

# THE BIRTH OF GOD'S NATION

## MOSES Part 1

**A Bible Teaching Commentary  
for personal or group study  
by Fred Morris**



**EXODUS Part 1  
Chapters 1 to 20**



## THE BIRTH OF GOD'S NATION: MOSES Part 1 EXODUS Part 1, Chapters 1 to 20

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The Egyptian princess and the baby Moses</b></li><li>• <b>How God uses the problems of life for our good</b></li><li>• <b>God speaks to Moses from a burning bush</b></li><li>• <b>Ten plagues from God defeat Pharaoh</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The Jewish Passover explained</b></li><li>• <b>Delivery from slavery in Egypt</b></li><li>• <b>Meat and bread and water from God</b></li><li>• <b>The Israelites prepare to meet their holy God</b></li></ul> |
|---|--|

**THIS BOOK** tells us how God fulfilled the promise He made to Abraham nearly 4000 years ago. God said that Abraham would have a very large family that would live in Canaan, the country we now call Israel. This book begins when the family of Jacob lived in Egypt. Jacob was Abraham's grandson whom God later called Israel. This story tells how God took them out from Egypt to Canaan. It tells us of God's plan for the people of Israel (later known as Jews). It tells us the importance of the Passover and the Ten Commandments for Jews and Christians today.

**MANNA PUBLICATIONS** supply Bible teaching commentaries written by Fred Morris. For many years Fred, and his wife Lorna, travelled round the world teaching and preaching. When they returned home they wrote these notes for printing locally wherever there was a need for basic Christian teaching.

**MANNA BIBLE TEACHING COMMENTARIES** are easy to read, easy to understand and easy to translate into other languages.

**THESE BOOKS** are to use on your own or to study in a group. They will help you to understand the truth of Almighty God, whose Hebrew name is Yahweh. He is worshipped by two billion Jews and Christians worldwide. These books will also help you to receive salvation and eternal life through God's Son, Jesus the Christ or Messiah, whose Hebrew name is Yeshua. They will help you to talk about your faith in God and to pray to Him. They will help to guide you from going the wrong way in life. They will help you to live a life that is pleasing to God.

**WE PRAY** that you may have a new peace and purpose in life as you trust in God, read the Bible and use these commentaries. As you read, think about what Jesus said and did 2000 years ago and what He is calling you to say and do today to prepare the way for His return.

### **Manna Publications**

**FOUNDATIONAL BIBLE TEACHING COMMENTARIES**

**"The secret of God's Kingdom has been given to you" (Mark 4:11)**

## To the reader or leader

These Bible commentaries explain the truth about God's Word in a way that is easy to read and understand. They are also easy to translate. You can use these books to study the Bible on your own or with others in a group. Each person should have his or her own book and a Bible if possible.



**Bible reading:** Where you see this, it means you or your group leader should always read the Bible passage first before reading this book.



**Talk about this:** Where you see this, there are questions that can be asked and discussed in a group study. This will help the readers understand the Bible.



**Think about this:** Where you see this, the question requires more time for personal meditation.



**Ruled text boxes:** Where you see these, the information gives additional Bible teaching mainly for students, teachers and preachers.

**Acknowledgements:** Original English Bible quotations are taken from the *HOLY BIBLE New International Reader's Version* and are copyright © 1998 by Biblica, and are issued by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, a Hachette UK company. All rights reserved.

Pictures are copyright © Global Recordings Network (GRN). Used by permission.

**Moses Part 1 Manna Bible teaching commentary © 2007, 2012, 2021 Fred Morris, Manna Publications (USA) Inc. All rights reserved**

**God has enabled us to print this title in the following countries:**

Revised Worldwide English edition first published in the UK in 2007

Reprinted 2007 in Uganda (English)

Reprinted 2011 in India (Telugu) and D. R. Congo, Katanga (French, Kiluba and Kisongye)

Reprinted 2012 in India (Telugu) and D. R. Congo, Katanga (French and Kisongye)

**Second edition** published 2012 in Cameroon (French and English), India (Telugu), Zimbabwe (English)

Reprinted 2014 in D.R. Congo, Katanga (French, Kiluba, Kisongye), Ethiopia (Amharic)

Reprinted 2015 in Cameroon (English), Malawi (Chichewa)

Reprinted 2016 in Cameroon (French)

Reprinted 2017 in Myanmar (Falam Chin), Armenia (Armenian)

Reprinted 2018 in D.R. Congo, Katanga (French, Kiluba), Malawi (Chichewa), Cameroon (French)

Reprinted 2019 in D.R. Congo, Katanga (French, Kiluba), Armenia (Armenian), Uganda (English)

Reprinted 2020 in D.R. Congo, Katanga (French, Kiluba)

**Third edition** published 2021 in the UK.

# CONTENTS

	INTRODUCTION.....	6
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 1</b> .....	<b>7</b>
	THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES OF GOD .....	7
	Why does God let people suffer? .....	8
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 2</b> .....	<b>9</b>
	THE PRINCESS AND THE BABY MOSES .....	9
	God saved baby Moses and God saved baby Jesus .....	10
	MOSES RUNS AWAY FROM EGYPT .....	10
	MOSES BECOMES A SHEPHERD IN A FOREIGN LAND.....	11
	Jethro and the people of Midian .....	12
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 3</b> .....	<b>12</b>
	GOD SPEAKS TO MOSES FROM INSIDE A BUSH .....	12
	The Special Names of God .....	14
	MOSES TRIES TO SAY "NO" TO GOD .....	14
	GOD TELLS MOSES MANY THINGS .....	14
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 4</b> .....	<b>15</b>
	GOD PREPARES MOSES TO GO BACK TO EGYPT .....	15
	GOD DEMANDS HOLINESS AND OBEDIENCE FROM MOSES .....	16
	MOSES MEETS THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL .....	18
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 5 to 6</b> .....	<b>18</b>
	MOSES AND AARON GO TO PHARAOH .....	18
	WHAT MOSES SAID TO GOD .....	19
	WHAT GOD SAID TO MOSES .....	19
	MOSES AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL DOUBT GOD .....	20
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 7 to 10</b> .....	<b>20</b>
	GOD HELPS MOSES TO HOPE .....	20
	THE MIRACLE OF AARON'S ROD .....	21
	GOD SENDS TEN PLAGUES ON EGYPT .....	22
	WHY GOD SENT THE PLAGUES .....	23
	WHAT PHARAOH SAID.....	23
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 11 to 12</b> .....	<b>24</b>
	THE FINAL PUNISHMENT .....	24
	THE NIGHT OF THE PASSOVER.....	25
	The Passover and the Last Supper .....	26
	THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL LEAVE EGYPT .....	27
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 13</b> .....	<b>28</b>
	THE LORD LEADS THEM THROUGH THE DESERT .....	28
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 14</b> .....	<b>29</b>
	THE EGYPTIANS TRY TO STOP THE EXODUS.....	29

