivers His people when they cease depending on their own efforts and place their trust entirely in Him.

OVERVIEW: Exodus 13:17—15:21

13:17—14:4	Divine guidance
14:5-9	Pharaoh's pursuit
14:10-18	Divine encouragement
14:19-22	Miraculous passage
14:23-31	Divine deliverance
15:1-21	The song by the sea

INTRODUCTION: Probably the most difficult lesson human beings have to learn is that of total dependence upon God. Our natures tend to self-sufficiency. Young children quickly show their independence of their parents by wanting to do things themselves. Within bounds this desire is normal and healthy. Children must take increasing responsibility for themselves. But in our relationship with God, trying to do everything ourselves can be fatal. While God expects us to take a proper responsibility for ourselves, He knows that "without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). This is true physically and spiritually.

As soon as He brought Israel out of Egypt, God purposely led them into an apparently hopeless situation—the sea before them, the Egyptian army behind them, and mountains hemming them in at the side. They must learn at the very outset of their relationship with God that deliverance—from their enemies, from want, or from sin—comes not from self-sufficiency but from God. This lesson is as necessary today as it was then. It will become even more essential as God's people move into the troubled scenes of earth's last days. They will need to trust God completely in times of crisis.

"The crossing of the Red Sea is one of the most beautiful stories in the Scriptures, both from a religious and a literary standpoint. The destruction of the Egyptians is described with a masterly hand. For Israel this was an event of the highest importance, both nationally and spiritually, while for the church redeemed on Calvary it foreshadowed the ultimate victory over all its enemies. It is frequently mentioned elsewhere in the Bible (cf. Josh.

2:10; 4:23; 24:6-8; Neh. 9:11; Pss. 66:6; 77:17-20; 78:13; 106:9; 114:3; 136:13-15; Isa. 63:12, 13; 1 Cor. 10:1, 2; Heb. 11:29; Rev. 15:3).”—W. H. Gispen, *Exodus*, p. 135.

SUN**I. DIVINE GUIDANCE (Ex. 13:17—14:4).**

When Israel left Egypt, God immediately took over the direction of their route of march. At first He apparently guided them through direct commands given to Moses. (See Ex. 14:1, 2.) Shortly after, He gave the pillar of cloud to lead them. (See Ex. 13:21, 22.)

Three great routes led east out of Egypt. The northernmost, through the “land of the Philistines” (13:17), was the shortest and most direct road to Canaan. The distance this way would have been only about 160 miles (257 kilometers). The second, the “way to Shur” (Gen. 16:7), was the central route that crossed long stretches of desert. The third, which began by taking them south—the opposite direction from Canaan, was the “way of the wilderness of the Red sea” (Ex. 13:18). God led them this latter way because they were not ready to face the warlike Philistines on the northern route and because He had a lesson of trust to teach them beside the Red Sea.

What interesting insight does Paul give into the “pillar of a cloud” (Ex. 13:21) that directed Israel’s course? 1 Cor. 10:1-4.

“Ancient army commanders at times used smoke or fire signals to guide their marching forces through trackless wastelands. Israel’s pillar of cloud and fire, however, was not produced by ordinary means, but was a miraculous manifestation of the presence of Christ.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 562.



The last mention in the historical record of the Exodus of the cloudy pillar guiding the Israelites to the Promised Land is found in Numbers 16:42. The guiding pillar of cloud by day and protecting fire by night remained with the Israelites throughout their wanderings. (See Num. 9:15-23.) Even when the people were unfaithful to God, the cloud remained to guide them.

THINK IT THROUGH: What are the implications of Jesus' promise in Hebrews 13:5?

Israel no sooner had begun their march than God commanded Moses to turn south, thus keeping the sea on their left. (See Ex. 14:1, 2.) No doubt this seemed strange and incomprehensible to the people. By continuing their original direction they could have reached Canaan in five or six days. Instead, God led them out of their way. They soon found themselves in a precarious position—camped “between Migdol [a tower connected with a border fortification tower] and the sea” (verse 2). Mountain ridges hemmed them in to the south. Had they followed their own wisdom, they would never have chosen this route. God often leads us through apparent difficulties to greater good. As was true with Israel, our only safe course is to follow the divine guidance even though we may not understand the reasons. (See Prov. 14:12; Isa. 30:21.)

Their strange and circuitous route would lead Pharaoh to think that they were lost and confused—“entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in” (Ex. 14:3). Seemingly at Pharaoh's mercy, they were there because they followed divine guidance. God wanted to teach them to trust in His care.



II. PHARAOH'S PURSUIT (Ex. 14:5-9).

Demonstrating the unchanged nature of his rebellious heart, Pharaoh determined to take advantage of his former slaves' apparent confusion and helplessness. Assembling his chariots and men of war, he set out to punish and recapture the Israelites. Josephus (*Antiquities*, II, xv, 3) says the Egyptian forces numbered 50,000 horsemen and 200,000 foot soldiers. But even if this figure is inflated, the Egyptian military forces felt confident of overwhelming a much larger number of the untrained, unwarlike Hebrews.

What do we face today that can be compared to the danger that Israel experienced at the Red Sea? What may we expect for the future? 1 Peter 5:8; John 15:18-21; 16:2, 3.

Satan pursues the individual who is released from the bondage of sin and sets out on life's journey free in Christ. Like Pharaoh, Satan will not release his captives easily nor admit defeat without a fierce struggle. He continues to stalk us with temptations, doubts, and discouragement. When we are brought into circumstances that appear hopeless our only recourse is to “stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord” (Ex. 14:13).

More specifically, Satan will inspire wicked men at earth's last hour to pursue God's people with the intention of destroying their lives.

What laws will be passed against those who refuse to worship the beast and the image? Rev. 13:15.

ILLUMINATION: "When the protection of human laws shall be withdrawn from those who honor the law of God, there will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction. As the time appointed in the decree draws near, the people will conspire to root out the hated sect."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 635.

TUE

III. DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT (Ex. 14:10-18).

SEARCH AND LEARN: Discouragement often follows exalted spiritual experiences. Partly this may be a reaction to any intense sensation, but it also involves Satan's effort to break our hold on God. How is this demonstrated in the following passages?

1. 1 Kings 19:1-14 _____
2. Matt. 11:2, 3 _____

Israel experienced the same effect after the excitement of the midnight departure from Egypt. "The first joy of escape from bondage has subsided. The terrors of the desert, the mountains and the sea—the weariness, the hunger and the thirst of the long march over yielding sand and rolling stones—now make even a home in Egypt and a life of bondage seem attractive. This is not the way to the land promised unto their fathers. And it is impossible to go on in this direction if they would. Three days of freedom have been worse than all the woes of the house of bondage."—Daniel March, *Night Scenes in the Bible* (Zeigler, McCurdy Co., 1869), p. 130.

When the Israelites saw the dust clouds of the approaching armies, their despondency turned into panic. They were hemmed in by mountains to the south, the sea to the east before them, and from the north—the way they had just come—Pharaoh's chariots and cavalry were bearing down on them. Surrounded on all sides by difficulties and dangers, they had only one direction open to them—up. They must look to God for divine deliverance.

What did the people do in their emergency? Ex. 14:10-12.

Their prayer was not one of faith, but of fear. The murmuring that was to characterize their years of wilderness wandering began at this time. They reproached Moses as if he were the cause of their predicament. They wished they were slaves back in Egypt.

THINK IT THROUGH: Do we become like the Israelites when trying times come? It is easy to remain strong in faith when life goes smoothly. The test comes when life falls apart. Then we demonstrate whether our faith will fall apart or whether it will be able to stand.

What determines our spiritual success in dealing with crises? Matt. 7:24-27; 1 Cor. 3:11-15.

“In summer there is no noticeable difference between evergreens and other trees; but when the blasts of winter come, the evergreens remain unchanged, while other trees are stripped of their foliage.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 602. Today is the appointed time to prepare for the crises of life. We must take advantage *daily* of the opportunities for spiritual growth.

God brought the Israelites to the Red Sea crisis at the beginning of their journey in order to teach them dependence upon Him. At the Red Sea they stood utterly helpless. No human efforts could save them. God’s people at the end of time will be in an equally hopeless situation with evil forces determined to crush out their lives. Before God could work to deliver them, the Hebrews needed to realize their total inability to save themselves. Only then would they turn to Him in complete trust.



What was Moses’ response to the people’s panic-filled reproaches? Ex. 14:13, 14.

Moses’ answer did not imply that the Israelites should do nothing in their predicament. The emphasis was upon the fact that God alone could save them from Pharaoh. This was to be the source of their courage as they went forward in faith. Because the pillar of cloud had led them to this spot, they could rest secure in God’s leading.

IV. MIRACULOUS PASSAGE (Ex. 14:19-22).

The cloud moved majestically to a position in the rear of the Israelite hosts, screening them from the Egyptians. Dark on that side, it was light for the Hebrews. Because dark, swirling mists disoriented the Egyptians, they could not continue their pursuit.

The rod by which God brought destruction on the Egyptians during the plagues now was used at His command to bring salvation to Israel. The waters, parted by a violent wind, stood up like walls on either side. The wind also served to dry the seabed for passage. Where the way had seemed hopeless God made a way of escape.

What lesson does Paul draw from this event in terms of the power of sin? 1 Cor. 10:13.

ILLUMINATION: “Often the Christian life is beset by dangers, and duty seems too hard to perform. . . . Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, ‘Go forward.’ We should obey this command, even though our eyes cannot penetrate the darkness, and we feel the cold waves about our feet. . . . Those who defer obedience till every shadow of uncertainty disappears and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey at all.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 290.

V. DIVINE DELIVERANCE (Ex. 14:23-31).

As the Israelites reached the opposite shore, morning was breaking. The Egyptians, disoriented in the darkness of the cloud, may not have realized at first where they were as they pursued their prey into the sea. But even when the situation became more apparent, they continued to pursue the Israelites. God caused their chariot wheels to mire in the now soft seabed, creating chaos among them. Psalm 77:16-20 adds the fact that thunder and lightning shook the earth in convulsive storms.

Becoming fearful, the Egyptians attempted to extricate themselves from their peril. They realized too late that once again they were fighting Israel's all-powerful God. As Moses stretched out the rod, the waters returned to their normal place, burying the entire Egyptian army.

THINK IT THROUGH: How do you think God felt about the destruction of the Egyptian host? (See Eze. 18:23, 32.)

VI. THE SONG BY THE RED SEA (Ex. 15:1-21).

This poetic anthem, noted for its vivid imagery, gives remarkable expression to the mingled horror, triumph, gratitude, and relief felt by the Israelite host as they experienced those fateful hours. It is one of the oldest recorded songs of national triumph.

What use does John make of this song in describing the experience of God's people at the end of time? What additional element does he include? Rev. 15:2-4.

ILLUMINATION: "This song and the great deliverance which it commemorates, made an impression never to be effaced from the memory of the Hebrew people. From age to age it was echoed by the prophets and singers of Israel, testifying that Jehovah is the strength and deliverance of those who trust in Him. That song does not belong to the Jewish people alone. It points forward to the destruction of all the foes of righteousness and the final victory of the Israel of God. The prophet of Patmos beholds the white-robed multitude that have 'gotten the victory,' standing on the 'sea of glass mingled with fire,' having 'the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.' Revelation 15:2, 3."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 289.

"It is the song of Moses and the Lamb—a song of deliverance. None but the hundred and forty-four thousand can learn that song; for it is the song of their experience—an experience such as no other company have ever had."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 649.

Those who have remained faithful by God's grace through the troublous end-time events will stand like Israel of old beside another sea and sing the triumphant song of Moses. But it also will be the song of the Lamb, for the Lamb of God will have brought them through an apparently hopeless situation to a miraculous deliverance.



FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Notice how later Bible writers dealt with the story of Israel's crossing the Red Sea. Pss. 77:16-20; 93:3, 4; Acts 7:36; Heb. 11:29.

Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, the chapter entitled "The Exodus," pp. 281-290.

SUMMARY: This lesson furnishes one of the most conspicuous illustrations in Israel's history of the way in which God delivers His people. We no longer have a pillar of fire and cloud to guide us, but, through the Holy Spirit, we have the actual presence of the One represented. The appearance of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea reminds us of the testing time that comes when the old enemy from whose bondage we have been delivered tries to bring us under his power again. But God always makes a way of escape for us when we realize our total dependence upon Him.

APPLICATION

- Has God miraculously intervened at some point in my life to save me from sure physical death?
- Do I realize my helplessness apart from God?
- In what ways do I find myself trying to take control of my own life?
- List specific situations when God has "made a way of escape" from temptations that seemed overwhelming. Analyze why He may not have done so on other occasions.

Mission Spotlight

RWANDA SAYS THANK YOU.



WHEN bandits murdered Sampson's father in 1977, staff members at Gitwe College took the boy in and helped him continue his education. "We're thankful for the more than 250 Adventist schools in Rwanda," Sampson says. "But we badly need church buildings where my people may worship on Sabbath mornings." Please help by systematically supporting the mission offerings all quarter long and by giving generously on Thirteenth Sabbath, **March 26.**

Introduction to Numbers

Because portions of the book of Numbers are incorporated in the lesson that follows, the introduction to the book is presented at this point in the quarter's study. Like Exodus, Numbers takes its name from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). The English title refers to the census of Israel recorded in chapters 1-4 and 26. However, the census hardly is a distinctive feature of the book. The Hebrew title, *In the Wilderness*, is more accurate and descriptive.

"It is a living book that has ministered to the spiritual life of men throughout history. Its principal objective is to exalt Jehovah as supreme God, in all His holiness, majesty, and care for His chosen people. With the wonderful progress of the chosen people there is the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their selfish motives and aims. In the background are the people murmuring, manifesting a lack of patience. . . . The dwelling of Jehovah in the midst of His people, His careful planning for them in detail, the poignant events in connection with outstanding individuals, priests and Levites . . . contribute to a splendid portrayal in vivid narrative of the deepest religious value to the church today, a narrative that rests upon the historical fact of the dwelling of God among His people."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 822.

Numbers, the fourth of the five books of Moses, picks up the Egypt-to-Canaan narrative in chapter 10 and closes with Israel camped across the Jordan from Jericho, ready to enter the Promised Land. Leviticus, the book between Exodus and Numbers, specifies the rituals and duties of the priestly worship system. It is because Numbers completes the story begun in Exodus, that we are studying these two books together this quarter. It is not possible to study the entire book in the time allotted. The emphasis will be on how Israel's Egypt-to-Canaan experience prefigures and parallels our own journey from the slavery of sin to the heavenly Canaan.

Overview of Numbers

1:1—10:10	10:11—20:29	21:1—36:13
Preparation for the Journey	The Journey Begins and Is Postponed	Preparation for Settling in Canaan

Bread From Heaven

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 16:1-36; Numbers 11:4-34.



MEMORY TEXT: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God supplies our needs, but not always our wants.

OVERVIEW: Exodus 16:1-36; Numbers 11:4-34		
Ex. 16:1-10	Ex. 16:11-36	Num. 11:4-34
A failure of faith	Physical and spiritual needs supplied	The gift rejected

INTRODUCTION: It is difficult to read the account of the miraculous food given Israel in the wilderness without thinking of two events in the earthly life of Jesus: the temptation in the wilderness to provide bread for Himself through a miracle (Matt. 4:1-4; Luke 4:1-4) and the supernatural feeding of 5,000 men plus women and children with five loaves of bread and two fish (John 6). Jesus linked both incidents to the manna given Israel. Refusing to follow Satan's suggestion during the first temptation, He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, in which Moses had summarized the lesson God intended to teach Israel by the manna. After feeding the 5,000, Jesus pointed to Himself as the True Manna—the Bread of life—which came down from heaven. This lesson will draw on both these New Testament events in relating the miracle of the manna to our Christian experience today.

