



The unabridged writings of Fred Morris, Manna Publications

People of the Bible AARON, brother of Moses



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MANNA FOR ALL

To the reader: Have your Bible open as you study these notes. Remember that they have not been edited by the UK editorial team but are part of Fred's legacy of Bible teaching literature he wrote after his retirement to the USA in 1990. These notes also serve as the legacy of the late Jim Norman, Manna Publications UK, who checked and formatted and archived Fred's writings for him. Invite a friend to study with you. You will be blessed.



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Unit 1. AARON, MOSES' BROTHER



Read: Exodus 2:11-25

Long years ago, Jacob and his twelve sons and their families lived in Canaan, which is now Israel. When famine threatened their families, they began to look to other countries for grain. When they heard that there was grain in Egypt, they went there to buy enough to feed their children.

Years before this, Jacob's sons had 'sold' their younger brother to slave traders going down to Egypt. Now Joseph was a grown man, but a slave in Egypt. Through many trials, God had saved Joseph from death. God had blessed Joseph for his faith and the Pharaoh, king of Egypt had put him in charge of all the grain stored in the store cities of Egypt.

When Joseph learned that his aged father was still alive in Canaan, and of the famine in the land, he sent word for him and all his sons and their families to come down to Egypt (Gen 46:1-34). Moses' father and mother were Levites. Levi was one of the twelve tribes of Israel. At that time the people were called Hebrews.

SLAVES IN EGYPT

The Pharaoh, king of Egypt, had forced the Hebrew people to work as slaves. They were treated cruelly and beaten by harsh slave masters. And the king ordered his soldiers to kill all the baby boys born to the Hebrew people. Aaron, Moses' older brother by three years, may have been born before the Pharaoh issued this order. Aaron and Moses lived in lived with their father and mother in Egypt.

Aaron grew up without any opportunity and without much learning. The children of the Hebrews did not go to school. But God was at work in Aaron's family. When baby Moses was born, God saved him from the Egyptian soldiers. When Moses' cries grew too loud for him to stay any longer in their tiny hut, Moses' mother made a basket of reeds from the river bank and coated the outside with pitch. She floated the basket, with Moses in it, on the river Nile.

A Princess of the royal family found Moses floating in the basket on the river, just where his mother had put him. She took him home to the palace and she raised Moses as her own son.

So Moses, Aaron's younger brother, grew up in the palace of Pharaoh's daughter and learned "all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He was powerful in speech and action" (Acts 7:22)

One day Moses, when he was grown, went out to see how the Hebrews were being treated. What he saw filled him with anger and he killed an Egyptian. When this act of murder was known, Moses had to run for his life.

Moses ran to the land of Midian, an ancient land near the Arabian Peninsula, and home to the Midianites, descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham (Gen 25:2).

Moses was safe there and found work caring for the flocks of one, Ruel, also called "Jethro, priest of Midian" (Exodus 2:16-21; 3:1).

For forty years, Moses cared for the sheep. All this time his family, along with all the other families of Jacob, suffered under the cruel slave masters in Egypt. They cried out to God and He heard their cries (Exodus 2:23).

GOD SPOKE TO MOSES

One day Moses took the sheep to the far side of Mount Horeb. There he saw a strange sight. A desert bush was burning and flames of fire came out of the bush. But the bush did not burn up. Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight – why the bush does not burn up" (Exodus 3:2-3). An angel appeared to him and God called to Moses from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

Moses answered, "Here I am."

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Then He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and Jacob." Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord God said, "I have seen the misery of My people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers...so I have come down to rescue them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of the land onto a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey – So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:5-10).

God spoke these words to Moses when he was all alone in the desert where he was minding his father-in-law's sheep (Exodus 3:10).



TALK ABOUT

1. Who was Aaron?
2. What advantages did Moses have that Aaron did not have?
3. Why did Moses have to run away from Egypt to Midian?
4. Where was Moses when God spoke to him (Exodus 3:1)?
5. What did God say to Moses (Exodus 3:7-10)?