	GOD SAVES THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL .....	29
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 15</b> .....	<b>31</b>
	THE SONG OF MOSES.....	31
	No way ahead in life? .....	31
	A WAY THROUGH THE DESERT .....	32
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 16</b> .....	<b>33</b>
	MANNA FROM HEAVEN .....	33
	Manna from Heaven: old and new.....	34
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 17</b> .....	<b>34</b>
	THE ROCK IN THE DESERT .....	34
	GOD FIGHTS FOR ISRAEL .....	35
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 18</b> .....	<b>36</b>
	JETHRO VISITS MOSES .....	36
	MOSES TRIES TO GUIDE THE PEOPLE .....	37
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 19</b> .....	<b>38</b>
	GOD PREPARES THE PEOPLE TO MEET HIM .....	38
	Every believer today is a priest.....	39
	A New Beginning: The Fear and Love of God.....	40
	<b>Bible reading: Exodus 20</b> .....	<b>41</b>
	GOD'S TEN COMMANDMENTS.....	41
	The Ten Commandments and salvation through Christ alone.....	43
	A NEW BEGINNING TO WORSHIP GOD .....	43
	CONCLUSIONS.....	44

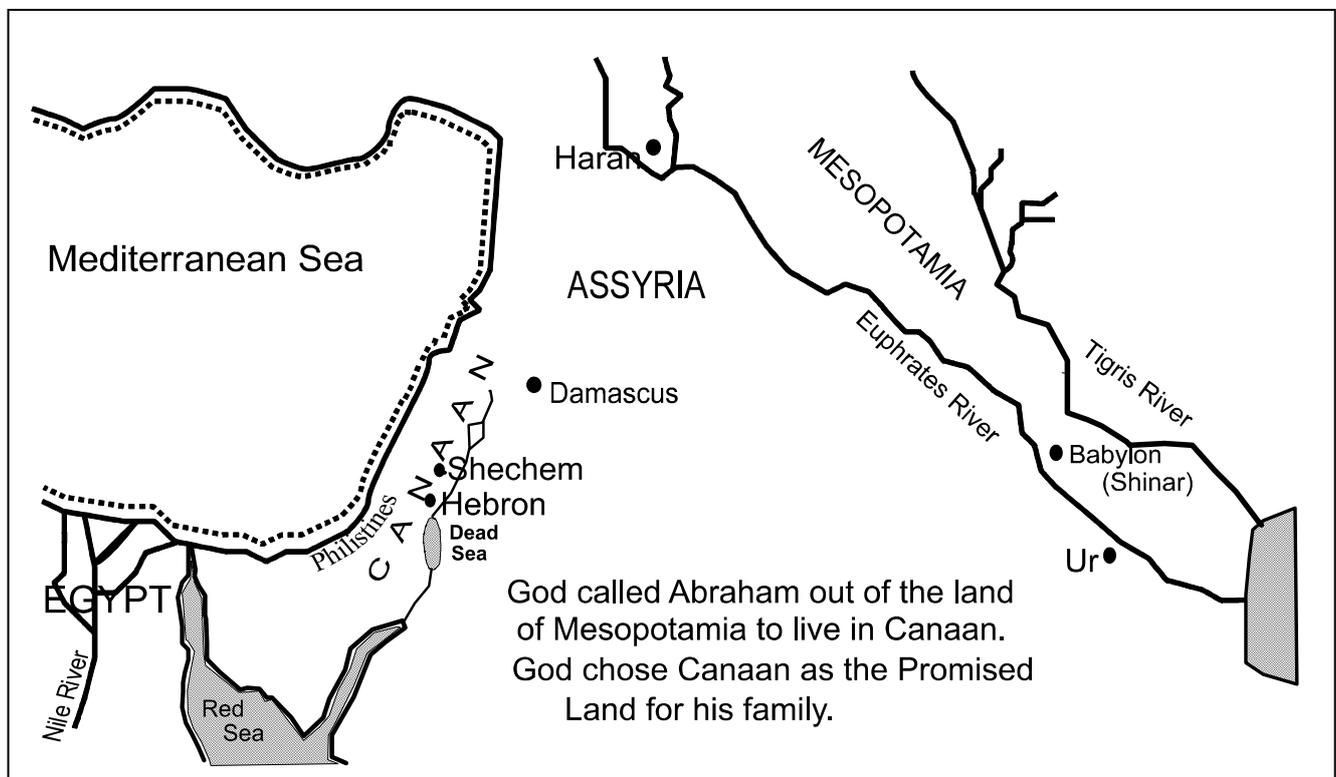
# Exodus Part 1, Chapters 1 to 20

## INTRODUCTION

Exodus, the second book of the Bible, tells about the families of the 12 sons of Jacob when they moved from Egypt. Jacob was the grandson of Abraham. God gave a new name 'Israel' to Jacob.