Our souls hunger and thirst for more than physical food. If we feed only our bodies but let our souls starve we are not being nurtured in the true sense. Every faculty of the soul needs the food that will strengthen and sustain spiritual life and cause it to grow into the fullness and perfection that God makes possible. Whatever builds character, increases faith, hope, love, knowledge, and all other virtues. Whatever makes the conscience more tender, perfects the judgment, enables the soul to live a pure and holy life, and fits it for heaven.

ILLUMINATION: "God would have His people in these days review with a humble heart and teachable spirit the trials through which ancient Israel passed, that they may be instructed in their preparation for the heavenly Canaan."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.


I. A FAILURE OF FAITH (Ex. 16:1-10).

What can we learn from Israel's reaction when the food supply they had taken with them from Egypt was exhausted? Ex. 16:1-3.

Notwithstanding the fact that they had seen God's amazing deliverance at the Red Sea only a few weeks earlier, the people lost heart when the prospect of hunger pressed in upon them and they saw no source that would satisfy their need. They began to murmur against Moses (and indirectly against God). Their complaint was almost identical to the one they had voiced when their faith had failed them at the Red Sea—"Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt" (verse 3).

It may seem incredible that the Israelites could so quickly lose sight of God's mighty acts and doubt His love and power. Yet do we not at times forget the blessings God has poured out upon us? Our murmurings and failures to trust God arise, like the complaints of the Israelites, from our forgetfulness of His leadings in the past.

What was God's response to Israel's failure of faith? Ex. 16:4, 5.

God's kindness and patience with the Israelites was remarkable, but no less so is His longsuffering toward our failures. Instead of rebuking their lack of trust, God sent help each time the Israelites found themselves in trouble. By so doing, He intended to train them to trust Him and His appointed leaders.

II. PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS SUPPLIED (Ex. 16:11-30).
1. Bread From Heaven (Verses 11-15).

The Bible describes the manna (verse 14) as "a small round thing," ("thin flakes like frost," NIV) that lay on the ground when the morning dew evaporated. It also is described as being white like coriander seed and tasting like "wafers made with honey" (verse 31). It could be baked or boiled. (See verse 23.) Psalm 78:25 calls it "angels' food."

The NIV and RSV translate the Israelite's words in verse 15 (*man hu* in Hebrew) as a question—"What is it?" This clarifies the following clause—"For they did not know what it was."

What does the giving of the manna indicate to us about God's concern for our physical needs? Matt. 6:31-33; Isa. 33:15, 16.

We can trust God to provide the necessities of life in our present daily walk with Him. The psalmist says, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. 37:25). We often bestow anxious concern on our physical needs, but God assures us that He is aware of these and will see that we have what is necessary.

When the time of trouble bursts upon God's people during their journey to

the heavenly Canaan, God will provide for their physical needs as surely as He did for Israel's. Our bread and water will be sure.



ILLUMINATION: "The Saviour has not promised His followers the luxuries of the world; their fare may be plain, and even scanty; their lot may be shut in by poverty; but His word is pledged that their need shall be supplied, and He has promised that which is far better than worldly good,—the abiding comfort of His own presence."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 367.

SEARCH AND LEARN: How is God's miraculous care for the physical needs of His followers revealed in the scriptures that follow?

Gen. 21:14-19 _____

Gen. 41:28-37 _____

1 Kings 17:1-16 _____

Luke 9:11-17 _____

For 40 years Israel ate the manna provided from heaven. When they crossed into Canaan "the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" (Joshua 5:12). God has promised to provide for our physical necessities, but He does not work miracles when other means are available. The Lord has invited us to ask Him for our daily bread. (See Matt. 6:11.) We recognize His care in the food He provides us each day as much as in those less frequent experiences when His supernatural power becomes evident.

How often did the Israelites have to gather the manna? What time of day did they do so? Ex. 16:19-21.

Although God was raining food from heaven upon them, He wanted to teach them not to become complacent and lazy. Each day labor was required in order for them to eat.

2. A Spiritual Test (verses 16-21).

The supernatural gift of manna was designed not only to feed Israel physically, but to educate them to respect and obey God and to teach them valuable spiritual lessons. (See verse 4.)

What basic spiritual truth did God design to reveal in the manna? John 6:31-59.

"Both the manna and the showbread in the tabernacle pointed to Christ, the living Bread, who is ever in the presence of God for us. He Himself said, 'I am the living Bread which came down from heaven.' John 6:48-51."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 354.



What was Satan's first temptation to the Saviour in the wilderness, and how did Jesus' reply link it with the manna given Israel? Luke 4:1-4; Deut. 8:3.

In the wilderness temptations Jesus refused to do for Himself what He had freely done for the Israelites—provide food supernaturally. Why?

In resisting Satan's suggestion to turn stones into bread, Jesus quoted Moses in Deuteronomy 8:3. "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord." According to Moses, this was the lesson God intended to teach Israel in the manna.

ILLUMINATION: "The Saviour now practiced the lesson He had taught to Israel. . . . In the presence of the witnessing universe, He testified that it is a less calamity to suffer whatever may befall than to depart in any manner from the will of God. . . .

"The only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' Matt. 6:33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. . . .

"In the last great conflict of the controversy with Satan those who are loyal to God will see every earthly support cut off. Because they refuse to break His law in obedience to earthly powers, they will be forbidden to buy or sell. It will finally be decreed that they shall be put to death. See Rev. 13:11-17. But to the obedient is given the promise, 'He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.' Isa. 33:16. By this promise the children of God will live."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 121, 122.

Faith is the vital ingredient. Because the Hebrews in the wilderness lacked faith, they murmured when their food supply became uncertain. In the wilderness temptations, Jesus was filled with faith. He did not complain even after going 40 days without food.

When Jesus miraculously fed the 5,000, what was the people's initial reaction? What spiritual danger does this reaction highlight? John 6:14, 15, 26, 27.

We may seek Jesus merely for "loaves and fishes." That the peoples' interest in Jesus was a selfish, material one was made clear by their unwillingness to accept the spiritual truth that He drew from this miracle. They turned away from Him when it became plain that He was not going to satisfy their temporal desires for wealth and greatness.

We need to examine our motives for following Christ and be careful what inducements we present to others when pointing them to the Bread of Life.

WED

What was Jesus' answer when challenged to show a sign similar to the miraculous giving of the manna? John 6:32-51.

God had provided the bread from heaven. The manna itself was not the real bread from God. It was merely a symbol of One who would Himself come down from heaven to satisfy not just physical hunger but spiritual hunger as well. He Himself is the genuine Bread from heaven who gives eternal life.

THINK IT THROUGH: What does Jesus mean in John 6:51—"If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh"? Compare verses 35, 53-56. How do we "eat" Christ's flesh?

ILLUMINATION: "To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to become partakers of His nature. What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 389.

How else did Jesus make it clear that it is essential for us to eat the bread of life? Matt. 26:19, 26-28.

What spiritual lesson can we gather from the directions God gave Israel concerning gathering up the manna? Ex. 16:21.

The people had to gather the manna fresh each morning. Any that was left over (except on Sabbath) was worthless. We must have a daily experience with Jesus. Each morning the Bread of Life must be accepted and taken into the life. One day's bread does not suffice for the next.

THU

3. Manna and the Sabbath (Ex. 16:22-30).

In what three ways did the weekly miracle of the manna impress the minds of the Israelites with the sacred nature of the Sabbath? Ex. 16:23-30.

For 40 years God pointed to Sabbath sacredness by causing (1) twice as much manna to fall on Friday, (2) no manna to fall on Sabbath, and (3) the manna kept from Friday to Sabbath to remain fresh and wholesome when normally it became unfit for use when kept a second day.

The Sabbath was known to and observed by the Hebrews before they

received the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone at Sinai. The Sabbath had been instituted in Eden as a memorial of Creation, but in Egypt the Hebrews had lost sight of this sacred obligation as they also had neglected other aspects of truth and the worship of God. Part of God's purpose in their wilderness wanderings was to reeducate them about neglected and forgotten truths.

THINK IT THROUGH: In the light of God's instruction to Israel in connection with the manna, how carefully should we regard the Sabbath hours?

ILLUMINATION: "The day before the Sabbath should be made a day of preparation, that everything may be in readiness for its sacred hours. In no case should our own business be allowed to encroach upon holy time. . . . Many carelessly put off till the beginning of the Sabbath little things that might have been done on the day of preparation. This should not be. Work that is neglected until the beginning of the Sabbath should remain undone until it is past."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 296.

What reason did God give for commanding that some of the manna be preserved? Ex. 16:32.



III. THE GIFT REJECTED (Num. 11:4-34).

Illustrative of human nature, the Israelites, who received the manna with gladness when they feared hunger, later grew dissatisfied with the supernaturally given food and complained that they did not have the diet that they remembered eating in Egypt. (See Num. 11:4-6.) Particularly they craved flesh foods. (See verse 18.)

Was it wrong for the people to want variety in their diet and to remember with longing favorite foods that they had enjoyed in Egypt? What made their dissatisfaction truly significant?

First, they showed a lack of gratitude in rebelling against the superior diet God had given them. They demonstrated a lack of confidence in His leading and showed a doubting, discontented spirit. See Psalm 78:18-21 for an inspired description of their rebellion.

Second, in rejecting the manna they were rejecting the Bread of Life to whom it pointed. We can do the same today if we turn from the divinely provided gift of a Saviour and attempt to feed ourselves from the sources we think best. Isaiah says, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (Isa. 55:2).

Those who rejected God's gracious gift, freely given, and who lusted for the food of Egypt, died for their sins. So will all who spurn the Bread that came down from heaven to give everlasting life to men and women.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter entitled "From the Red Sea to Sinai" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 291-302.

SUMMARY: God has proved repeatedly His willingness to provide for all our needs—the physical no less than the spiritual. But He declares that the spiritual food is of as much greater value than the physical as our spiritual nature is of transcendent value when compared with the material. In the great controversy before us, He has pledged Himself to care for us on both levels and bring us safely to the Promised Land, where hunger and thirst will be unknown.

APPLICATION

- Have I accepted the Bread of Life as God's all-sufficient gift for my soul's hunger?
- Am I recognizing the supernatural character of God's Word that testifies to Jesus, the heavenly manna, and do I feed on it daily?
- Am I sharing the Bread of Life with the spiritually hungry as readily as I would give physical food to one who was starving?
- Do I truly trust God for my daily bread?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Question: Why are Scripture passages repeated more than one time in a lesson? For instance, the same passage may be mentioned in a section title, in a subtitle, and in some of the questions. It gets boring reading the same text so many times.

Editor's Response: Bible study becomes boring when we are so familiar with the words we are reading that we do not give much thought to what the passage has to say to us. In order to get the most out of a portion of Scripture being studied, we need to look at it several times; giving careful and prayerful attention to every word, phrase, and implication of the passage. "Christ would have the searcher of his word sink the shaft deeper into the mines of truth. If the search is properly conducted, jewels of inestimable value will be found."—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, July 12, 1898. "Let the student take one verse, and concentrate the mind on ascertaining the thought that God has put into that verse for him, and then dwell upon the thought until it becomes his own."—*Education*, p. 188.

Water From the Rock

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 17:1-7; Numbers 20:1-13.



MEMORY TEXT: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13, 14).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Our physical need for water and the way that God provides for that need illustrate our need for the water of life and how God provides that which alone can quench our spiritual thirst.

OVERVIEW: Ex. 17:1-7; Num. 20:1-13	
Exodus 17:1-7	Numbers 20:1-13
Quarreling and Testing at Rephidim	Quarreling and Testing at Kadesh
The peoples' rebellion, vss. 1-3 Moses's response, vss. 4-7	The peoples' rebellion, vss. 1-5 Moses's response, vss. 6-13

INTRODUCTION: This week's lesson will bring together two similar events that were separated approximately 40 years in time—one taking place not long after Israel had left Egypt, and the other occurring on the final leg of their journey. Both events were triggered by lack of water. This lack led the Israelites to take a rebellious attitude toward God and His appointed leader.

In the first instance, those rebelling were the people whom God led out of Egyptian slavery by His supernatural power. In the second instance, those rebelling were their children who had been under 20 years of age at the time of the Exodus and those who were born to the Israelites and the mixed multitude during their travels. These had witnessed God's miraculous leading since childhood. In many cases their *only* memories were of the wilderness march and God's continuing care. In spite of marked evidence of God's providence, both parents and children failed to pass the test when confronted with hardship. Their experience contains a lesson for those who find it difficult to trust God when faced with loss or trial.

The life-giving and life-sustaining properties of water were used to illustrate the need of the soul for blessings that come only from God and without

which spiritual life becomes parched and dies. Water frequently is used in this spiritual sense throughout the Old Testament. (See for example Pss. 1:1-4; 23:1-3; Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Isa. 44:3; 55:1.) This side of the cross, we have an even clearer picture of Jesus, the living Water.

SUN

I. QUARRELING AND TESTING AT REPHIDIM (Ex. 17:1-7).

1. The Peoples' Rebellion (verses 1-3).

The manna had first been given to Israel in "the wilderness of Sin," "between Elim and Sinai," about six weeks after leaving Egypt. (See Ex. 16:1.) They "journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys [literally, according to their journeys]" (Ex. 17:1), arriving at Sinai and camping before the mountain in the third month after leaving Egypt. (See Ex. 19:1, 2.) These events occurred in close succession during a period of just a few weeks. The picture given in Exodus 17:1 is one of the multitude traveling from the wilderness of Sin to Sinai in stages, from camping spot to camping spot, with rest periods between.

ILLUMINATION: "Rephidim may well be the Wadi Feiran . . . the most beautiful valley of the Sinai peninsula with much vegetation. The Israelites then camped in front of the most fertile part of the valley, which has a stream that never dries up, and a large number of springs. The Amalekites probably controlled the stream, the springs, and the palm trees, and they soon came out and attacked Israel (17:8-16). The Israelites thus could not reach the springs but had to be satisfied with the barren part of the wadi, and had no water to drink."—W. H. Gispen, *Exodus*, p. 164.

If this reconstruction is correct, the tantalizing sight of nearby water, impossible to reach, could well have instigated their frenzied argument with Moses. Once again they wished aloud that they had never left Egypt. Then they accused Moses of deliberately plotting their destruction. The argument became so heated that Moses' life apparently was in danger.

Who was the real target of the Israelites' rebellion, and what did their words indicate about the attitude of their hearts? Ex. 17:2, 7.

ILLUMINATION: "In their thirst the people tempted God, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'—'If God has brought us here, why does He not give us water as well as bread?' The unbelief thus manifested was criminal."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 298.

THINK IT THROUGH: In what ways may I be repeating Israel's rebellion by demanding that God meet my expectations?

MON

2. Moses's Response (Ex. 17:4-7).

What valuable lesson can we learn from the way Moses handled this crisis? (Ex. 17:4).

When emergencies come into our lives do we often try to deal with them in our own strength, drawing on our training, resources, or abilities? God expects us to use the judgment He has entrusted to us, but we must never do so apart from Him.