Unit 2. MOSES MADE EXCUSES TO GOD



Read: Exodus 4:1-17

When God told Moses that He wanted him to go to Egypt and bring the Israelites out, Moses was afraid, and he made these excuses to God:

- Who am I to go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt (Exodus 3:11)?
- Suppose I go, and the Israelites don't believe that You sent me?
- What if they will not listen to me?
- O Lord... I am slow of speech and tongue.

God is ever gracious and patient with us. His grace and favor always comes to us to assure and strengthen us. God was angry with Moses for making all those excuses, but He did not give up on him.

"Who gave man his mouth?" God asked. "Did not I create you and give you your tongue? Cannot I give you the words to speak?"

Cannot I take care of you in Egypt?

"I will help you speak and will teach you what to say to the king of Egypt," God told Moses.

What was Moses thinking? Deep down in his heart, Moses did not receive God's wonderful promise of help. He answered the Almighty God with these words: "O Lord, please send someone else to do it" (Exodus 4:13).

Again God was angry with Moses!

"What is that in your hand?" God asked Moses.

"A staff," he replied.

"Throw it on the ground," God commanded (Exodus 4:2-3).

When his staff hit the ground, it became a snake. Moses ran from it. Then God said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." Moses did this and the snake turned into a staff in his hand. From that time on, Moses knew God could use the rod to show forth His power. It was the staff of God.

Then God told Moses, "Put your hand inside your cloak." When Moses took his hand out, it was white with leprosy.

"Now put it back into your cloak," God said. Moses did this his hand was made whole like the other. Then God said, "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second" (Exodus 4:8).



TALK ABOUT:

1. Who was Moses living with in Midian?
2. How did God reveal Himself to Moses (Exodus 3:5-10)?
3. Where was Moses when this happened and what was he doing?
4. What did God tell Moses?
5. Why was God angry with Moses (Exodus 4:13)?
6. What excuses did Moses make?
7. What miraculous signs did God give Moses (Exodus 4:1-8)?

GOD SENT AARON TO MEET MOSES



Read: Exodus 4:27-31

God gave Moses miraculous signs to do before the people and before Pharaoh, Yet Moses still made excuses to God (Exodus 4:10-11). He said that he could not speak well and would not be able to speak to the Pharaoh of Egypt, so God asked Moses, "What about your brother, Aaron, the Levite? He is coming out into the desert to meet you; I know he can speak well. I will help you both speak and I will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you... it will be as if he were your mouth... As if you were God to him" (Exodus 4:14-16).

And that is how Aaron came to help his younger brother face Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Aaron went back to Egypt with his brother Moses. Aaron acted as Moses' mouth, speaking all the words God gave to Moses to speak to Pharaoh. In everything, Aaron was Moses' spokesman. Aaron did not even have to think what he was going to say! His brother Moses told him.

Later, when the people accused Moses of making their life more difficult, Aaron got blamed, too!

AARON AND MOSES IN EGYPT

In Egypt, Moses and Aaron stood before the Pharaoh. Moses spoke God's words and Aaron repeated every word Moses said. First, they spoke to the elders of Israel and told them God's great plan to rescue them from slavery (Exodus 4:29-31).

The Hebrew people had been in bondage in Egypt for 400 years. They were slaves of the Pharaohs. While they were slaves, they built great cities out of brick and worked very hard. In their misery, they cried out to God for mercy.

God did many miracles for them before Pharaoh agreed to let them go. But, each time, Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. So God told Pharaoh, "I will make a distinction between My people and your people" (Exodus 8:23). With a mighty, out-stretched arm, God brought His people up out of Egypt.

God sent nine plagues on the Egyptians, while Pharaoh tried to hold on to his labor force. Finally, Moses told Aaron to tell Pharaoh. "Tonight, the first born of every family in Egypt will die. From the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl" (Exodus 11:5). "There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt, worse than there has ever been. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark. Then you will know the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel" (Exodus 8:23).