God sent Abraham from the city of Ur, to Haran, then to Shechem in Canaan. God promised Abraham that his family would be given the whole land of Canaan (Genesis 11:31 to 12:8). But God also told Abraham that his family would live in Egypt for 400 years before living in the land He promised them (Genesis 15:13). This happened nearly 4000 years ago during the life of Abraham's grandson, Jacob, called Israel.

There was good food in Egypt and good grass for their sheep. At first, the people of Israel were happy and had many children. They began to forget about God's promise for them to live in Canaan. They lived in peace in the land of Egypt. During that time, the family of Jacob (the children of Israel) grew to over one million people. After 400 years in Egypt, God knew it was time for them to move back to the Promised Land of Canaan.



God did not forget His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Already, one of His promises had come true since they had lived in Egypt for 400 years. A great number of people were born through Abraham's grandson Jacob (Israel) who had 12 sons of his own. It was God's purpose that one day the family of Israel would be 'as many as the stars in the sky' and 'the grains of sand on the seashore' (Genesis 22:17). There were so many of them in Egypt that they 'filled the land' (Exodus 1:7) in the north of Egypt.

God also gave a warning to Abraham: "Your children who live after you ... will become slaves. They will be treated badly" (Genesis 15:13). Now it was the end of the 400 years. It was time for the people of Israel to leave Egypt and go to live in the Promised Land. Therefore, God made life very hard for the people so that they wanted to leave Egypt.

God made a special way for them all to leave. The first chapters of Exodus tell us how God made His promises come true through much suffering. It tells how God saved them from being slaves in Egypt and made them ready to live a holy life in the Promised Land. God tells why He arranged the exodus, the coming out of Egypt, in chapter 9 verse 1: "Let My people go so that they will worship Me." Through this exodus, God made the people of Israel into a great nation. He set them apart to worship the one true God, Yahweh. This is the story of the birth of the nation of Israel, God's special people (Exodus 6:7).

Note: Bible names often change over the years. Hebrews means the same as Israelites or children of Israel or people of Israel. Later they were called Jews.



## **Bible reading: Exodus 1**

### **THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES OF GOD**

After many years in Egypt, there was a new Pharaoh (king). He was afraid of the people of Israel (Exodus 1:9). He said, "There are so many Israelites, they might join our enemies and fight against us."

So he made them his slaves. The men were forced to make bricks to build cities (1:14). The women were forced to work hard in the fields. The Egyptians in charge of the slaves were cruel. Did the Hebrews suffer? Did they cry? Did they die? Yes! But God was with them. He promised to save them. Instead of fearing the Egyptians and the gods and evil spirits of Egypt, the Hebrews learned to fear Yahweh, the God of Abraham, who is God Almighty, the Creator of all things.

Meanwhile, the number of Hebrews kept growing so Pharaoh tried to kill all the Hebrew baby boys (1:16, 22).

This is the first time that the people of Israel were persecuted. Ever since that time, many kings and many nations tried to destroy the Jews, but God punished those nations. God warned Abraham that this would happen. "I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you" (Genesis 12:3). At the same time, God promised that "all people on Earth will be blessed by you! This happened when Jesus Christ lived and died on Earth to save the world from sin. He is the Messiah, whose Hebrew name is Yeshua.



## **Why does God let people suffer?**

Why did God let the People of Israel suffer? Many people lived and died before God sent Moses to stop their suffering. The older people remembered the good times before they were slaves. Now they wanted God to help them. But if they were not slaves and became happy again, would they want to leave Egypt? If they did not suffer they might want to stay in Egypt. They became unhappy and this made them ask God to help them. They prayed to God and He answered their prayers. This was part of the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham to grow in number and return to Canaan.

The people of Israel were chosen by God for a special purpose. But many of them had forgotten that God had told Abraham that they would be slaves in Egypt. They forgot that God had promised Abraham that He would have a large family and take them to the Promised Land of Canaan.

They were now a nation of over one million people. But Egypt was not the land God promised them. At the end of 430 years in Egypt, God made them want to leave Egypt. Soon they would be a nation who worshipped Him in the land He had chosen.

Now we can understand why God let them suffer. It worked for good in their lives. We, too, can learn from this. We must never forget that God has a purpose for us. When we suffer, we must call out to God and ask Him to save us. We must also trust God and remember that He loves us. We must not be angry with God. We must ask Him to help us and show us how our troubles are working for our good (Romans 8:28).

God understands if we are unhappy or angry at times. We must remember that God loves us but many troubles happen to us in this world through personal sin or accidents or ignorance or the sins and persecution of others.

Christians are also God's special people. But we, too, have troubles. Remember that God does not stop loving us when we have troubles. He always hears us when we call out to Him. He is always with us and will help us. Many people are enemies of Jews and Christians. Our enemies do bad things to us because they are afraid of the truth and power of God.

Sometimes, we must stay where we are and suffer. Sometimes, we must be ready to go where God wants us to go and not stay in the wrong place. We must trust God. We know He hears and understands and saves His people. He does not always answer our prayers quickly. But we must not stop trusting God. And when He helps us to understand what to do, we must be ready to act quickly. We must be ready for change!

Paul says we should learn to rejoice in our suffering (Romans 5:3). Read more about suffering in the Manna Bible commentary on Romans Part 1.



### **Talk about this:**

1. How did the Hebrews become slaves (1:7-11)? What wicked orders did the new king give (1:16,22)?
2. When life was easy for the children of Israel, did they remember God? When life was hard for the children of Israel, did they remember God? Are these answers still the same today for us all?
3. What did God do to prepare the children of Israel for the big changes He wanted for them?