What spiritual insight does the apostle Paul give into God's method of responding to Israel's need and challenge? What specific application does he make to Christians? 1 Cor. 10:1-4, 11.

ILLUMINATION: "It was Christ, by the power of His word, that caused the refreshing stream to flow for Israel. . . . He was the source of all temporal as well as spiritual blessings. Christ, the true Rock, was with them in all their wanderings. . . .

"The smitten rock was a figure of Christ, and through this symbol the most precious spiritual truths are taught. As the life-giving waters flowed from the smitten rock, so from Christ, 'smitten of God,' 'wounded for our transgressions,' 'bruised for our iniquities' (Isaiah 53:4, 5), the stream of salvation flows for a lost race. As the rock had been once smitten, so Christ was to be 'once offered to bear the sins of many.' Hebrews 9:28."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 411.

SEARCH AND LEARN: How much water would be required to satisfy the needs of some two million persons for drinking, washing, and cooking? How much water would their livestock need? What did God do to provide an adequate supply? Pss. 78:15,16; 105:41; 114:8.

The little stream that artists often picture as running from the smitten rock would be completely inadequate to provide water in the quantity required. Exodus 17 seems to imply that Moses and the elders of the people went out some distance from the encampment until they came to the particular rock the Lord had selected. Moses struck the rock in the presence of the elders; the water rolled forth and rushed down the valley to the encampment for the peoples' use. (See verses 5, 6.)

The water did not continue to flow from this rock after the peoples' needs were met and they journeyed on. However, for 40 years, whenever they found themselves in waterless encampments, God caused water to gush out of the rocks to provide for them.

Millions of persons and animals daily receive from God's hands their necessary supplies of water. The so-called "natural means" by which our physical needs are met are as much the direct result of God's sustaining activity as are such overtly supernatural occurrences as the water from a rock. One may appear more directly God-sent, but without His constant intervention in the operation of the earth we would perish as surely as the Israelites would have died without water in the desert. God daily works "miracles" in nature to sustain the earth. (See Matt. 5:45.)

Moses named the place where this miracle occurred *Massah* (quarreling) and *Meribah* (testing) because there the people had quarreled with God and had attempted to put Him to the test.

In their progress toward the heavenly Canaan, God's people will be brought into equally difficult situations. God has promised that water will be miraculously provided if necessary. (See Isa. 33:16.)

TUE

II. QUARRELING AND TESTING AT KADESH (Num. 20:1-13).

The Israelites were at Kadesh nearly 40 years later. Those 20 years of age and older who tested God at Rephidim had by this time died in the wilderness. Their children now have come almost to the borders of Canaan. Throughout the 40 years God has sustained them with manna and, when necessary, has caused water to flow miraculously for them. Have they learned the faith and submission their fathers failed to demonstrate?

1. The Peoples' Rebellion (verses 1-5).

ILLUMINATION: "Just before the Hebrew host reached Kadesh, the living stream ceased that for so many years had gushed out beside their encampment. . . . They were now in sight of the hills of Canaan. A few days' march would bring them to the borders of the Promised Land. . . . They were about to pass through a well-watered, fertile country, in a direct course to the land of Canaan. . . . The cessation of the miraculous flow of water should therefore have been a cause of rejoicing, a token that the wilderness wandering was ended. . . . Here was an opportunity for them, for a little time, to walk by faith instead of sight. But the first trial developed the same turbulent, unthankful spirit that had been manifested by their fathers."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 413, 414.

When the water failed, what were the accusations and complaints brought against Moses, and by extension, against God? Num. 20:2-5.

The people used words almost identical to those of their parents 40 years earlier. The Israelites failed once more to withstand temptation under trial.

What does Israel's rebellious attitude tell us about our own susceptibility to temptation and doubt? 1 Cor. 10:12; Rom. 7:18, 19, 22-25; Heb. 3:12, 17-19; 4:11.

God has surrounded us with evidences of His love as distinct as those that He gave to Israel, yet how often we disappoint Him by our doubts and failures! With each warning Paul couples the assurance that we need not fail if we will remain close to our faithful High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

WED

2. Moses's Response (Num. 20:6-13).

As he had done 40 years before, Moses turned to the Lord for guidance at this time of crisis.

In what way did God's instructions differ from those given in the earlier instance, and what was the significance of the change? Compare Num. 20:8 with Ex. 17:5, 6.

The symbolism is clear. Jesus, the Rock of our salvation, was to be smitten but once. On the cross He died to provide us eternal life. But He is not to be crucified repeatedly. We have only to speak the word in faith, and the water of eternal life is ours.

In what terms did Jesus announce this great truth to the people of His day? What was the occasion and what special significance did it have? John 7:37, 38.

The Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths) was one of the three principal religious festivals of the Jews. It commemorated the period of time their ancestors had lived in temporary, portable shelters during the 40 years of travel to Canaan. Jewish requirements stipulated that for the eight days of this feast the people must live in temporary structures of branches and palm fronds built on their roof tops or in the streets and on the hillsides. Living in booths was to remind them of their ancestors' journey to Canaan. The booths must not keep out the sun, and the roof thatching must be loose enough to allow the stars to be seen through it at night.

A ceremony was conducted each day during the festival to commemorate God's special provision of water from the rock.

ILLUMINATION: "The people came with their palms and their willows to the Temple; with them they formed a kind of screen or roof and marched round the great altar. At the same time a priest took a golden pitcher which held three *logs*, that is, about two pints—and went down to the Pool of Siloam and filled it with water. It was carried back through the Water Gate while the people recited Isaiah 12:3: 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.' The water was carried up to the Temple and to the altar and poured out on it as an offering to God. . . . It was against that background . . . that Jesus' voice rang out: 'If any man thirst, let him come to *me* and drink.' It is as if Jesus said, 'You are thanking and glorifying God for the water which quenches the thirst of your bodies. Come to Me if you want water which will quench the thirst of your soul.' Jesus was using that dramatic moment to turn men's thoughts to the thirst of men for God and for the eternal things."—William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 1, p. 262.

Ellen White adds to this picture that at dawn on the first day of the feast a priest poured the pitcher of water into a silver basin at the altar while a second priest poured another of wine into a matching basin. The water and wine mingled through a common pipe and flowed back into the Kidron and thence to the Dead Sea. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 448, 449.) This was a fitting symbol of the One who at His death would have His side pierced by a Roman sword, causing "water and blood" to pour forth. This symbolism gave added force to Jesus' declaration of Himself as the living Water that quenches spiritual thirst.

In talking with the woman at Jacob's well what comparison did Jesus draw that demonstrates the superiority of the water He has to give? John 4:13, 14.

ILLUMINATION: “Jesus did not convey the idea that merely one draft of the water of life would suffice the receiver. He who tastes of the love of Christ will continually long for more; but he seeks for nothing else. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee. And He who reveals to the soul its necessity is waiting to satisfy its hunger and thirst. . . . We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

In what words does Christ extend to us today the same invitation given to the Samaritan woman at the well? Rev. 22:17; compare Isa. 55:1.

What promise is given to those who through faith in Jesus Christ find a place in the heavenly Canaan? Rev. 7:14-17.

What contrast does Revelation present between those who prove faithful to the Lamb and those who oppose Him? Rev. 21:6; compare Rev. 14:9, 10; 16:3-6.

The second and third plagues at the end of time turn the seas, rivers, and streams into blood. The reason given in Revelation 16:5, 6 is that the wicked are supplied with blood to drink because they have delighted in shedding the blood of the saints. In Revelation 14, the third angel declares that those who receive the mark of apostasy against God will drink the wine of His wrath.

In contrast, those who wash their robes in the Lamb’s blood have free access to the fountain of the water of life. (See Rev. 21:6.) As John describes the New Jerusalem, the heavenly Promised Land, he says, “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. . . . And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:1, 7).

It is likely that John is drawing on the imagery of the rock in the wilderness from which a river of pure water of life flowed for ancient Israel. For Israel redeemed, the wilderness rock has been replaced by the throne of God and of the Lamb. They will serve Him and see His face and reign forever and ever because of the life-giving water provided by the Rock of their salvation.

What was the result of Moses’s disobedience to God’s instructions regarding speaking to the rock? Num. 20:12.



Through a momentary lapse of faithfulness, Moses and Aaron spoiled the intended symbolism God planned regarding Christ, the Rock of our salva-

tion. We may consider this failing of a truly spiritual man such as Moses to be a minor error. But sin in such a prominent leader would embolden the people in their rebellion if it were left unpunished. By his words, Moses left the impression that *he* was the one bringing forth the water. The people were prone to look to Moses instead of God. To correct this, God announced that Moses would not be allowed to complete the task of leading the people into Canaan. They needed to understand that God alone was responsible for the success of their journey. God's reproof of Moses demonstrates the importance He places on careful obedience in every area of life.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:

"The refreshing water, welling up in a parched and barren land, causing the desert place to blossom and flowing out to give life to the perishing, is an emblem of the divine grace which Christ alone can bestow; and which is as the living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul. He in whom Christ is abiding has within him a never-failing fountain of grace and strength. His love, received into the heart, will spring up in good works unto eternal life. And not only does it bless the soul in which it springs, but the living stream will flow out in words and deeds of righteousness, to refresh the thirsting around him."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 412.

SUMMARY: Modern spiritual Israel has access to a never-failing source of the water of life. The needs of our souls now and for eternity will be supplied by the spiritual Rock who invites all who are thirsty to drink freely.

APPLICATION

- Do I react as Israel did when physical needs arise in my life?
- Do I thirst for the living water as intensely as I experience physical thirst?
- Have I experienced what Jesus calls "a well of water springing up to everlasting life"?
- What am I doing to share the water of life with those dying of spiritual thirst?

God Will Provide

"Many, when they begin to gather earthly riches, commence to calculate how long it will be before they can be in possession of a certain sum. In their anxiety to amass wealth for themselves, they fail to become rich toward God., Their benevolence does not keep pace with their accumulation."—*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 221, 222.

"If men love and obey God, and do their part, God will provide for all their wants. Although your living may have to be obtained by the sweat of your brow, you are not to distrust God; for in the great plan of His providence, He will supply your need from day to day."—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 227.

Law and Love at Sinai

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 19:1 through 20:21; 32:1-35; 34:1-29.



MEMORY TEXT: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God has called each of us to be His "peculiar," or special, people. On His own initiative, unprompted by any merit of our own, He has chosen us and entered into a covenant with us that He is to be our God and we are to be His obedient people. As wonderful as this is, it is only part of the picture. God also has demonstrated that His love can reach us through His law of love and restore us to that special covenant relationship when we fail.

OVERVIEW: Exodus 19:1—20:21; 32:1-35; 34:1-29

19:1—20:21 The Covenant Made	32:1-29 The Covenant Broken	32:30-35; 34:1-29 The Covenant Restored
God chooses a special people 19:1-6 Promises of obedience 19:7, 8 Preparing for God's presence 19:9-15 God manifests Himself 19:16-25 The Ten Commandments 20:1-21	Inexcusable apostasy 32:1-6 Moses intercedes with God 32:7-14 The awful results of sin 32:15-29	"Blot me out!" 32:30-35 The broken law given again 34:1-29

INTRODUCTION: The verses covered by the lesson this week soar and plunge through a grand range of dramatic events and emotions. In these verses we find the awesome manifestation of God in fire and smoke as He selects Israel for His "peculiar treasure . . . above all people" (Ex. 19:5) and thunders His commandments from Sinai. Then there is a drop into the shameful depths of apostasy when, within days, the people seek to worship God by bowing down to a calf of gold. Finally, we see Moses rise to the most exalted heights of self-sacrificing love.

In one sense, the events of this lesson prefigure the story of our lives. God has chosen each of us to be His "peculiar treasure." He has called us to respond in loving obedience to His gracious selection. We have promised to love and obey, but have found that, on our own, we cannot do so.

However, an Intercessor has offered to bear the guilt of our sins and to restore us to the covenant relationship with God, even if doing so would result in His own sacrifice. God graciously puts together again the broken pieces of His law, writing them anew on our hearts.

I. THE COVENANT MADE (Ex. 19:1—20:21).

1. God Chooses a Special People (19:1-6).

On what basis did God choose Israel out of all nations on earth to be His special covenant people? Deut. 7:6-8; compare Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17:1-8.

Verses 5 and 6 of Exodus 19 have been called the classic pronouncement of the Old Testament, the center and the theme of the Pentateuch. The words translated "peculiar treasure" have the meaning of a private, personal possession as opposed to community or common property. The idea is one of a precious, treasured belonging. This was Israel's solemn and wonderful responsibility and destiny.

God did not choose the Israelites on the basis of their inherent qualities, but on the basis of His sovereign grace. Undeserving as they were, He determined to fulfill all He had promised Abraham concerning them.

THINK IT THROUGH: What does God's attitude regarding Israel imply concerning the other nations that existed at that time? If the Israelites were His chosen people, had He rejected everyone else? In light of Israel's repeated failures, were other nations less deserving of God's grace?

In New Testament times what promise is given to Christians that corresponds to God's special relationship with Israel? 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

Although God's selection of Israel as His chosen people was entirely of grace, upon what condition was the relationship to continue? Ex. 19:5.

Our status as God's elect is not a legalistic arrangement which goes in and out of joint with every act of disobedience or repentance. Rather, it is a relationship based on love. But the lives we live demonstrate that the relationship is real.

ILLUMINATION: "Our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling in us. . . . The character is revealed not by occasional good deeds

and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 61.

2. Promises of Obedience (Ex. 19:7, 8).

THINK IT THROUGH: Should the people have promised obedience to all that God asked of them?

The example of Israel at Sinai, like that of Peter in the high priest’s courtyard, demonstrates that promises alone are not enough. Self-confidence is misplaced when it comes to resisting sin. We cannot keep such promises apart from a constant dependence upon the strength of Jesus. (See Phil. 4:13; John 15:5.)

The conditions of the covenant had been formally met. Moses would take the people’s answer back to God. God would visibly ratify the agreement before the people by manifesting Himself to them and proclaiming His law.

3. Preparing for God’s Presence (Ex. 19:9-15).

ILLUMINATION: “God purposed to make the occasion of speaking His law a scene of awful grandeur, in keeping with its exalted character. The people were to be impressed that everything connected with the service of God must be regarded with the greatest reverence.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 303.

Note what specific preparations the people made for God’s appearing and what prohibitions were given. Ex.19:10, 15.

1. Moses was told to “sanctify” the people. This, no doubt, involved ritual cleansings, but more important, consisted of cleansing from sin through prayer, fasting, and confession.

2. The people must be physically clean. This included their clothing.

3. They must avoid sexual relations during this time. This probably had to do with ritual cleanliness, but it also indicated that this time was to be spent in intense spiritual preparations.

4. They were not to touch the mountain where God would be manifested.

THINK IT THROUGH: What does God’s concern for sanctifying the people and Mount Sinai in preparation for the giving of the law indicate regarding our preparation for fellowship with God today?

4. God Manifests Himself (Ex.19:16-25).

What did the people see when God manifested Himself at Sinai? Deut. 4:11-15.

In a thunderstorm of supernatural intensity God descended on the mountain in sight of the assembled Israelites. The retinue of angels attending Him appeared as flames of fire flashing from the thick, black clouds enveloping the mountain peak. The voice of God was heard under the most awesome,

reverential, and impressive circumstances. Hidden by thick clouds, He revealed His power and glory. The earth trembled, the mountain smoked, and the sound of a trumpet resounded from peak to peak. The trumpet call reverberated to a crescendo followed by profound silence. The vast assembly stood quietly, awestruck. In the silence Moses addressed God, and God answered him.