TALK ABOUT

1. What did God send Moses to Egypt to do?

2. Why did Moses not want to go to Egypt?
3. Was God pleased with Moses?
4. What promise did God give Moses (Exodus 3:13)?
5. What did God do to cause Pharaoh to let the Hebrew people go?
6. Did Pharaoh harden his own heart (Rom 9:17)

Unit 3. GOD WORKED MIRACLES



Read: Exodus 12:1-13

God gave Moses very special instructions. He told him to have the Israelites mark their houses with the blood of a lamb. Sprinkle the blood on the door posts and the lintel above the door, Aaron told them. And make sure everyone in the family stays inside the house all night.

“When I see the blood,” God said, “I will pass over you and not destroy you” (Exodus 12:1-11).

In the morning you will be able to leave Egypt. Your neighbors will beg you to leave. And Pharaoh will order you to get out.

God’s word came to pass, just as He had said. Everything God says He will do, He does!

A great company of Israelites left Egypt that day. Their Egyptian neighbors were glad to see them leave and gave them anything the Hebrews asked them for, so that it was said that “the Israelites plundered the Egyptians” (Exodus 3:22).

THE HEBREW PEOPLE LEAVE EGYPT



Read: Exodus 14:5-31

Aaron, Moses and the great company of people marched north. When they came to the Red Sea there was no way for them to cross over. And very soon they saw Pharaoh’s army coming after them.

“What have you done to us?” the people shouted at Moses. “It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians as slaves than to die here in the desert!” (Exodus 14:11-12).

“Stand still,” Moses told them through Aaron, “and you will see the Lord deliver you. And you won’t have to lift even a little finger” (Exodus 14:14 The Living Bible). When we put God in charge of our lives, everything is take care of,

Raise your staff and stretch it over the sea, God told Moses. Aaron had carried the rod on the first three interviews with the Pharaoh in Egypt (Exodus 7:3, 9, 19). After this Moses always carried the rod as a symbol of God’s power.

When Moses held the rod of God over the sea, in faith, the wind blew the waters. They parted and the people walked through on dry land...until all of them had passed over and were safe of the other side.

God made a way for His people to cross over. He held back the water and made a dry path through the sea. So they crossed over the Red Sea on dry land.

Pharaoh and his army went to follow, but the water closed in over them. And they were all drowned.

This was the greatest miracle in all Israel's history. Every prophet wrote of it. Even heathen people living hundreds of miles away heard what God had done for His people. And they 'feared' the God of Israel (Joshua 2:9).



TALK ABOUT

1. What happened when the people came to the Red Sea?
2. What did God tell Moses to do?
3. Did Aaron have any part in this miracle?

Unit 4. THE BATTLE WITH AMALEK



Read: Exodus 17:8-16

The Israelites marched through the desert toward Mount Sinai. At Rephidim, the wild tribes of Amalek came and attacked them.

Amalek was a son of Eliphaz, son of Esau (Gen 14:12). For a long time, the Amalekites lived around Kadesh-Barnea, a wilderness town on the southern frontier of Judah. They were a fierce people and often attacked God's people (Numbers 24:20).

As the Israelite companies neared Mt Sinai, the Amalekites attacked them from the rear. Moses told Joshua, his young aide, to take men and drive them off (Exodus 17:9).

Moses promised Joshua, "Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands." Aaron and Hur went out with Moses.

Hur was a man from the tribe of Judah who helped Aaron and Moses

Later Hur helped Aaron govern the people while Moses was away from the camp.

The battle raged and Joshua was hard pressed by the Amalekite hordes. When Moses held up the rod of God, Joshua's men seeming to get the upper hand. But Moses' arms got tired and the rod dropped to his side. Then the Amalekites gained ground. So Aaron and Hur rolled a stone to the highest part of the hill and Moses sat on it. Aaron held up one of Moses' arms and Hur held up the other "so that his arms remained steady until sunset" (Exodus 17:12) and Joshua won the battle.

God told Moses to write the record of the battle and the victory on a scroll for Joshua to read (Exodus 17:14).