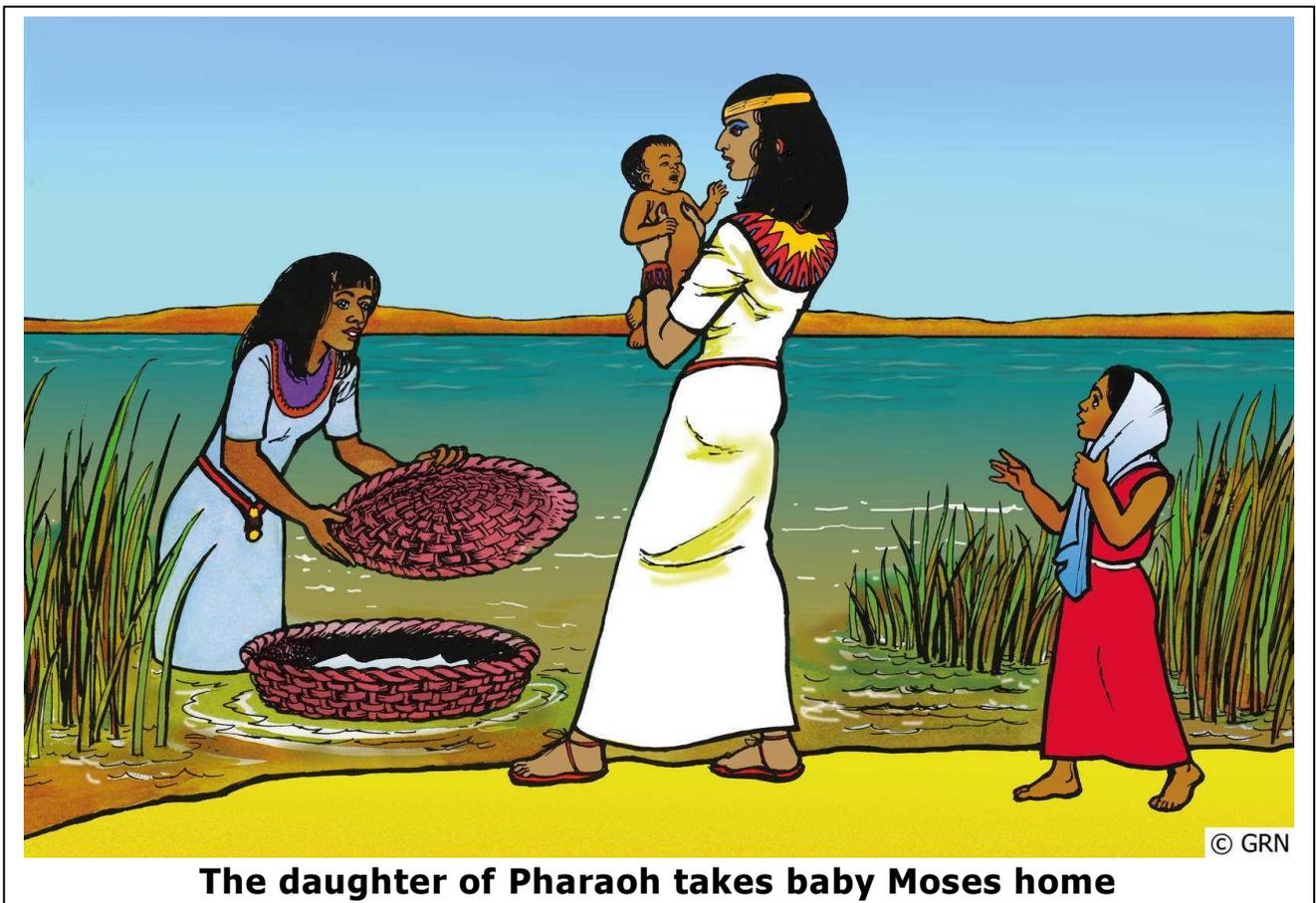


### **Bible reading: Exodus 2**

## **THE PRINCESS AND THE BABY MOSES**

It was now time for God to punish the Egyptians, to save His people and take them to the Promised Land of Canaan. So He made a way for one Hebrew boy to live in the king's palace! His name was Moses. Later, God used him to talk to the king and tell him to set the people free.

When Moses was a baby, his parents trusted God to keep him safe. They hid him in a basket in the River Nile. King Pharaoh's daughter found him and brought him up (Exodus 2:3-10). This was a miracle of God, for Moses grew up in the king's palace. He went to the best Egyptian schools but he did not forget what his mother taught him through the Spirit of God.



**The daughter of Pharaoh takes baby Moses home**

People thought Moses was the 'son of Pharaoh's daughter' but when he was a man he wanted people to know he was a Hebrew (Hebrews 11:24). He wanted to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That was more important than being rich and living in the king's palace. The king's people did not worship the Almighty God of Jews and Christians whose special name is Yahweh. In the palace, the Egyptians taught Moses about the stars, language, writing and numbers. But all the time he trusted God and did not trust in the Egyptian gods.



### **God saved baby Moses and God saved baby Jesus**

How wonderful! God used a princess in Egypt to keep baby Moses safe. This was a miracle because:

- she knew the baby belonged to the people of Israel (2:6);
- she knew her father said his soldiers must kill all the Hebrew baby boys (1:22);
- she let the Hebrew mother of the baby care for him (2:7,8).

So Moses grew up in the king's palace but kept his mother's faith in the God of Abraham. He did not worship the Egyptian gods. Moses was the right person to talk to the king and also to lead the Hebrew people. God planned this for Moses and for the people of Israel. So God used the people of Egypt to keep baby Moses safe. He was the one God chose to save Israel.

God also used the people of Egypt to keep baby Jesus safe. He became the Saviour of Israel and of the whole world. Read Matthew 2:13,14. Moses and Jesus were both saved when a wicked king ordered all the Israelite baby boys to be killed (Exodus 1:22; Matthew 2:16).

This is one of the ways that Moses is a picture or type of Jesus Christ. Baby Moses and baby Jesus were saved in Egypt from death by a miracle of God. Jesus actually met Moses on a mountain top near Jerusalem 1,500 years later (Luke 9:30). They spoke together about the fulfilment of God's salvation plan for the whole world through the death and resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem. No wonder that Satan tried to kill baby Moses and baby Jesus! Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God and is the promised Messiah for the Jewish people. Through Him the whole world can know the salvation of God.