What was the people's reaction to God's impressive manifestation of Himself on Sinai? Deut. 5:23-28.

5. The Ten Commandments (Ex.20:1-21).

The principles enshrined in the Ten Commandments have been in existence from eternity. The supreme importance of God's law comes from the fact that it is the expression of His character.

THINK IT THROUGH: What is the significance of God's opening words on Sinai—the preamble to the Ten Commandments? Ex. 20:1, 2.

The law had to be in existence before sin or there would have been no sin. Sin is defined by the law. The formal giving of the law at Sinai was a reiteration of the great principles established from eternity. Two great spiritual truths are involved in the keeping of the law: (1) we are not saved by our lawkeeping, but by God's grace, and (2) those who have been saved are those who receive the law and, by God's grace, obey it.

Following God's reminder of their status as His redeemed people, Israel listened as God outlined in ten great universal principles how redeemed people ought to live. The first four outline how they should relate to Him. The last six specify how they are to relate to one another. These ten precepts do not cover every life situation in detail, but they are drafted in broad terms that apply to every aspect of human experience.

Which member of the Godhead was the Lawgiver at Sinai? 1 Cor. 10:1-4; Isa. 54:5; James 4:12. What light does this shed on one aspect of Jesus' work when He appeared on earth as a man?

ILLUMINATION: "It was He [Christ] who gave to Moses the law engraved upon the tables of stone."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366.

ILLUSTRATION: Only twice do we find a record of Jesus writing. When the Pharisees and scribes dragged the adulterous woman before Him (John 8:1-11), He traced a record of their sins with His finger in the dust covering the broad stones of the courtyard. He previously had written His law at Sinai on tables of stone with His own finger. Laws on stone and sins in sand! Some have suggested that by writing His Ten Commandments on stone, the Lord intended for us to understand their permanence and importance. But lest we should despair at our failures to obey, He traced in the fleeting sand the record of our sins against that law. He is eager to forgive.

The fact that with His own finger Christ etched the law in stone gives proof of His unchanging attitude toward sin. He does not dismiss it as something insignificant. Any departure from His law is a serious rebellion against Him. It was this unalterable, all-important nature of the law that made it necessary for the Lawgiver Himself to assume human nature and live under law as a man. Jesus can write our sins in sand only because He honored with His own death the law that He had written in stone.



What was to be a significant part of the Messiah's work? Isaiah 42:21.

The rabbis understood this to refer to the multiplication of the law into the 13 classes of regulations that Jewish tradition had derived from the original Ten Commandments. However, Jesus dismissed many of these man-made rules because they obscured the real significance of His law. He magnified the law by rescuing it from the mass of human traditions that had caused men and women to look upon it as an intolerable burden, and also by presenting its spiritual nature and far-reaching principles.

ILLUMINATION: "It was Christ who, amid thunder and flame, had proclaimed the law upon Mount Sinai. The glory of God, like devouring fire, rested upon its summit, and the mountain quaked at the presence of the Lord. The hosts of Israel, lying prostrate upon the earth, had listened in awe to the sacred precepts of the law. What a contrast to the scene upon the mount of the Beatitudes! Under the summer sky, with no sound to break the stillness but the song of birds, Jesus unfolded the principles of His kingdom. Yet He who spoke to the people that day in accents of love, was opening to them the principles of the law proclaimed upon Sinai."—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 45.

SEARCH AND LEARN: After reading the following texts, make a list of the specific commandments that Jesus magnified, showing the deeper spiritual lesson He drew from each:

Matthew 5:21-26 _____

Matthew 5:27-32 _____

Matthew 5:33-37 _____

Matthew 6:19-34 _____

What relationship does Paul bring out between Christ and the law? Rom. 10:4.

SEARCH AND LEARN: The law is an expression of Christ's character. All the attributes that Scripture applies to the law, it applies to Jesus as well. See, for example, the following pairs of texts:

Ps. 19:7 and Heb. 2:10; 5:9
 Ps. 19:9; 119:172 and 1 John 2:1
 Ps. 119:89 and 1 John 5:11

What is the basis of God's law? Matt. 22:35-40; Rom. 13:8-10.

II. THE COVENANT BROKEN (Ex. 32:1-29).

1. Inexcusable Apostasy (Ex. 32:1-6).

In a matter of a few short weeks after having seen the visible manifestation of God and agreeing to be His covenant people, the Israelites became discouraged and faithless because of Moses' absence. This shows how much their faith depended on sight.

How did Aaron and the people attempt to mask the sinfulness of their apostasy? Ex. 32:4, 5.

ILLUMINATION: "The 'calf' would naturally suggest itself to the Israelites because they had witnessed in Egypt the worship of Apis the bull. But the golden calf was presumably a material representation of the true God. . . . Sensing popular approval, Aaron further committed himself to this apostasy by announcing a 'feast.' Strangely enough, it was to be 'a feast to the Lord.' This spirit of compromise, the endeavor to harmonize the worship of the Lord with that of idols, was not manifested by Israel in this case alone; it was also to motivate much of the idolatry that plagued them in the future."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 665.

2. Moses Intercedes with God (Ex. 32:7-14).

Notice the interesting use of pronouns referring to Israel. Speaking to Moses, God called them "thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt" (verse 7). God seemed to disown Israel. But Moses was unwilling to acknowledge this. Replying to God, he referred to Israel as "thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt" (verse 11).

ILLUMINATION: "As Moses interceded for Israel, his timidity was lost in his deep interest and love for those for whom he had, in the hands of God, been the means of doing so much. The Lord listened to his pleadings, and granted his unselfish prayer."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 319.

THINK IT THROUGH: Could Moses really have dissuaded God from destroying Israel if He had been intent on their destruction? Was God as anxious to forgive their sin as Moses was to intercede for them?

3. The Awful Results of Sin (Ex. 32:15-29).

What did Moses do to portray graphically to the people the results of their sin? (Ex. 32:19).

The broken tablets represented the fact that sin destroys the love relationship that should exist between human beings and God. When we sin, we break more than a law written in the statute books of heaven. We break God's heart. The inexcusable apostasy must be punished. Moses called for those who had not taken part in the worship of the calf to stand beside him. The entire tribe of Levi was found to have remained faithful to God. Those who had sinned, but were repentant, were called forth. A large group—mainly composed of the mixed multitude—remained stubbornly defiant. Because the cancer must be removed from the assembly, the Levites were commanded to execute this group.

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III. THE COVENANT RESTORED (Ex. 32:30-35; 34:1-29).

1. "Blot Me Out!" (Ex. 32:30-35).

These verses contain the most sublime example of self sacrificing love outside of Gethsemane and Calvary. Like Jesus, Moses willingly faced the second death.

The amazing love Moses showed on Sinai is the love Jesus demonstrated in its fullest measure at Gethsemane and on Calvary. And this is the love He wants us to exhibit as well.

2. The Broken Law Given Again (Ex. 34:1-29).

How did God symbolize that atonement had been made and the covenant restored? Ex. 34:1, 27.

Where does God intend that His law ultimately be written? Ps. 40:8; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 10:16, 17.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter in *Patriarchs and Prophets* entitled "The Law Given to Israel," pp. 303-314.

SUMMARY: In the experience of Israel, we see our own life situation. Called out of darkness to be His special possession, we fall into sin and break our relationship with Him. We deserve to die. Repentant, we find an Intercessor who is willing, like Moses, to die the second death that we may live. As we accept the atonement, God returns to us with the same conditions. The law is written in our hearts; the relationship is restored.

APPLICATION

- Do I view God's law as liberating or repressive?
- Do I understand the special kind of love demonstrated by Moses and by Jesus, and am I developing that same love in my relationship to those around me?
- Am I in a covenant relationship with the Lord Jesus, being obedient to Him by His grace?

Lessons From the Sanctuary

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 25 through 31; 35 through 40.



MEMORY TEXT: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Old Testament sanctuary, with its furniture, services, sacrifices, priesthood, and rituals, finds its primary focus and application in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. God gave the sanctuary service to Israel as an object lesson of the work that Jesus would perform as the world's Redeemer in dealing with the sin problem.

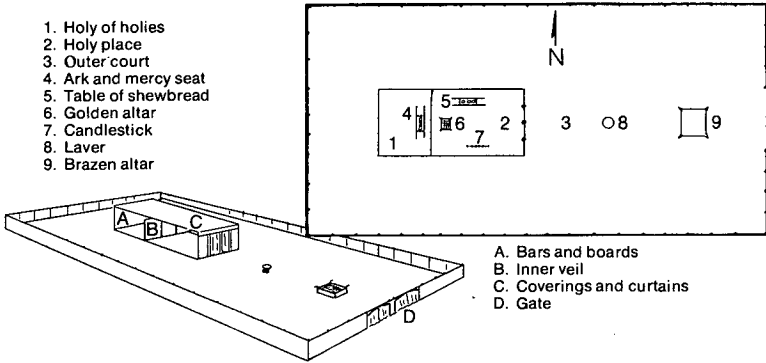
OVERVIEW: Exodus 25—31; 35—40

25—31	35—39	40
Instructions for building the sanctuary	The sanctuary built according to the pattern	The sanctuary completed and accepted

INTRODUCTION: God's directions to Moses for constructing the sanctuary and its equipment are given in Exodus 25—31. The actual making of the items is described in chapters 35—39. Because the terminology of these two sections is much the same and the material is repetitive to a large degree, we will draw on these passages interchangeably in our study. Some details regarding the construction of the sanctuary are not given, although a fairly complete picture emerges. Some details we may never understand for sure; some can be determined with reasonable accuracy from the description of Solomon's temple, which seems to have been built on a scale exactly double that of the wilderness tabernacle. The relatively imprecise specifications regarding construction details suggest strongly that these matters are not as significant as the broad spiritual lessons involved.

In Hebrews 9:9, the Old Testament sanctuary is called "a figure for the time then present." The word translated "figure" literally is the word *parable*. The sanctuary is a parable designed to teach certain basic spiritual truths. Not every detail of a parable has spiritual significance. To facilitate this week's discussion, fix in your mind the following diagram of the wilderness tabernacle as specified by God to Moses:

1. Holy of holies
2. Holy place
3. Outer court
4. Ark and mercy seat
5. Table of shewbread
6. Golden altar
7. Candlestick
8. Laver
9. Brazen altar



The tabernacle itself was a portable building three times as long as it was wide (approximately 45 feet by 15 feet) made of gold-covered boards and curtains. Basically it was a tent with three wooden walls and a roof made of four layers of material. A curtain hanging across the width separated the building into two rooms—one twice the size of the other. The smaller (approximately 15 feet on each side) was called the Most Holy Place and contained only the ark of the covenant. The larger room (approximately 30 feet by 15 feet) was called the Holy Place and contained three items: the altar of incense, the table of shewbread, and the candlestick.

A courtyard, measuring approximately 150 feet by 75 feet was formed by curtains hanging on posts. It surrounded the tabernacle. In this courtyard stood the altar of burnt offering and a laver, or wash basin, in which the priests washed before entering the tabernacle.

I. INSTRUCTIONS FOR BUILDING THE SANCTUARY (Ex. 25-31).

What was God’s announced purpose for the building of the sanctuary? Ex. 25:8.

How did Solomon demonstrate his understanding of this truth? 1 Kings 8:27.

Isaiah also captured God’s real purpose in the sanctuary: “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. 57:15). God intended that the sanctuary and its services so prepare the people spiritually that He could make their hearts His dwelling place. He wanted to live among them and in them. Some understood this and cooperated, but Israel, as a whole, never seemed to grasp the full spiritual implications of the sanctuary. They allowed its services to become mechanical. In the fullness of time “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The word *dwelt* is the word for *tabernacle*—Jesus “tabernacled” with us. He was the One to whom the sanctuary pointed.

ILLUMINATION: God “abode in the sanctuary, in the midst of His people. Through all their weary wandering in the desert, the symbol of His presence was with them. So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 23.

What does the apostle John say regarding the temple in the New Jerusalem? Why? Rev. 21:22. Compare verse 3.

The purpose of the sanctuary, to allow God to dwell in the hearts of His people, will be realized in its fullness when sin is eradicated from the universe and the New Jerusalem is set up on earth. Then God will dwell in a face-to-face relationship with the redeemed.

God gave Moses detailed instructions regarding every part of the tabernacle and its services in order that it might serve as a continuing object lesson of the gospel. Particularly, it pointed to the Lamb who would bring an end to sin through the sacrifice of Himself.

II. THE SANCTUARY BUILT ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN (Ex. 35-39).

What does the author of Hebrews imply from the fact that God instructed Moses to build the tabernacle according to the pattern that he was shown? Heb. 8:1-5; 9:24.

A pattern implies an original. The earthly sanctuary was patterned after the heavenly one—the “true [genuine or real] tabernacle” (Heb. 8:2). John saw this heavenly sanctuary in vision. (See Rev. 4:5; 8:3; 11:19.)

Because the heavenly is the original and the earthly is patterned after it, we should study the earthly sanctuary in the light of the heavenly. However, as a matter of practicability, we have to move from the known (the earthly) to the less known (the heavenly). But if in so doing we use the earthly sanctuary as an exact yardstick by which to measure the heavenly, we are liable to draw erroneous conclusions.

There is a heavenly sanctuary, but we must not insist that it correspond in every detail to the earthly. For example, the sacrifice on the altar of burnt offering represented the death of Jesus. But He was crucified on a cross, not killed with a knife and burned as the lamb was that was offered in the earthly sanctuary service.

1. The Altar of Burnt Offering (Ex. 27:1-8; 29:38-42; 38:1-7).

The Scripture does not follow a definite order in presenting the different articles connected with the tabernacle. But in our study of each item we will follow the order in which we would encounter them if we were to make our way from the courtyard into the the Most Holy Place.

The altar of burnt offering was made of boards overlaid with bronze. It measured about seven-and-one-half feet square and stood four-and-one-half feet high. It was hollow with a bronze screen or grate fastened inside.

What was represented by the different sacrifices at the altar of burnt offering? Lev. 17:11, 14; Heb. 9:22-26.

Blood represents life. The death of the Lamb of God was the focal point of every sacrifice on the altar no matter what type of offering was involved. Every sacrifice on this altar taught that God's judgment on sin was separation and death. The death portrayed was more than simple physical death. The wages of sin is eternal death, the second death. (See Rom. 6:23.) It was this death that Jesus experienced at the cross.

The blood of an animal could not cleanse a sinner from moral defilement. In a judicial sense no human being was or could be forgiven until Jesus died on the cross. The sins of humanity from Adam to Christ were "passed over," as it were, through the forbearance of God (see Rom. 3:24-26, margin) until the true sacrifice took place. The sacrifice focused the penitent's faith on the coming Redeemer. In experience, the sinner was forgiven on the basis of repentance and faith in that Redeemer.



What main sacrifice was offered on the altar of burnt offering? Ex. 29:38-42.

The morning and evening sacrifice was a public offering for the entire congregation. A lamb was offered along with the appropriate cereal and drink offerings. The significant feature of this sacrifice was that it burned continually on the altar; the fire never went out. "The daily burnt offerings were burned on the altar, but over a slow fire so that one sacrifice would last until the next one was put on. . . . The evening sacrifice lasted until morning, and the morning sacrifice until evening."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 713.