GOD MADE A COVENANT WITH ISRAEL



Read: Exodus 24:12-10

God made a covenant with His people Israel. God had chosen them as His special people, "His treasured possession" (Exodus 19:5; Deut 7:9). He said to them, Now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all the nations you will be My treasured possession" (Exodus 19:5-6).

Later God told Moses to take Aaron, his two eldest sons Nadab and Abihu and 70 of the elders of Israel and come up to the slopes of the mountain (Exodus 24:1).

Only Moses went up the mountain to meet with the Lord. Aaron and the others would share in the feast that would signify the confirming of the covenant.

That morning, Moses sacrificed young bulls and made fellowship offering to God. He took some of the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. "Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people." Moses had written all God's instructions to the people in The Book of the Covenant.

When Moses read these instructions to the people, they answered him, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey" (Exodus 24:7).



TALK ABOUT

1. Who were the Amalekites?
2. Why did they attack the Hebrews?
3. Who did Moses send out to fight them?
4. What did Aaron and Hur do?
5. Did God answer Moses' prayers by giving Israel the victory?

Unit 5. AARON SAW GOD'S GLORY



Read: Exodus 24:9-18

That day Aaron and his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, were among the company of people who saw the glory of God. "Under His feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself...They saw God, and they ate and drank" together in the light of His glory.

The Scripture says, "They saw God. But God did not raise His hand against these leaders..." (Exodus 24:11). What a privilege God gave His servant Aaron. One would think Aaron would never be the same man again after such an experience.

These men saw the place where God revealed His presence. The Scripture says, "No man can see God and live" (1 Tim 6:16), so we conclude that they

had a glimpse of God's glory. They saw no form, for God is Spirit (John 4:24). No picture could be drawn nor any image made of what they saw, yet it was enough to satisfy them that God was indeed present with His people.

As Matthew Henry commented, "Nothing was described but that which was under His feet; for our conceptions of God are all below Him, and fall infinitely short of being adequate."

Though they were so near, God "did not raise His hand against these leaders." They were near, but not too near as to be in danger.

To the Israelites waiting below "the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain" (Exodus 24:17).

A LARGE COMPANY OF SLAVES

Before the Hebrew people left Egypt they were only a bunch of slaves! Now God would form them into a nation. So He gave them rules and laws to live by. God's Laws were for their good and to help them become a nation which honored God. They would be separate from the idol-worshipping peoples around them. They were God's chosen people and He wanted them to show his holiness and justice to the other nations!

To help them to know Him and to live as He wanted them to, God would give Moses His Law for the people. He would give the Law to Moses while the people camped at Mt. Sinai. Moses was alone on Mt Sinai with God for forty days and forty nights. When Moses came back down the mountain, he told the people "all the words of the Lord:" And all the people responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said" (Exodus 19:8).

"You have seen what I did in Egypt," God told the people, "Now if you obey me fully, and keep My Covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6).

Aaron and all the people replied: "We will do everything the Lord has said."



TALK ABOUT

1. Who did they see chasing them?
2. How did God save them from the Pharaoh's army?
3. What great word did Moses give to the people (Exodus 14:14)?
4. Did Aaron see God perform all these miracles?

Unit 6. MOSES LEFT AARON IN THE CAMP



Read: Exodus 31:18; 32:1-35

Aaron stayed close to Moses and did everything Moses told him to do. So Aaron walked in the shadow of his younger brother, Moses.

When Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the Law, Aaron was left to stand alone as leader in the Israelite camp! It was then that Aaron's faith was tested.

Moses was on the mountain speaking with God for 40 days. And the people got tired of waiting. Some of the people rebelled against God. They asked Aaron to make them a golden-calf idol.

"What has happened to this Moses", the people yelled at Aaron (Exodus 32:1-15)? "Come, make us gods who will go before us. We do not know what has happened to this fellow, Moses?"

Aaron had to make a choice. What should he say to the people? Should he say, "No, that would be wrong" and put himself in danger?