## **MOSES RUNS AWAY FROM EGYPT**

Moses knew that the Egyptians made Hebrew slaves work very hard. One day he went out to see for himself (Exodus 2:11). He saw an Egyptian master beating a Hebrew slave. He was very angry. He killed the Egyptian, then hid the man's body in the sand.

The next day Moses saw two Hebrews fighting. Boldly he tried to stop the fight. Perhaps he thought that his own people would know that God wanted him to help them (Acts 7:25).

“Why are you hitting a Hebrew when you are brothers?” he asked the man.

“Who made you in charge of us? Do you want to kill me like you did the Egyptian yesterday?” the man asked.

Then Moses was afraid. He now knew that someone had told Pharaoh he had killed an Egyptian. He then knew that Pharaoh would try to kill him (Exodus 2:15). So he ran away from Egypt. He knew that he had lost the respect of the Egyptians and had failed to gain the respect of the Hebrews.

In this mysterious way, through the next 40 years, God changed a murderer into a leader of God’s people.

## **MOSES BECOMES A SHEPHERD IN A FOREIGN LAND**

Moses went to Arabia, on the other side of the Red Sea. When he came to the land of Midian he was safe. He was a long way from Pharaoh. Moses was also a long way from the land where he was born and from the Hebrew people God wanted him to help. But he knew nothing of God’s plan for him at that time.

He sat by a well to rest. Some shepherd girls came to the well to get water for their sheep, but other shepherds came and pushed them away. Moses was bold with the men. He made them wait and he helped the shepherd girls get water for their sheep first (2:19).

The father of the girls was a chief called Jethro. They ran home and told their father about the man who saved them from the rough shepherds.

“Where is he? Why did you leave him? Ask him to come and eat,” their father said to the girls (2:20).

Moses liked this kind chief and said, “I will work for you,” so Jethro showed Moses how to care for the sheep and where to find water and food for them. Later, Moses married Jethro’s daughter Zipporah. They had two sons. But often he felt unhappy and did not understand the purpose of God at work in his life (2:22). In Egypt, Moses was a prince in Pharaoh’s palace, but now in Midian he was a poor shepherd. He did not even own the sheep; they belonged to chief Jethro. Moses was told to care for them and not lose them or let wild animals eat them. He found grass and water for them. He cared for Jethro’s sheep on the hills of Midian for forty years.

Meanwhile, God cared for the people of Israel. He listened and answered when His people called out to Him (Exodus 2:24-25). He heard their groaning; He remembered His covenant with Abraham; He looked on these Hebrews with mercy. He cared for them as a shepherd cares for his sheep. But God waited a long time until everyone and everything was ready.



## **Jethro and the people of Midian**

Midian was the son of Abraham and Keturah (Genesis 25:1,2). The people of Midian, Midianites, lived in Arabia, south of Canaan, the land God promised to the people of Israel. They were traders who met many travellers, so Jethro knew about Egypt and the Hebrews and the God of Moses. Abraham, who lived a long time ago, was a forefather of both Moses and Jethro. The Midianites later became robbers and gave the people of Israel much trouble (Judges 6:4).



### **Talk about this:**

1. Why did God save the baby Moses from the River Nile?
2. Why did Moses not worship the gods of Pharaoh?
3. Why did Moses run away from Egypt?
4. How did the actions of Moses change his life (2:12,13,17)?
5. How did this affect the purpose of God for the people of Israel (2:15,21,22)?



**Think about this:** Why does God use sinners like Moses to fulfil His purposes for the world? Why does God sometimes wait many years before He calls us into His service?



## **Bible reading: Exodus 3**

### **GOD SPEAKS TO MOSES FROM INSIDE A BUSH**

Moses was forty years old when he ran away from Pharaoh's palace and he was in Midian forty years. All this time, the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt. As their lives got harder, they begged God to save them from their cruel masters.

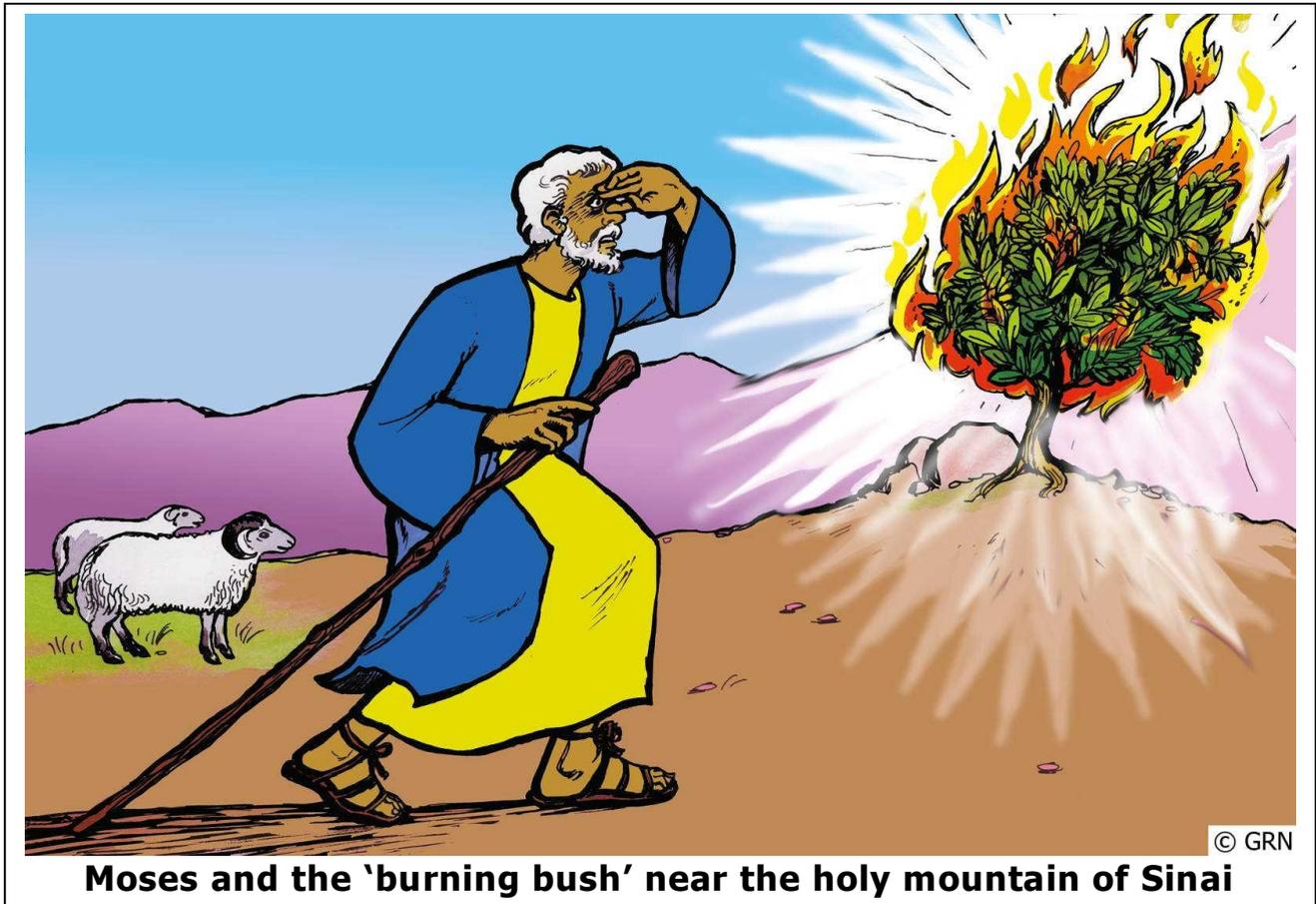
One day God was ready to speak to Moses. Moses led the sheep across the desert of Sinai, near to Mount Horeb. It became known as the mountain of God (3:1). When he looked across, he saw a bush. Moses thought that the bush was on fire. However, the bush did not burn away, so Moses went nearer to look.