Thus there *always* was a sacrifice on the altar. For this reason the sacrifice was called the "daily" or the "continual" offering. This sacrifice represented to the people the constant availability of the merits of Christ's sacrifice. At any time of day or night a repentant Israelite might look in faith to the sacrifice being offered just then for him.

What does this sacrifice teach us about the true Sacrifice for sin? Heb. 4:16; 7:25; 1 John 1:7, 9.

What lesson does the apostle Paul draw for Christians today from the individual burnt offering? Rom. 12:1, 2.

Five different types of individual offerings were sacrificed on the altar of burnt offering, including the sin offering. Others were offered to represent consecration or thankfulness. For these offerings the entire animal was burned. On the part of the worshiper, the "whole offering" (NEB) symbolized the total dedication of the Christian to God.

2. The Laver (Ex. 30:17-21; 38:8).

The laver was a basin made from women's bronze looking glasses. (See Ex. 38:8.) No description of it is given except that a pedestal is mentioned that seems to have been a separate piece on which the basin sat.

What was the purpose of the laver, and what was the penalty for failing to make proper use of it? Ex. 30:17-21.

Both physical and spiritual cleanliness were essential for the priests who entered the sacred precincts to serve as a representation of Christ our High Priest. So important was this that the person who was negligent in this matter would die. This washing represented Christ, the Water of Life, who washes away our sins in His own blood. (See Acts 22:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26; Rev. 7:14.)

What ceremonies in the church today were prefigured by the laver? John 3:5; 13:5; Acts 2:38.

By baptism we signify that our sins are washed away because we have accepted the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. The footwashing service serves as a reminder that we need daily cleansing.

3. The Golden Candlestick (Ex. 25:31-40; 37:17-24).

The seven-branched candlestick (or, more properly, *lampstand*) was the only source of illumination in the first apartment—the Holy Place—of the tabernacle. It stood on the priest's left as he entered. (See Ex. 40:24.) Among the spoils carried to Rome when the Jewish temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 was the lampstand. It is depicted prominently upon the Arch of Titus in the Roman forum. It consists of an upright shaft from each side of which three branches extend upward in pairs to the same height. The lampstand was beaten whole from a talent (about 66 pounds) of pure gold.

When John saw the lampstand in the heavenly sanctuary, what was he told that the lamps represented? (Rev. 1:20; 4:5).

How did John the Baptist relate to the source of spiritual light? John 1:1-9. What does this indicate about our relationship to "the true Light"?

Whatever light we possess has come to us reflected from the Sun of Righteousness (see Mal. 4:2), just as the moon has no light of its own but shines by the reflected brilliance of the sun.

How does Jesus communicate His light to us? Rev. 4:5; John 16:7, 13, 14.

SEARCH AND LEARN: What are some of the continuous operations of the Holy Spirit that are mediated to us through Jesus our High Priest?

1 Cor. 6:19, 20 _____

John 16:8; 14:26 _____

Gal. 5:22, 23 _____

Rom. 8:26 _____

1 Cor. 12:1, 4, 7-11 _____

What is the significance of the command God gave regarding the burning of the lamps? Ex. 27:20; Lev. 24:1-4.

The seven lamps were never all extinguished at one time. Jesus never ceases to shine on us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We are never to cease reflecting that light to the world.

4. The Table of Shewbread (Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16).

This table, made of wood and covered with gold, stood on the north side of the Holy Place—on the priest's right as he entered. It measured about three feet by one and a half feet and was about two feet high. Twelve loaves of bread, two rows of six each, were kept on this table.

What directions did God give concerning the bread and the use of this table? Leviticus 24:1-9.

Set out fresh every Sabbath, it replaced the old bread that was then eaten by the priests. The term "shewbread" literally means "bread of the presence." The fact that there were 12 loaves seems to reflect the fact that Israel was divided into 12 tribes. This symbol represented a constant acknowledgement of their dependence upon the Lord for their daily bread. In a higher sense, it pointed to Jesus the living Bread.

5. The Altar of Incense (Ex. 30:1-10; 37:25-29).

The altar of incense, made of wood covered with gold, was 18 inches square and stood three feet high. It was placed just before the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. A specially prepared incense was burned on this altar morning and evening.

What significance did John give to this altar when he was shown the altar in the heavenly sanctuary? Rev. 8:2-4; cf. Rev. 5:8; Ps. 141:2.

"Our prayers, made fragrant by the righteousness of Christ our Saviour, are presented by the Holy Spirit before the Father. To John in vision it appeared like a cloud of smoke bearing the prayers and fragrant incense up

before the throne of the Infinite One. The weakest saint who knows how to press his petitions to the throne of grace in the name of Jesus, the sinless One, has all the treasures of heaven at his command.”—Stephen N. Haskell, *The Cross and Its Shadow*, p. 61.

6. The Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:10-22; 37:1-9).

The ark, the only article of furniture in the Most Holy Place, was a chest made of wood covered inside and out with gold. It measured almost four feet in length by two feet wide and two feet high. A lid of solid gold, called the “mercy seat” covered the ark. The mercy seat was surmounted by golden cherubim standing on both ends. The ark represented the throne of God. His shekinah glory appeared between the golden cherubim.

What did the ark contain and what significance does this have in relationship to the mercy seat covering the ark? Ex. 40:20; Deut. 10:1-5.

The root meaning of the word used to describe the cover of the ark is “pardon.” “The ark and the mercy seat constituted the very heart of the sanctuary. . . . The tables of the law within the ark testified to the fact that God’s kingdom is founded on an immutable standard of righteousness (Ps. 17:2), which even divine grace must respect. . . . While the tables within the ark testified against the people, the mercy seat pointed to a way in which the claims of the law could be met and the sinner saved from death, the penalty of the law.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 637.

The sanctuary imagery finds its true focus in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul says that God has set forth Jesus “to be a propitiation” (Rom. 3:25). The Greek word he uses is the word for *mercy seat*—Jesus is our Mercy Seat, covering us from the penalty we deserve as transgressors of the law.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter entitled “The Tabernacle and Its Services” in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 343-358.

SUMMARY: God portrayed the gospel to Israel in the sanctuary. The services were to be a means to an end, not an end in themselves. The Israelites understood this in their better moments in spite of their tendency to become mechanical in their worship. The words of Micah ring as true for spiritual Israel as they did for ancient Israel: “Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:7, 8).

APPLICATION

- Do I participate in religious exercises and duties from habit, mechanically, or do I realize their spiritual meaning?
- Is Jesus Christ the center of every part of my life?
- How can I use the sanctuary to teach people about Jesus today?

Failure of Faith at Canaan's Border

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Numbers 13, 14.



MEMORY TEXT: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb. 4:11).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Israel's lack of faith when confronted with possessing the Promised Land caused an entire generation to fail to enter into rest. Today God offers us rest—spiritual rest now and eternal rest in heaven. We face the same choice that Israel faced—faith or unbelief.

OVERVIEW: Num. 13, 14

13:1-25 Investigating the Land	13:26-33; 14:6-9 Reporting the Findings	14:1-5, 10-45 Making a Fatal Decision
The searching party formed (13:1-16) Sent to spy out Canaan (13:17-25)	The majority report (13:26-29; 31-33) The minority report (13:30; 14:6-9)	Rebellion through lack of faith (14:1-5, 10) Penalty for unbelief (14:11-38) Further rebellion (14:39-45)

INTRODUCTION: God planned to lead His people into the Promised Land within a matter of months after leaving Egypt. Notice the facts given in the Bible: Israel had arrived at Sinai "in the third month" (Ex. 19:1) after leaving Egypt. There the people had camped during the giving of the law and the construction of the sanctuary, finally erecting the sacred structure at the beginning of their second year of freedom. (See Ex. 40:17.) Almost two months were spent in ordaining priests, celebrating the Passover, and carrying out organizational details. "On the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year" (Num. 10:11) the cloud over the sanctuary moved forward, signifying that the encampment at Sinai was ended. Eleven days later (see *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 387) the multitude pitched their tents at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran on the southern border of Canaan. Thus the total elapsed time from Egypt to the borders of Canaan was less than 15 months.

In 1883 Ellen White wrote: "Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith, and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, . . . they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward. . . . It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. . . . For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years."—E. G. White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 68, 69.

With this in mind, the apostle's words in Hebrews 4:1 take on added meaning: "Since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it" (NIV).



I. INVESTIGATING THE LAND (Num. 13:1-25).

The twelve men selected at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran for this dangerous and sensitive mission spent 40 days traveling throughout the land of Canaan, a round trip of 300 miles. From the southern extremity they made their way north to the pass between the Lebanon mountains, to the entering in of Hamath (verse 21), a city north of Damascus. Their purpose was to ascertain the nature of the country and its people, the best routes through the land, and the potential difficulties and necessary preparations for taking possession of it. It is not likely that they traveled in a single band as that would have aroused suspicion.

What did the spies find? Num. 13:21-24.

ILLUSTRATION: The arrangement made for carrying the single bunch of grapes was not because the weight was too great for one person to carry, but to keep the grapes from being crushed. A large cluster of grapes weighing 19 pounds was sent as a present in 1819 to the Marquis of Rockingham. It was carried 20 miles on a pole borne by four men, two at a time in rotation. One of the largest bunches of black grapes on record weighed slightly more than 23 pounds. The spies also carried back with them pomegranates and figs.

II. REPORTING THE FINDINGS (Num. 13:26-33; 14:6-9).

1. The Majority Report (Num. 13:26-29, 31-33).

What report did 10 of the 12 spies give? Verses 31-33.

The ten spies spoke the truth when they reported what they had seen. They admitted that the land was productive, flowing with milk and honey. They described the defenses factually, as may be inferred from the fact that Caleb and Joshua did not dispute their description. They reported on the

various peoples that inhabited different areas of the country. But the conclusion the ten reached demonstrated a lack of faith.

Discouragement feeds on itself and blinds the eyes to reality. The spies had attested to the fruitfulness of the land. The evidence was before them in the grapes and the other fruits they had brought back with them. Yet, in their discouragement, they insisted that the land did not support its population, but “eateth up the inhabitants thereof” (verse 32). They inconsistently spoke of the giant races of men who apparently flourished in spite of the “inhospitable” land.

The more they dwelt on their discouragement, the more difficulties they saw in the way and the more they contradicted their earlier favorable impressions of the land. The result was that Israel’s eager anticipation turned to dismay.

ILLUMINATION: “The people of Israel were cherishing high hopes and were waiting in eager expectancy. . . .

“They listened intently as the report was brought to Moses, that not a word should escape them. . . . The people were enthusiastic; they would eagerly obey the voice of the Lord, and go up at once to possess the land. . . .

“Now the scene changed. Hope and courage gave place to cowardly despair, as the spies uttered the sentiments of their unbelieving hearts, which were filled with discouragement prompted by Satan. Their unbelief cast a gloomy shadow over the congregation, and the mighty power of God, so often manifested in behalf of the chosen nation, was forgotten.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 387, 388.

THINK IT THROUGH: What similar situation does spiritual Israel face in these days prior to the return of Jesus and entering into the heavenly Canaan? See 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

2. The Minority Report (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9).

On what did Caleb and Joshua base their optimistic report? Num. 14:8, 9.

Notice the marked contrast in chapter 13 between verses 30 and 31. On one hand we see faith and courage; on the other hand we see disbelief and discouragement. Both attitudes still can be seen in the church. There always are those ready to stress the severity of the obstacles facing the people of God. These have caused much damage by weakening the faith of their brothers and sisters.

But there also are those in the church who say, “The Lord is with us: fear them not.” “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (Num. 14:9; 13:30).

How did Isaiah, in a different age and context, express our responsibility to talk courage? Isa. 35:3, 4.

ILLUMINATION: "We are living in the last days. The end of all things is at hand. The signs foretold by Christ are fast fulfilling. There are stormy times before us, but let us not utter one word of unbelief or discouragement."—*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 167.

"Let us talk faith, and we shall have faith. Never give place to a thought of discouragement in the work of God. Never utter a word of doubt. It is as seed sown in the heart of both speaker and hearers, to produce a harvest of discouragement and unbelief."—*Evangelism*, p. 633.



III. MAKING A FATAL DECISION (Num. 14:1-5, 10-45).

1. Rebellion Through Lack of Faith (Num. 14:1-5, 10).

What tangible forms did the people's rebellion take?

Verse 1 _____

Verse 2 _____

Verse 4 _____

Verse 10 _____

What was the root cause of Israel's failure? Heb. 3:19.

God had worked miracles among them since they had left Egypt, protecting them through supernatural displays of His power. But their unbelief blinded them to all this.

THINK IT THROUGH: Would I have stood with Joshua and Caleb, or would I have joined the faithless multitude? How do I fare today when discouragements come? Do I remember and cling to past evidences of God's leading?

2. The Penalty for Unbelief (Num. 14:11-38).

Once more Moses interceded for wayward Israel. As he had a few months earlier, Moses refused God's offer to disinherit Israel and make him the leader of a great, new nation. Moses remonstrated with God, pressing the argument that failure now would reflect on God Himself. Such selfless intercession was no doubt what God intended to elicit from Moses. Responding to Moses' appeal, God pardoned the people.

God pardoned Israel. Why, then, did He refuse to allow them to possess Canaan?

Pardon does not necessarily shelter an individual from the consequences of sin. Israel "could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:19). Their lack of faith had unfitted them to respond in a positive way to God's leading. Their insistence on attacking Canaan contrary to God's command (verses 40-45) demonstrated that they still had the problem of unbelief.

In what ways was the assigned penalty particularly appropriate to their sin? Num. 14:2, 3, 28-34.

Stripped to its most basic dimensions, sin is an insistence on having one's own way regardless of God's will. Much of the penalty of sin resides in sin itself. When sinners demand to have their own way, they experience the inevitable consequences of that decision. Too often "repentance" merely is the desire to avoid reaping what has been sown rather than showing godly sorrow for sin that has been committed. (See Gal. 6:7, 8.)

3. Entering Into God's Rest (Heb. 3:7—4:11).

What warning based on Israel's failure is given to Christians in Hebrews 4:1?

Hebrews 3 and 4 use this tragic chapter in Israel's experience as a means of exhorting Christians to faithfulness. The author of Hebrews reminds his readers of Israel's failure to enter the promised rest and of God's solemn oath that none of that generation would enter in (Heb. 3:8-11).

SEARCH AND LEARN: Read Hebrews 3:7—4:11 carefully. Pray for the aid of the Holy Spirit and use commentaries as you do your best to answer these questions:

• How does the apostle apply Psalm 95:7-11 in his argument?

• What is the meaning of *rest* in Hebrews 4:1?

• In Hebrews 4:8 does the name "Jesus" (KJV) refer to Christ or to Joshua who led the Israelites into the Promised Land?

The apostle points his readers to Genesis 2:2, where it is stated that God rested on the seventh day following the work of creation.

The unusual thing about the word *rest* in verse 9 is that it uses a word that is different in the Greek from the common word for rest that is used elsewhere in this section. The word used comes from the Greek word for *Sabbath*. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible translates verse 9 this way: "So then, there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God." It links the Sabbath rest with the rest of redemption. This implies that the Sabbath has taken on new meaning as a result of Christ resting on the Sabbath after completing the work of redemption.