Sadly, Aaron went right along with their wicked plan! He asked the ones who wanted the idol to give him all their gold jewelry. They had 'borrowed' gold and silver from the Egyptians on the night they left Egypt. Their neighbors had given them everything they asked for! Now they gathered up their bracelets and earrings and gave them to Aaron. And Aaron made an idol out of the gold jewelry.

TWO TABLETS OF STONE

Moses had been on the mountain top with God. He had been there for 40 days and 40 nights without food or water. The Spirit of God sustained him.

"When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mt Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God" – that is by the will and power of God (Exodus 31:18).

This is a very interesting Scripture. God gave Moses a copy of the Ten Commandments which He had spoken to the people of Israel. They were written down on stone by God Himself. This showed that they were God's commands and that they would never change. They were two tablets inscribed with the commandments that would direct all men everywhere, for all time, in our duty toward God and toward man.

They are called "the Testimony" because they testified to the will of God and His goodness toward His people. The Law also testifies to the holiness and justice of God. No other document ever produced expresses this so clearly.



TALK ABOUT

1. Why did Moses leave the camp and climb Mt Sinai?
2. Who did he leave in charge of the people?
3. What did the people ask Aaron to do?
4. Why did Aaron make a calf-idol?
5. What did God give Moses while he was on the mountain?
6. Why did God give Israel these commandments?
7. Why are they so important?

8. Are there any laws more important than God's Law?

Unit 7. GOD SAW AARON AND THE PEOPLE



Read: Exodus 32:7-14

Moses could not see the people in the camp of Israel, but God could see them. God did not need to see them, He knew their hearts.

"God said to Moses, "Go down because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I have commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast the shape of a calf..." (Exodus 32:7-14).

"I have seen these people, and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave Me alone so that My anger may burn against them..."

"But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God...Then the Lord relented and did not bring on His people the disaster He had threatened." Moses was with Joshua, his aide. Joshua heard the noise in the camp too! He told Moses the sound was like the sound he had heard when an enemy attacked the camp. But Moses replied, "It is not the sound of victory, it is not the sound of defeat; It is the sound of singing that I hear" (Exodus 32:18).

WHY DID YOU DO THAT?



Read: Exodus 32:19-24

Moses stood facing his brother Aaron. At the sight of the golden calf idol, Moses boiled inside with anger. He was holding the two stone tablets - the Law of God, written by God's own finger.

"What did these people do to you?" Moses shouted at Aaron, his brother. "That you led them into such great sin?"

"Don't be angry..." Aaron pleaded. And he blamed the people for asking him to make the idol!

With a smashing madness, Moses threw the stone tablets down at his feet and they broke into a hundred pieces (Exodus 32:19)

"Aaron, why did you do that?" he shouted again. "What has happened to you?"

"The people asked me to make it for them. I just went along with their wishes. They grumbled that there was no one to lead them. You were gone so long! They thought you would never come back!"

"I did not want to do it!" Aaron hung his head.

"You get rid of the thing," Moses muttered. He pointed to the Golden Calf idol that stood in the middle of the camp.

THE PEOPLE WERE RUNNING WILD

Some of the people had gone wild. They were eating and drinking and dancing around the golden calf idol. The idol Aaron had made for them!

Moses was so angry, he ground the calf idol to powder. Then he threw it into the water and made the people drink the water. And he prayed to God to forgive them for turning away from Him. And I am sure he prayed for his brother, Aaron, that God would forgive his sin, also.



TALK ABOUT

1. How long was Moses on the mountain meeting with God?
2. Did God change His mind?
3. Do you try to put the blame for your sins onto someone else?
4. Why do we always blame someone else for the wrong things we do?
5. Why is sin always our fault (Romans 3:23)?
6. What did God say about sin (Romans 3:23; 6:23)?

Unit 8. WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE



Read: Exodus 32:25-29

Aaron truly repented of his sin and stood with the Levites, his own clan. The Levites honored God in the camp. God forgave Aaron and all those who had not worshipped the idol.