"Moses! Moses!" a voice called. "Here I am," Moses answered.

God spoke to Moses from the bush: "Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (3:4-5).

At once Moses turned his face away (3:6). He was afraid to look. The brightness of God's glory was shining in the bush.

The bush was not on fire. God used the bush to bring Moses close to Himself. This was the day when the Lord God Almighty spoke to His servant Moses.



### **Moses and the 'burning bush' near the holy mountain of Sinai**

Moses was afraid. He obeyed God and took off his sandals. Then, God spoke again: "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (3:5).

Then God told Moses that He had come down because He was ready to save His people from the Egyptians. He wanted Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt, and to go to Canaan, 'a land full of milk and honey' (3:8). It would be 'a good land'. But it would be a land where evil people lived. Up to 10 tribes lived in Canaan at that time (Genesis 15:19-21).

God planned to make the people of Israel into a special nation. They must leave the place promised to them for 400 years and move to the place promised them forever. They must leave behind the gods of Egypt. They must learn to be a holy people, set apart to worship Yahweh, the one true and living God.

God wanted the people of Israel to follow Moses into a new life to worship Him in the Promised Land of Canaan (3:7-10).

As God used Moses to bring His people out of Egypt, so Jesus Christ brings us out of a life enslaved by sin. When we were born, we were slaves to sin (Romans 6:6,16). Jesus Christ died on the cross to set us free from the power of sin. When we ask God to save us and we believe in Jesus as our Saviour, God brings us out of the kingdom of darkness. He brings us into the kingdom of Jesus, a kingdom of light, where we begin a new life as holy people, free to worship Him (Colossians 1:13-14). God wants us to follow Jesus who will lead us into a new life to worship Him.



## **The Special Names of God**

God told Moses to use the name Yahweh, which means the LORD God Almighty (Exodus 3:15). God's name Yahweh, was so holy that the Hebrews did not say it out loud, or even write it. At that time they wrote the letters YHWH for the name of God. Because God's name is so holy, instead of YHWH the people often used the word 'Adonai'.

In English Bibles we use the word 'LORD' (with capital letters). This is not the same as the word 'Lord'. When you see 'Lord God' in English Bibles it means 'Yahweh God', the one true almighty and living God who created the world. In French Bibles, Yahweh is called the Eternal One or Everlasting God. In Manna books we say 'Almighty God'.

God wanted Moses to know that the almighty, living and eternal God was speaking to him from the 'burning bush'. God also used His own special name 'I AM' (3:14).

## **MOSES TRIES TO SAY "NO" TO GOD**

God told Moses why he must go to Egypt (3:7-9). God wanted Moses to take His people out of Egypt, back to the land promised to Abraham (Genesis 15:18). Moses was God's chosen man to lead them. Moses was the only Hebrew who knew and understood the king of Egypt.

"Who am I?" Moses answered. "Who am I that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11). He was not a great prince any more. He was just a poor shepherd. He was good at caring for sheep, not people. Moses was afraid. He killed an Egyptian. God knew this but He still chose Moses to speak to the Pharaoh king and to take the Hebrews out of Egypt. Moses had run away and the Hebrews suffered in Egypt for 40 more years. But now this was God's time. He would not wait any longer.

"I will be with you," God told him, "and I will give you a sign... When you bring the people out of Egypt, you will all worship Me here on this mountain." It was Horeb the mountain of Sinai near where Moses was keeping the sheep (3:1,12).

Moses tried to argue with God but God said, "I will strike the Egyptians so that they will let you go to your own land" (3:20). But Moses was afraid of Pharaoh and did not want to go back to Egypt.

## **GOD TELLS MOSES MANY THINGS**

"I AM who I AM," God told Moses. "Yahweh, the Almighty God, is My name forever" (3:14-15).

Before Moses could serve Yahweh, the Great I AM, he had to know Him as the One who is always there. He was there in creation, in history, with Abraham, in Egypt with Jacob. And He has all power in Heaven and on Earth, now and in the future for all time.