"Jesus rested from the work of redemption; and though there was grief

among those who loved Him on earth, yet there was joy in heaven. Glorious to the eyes of heavenly beings was the promise of the future. A restored creation, a redeemed race, that having conquered sin could never fall,—this, the result to flow from Christ's completed work, God and angels saw. With this scene the day upon which Jesus rested is forever linked."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 769.

How is the "sabbath rest" of verse 9 linked to the concept of rest that is developed throughout Hebrew 3:7—4:11?

The Sabbath becomes a sign of righteousness by faith. This is why God says, "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" (Eze. 20:12; compare Ex. 31:13). Instead of being a legalistic attempt to earn salvation, Sabbath-keeping, rightly understood, is a symbol that we have entered into God's rest, that we have confidence in the saving grace of Jesus Christ and in His power to give us victory over sin, and that we have ceased trying to become righteous by our own works.

What light does Hebrews 3:14 shed on the apparent delay in the return of Jesus?

"The admonitions of the book of Hebrews were originally addressed to believing Jews of the apostolic church. . . . It was commonly believed in the church of apostolic times that the promised return of the Lord would not be long delayed . . . but some 30 years or more had now passed since Christ ascended to heaven . . . and there was still no sign of His immediate coming. What then doubtless seemed a long and unexpected delay may have found the faith of some on the wane, and perhaps the admonition to be 'stedfast unto the end' was intended particularly for this wavering group. A clear conception of the work of Christ as our great high priest in the courts above would provide a firm foundation for their faith by making it possible for them to be 'partakers of Christ' (Heb. 3:14). . . . There might be delay in the return of Jesus, but it was their privilege to enter into God's 'rest' now . . . by faith. . . . The admonition here given the apostolic church is particularly appropriate for the church today."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 416.

How does the apostle emphasize the urgency involved in entering God's rest? Heb. 3:13-15; 4:7.

3. Further Rebellion (Num. 14:39-45).

What was Israel's reaction to the penalty pronounced upon their unbelief? Num. 14:39, 40. Compare Deut. 1:41.

Satan does not care what course we take as long as we insist on having our own way in opposition to God.

Israel was defeated soundly and turned back sadly into the wilderness to begin the 40 years of wandering. How much better it would have been if they had listened to the minority report brought by men of faith!

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter entitled "The Twelve Spies" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 387-394.

SUMMARY: Unbelief has caused modern Israel to remain in the wilderness of sin far longer than God intended. We need to heed the apostle's words: "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation" (Heb. 3:15). Two reports are being given today. As individuals and as a church, we must decide whether to accept the report of unbelief or the report of faith.

APPLICATION

- Does reviewing these experiences help me understand better why the Israelites acted as they did?
- If all God's church were like me, would Jesus' coming be more or less likely to be delayed further?
- What difference does letting God have His way bring about in my attitude?



Mission Spotlight

Africa-Indian Ocean Division Says Thank You.

RWANDA, the Switzerland of Africa, is a country about the size of Maryland that is populated by 6.2 million people. One of the smallest, poorest, and most crowded countries on the African continent, Rwanda has 149,871 Seventh-day Adventists who worship in 608 organized churches. They thank you for your generous **Thirteenth Sabbath Offering** that will help provide church buildings where they may worship.

Rebellion in the Wilderness

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Numbers 16:1 through 17:13.



MEMORY TEXT: "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Num. 12:8).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Pride and unsanctified ambition can be disguised cleverly as reforming zeal. As is true of spiritual leaders today, Moses and Aaron were not perfect. They made mistakes, at times erring in judgment. Their sins caused damage to the work of God. But, because they were divinely appointed, rebellion against them was rebellion against God.

OVERVIEW: Num. 16:1—17:13

16:1-3	16:4-19	16:20-35	16:36-50	17:1-13
Conspiracy hatched	Conspirators challenged	Conspirators overthrown	Conspiracy lingers	Aaron vindicated

INTRODUCTION: Dismayed at the turn events had taken on the borders of Canaan, the Israelites turned back into the wilderness with unreconciled hearts. They had been forced to accept God's declared punishment on their unbelief and apostasy. But discontent simmered beneath the surface, waiting only for someone to arouse it to fresh rebellion. That person appeared—a relative of Moses, Korah, had been harboring resentment against God's leaders even before the debacle at Canaan's border.

Korah apparently became consumed with jealousy because of pride. Not content with the place assigned him, he aspired to the highest position—that occupied by Moses—and instituted a campaign of deception, slander, and flattery to accomplish his objective. Playing on the discontent of the people and on the ambition of certain leading individuals, Korah skillfully fanned the coals of disappointment into flames of rebellion.

I. THE CONSPIRACY HATCHED (Num. 16:1-3).

How were Korah and Moses related? What light does this shed on Korah's dissatisfaction with leadership arrangements? Num. 16:1; Ex. 6:16-21.

As a Levite and a descendant of Levi's son Kohath, Korah was among the

group assigned to care for various items of the sanctuary. His family's responsibilities included the ark and the sacred furniture of the Holy Place. However, Korah and his 250 associates in the conspiracy aspired to the priesthood. Fueling Korah's belief that he was not being given the status he deserved was the fact that Elizaphan had been named chief of the family of Kohath. Elizaphan's father was the *fourth* son of Kohath, while Korah's father was Kohath's *second* son. (See Numbers 3:30.)

It seemed to Korah that Moses and Aaron were in league to exalt themselves at the expense of their fellow Levites. He lost sight of the fact that these arrangements had been made at God's direction. He also overlooked the fact that, in passing on God's command regarding the priesthood, Moses had effectively excluded himself and his descendants.

What argument did Korah employ to mask his selfish ambition and to enlist the support of the Israelites in his attack on God's leadership? Num. 16:3.

THINK IT THROUGH: What forms can spiritual pride and unsanctified ambition take in the church today?

ILLUMINATION: "Do not the same evils still exist that lay at the foundation of Korah's ruin? Pride and ambition are widespread, and when these are cherished, they open the door to envy, and a striving for supremacy; the soul is alienated from God, and unconsciously drawn into the ranks of Satan. Like Korah and his companions, many, even of the professed followers of Christ, are thinking, planning, and working so eagerly for self-exaltation that in order to gain the sympathy and support of the people they are ready to pervert the truth, falsifying and misrepresenting the Lord's servants, and even charging them with the base and selfish motives that inspire their own hearts. . . . While endeavoring to destroy the confidence of the people in the men of God's appointment, they really believe that they are engaged in a good work, verily doing God service."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 403, 404.

Besides Korah, who else were prominent in the rebellion? What motivated them to participate? Num. 16:1, 12, 13.

Some commentators have inferred from the fact that On is not mentioned again in the rebellion that he abandoned his part, thus saving his life. The conspiracy seems to have had two prongs: (1) Korah and his followers, whose primary interest was in the priesthood and the religious prerogatives of leadership, and (2) Dathan and Abiram, who coveted Moses' position as the civil ruler of Israel.

What recent event had resulted in the tribe of Levi being entrusted with the spiritual leadership of Israel? Ex. 32:26-29.

In the camping arrangements, the tribe of Reuben was located on the south side of the tabernacle, as was the family of Korah among the Levites. (See Num. 2:10, 11; 3:29.) This proximity may help explain why the conspiracy formed among these families in Israel.

For some time Korah had advanced his sedition in secret, spreading doubt and insinuations against Moses and Aaron. Josephus portrays him as a man of great wealth and possessing a gift for oratory. When he felt he had sufficient support, he boldly came before Moses and Aaron, at the head of his 250 followers, accusing the brothers of arbitrarily assuming unwarranted authority over the people. (See Num. 16:3.)

THINK IT THROUGH: In the light of Exodus 19:5, 6 was Korah justified in saying that all the congregation were qualified to be spiritual leaders and serve as priests? Why or why not?

II. THE CONSPIRATORS CHALLENGED (Num. 16:4-19).

How did Moses propose to test Korah's argument that he and his followers were qualified to serve as priests? Verses 5-7.

Korah and his followers did not shrink from Moses' challenge. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 396, 397, indicates that the conspirators had gone so far in their jealous strategy that they genuinely believed their own deceptions. They believed that they were acting from zeal for the Lord. Since that time others both within and without the church who have attacked God's appointed leaders also have come to feel that their rebellion is justified and their criticisms are motivated by zeal for God. (See John 16:1-3.) But sincerity is no excuse when people blind their own eyes to the truth.

What use does Jude make of Korah's rebellion in his letter to New Testament Christians? Jude 11. See also 2 Peter 2:10.

We live in a world that is prone to question authority and is suspicious of the motives of leaders. The church has not escaped this attitude. We need to guard against a cynical position that distrusts even the good intentions of leaders and refuses to respect their God-given authority.

ILLUMINATION: "In order for the church to prosper there must be a studious effort on the part of its members to cherish the precious plant of love. Let it have every advantage that it may flourish in the heart. Every true Christian will develop in his life the characteristics of this divine love; he will reveal a spirit of forbearance, of beneficence, and a freedom from envy and jealousy. . . . He will not impute wrong motives and evil intentions to others, but will feel deeply over sin when discovered in any of the disciples of Christ."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 123.

What recent experience had occurred that should have shown Korah the sinfulness and futility of rebelling against divinely appointed leaders? Num. 12:1-16.

SEARCH AND LEARN: How should divinely appointed leaders be brought to account for their mistakes? In each of the cases below, how did individuals go about reproofing leaders for sins and mistakes?

1 Samuel 26:1-25 _____

2 Samuel 12:1-13 _____

Matthew 26:69-75; John 21:15-17 _____

Galatians 2:11-14 _____

What challenge did Moses issue to co-conspirators Dathan and Abiram? Num. 16:12.

When Moses summoned the rebels from the tribe of Reuben, they replied: "We will not come up" (verse 12). Denying the legal authority of Moses, they refused to submit their case to arbitration.

III: THE CONSPIRATORS OVERTHROWN (Num. 16:20-35).

ILLUMINATION: "On the morrow, the two hundred and fifty princes, with Korah at their head, presented themselves, with their censers. They were brought into the court of the tabernacle, while the people gathered without, to await the result. It was not Moses who assembled the congregation to behold the defeat of Korah and his company; but the rebels, in their blind presumption, had called them together to witness their victory. A large part of the congregation openly sided with Korah, whose hopes were high of carrying his point against Aaron. . . . Korah had withdrawn from the assembly, to join Dathan and Abiram, when Moses, accompanied by the seventy elders, went down with a last warning to the men who had refused to come to him. The multitudes followed, and before delivering his message, Moses, by divine direction, bade the people, 'Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.' The warning was obeyed, for an apprehension of impending judgment rested upon all. The chief rebels saw themselves abandoned by those whom they had deceived, but their hardihood was unshaken. They stood with their families in the door of their tents, as if in defiance of the divine warning."—E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, November 12, 1903, p. 576.

THINK IT THROUGH: How can we reconcile 2 Peter 3:9 with the severe penalty visited upon Korah and his co-conspirators? How does Peter himself deal with the question of how to blend God's mercy with His justice? 2 Pet. 2:4-9.

When necessary, God reluctantly and sorrowfully visits the just consequences of sin upon the guilty. (See Ex. 34:5-7.)

THINK IT THROUGH: In the light of what God says in Ezekiel 18,

how do you explain His explicit command at times that His people utterly destroy their enemies—men, women, and children? See Deut. 7:2; Josh. 6:17, 21; 1 Sam. 15:3.

Why were Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (the leaders in the rebellion) swallowed up by the earth, while the 250 who followed them were destroyed by fire?

In mercy God gave the 250 an opportunity to repent. They had been led into apostasy by Korah and his companions. By witnessing the unmistakable judgment of God upon these men, perhaps the 250 would realize their error and repent of their sin. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had been among those who accompanied Moses up Sinai to witness God's presence in a special way. (See Ex. 24:1, 9, 10.) Satan knows that rebellion against God and His church will be most effective if it is led by those who seem to be spiritual leaders and who hold positions of influence in the church.

IV. THE CONSPIRACY LINGERS (Num. 16:36-50).

What was done with the censers in which the 250 had offered incense to the Lord? Num. 16:36-40.

What astounding accusation did the children of Israel bring against Moses and Aaron the next day? Verse 41.

The position taken by the people is astounding on two counts. First, that having witnessed the fate of Korah and his co-conspirators the day before they should persist in the rebellion against God's leaders. Second, that they should still consider the rebels "the people of the Lord," and Moses and Aaron their murderers! "The pronoun 'ye' is emphatic in the Hebrew. The people apparently attributed the death of the 250 princes to Moses and Aaron, who had suggested that they offer incense in their censers. They may also have felt that Moses and Aaron should have pleaded with God to forgive the princes, rather than call down judgment upon them."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 878.

ILLUMINATION: "There are many instances where what may seem to be a sincere zeal for the honor of God has its origin in leaving the soul unguarded for the enemy to tempt and to impress the mind with a perverted sense of the real state of things. And we may expect just such things in these last days, for Satan is just as busy now as he was in the congregation of Israel." "Here we find a striking exhibition of the blindness that will compass human minds that turn from light and evidence. Here we see the strength of settled rebellion, and how difficult it is to be subdued."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 353, 357.

What New Testament experience illustrates the essence of Israel's sin? Matt. 12:24-32.

“Day by day we must listen to God, so that day by day God’s voice may become, not fainter and fainter until we cannot hear it at all, but clearer and clearer until it becomes the one sound to which above all our ears are attuned.”—William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), vol. 2, pp. 49-51.

How many died as a result of the lingering conspiracy among the congregation? Num. 16:49.

“Those who sympathized with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in their apostasy brought blight and death upon themselves. So it will be in these last days. The cause of Christ will be betrayed. Those who have had the light of truth, and have enjoyed its blessings, but who have turned away from it, will fight down the Spirit of God.”—E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, May 24, 1898, p. 571.

THINK IT THROUGH: What is the proper role of individual judgment in spiritual matters? What is its role in the church? Where should the line be drawn between the authority of the body and the independence of the individual? How can it be drawn in a friendly, caring way?

V. AARON VINDICATED (Num. 17:1-13).

What further test did the Lord propose in an effort to settle any remaining questions regarding a divinely ordained priesthood? Verses 1-5.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter entitled “The Rebellion of Korah” in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 395-405.

SUMMARY: Korah’s conspiracy illustrates the great danger of deception. It is difficult to have an adequate conception of our own nature and our capacity for rising up against the clearest evidences of God’s leading when it cuts across cherished desires and beliefs. Especially in this age of opposition to authority, we need to be reminded that God works through divinely appointed means to bring His body into unity. (See 1 Cor. 12:4-31.)

APPLICATION

Look up the following texts, inviting the Holy Spirit to help you see how they should apply: (1) to you and your relationship to the members in your local church, (2) when differences of opinion arise concerning church practice or doctrine, (3) when you have suffered unjust reproof, and (4) when you have been given deserved reproof.

Rom. 12:3, 9, 10

Heb. 13:17

Eph. 5:21

1 Peter 5:5, 6

Backsliding and Chastisement on the Way to Canaan

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Leviticus 10:1-11; 24:10-16; Numbers 11:4-35; 15:32-36; 21:4-9.



MEMORY TEXT: "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. . . . Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:5, 11).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In the Christian life, as in the wilderness, backsliding results in correction. We bring upon ourselves difficulties that we might avoid through faith and dependence on God. But if, through these difficulties, we learn the lessons of repentance and restoration of faith, the final results will be worth all that we have had to endure.