We know God forgave Aaron because, later, God allowed him to be the High Priest in Israel. As the High Priest, Aaron carried the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it on the altar before God.

For a time Moses was not sure what would happen to Aaron. "Moses said to the Lord, 'You have been telling me, lead these people, but you have not let me know whom you will send with me.'" (Exodus 33:12)

Moses was so angry to see the people drinking and running wild like pagans who did not know God. He was so angry with them that he threw the Tablets of Law out of his hands. And they broke at his feet there at the foot of the mountain.

ISRAEL IN THE DESERT



Read: Numbers 12:1-16

The people of Israel had been wandering in the desert for a long time. When they complained about their hardships and the Lord heard them, "fire burned among them and consumed some on the outskirts of the camp" (Num 11:1). It is thought that they were some of the "mixed peoples" who joined themselves to Israel when they left Egypt (Exodus 12:38).

But Aaron sinned in something more serious. Moses' own brother Aaron and his sister Miriam began to talk against Moses, their leader. They complained about his Cushite wife. They may have talked against Zipporah, the daughter of the priest of Midian (Exodus 2:15-22). "Cushite" is a name used to reflect badly on her Midianite ancestors. But more likely Moses had taken a second wife in Egypt, perhaps after the death of Zipporah. Cush was the first son of Ham, the father of the peoples living in the southern Nile valley.

They talked about Moses' wife, but they really spoke against Moses and the place God had given him as the leader and prophet of Israel. Moses had chosen the seventy elders from the twelve tribes without consulting them.

God summoned all three to the Tent of Meeting. "Then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and; He (the Lord God) stood at the entrance of the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam."

When both of them stepped forward, God spoke: "When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal Myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord. Why were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses" (Num 12:6-7)?

JUDGMENT CAME ON MIRIAM

"The anger of the Lord burned against them (Aaron and Miriam) and His presence left them. When the cloud lifted from above the Tent, Miriam stood leprous..." She had the disease of leprosy on her body. Aaron saw his sister, a leper and cried out to Moses, "Please, my lord, do not hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed."

So Moses cried out to the Lord, "O God, please heal her."

People with leprosy were 'unclean,' and had to stay away from all others. As they went down the street they had to cry out "Unclean! Unclean!" and warn the people to keep away from them!

God told Moses to put his sister in a special tent, outside the camp, for seven days. And the people did not move camp until she was brought back, healed of her sickness.



TALK ABOUT

1. What happened in the camp of Israel that made God so angry?
2. What happened to the two tablets of stone God gave to Moses?
3. How did Moses plead with God to spare the people
4. Who was Miriam?
5. What did Miriam and Aaron complain about?
6. Was Moses in the wrong?
7. Who got leprosy? Why?
8. How was Miriam healed?

Unit 9. AARON AND HIS SONS



Read: Exodus 25:1-8; 28:1-14

God had already given Moses plans to build the tabernacle or tent of meeting. God would meet with His people at the tabernacle. The people brought all the materials Moses needed to build this tent-structure

Moses received the pattern for the tabernacle and its furnishings from God (Exodus 25:8). The most important object to be put in the tabernacle was the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-22).

God told Moses, "Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve Me as priests" (Exodus 28:1).

Aaron and his sons would serve God at the tabernacle. This shows us that God is gracious and ever ready to forgive those who repent and are sorry for their sins. God had forgiven Aaron for the sin of making the calf-idol and chose him to be the first High Priest of Israel. This was a high honor. As the years passed, the High Priest became the most important person in all Israel.

God had revealed something of His character to Moses. He passed in front of Moses proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished..." (Exodus 34:6-7).



TALK ABOUT

1. Was Aaron a perfect priest?
2. What happened to Aaron's line of priests (Lev 10:1-7)?

AARON'S ROD THAT BUDED



Read: Numbers 17:1-11 (Hebrews 9:4)

The Israelites grumbled against Moses. Some of the grumbling was started by the mixed multitude that came up out of Egypt with the people of Israel (Exodus 12:38; Num 11:4).