But now it was time for God to rescue His people and teach them the meaning of this new name, Yahweh. The people of Israel must know God is Yahweh, the great I AM, Creator and the Almighty God who Saves. They must also know God's power to bring them out of Egypt. (God used the word 'know' many times in Chapters 6 to 11.)

Then God tells Moses some of the things that will happen in Egypt (3:18-22):

- "The elders of Israel will listen to you."
- "You must tell the king of Egypt you want to go into the desert to offer sacrifices to Yahweh, the LORD our God."
- "The king of Egypt will not let you go."
- "I will strike the Egyptians with many miracles. After that, he will let you go."
- "When you leave, you will not go out with your hands empty."
- "You will take the wealth of Egypt along with you."

God prepares us for the future so that we do not forget what He tells us.



### **Talk about this:**

1. Discuss the way God made Moses ready to work for Him, as a baby; as a young prince; as an old shepherd.
2. How and why did God use a bush to speak to Moses?
3. What did God tell Moses to do (3:10)? What did Moses do next? What did God do next?



**Think about this:** What do God's people need to know in their lives to have victory? How do we prepare ourselves and others to trust God and stay within His will? How does God prepare us?



### **Bible reading: Exodus 4**

## **GOD PREPARES MOSES TO GO BACK TO EGYPT**

Moses was still afraid and said, "What if...? What if...? Suppose...? Then what should I do?" (4:1).

God is all-powerful. He could bring His people out of Egypt without Moses, but He chose Moses to do this great work. And He chose the people of Israel to be His witnesses to the world, to show the other nations that He is God (Ezekiel 20:5; Isaiah 43:10-13). God speaks to us so we know what is true. We must tell His truth to other people. Through Christ Jesus, God gives us His Holy Spirit to help believers to do this today (Acts 1:8).

God gave Moses three miracles, or signs, to help him trust God:

1. God turned the shepherd's stick of Moses into a snake, then back to a stick (Exodus 4:3-4). This showed that God would work miracles through Moses.

2. God gave Moses leprosy and then healed him (4:6-7). This showed God's power to bring sickness as judgement and power to give healing.
3. God told Moses when he poured out some water from the River Nile that it would turn to blood. This showed God's power over unhealthy water and water that gives life.

God gave these signs to Moses to show that He is greater than anything or anyone else.

Moses knew he must not argue with God any more. But still he was afraid to go back to Egypt so he said, "I cannot speak very well... Please send someone else to do it" (4:10,13). Moses had great fear and little faith. Perhaps he was still afraid because he killed an Egyptian.

God then became angry with Moses and said that Aaron, the brother of Moses, could go with him. Aaron would speak for Moses (4:14-16).

We, too, can make excuses, but we cannot run away from God and what He wants us to do. God is in charge and He does not change His mind (1 Samuel 15:29). He wants us to say "Yes" to Him. He wants to give us another chance to obey Him.

God calls every Christian to serve Him. He does not always tell us about the difficult things that may happen to us. He wants us to trust Him. God wants us to serve Him and to help and to save others. He wants us to say "Yes" when He asks us to do little things. Then we will learn to say "Yes" when He asks us to do big things!

It does not matter if our faith in God is small. What matters is God's calling to do His work and our willingness to trust Him. Our lack of faith in God will let us down sometimes. But God will never let us down.

## **GOD DEMANDS HOLINESS AND OBEDIENCE FROM MOSES**

So Moses asked Jethro, his father-in-law, if he could go to Egypt. It was the custom at that time to ask for permission. Moses did not tell Jethro that God had told him to go. He said he wanted to see if his relatives were still alive.

Jethro told Moses to go to Egypt and he asked the God of Moses to bless him. So now Moses knew nothing could stop him. He had no more reasons to say "No" to God.

When Moses decided to go, God began to encourage him. He told him that the people who wanted to kill him were dead (4:19,21-23). When he calls us to do His work, He does not tell us everything at first. He wants us to obey Him and trust Him one step at a time. When we begin to obey God, He helps us and encourages us along the way.

"Do all these signs for Pharaoh to see," God told Moses. "Say to Pharaoh, 'Almighty God says, Israel is My firstborn son. Let My son go, so

that he can worship Me. If you will not let him go, I will kill your firstborn son' " (4:21-23). The meaning and fulfilment of this became clear later on.

Zipporah, the wife of Moses, packed their things for the journey. Moses put her and her two sons on a donkey. Moses held the wooden stick in his hand that God would use for miracles (4:20). His shepherd's stick was now the Rod of God which he would use to show God's power.

On the way to Egypt, Moses nearly died. God stopped him from going to Egypt!

Zipporah understood why. It was because Moses had not obeyed God. His family was unholy. He had not circumcised his younger son in the way that God had instructed father Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14).

Quickly she took a sharp stone. 'She circumcised her son with it. Then she touched the feet of Moses with the boy's skin she had cut off' (4:25). All the male members of Israel's family were circumcised and had this special sign of the Jews in their bodies. They were God's special people. Zipporah did the right thing to save the life of Moses and they went on to Egypt.

Circumcision was a special sign. It was a religious law from God. He judged Jews who did not circumcise their children. This is why God stopped Moses. When a Jewish boy is born, he is born into God's special family and must keep the covenant God made with Abraham. Moses had to learn to obey God and to keep his part of God's covenant. This rule applies only to males in the family of Abraham.

Moses lived in the desert for 40 years but did not live like one of God's special people. He did not obey the law of God at that time. He therefore did not respect God. He was therefore unholy before God. His heart was not right with God. Zipporah did not want Moses to die, so she acted quickly to circumcise their son. His wife saved Moses from God's punishment.

What do we learn from this?

- We must obey God AND live holy lives.
- It is important that husbands and wives lovingly help each other to obey God and to teach their children.