OVERVIEW				
Lev. 10:1-11	Num. 11:4-35	Num. 15:32-36	Lev. 24:10-16	Num. 21:4-9
Burned by strange fire	Destroyed through discontent	A willful Sabbathbreaker stoned	A blasphemer stoned	Bitten by fiery serpents

INTRODUCTION: This week's lesson departs temporarily from the chronological sequence followed so far through the books of Exodus and Numbers, in order to group together five events that have as a common theme—backsliding and its consequences. Two of these events took place during the period between Mount Sinai and the failure of faith at Canaan's border. Three happened during the years of wilderness wandering. Each illustrates the chastening that results from backsliding. In Israel's repeated failures and restorations we see established the up-and-down pattern that was to characterize the nation throughout its history.

Chastisement is evidence of God's love. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). It is evidence, too, that the Lord still sees value and hope in us. As long as He chastens, we can be sure that He still is working to develop a stronger character in us and to bind us closely to Himself so that we will not fall again.

Much later in Israel's history, God illustrated this truth to Jeremiah by a vision of a potter making a clay jar. As it was being formed, the vessel revealed a fatal flaw, making it useless for the potter's purpose. But instead of discarding the clay, the potter placed it again on the wheel and fashioned it into a new piece—a utensil to occupy a useful place in the Master's house. (See Jer. 18:1-6.) Backsliding may have consequences that even God cannot undo—results that unfit us for His original purpose. But if we accept the chastening and allow it to re-mold us, the Potter will shape us again to fill a useful purpose.

In each of the five cases being studied this week, individuals went beyond backsliding into apostasy for which there was no remedy. Their example can be of value in warning us not to develop a similar lack of repentance. Each one of us must decide if chastisement will drive us deeper into stubborn sin or will lead us to repentance.

SUN

I. BURNED BY STRANGE FIRE (Lev. 10:1-11).

What sin did Nadab and Abihu commit and why? Lev. 10:1, 9.

Verse 9 strongly suggests (and Ellen White confirms the fact) that these two oldest sons of Aaron were partially intoxicated when they attempted to carry out their sacred responsibilities. Because of their inebriation they saw no reason to use the sacred fire from the altar, kindled only a few days earlier by God Himself. (See Lev. 9:24.) In spite of God's clear command they used ordinary coals from common cooking fires.

They had just experienced seven solemn days of consecration in which they, along with their father, Aaron, and their brothers, had been set apart by God for the ministry of the tabernacle. (See Lev. 8; 9.) They had seen the fire fall from heaven upon the altar. They had been among the select group that accompanied Moses to Mount Sinai to worship God. (See Ex. 24:1.) But they dared to become drunk before entering for the first time upon their sacred duties as priests!

What ideal in the use of intoxicating beverages does Paul set before us in the New Testament? 1 Cor. 10:31; compare 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20.

"There is no excuse today for the argument that there is nothing intrinsically wrong in the use of intoxicants, on the basis that God once permitted them. . . . He also once permitted such practices as slavery and polygamy."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1003.

What specific warning and condemnation does the New Testament give against intoxication? 1 Cor. 6:10.

How did God instruct Aaron to relate to the death of his sons? Lev. 10:6, 7. Why? Verses 3, 10, 11.

Had Aaron given way to human passion, he would no doubt have started a train of discontent and murmuring against God that would have resulted in many losing both physical and spiritual life. When just punishment comes for sin, we do the guilty no favor by showing a false sympathy that encourages them in their sin.

MON

What lesson may we learn from this experience regarding the reverence that should be shown to sacred things? Verse 3.

We need a deeper sense of the holiness and majesty of God. It is true that He condescends to draw near to "him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit," but He also is "the high and lofty One" who dwells in a "high and holy place" (Isa. 57:15).

SEARCH AND LEARN: What were the reactions of the following individuals when they came into the presence of God?

Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:6, 7) _____

Isaiah (Isa. 6:1-5) _____

Daniel (Dan. 10:7-12) _____

Saul (Acts 9:3-9) _____

John (Rev. 1:12-17) _____

ILLUMINATION: "True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence. With this sense of the Unseen, every heart should be deeply impressed. The hour and place of prayer are sacred, because God is there. And as reverence is manifested in attitude and demeanor, the feeling that it inspires will be deepened. 'Holy and reverend is His name,' the psalmist declares. Psalm 111:9. Angels, when they speak that name, veil their faces. With what reverence, then, should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips!"—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 48, 49.

At the inauguration of the sacred sanctuary service, these sons of Aaron showed a flagrant disregard for the holiness of God and for His appointed plan for worship. Swift retribution was the only way to check the awful results that would otherwise spring from their daring impiety.

TUE

II. DESTROYED THROUGH DISCONTENT (Num. 11:4-35).

What complaint arose shortly after Israel left Sinai? With whom did it begin? Num. 11:4-6; Ex. 12:38.

For what did the congregation specifically long? Num. 11:13.

Flesh food was not God's original provision for the human diet. However, with the entrance of sin, the killing of animals for food soon became widespread. Following the flood, God gave permission to eat flesh if certain restrictions were followed. (See Gen. 9:1-5.) Although God did not here make a specific distinction between animals allowed for food and those not allowed, the fact that the animals entering the ark were designated as either "clean" or "unclean" implied that the distinction was known. Through Moses God later made this matter clear to His people, giving principles by which to distinguish those animals that could be used for food. (See Lev. 11; Deut. 14.)

SEARCH AND LEARN: From the beginning, appetite has been a successful means by which Satan has tempted people to sin. In what way do the following texts indicate the close connection between appetite, diet, and spiritual well-being?

Genesis 3:1-7 _____

Genesis 25:29-34 _____

Judges 13:2-5 _____

Matthew 4:1-4 _____

1 Corinthians 10:31 _____

THINK IT THROUGH: How would you answer a person who cites Jesus in Mark 7:15-23 and the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4:1-5 as teaching that the distinction between clean and unclean animals is abolished in the New Testament?

What was the result of Israel's discontent over diet? Num. 11:18-20, 33, 34.

Numbers 11 is full of complaining. Even Moses complains to God of the burdens under which he labors (verses 10-15). How easy it is to focus on our problems and become discontented! How difficult it is to see our blessings and be grateful! "Jude speaks of persons who were murmurers and complainers, walking after their own lusts, ver. 16, and seems to have this people particularly in view, whom the sacred text calls . . . *complainers of their lot*. They could never be satisfied; even God himself could not please them, because they were ever preferring their own wisdom to his. God will save us in his own way, or not at all; because that way, being the plan of infinite wisdom, it is impossible that we can be saved in any other. How often have we professed to pray, 'Thy will be done!' And how seldom, very seldom, have our heart and lips corresponded! How careful should we be in all our prayers to ask nothing but what is perfectly consistent with the will of God! Many times our prayers and desires are such that, were they answered, our ruin would be inevitable."—*Adam Clarke's Commentary* (NY: The Methodist Book Concern, 1977), vol. 1, pp. 656, 657.

For a month the people had quail to eat, until they were sick of such a diet. The most rebellious died almost as soon as they began to eat. (See Num. 11:33.) Many more died during the month of indulged appetite. But manna surely was available during this month as well. Those who learned from their chastisement must have returned to the divinely-given food with renewed gratitude for God's gifts.

III. A WILLFUL SABBATHBREAKER STONED (Num. 15:32-36).

In regard to sin, what distinction does God make in verses 27-31 ?

THINK IT THROUGH: Do these verses indicate that deliberate sin cannot be forgiven? Did the Old Testament sanctuary service make any sacrificial provision for willful sin? (See Leviticus 4:1, 2; compare Hebrews 10:26, 27.) Is there such a thing as a sin that is not deliberate? (See James 4:17.)

Why was the particular case of Sabbathbreaking described in Numbers 15:32-36 punished so severely?

This must not have been the only instance of Sabbathbreaking during Israel's march. Were all offenders summarily executed? This case is introduced here as an illustration of the instruction regarding presumptuous and willful sin given in the preceding verses. This man deliberately and publicly went out to desecrate the Sabbath in order to defy God. He was angry at the divine decree that doomed Israel to 40 years in the wilderness as a result of their unbelief at Canaan's border. This was not casual or thoughtless sin, but premeditated rebellion.

IV. A BLASPHEMER STONED (Lev. 24:10-16).

Blasphemy includes more than simply using God's name in a profane manner as prohibited by the third commandment. This man, enraged at a decision against him by the judges of Israel (see *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 407), blasphemed God's name—cursing God Himself!

"Our English versions [of the Bible] generally reserve 'blaspheme' and 'blasphemy' for instances where God's name or character is defamed (Lev. 24:11; Jas. 2:7, etc.). The defamation may be direct (Acts 6:11) or implied as in attributing evidences of divine power to the devil (Mt 12:31), or in claiming divinity or divine prerogatives (Mt 9:1-6; 26:65; Jn 10:33, 36)." — *SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 148.

What does James say about the potential of the tongue for evil? James 3:2-10.

THINK IT THROUGH: How do we blaspheme God's name without using our tongues?

ILLUMINATION: "There are those who will question God's love and His justice in visiting so severe punishment for words spoken in the heat of passion. But both love and justice require it to be shown that utterances prompted by malice against God are a great sin. The retribution visited upon the first offender would be a warning to others, that God's name is to be held in reverence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 408.

V. BITTEN BY FIERY SERPENTS (Num. 21:4-9).

What precipitated the attack by poisonous snakes? Verse 5.

God had preserved Israel from snake bites during their journeys in the desert. But now, because of their ingratitude and murmuring, He removed His protection, allowing them to experience what their journey would have been like without His care. (See Deut. 8:15.) Large numbers died from the violent inflammation of these poisonous bites.

Later generations of Israel were puzzled by God's instruction regarding a bronze serpent, especially in light of the fact that He had expressly forbidden them to make an image of anything on earth. The rabbis explained it by saying that it was not the serpent which gave life to the dying. Israel was to look at the bronze serpent and believe on the God who had commanded this strange act. It was their belief in God's word that gave them life, the rabbis rightly maintained.

What meaning did Jesus give to this event in His conversation with Nicodemus? John 3:14, 15.

ILLUMINATION: "The people well knew that in itself the serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ. As the image made in the likeness of the destroying serpents was lifted up for their healing, so One made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' was to be their Redeemer. Rom. 8:3. Many of the Israelites regarded the sacrificial service as having in itself virtue to set them free from sin. God desired to teach them that it had no more value than that serpent of brass. It was to lead their minds to the Saviour. Whether for the healing of their wounds or the pardon of their sins, they could do nothing for themselves but show their faith in the Gift of God. They were to look and live."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 174, 175.

Why would God use a serpent, the symbol of sin, to represent the Saviour on the cross? 2 Cor. 5:21.

"Each of us, like those rebellious Israelites of old, has been bitten by that old serpent called the devil and Satan. Each of us bears the sentence of

death. (Rom. 5:12-19; 6:23.) Each of us has contributed his load of sin to Christ on His cross. And to each of us is offered life and healing.

“ ‘How?’ you ask. By the look, the act, of faith. . . . ‘Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else’ (Isa. 45:22).”—John J. Carter, *Adventist Review*, October 24, 1985, p. 7.

What did later generations of Israelites do with the bronze serpent that showed that they failed to understand its intended lesson of saving faith in a coming Redeemer? 2 Kings 18:4.

We must avoid thinking that our actions can ensure our salvation.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: “In the time of confusion and trouble before us, a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation, the uplifted Saviour will be presented to the people in all lands, that all who look to Him in faith may live.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 50.

SUMMARY: The experience of Israel teaches us that backsliding always results in chastisement. It also teaches us that repentance leads to forgiveness and restoration. No matter how deeply Israel fell into sin, God always was willing to take them back if they repented and confessed their sin. The only thing that can separate us from God is willful sin—sin that we refuse to repent.

APPLICATION

- How do I react to God’s chastening? With further rebellion, or in gratitude that He is drawing me back to Himself?
- Can I be a “backslider” in some areas without actually severing my connection with God’s church?

Final Preparations for Canaan

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Numbers 26 through 28; 32; 35.



MEMORY TEXT: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Many of the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament will be fulfilled to spiritual Israel in the closing moments of time. The temptations they faced, we face today. The help they received, we also can receive today. Every aspect of their preparations for entering Canaan has meaning for those of us bound for the Promised Land.

OVERVIEW: Num. 26—28; 32; 35				
26:1-63	27:12-22	28:16—29:40	32:1-42	35:1-34
The second census	Joshua ordained to succeed Moses	Sacred days reemphasized	Request of two tribes	Cities of refuge

INTRODUCTION: In this week's lesson we again will attempt to pull together a number of items that occupied Israel's attention as they stood poised to cross the Jordan.

The 40 years in the wilderness had done their work. Israel was far from perfect, as their subsequent history shows. But God had taught them some of the lessons they needed before they could enter the Land of Canaan. Unlike their parents some 38 years earlier, the people were ready to obey God as they came to the border of the Promised Land the second time. They had been redeemed from Egyptian slavery and formed into a special nation acknowledging the God of heaven as their Leader. They trusted God to supply their needs as they looked across Jordan in anticipation of moving into the Promised Land.

God's people today are not without weaknesses and faults. But we must look in faith to God to supply Christ's righteousness to us as we face the end time. We, too, have been redeemed from sin's bondage and formed into the body of Christ—His church—so "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). Our final preparations for Canaan must be characterized by faith and loving obedience.

SUN

I. THE SECOND CENSUS (Num. 26:1-63).

A numbering of the people had taken place at Sinai in the second month of the second year after leaving Egypt. (See Num. 1:1, 2.) Now, some 38 years later, all those numbered in that first census (except for Caleb, Joshua, and Moses) lay buried in the wilderness. Because the land would be parceled out among the tribes according to the number of adult males, an exact count had to be made.

How did the new count compare with the census taken nearly 40 years before? Num. 1:46; 26:51.

The number of adult males in Israel had remained almost unchanged during the 40 years in the wilderness. However, individual tribes showed marked differences. The tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Ephraim, and Naphtali had decreased in number.

How did the number of Levites compare with the tally taken in the first census? Num. 3:39; 26:62.

Some have explained the negligible increase in the number of Levites by the fact that many died in the rebellion of Korah.

What parallel to Israel's census on the border of Canaan do we find in Revelation 7:1-8? Compare Rev. 14:1-5.

The form of the figure given here (12,000 from each of the 12 tribes) indicates that we are dealing in symbols rather than in literal numbers. The 144,000 are a particular group among the redeemed—those who will be alive upon the earth to see the Lord return. They enjoy special privileges because of their experience; they stand upon Mount Zion with Christ and follow the Lamb wherever He goes. (See Rev. 14:1, 4.)

ILLUMINATION: "Upon the crystal sea before the throne, that sea of glass as it were mingled with fire,—so resplendent is it with the glory of God,—are gathered the company that have 'gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.' With the Lamb upon Mount Zion, 'having the harps of God,' they stand, the hundred and forty and four thousand that were redeemed from among men. . . . These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as 'the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.'"
—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 648, 649.

MON

II. JOSHUA ORDAINED TO SUCCEED MOSES (Num. 27:12-22).

What reason did God give to Moses for not allowing him to complete the work of leading Israel into Canaan? Verses 12-14.

What concern did Moses voice in the face of God's decision that he must die without crossing Jordan? Verses 15-17.