God was tired of hearing them grumble against His servant Moses. He said to Moses, "Get twelve staffs, one from the head of each tribe. Write the name of each man on his staff. On the staff of Levi write Aaron's name. Place them in the Tent of Meeting (the Tabernacle) in front of the Testimony, where I will meet with you. The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid Myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites" (Num 17:1-5).

Moses spoke to the leaders and each gave him their staff. The rods had been cut from the almond trees. Aaron's staff was among them.

Moses placed the staffs before the Lord in the Tabernacle as God had commanded. God chose this way to work a miracle. The rod God chose would bud and blossom (17:5).

The next day, when Moses entered the Tabernacle, he saw that Aaron's staff had budded, blossomed and produced fruit (17:8).

Aaron's staff represented the tribe of Levi. On them the Lord had put the privilege and burden of the priesthood. He had chosen Aaron to be Israel's High Priest and his sons to be priests (Exodus 28:1-2). They were to be even more holy and obedient than the common men of Israel. Perhaps it was this preferment of Levi that caused some of the other tribal leaders to grumble.

Moses gave each man back his staff which remained just as it was when Moses put it in the Tabernacle. But God said to Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back in the Tent of Meeting, in front of the Testimony (the Ark of the Covenant) to be kept as a sign for the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against Me, so that they will not die" (17:10).

GOD SEEKS FRUIT

Again we see that God's servants need His power. Without God's power working through him, Aaron would have been just another dry rod. With God's power and authority on him, Aaron's life would be fruitful and a blessing to the people of Israel.

Christians have the same power and authority from God (1 Peter 2:5).

Spiritual fruit is the best evidence of God's call. When God calls a person, He equips that person with gifts to serve Him. He called Aaron and his sons to be priests. He calls every believer to be a priest in a holy priesthood "offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

- a. That each person serves the Lord and the Church of Jesus Christ.
- b. Each person should reproduce his kind and disciple another.
- c. The sap and vitality of the believer comes from the Lord.
- d. God's purpose is ever to take away sin and rebellion.



TALK ABOUT

1. Why did the elders grumble against Moses?
2. What did God tell Moses to do?
3. Where did Moses place the rods?
4. What happened to Aaron's rod?
5. What did this show?
6. Do Christians have God's authority?

Unit 10. TRAGEDY IN THE DESERT



Read: Leviticus 9:22-24; 10:1-11

Things were going well for Aaron and Moses. The priests began their ministry, serving God and the people at the Tabernacle. Moses told Aaron and his sons which animals to sacrifice before the Lord on the altar (Lev 9:1-4).

Moses told Aaron, "Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people...as the Lord has commanded" (Leviticus 9:7).

When Aaron had finished doing all that the Lord God had commanded, "Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them...Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting (the tabernacle). When they came out they blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering... on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell face down" (Leviticus 9:22-24).

NADAB AND ABIHU

We don't know what Aaron's two elder sons were doing while the people worshipped at the Tent of Meeting (the Tabernacle). Perhaps, while the people were on their faces before the Lord, the two men grabbed their censers and took fire from the altar where the sacrifices had been burned.

They took fire from the altar in their censers and added incense. Then they went into the Tent of Meeting. Their actions were contrary to a command God had given them (Lev 10:1). Again, fire came out from the presence of the Lord and killed the two men. This left only Eleazar, Aaron's third son, to carry on the High Priest's duties.

These two young men knew God's laws. They had been told what to do, but they thought they could worship God in their own way. Were they proud of their office, over zealous or drunk with wine? Perhaps wine had dulled their senses for God said to Aaron, "You and your sons are not to drink wine or fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting..." (Lev 10:8).

Aaron was shocked, but Moses reminded him of words the Lord had spoken: "Among those who approach Me I will show Myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored" (Lev 10:3). "You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean..." God told Aaron.

Moses commanded two of Aaron's nephews to carry their dead cousin's bodies outside the camp and bury them.

Christians must worship God in the way He has commanded. He demands holiness of life now, just as He did then (Lev 11:44). Each person is responsible before the Lord. These two men joined together to offer incense to the Lord.

God told the priests to minister one at a time. This points to every believer acting as a “priest unto God” in his or her own right (1 Peter 2:5).

Unit 11. AARON’S PRIESTHOOD PASSED TO HIS SON



Read: Numbers 20:22-29

In their wanderings, the people came near to the border of Edom (Numbers 20:22). The Edomites were descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob the ancestor of the Israelites. The Edomites were enemies of Israel and refused to let Moses and the people pass through their territory.

Moses wrote, “So we went on past our brothers, the descendants of Esau... we turned from the Arabah road... and traveled along the desert road and went up toward Moab” (Deuteronomy 2:8).

After 38 years of wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites set out from Kadesh and to Mount Hor (Num 20:22-25).

These God said to Moses, “Aaron will be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I gave the Israelites, because both of you rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah. (Aaron shared in the disobedience of Moses when he struck the rock to get water for the people, Num 20:1-13). Get Aaron and his son Eleazar and take them up Mount Hor.”

Moses took Aaron and his third son Eleazar to the top of the mountain. Then he removed Aaron’s garments, the garments of the High Priest, and put them on Eleazar. “And Aaron died there on the top of the mountain.”

There was no ceremony, no audience, only God and Moses.

Moses dressed Eleazar in the High Priest’s robes and put the ephod over his head and tied it with the cords. He would carry the vest or ephod with the Urim and the Thummim and use it to find God’s will for Israel. The High Priest used these to determine God’s will in difficult cases. From that day on, Eleazar would represent the people before God.

Aaron died there and we may suppose that Moses and Eleazar buried his body.

When the Israelites learned of Aaron’s death “the entire house of Israel mourned for him thirty days” (Num 20:29). This was their custom.



TALK ABOUT

1. Aaron and Moses went up Mount Hor. What did Moses do there?
2. Do you grumble if God blesses another more than He blesses you?

Unit 12. MOSES AND AARON DID NOT ENTER THE LAND



Read: Deuteronomy 32:48-52; Numbers 20:22-29

Moses and Aaron did not go into the "Promised Land" because they had disobeyed God – Aaron when he made the golden-calf idol at Mt Sinai and Moses when he struck the rock at Meribah.

At the "Waters of Meribah," which means rebellion, Aaron joined with his brother Moses in striking the rock. God had told them to "speak to the rock", but in anger Moses struck it twice and said to the people, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock (Numbers 20:10)?"

Moses had no power to produce water for the people. God accused Moses of not trusting Him enough to bring honor to His holy name.

So the last of the old generation passed on without entering the Promised Land.

Canaan was a place of promise and rest. "So we see they were not able to enter because of their unbelief" (Heb 3:19).

God's promise of rest is for us now! We are challenged to take it by faith and trust Him for all our needs.



TALK ABOUT:

1. When God makes a promise, why not believe and receive it?
2. Whose blood, shed for sinners, is like the blood of the Passover Lamb?
3. What protects us from the destroying angel? Is there any other protection?

GOD'S GRACE AND THE NEW COVENANT



Read: Ephesians 2:1-10

We are no different to the grumbling Israelites! We are all sinners before Almighty God. God said, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

But God is loving and gracious and willing to forgive our sins. Because of the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, we can be forgiven. Jesus came and died for us and in our place. He was the "perfect lamb" that was killed to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

He was our Passover Lamb. His blood was sprinkled on the true 'altar' in heaven. And by faith in His blood, we are not be destroyed, but saved, when the angel of death passes by.

We are not only forgiven, but trusted with service for God, just like Aaron was High Priest.

God says all Christians are 'appointed' by God as His priests. We offer ourselves to him first in prayer and worship. We stand ready to do His bidding. Then we go out to bless the people in His name.

“Go and make disciples of all nations,” He told His followers, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).



TALK ABOUT

1. God has made his followers “kings and priests” to serve Him. How are you serving Him?

Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel....? (Matthew 28:19-20). Are you obeying His command?

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