Although disappointed bitterly, Moses did not complain or try to appeal God's decision. The Israelites often demonstrated their disappointment with murmuring and rebellion when events did not turn out as they wished. Yet Moses accepted God's will without complaint, demonstrating his unselfish character by his concern for the people.

When the time came for Moses to obey God's command by climbing the mountain where he would die, he was given a vision of Canaan and the future. He saw the Land of Promise as it might become under God's blessing—a second Eden. He saw in vision the history of the Israelites as they possessed the land and settled it. He saw their apostasy and the captivity that finally came as a result. He saw the birth of Jesus and His ministry. He saw the Hebrew nation reject Him. He followed the Saviour to Gethsemane and Calvary. He witnessed the resurrection and Jesus' triumphal entry into heaven to be welcomed by the angels. He was shown the history of the disciples and of the Christian church to the end of time. He witnessed the Second Coming and the earth re-created into the heavenly Canaan—which was much more beautiful than the scenes he had just been shown of the Promised Land that Israel was soon to occupy. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 472-477.)

ILLUMINATION: "In consequence of sin Moses had come under the power of Satan. In his own merits he was death's lawful captive; but he was raised to immortal life, holding his title in the name of the Redeemer. Moses came forth from the tomb glorified, and ascended with his Deliverer to the City of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 479.

What were Joshua's qualifications to be Moses' successor? Num. 27:18; Ex. 24:13.

How did Israel react to the change in leadership? Deut. 34:8, 9.

In a formal ceremony, Moses transferred authority to Joshua by laying his hands on him in ordination to his new responsibilities. The stage was now set for Israel to do what Joshua urged their forefathers to do years before.

III. SACRED DAYS REEMPHASIZED (Num. 28:16—29:40).

Among the instructions given Israel just before entering Canaan was a summary of the important festivals that were to be observed when they occupied the land and settled it. The Hebrew's sacred calendar contained six annual festivals or feasts—the five reemphasized here, plus the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (See Leviticus 23 for detailed instructions on these feasts and how they were to be observed, as well as the seven annual sabbaths that accompanied them.)

The Feast of Unleavened Bread may have been omitted in Numbers 28 and 29 because it was associated so closely with the Passover. For practical purposes the two were considered as one. They occurred on succeeding days and were tied to the events of the night Israel left Egypt.

These six festivals were divided into the spring festivals (the first three) and the autumn festivals (the last three). The spring festivals found their fulfillment in the events surrounding Jesus' death at the beginning of the Christian era, while the autumn feasts represented events at the close of the age and the end of sin.

1. The Passover (Num. 28:16-25).

How were the events of crucifixion weekend clearly and specifically foreshadowed in the Passover ritual? Lev. 23:5-12; Luke 23:46—24:6.

"A summary of the Passover ritual lends emphasis to the great central truths of Christianity. The Passover is symbolic of the death of Christ. As the Passover lamb died, so Christ died. The blood of the lamb delivered Israel of old from the destroying angel. The blood of Christ now reconciles all who come to Him in faith.

"The Passover is also symbolic of the resurrection, as typified in the wave sheaf. The lamb died on the evening of the 14th day of Abib. On the 16th, the 'morrow after the sabbath,' the first fruits, previously cut, were presented before the Lord. Christ died Friday afternoon and rested in the grave over the Sabbath (Luke 23:53-56). On the morrow after the Sabbath (Luke 24:1) Christ the 'firstfruits' (1 Cor. 15:20) was raised from the grave, and presented Himself before the heavenly Father (John 20:17)." —*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 804.

For us who stand ready to go into the heavenly Canaan, what service has taken the place of the Passover? Luke 22:13-20.

2. The Feast of Weeks (Num. 28:26-31).

What is a more familiar name for this festival and what happened in the New Testament on this day to give it special meaning? Acts 2:1-4.

The name *Pentecost* is from a Greek word meaning *fifty*. The festival received this title because it came 50 days after the presentation of the firstfruits. Pentecost came on the sixth day of the Jewish third month (late May or early June) and marked the close of the grain harvest that had begun 50 days earlier with the firstfruits. When Jesus rose from the tomb, "the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20), He brought with Him to heaven those who were resurrected at His death as an emblem of the harvest to come. (See Matt. 27:52, 53; Eph. 4:8.) Thus Pentecost marked the descent of the Holy Spirit to equip the apostles for the harvest.

ILLUMINATION: “When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 38, 39.

What promise to us does the experience of Pentecost confirm? John 14:16, 17, 26.

3. The Feast of Trumpets (Num. 29:1-6).

Celebrated today by the Jews as Rosh Hashanah, this festival (late September or early October) was the New Year’s Day of the civil calendar. It was marked by the blowing of trumpets. The Jewish Talmud taught that each person was judged on this day for the deeds of the previous year, but his destiny was not settled until the Day of Atonement nine days later.

What last-day application can we make to the Feast of Trumpets which was closely connected with the judgment portrayed by the Day of Atonement? Rev. 14:6, 7.

As the Feast of Trumpets prepared the people for the annual judgment to come, so the first angel’s message draws attention to the everlasting gospel and the end-time judgment that determines each person’s relationship to that gospel.

4. The Day of Atonement (Num. 29:7-11).

What was the congregation to do during the Day of Atonement? Lev. 23:27-29.

ILLUMINATION: “We are in the great day of atonement, when our sins are, by confession and repentance, to go beforehand to judgment. . . . In the typical service, when the work of atonement was performed by the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary, the people were required to afflict their souls before God, and confess their sins, that they might be atoned for and blotted out. Will any less be required of us in this antitypical day of atonement, when Christ in the sanctuary above is pleading in behalf of His people, and the final, irrevocable decision is to be pronounced upon every case?”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 124, 125.

How does Daniel describe this day of judgment? Dan. 7:9-14, 24-27.

The results of judgment are both positive and negative. Judgment is given against the power opposed to God and in favor of the saints.

What does Jesus say about judgment as it relates to those who have accepted Him? John 5:22-24. Compare 1 John 4:15-17.

5. The Feast of Tabernacles (Num. 29:12-40).

This feast commemorated the time of the wilderness wandering. During the seven days of the festival the people lived in temporary shelters made of palm and willow branches to remind themselves of the lack of a permanent home during this time. See Deut. 16:12-15; Lev. 23:39-41. It was also the final festival of the agricultural year (observed during October). It celebrated the gathering in of the final harvest.

“It was altogether the happiest occasion of the year, when friends and neighbors renewed fellowship and dwelt together in love and harmony. In this respect it was prophetic of the time when the great ingathering of God’s people shall take place, and ‘many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven’ (Matt. 8:11).”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 805.

IV. THE REQUEST OF TWO TRIBES (Num. 32:1-42).

What request by Reuben and Gad caused Moses to fear a repetition of the fiasco at Kadesh Barnea 40 years earlier? Verses 1-15.

The proposal of these two tribes to find their inheritance east of the Jordan disturbed Moses greatly. He feared that their action would lead the other tribes to refuse to cross the Jordan.

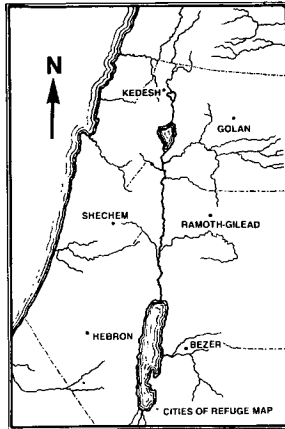
What assurance did the two tribes give that allayed Moses’ fears? Did they fulfill their bargain? Verses 16-19; Josh. 22:1-6.

V. CITIES OF REFUGE (Num. 35:1-34).

What provision was to be made in Canaan for the protection of those guilty of involuntary manslaughter? Verses 6, 11-15.

These cities of refuge did not provide unconditional protection, but did safeguard the slayer’s life until a trial could take place. They were distributed throughout Canaan so that every part of the land was within a half day’s journey of such a refuge.

MAP STUDY: Three cities of refuge were located on each side of the Jordan. Note on the map that they were located in such a way that no person would have to go more than 30 miles (about 48 km.) in order to reach a city of refuge.



What spiritual application does this provision have for Christians today? John 10:27-30.

Standing at the border of the heavenly Canaan, we must expect some hardships and struggles in the days just ahead. But our faith in God will carry us through into the Promised Land. The Advent movement will triumph. By the grace of God, we will triumph with it. But we cannot be content to go alone. Now is the time to put forth every effort to encourage those about us and those we love to go with us into the heavenly Canaan.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: What parallel for today do you find in the fact that those who were accorded sanctuary in the city of refuge must never leave its precincts if they would remain shielded from the avenger? Num. 35:25-28; Heb. 10:26, 27.

SUMMARY: The way Israel went about preparing to enter Canaan showed a distinct contrast to the unbelief exhibited by their fathers 40 years earlier. We have had to learn certain lessons in our preparation for heaven. As spiritual Israel, we need to accept God's promises and let Him lead us the last part of the way across Jordan.

APPLICATION

- Read Revelation 7 and then ask the Holy Spirit to apply these questions to your life:
 1. Have I washed my robe and made it white in the blood of the Lamb?
 2. What does it mean to receive the seal of God in my forehead?
 3. By my life, do I ascribe "salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb"? (Rev. 7:10).
- What more can I do to encourage friends and loved ones to be ready when Jesus comes?

Lessons for Second Quarter, 1988

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the second quarter of 1988 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of this series is "Love Never Fails."

First Lesson:

"GOD GETS OUR ATTENTION"

MEMORY TEXT: Deut. 28:1.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Hosea chapter 1 and 2:6-23

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God spoke through His servants the prophets to point out sin in the ranks of His people, often in a dramatic, attention-getting way, and to call them to repent and return. Hosea's experience with Gomer demonstrated God's never-failing love. It also can serve to remind us how crucial the choice of a life companion can be.

OUTLINE:

- I. God's Controversy with Israel (Hosea 4:1, 2).
- II. The Prophet Introduced (Hosea 1:1, 2).
- III. Hosea's Message (Hosea 1:1, 2, 4, 6, 9).
- IV. The Prophet Takes a Wife (Hosea 1:2-9).

Second Lesson:

"TWO HAZARDS TO A HAPPY HOME"

MEMORY TEXT: Phil. 2:3.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Hosea 2:1-6.

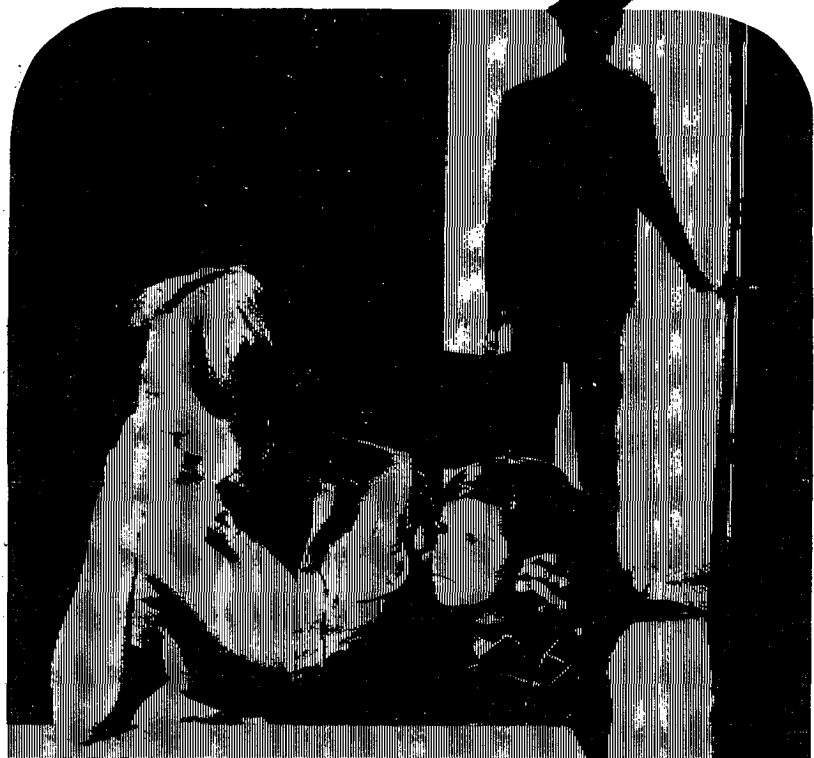
CENTRAL THOUGHT: There are many hazards to happy homes. Two that are common and destructive in their efforts upon marital peace and prosperity are selfishness and lack of commitment.

OUTLINE:

- I. Selfishness—Roots of Problems, Unhappiness, and Sin.
- II. Lack of Commitment—Pitfall of Relationships.

Lessons in Braille:

The regular Adult Sabbath School Lessons are available free each month in Braille and 16 2/3 rpm records to blind and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal ink print. This includes individuals who because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, old age, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact the Christian Record Braille Foundation, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506.



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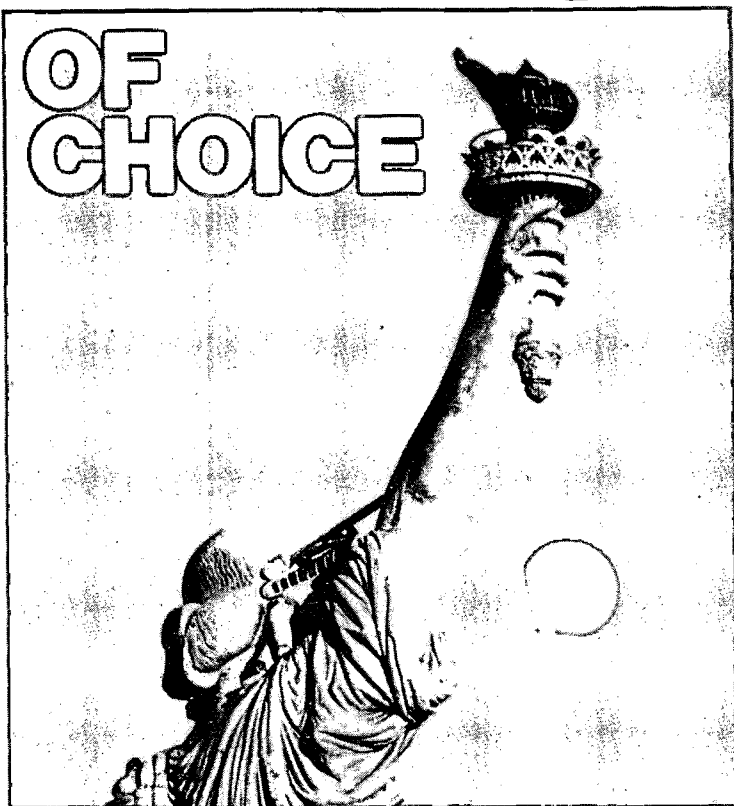
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Projects:

1. Chapels and lamb shelters, Rwanda Union Mission
2. Chapels and lamb shelters, Indian Ocean Union Mission

Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members	Sabbath School Members
Central African	20,216,000	361	32,325	88,441
Indian Ocean	9,799,057	143	20,676	15,546
Nigerian	98,100,000	371	63,245	117,605
Rwanda	6,214,943	608	149,871	230,330
Sahel	34,200,000	30	3,882	4,575
West African	30,400,000*	271	98,739	138,386
Zaire	32,300,000	636	138,214	175,764
Burundi	5,120,000	81	20,621	37,046
Division Totals	236,350,000	2,501	527,573	807,693

Statistics as of June 30, 1985