We also learn from this chapter:

- Moses had little faith in God but God had much trust in Moses.
- Moses was slow to obey God but God encouraged him once he started to obey.
- Moses was a sinner and deserved to die. So God stopped Moses and put right the things that were wrong in his life.

This means that God can call us at any time, even if we have little faith or are afraid or have sin and unholiness in our lives. We must be ready to serve God at all times. But we must be ready for God to show us what is

wrong in our lives and in our families so that we can repent, be forgiven and then move forward in the truth of God.

## MOSES MEETS THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

Aaron had not seen Moses for forty years. Now God sent Aaron to go from Egypt to find his brother Moses. He found him near 'the mountain of God'. Moses told his brother everything that God said (4:28).

Together they went back to Egypt. In Egypt, Moses called all the leaders of Israel to a meeting. Aaron told them everything that God said to Moses. Moses told Aaron what to say, and Aaron spoke the words (4:30).

Moses threw his stick down in front of the leaders of Israel and it became a snake. Before it could bite anyone, Moses held it by the tail and it became a stick again. Moses put his hand in his cloak and it became white with leprosy. When he put his hand back in his cloak and took it out, it was clean again. The people saw God heal the hand of Moses from leprosy. Then they believed that God sent him and Aaron to free them from Pharaoh (4:31). They saw God's power and fully believed.

Many people of Israel prayed for many years, asking God to help them. He had seen their suffering and remembered His promise to send them to Egypt for 400 years and then to send them back to Canaan (Genesis 15:13). Now they knew that God heard their prayers, and they worshipped Him (Exodus 4:31).



### Talk about this:

1. How do we get ready to say "Yes" to God?
2. What signs showed God's power to Moses (4:3-9)?
3. How did God show his trust in Moses (4:11-12)?
4. How did Moses show his faith in God (4:1,10,13,18)?
5. When and how did God encourage Moses (4:19)?
6. How did God warn Moses what would happen in Egypt (4:21-23)?
7. How did the wife of Moses save him from unholiness (4:24-26)? What does this teach us today?



**Think about this:** How did Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses encourage him? How did Zipporah, the wife of Moses, save him from unholiness? How should family members support each other to do what is right?



### Bible reading: Exodus 5 to 6

## MOSES AND AARON GO TO PHARAOH

Moses and Aaron went to king Pharaoh. They told him, "Yahweh, the Lord God Almighty, is the God of Israel. He says, 'Let My People go!' " (5:1). God told Moses what to say, but Moses spoke to Pharaoh through Aaron. Moses and Aaron told Pharaoh that the people of Israel must go into the desert to

worship Almighty God (5:3). They asked to go into the desert for three days to offer sacrifices (5:4).

Pharaoh answered Moses, "Who is Yahweh? Why should I obey Him and let Israel go? I do not know Him and I will not let Israel go" (5:2).

Pharaoh was against Moses. Leaders who do not know God are often against people who believe in Him. They may also try to stop God's people meeting together for worship.

Moses knew that God would kill Pharaoh's firstborn son if he did not obey Moses (4:23). Moses told Pharaoh, "Terrible things will happen if you do not obey Almighty God." This made Pharaoh very angry and he shouted, "Get back to your work! You are taking the people away from their work" (5:4).

Then Pharaoh gave orders to make the slaves work harder (5:6-14). The slave leaders went to Pharaoh to beg for mercy.

"You are lazy," Pharaoh told them, "Now get back to work!" (5:17-18).

So the slave leaders went to Moses and Aaron. "We want God to judge you for what you have done. You have given the Egyptians an excuse to kill us!" (5:21).

## **WHAT MOSES SAID TO GOD**

Moses complained to God, "You have not saved Your people!"(5:23). He failed to believe that God does not give up on those whom He has called and chosen.

Moses said to God (5:22-23):

- "Why are you bringing more trouble on the people of Israel?"
- "Why did you send me back here?"
- "I have done what you told me to do."
- "I have spoken to Pharaoh using your special name."
- "Pharaoh has brought even more trouble on the people."
- "You have not saved your people at all!"

## **WHAT GOD SAID TO MOSES**

God did not complain to Moses. He knew what Moses said was true. Instead, He confirmed what He had promised (6:1-8):

- "You will see what I will do to Pharaoh through My power."
- "Pharaoh will let the people of Israel go. Not just for three days. He will drive them out of his country!"
- "I am the same God who talked to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, though they did not know my special name, Yahweh."
- "I promised to give them the land of Canaan."
- "I know how much the people of Israel are hurting because they are slaves in Egypt, and I heard them crying."
- "I have not forgotten My promise."

- “Tell the people of Israel, I am Almighty God.”
- “I will make them free.”
- “I will punish the Egyptians.”
- “You will be My own special people and I will be your God.”
- “I will show you that I am Yahweh your God.”
- “I will bring you to the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

## **MOSES AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL DOUBT GOD**

Moses shared with the people what God said but they would not listen. They had lost their hope in the promises of God and instead had to work very hard as slaves (6:9).

Moses told God, “If the people of Israel will not listen, then Pharaoh will not listen. I am not a good speaker” (6:12,30).

Between verses 13 and 27, the Bible reminds us of who Moses and Aaron were. They were brothers from the family of Levi (v.19,20). The Levites were priests. They were chosen by God as priests of the Lord God Almighty to serve the people of Israel. God chose Moses and Aaron to bring the people of Israel out of Egypt (v.13,26,27). They must serve the people as priests. They must continue doing what God called them to do.

Nothing would stop God’s plans for His people. Yet the people doubted God (6:9). And even Moses doubted God (6:12,30). However, they must continue to trust God as He allowed things to get worse. We, too, must trust God for a fuller understanding of His plans and promises.



### **Talk about this:**

1. Was it good for Moses to speak to God in this way (5:22,23)?
2. How many times did God use His special name (6:1-6)? Why?
3. What three things did God do (6:4,5)?
4. What did the people of Israel hope for? What hindered their faith in God (6:6-9)?
5. What did God tell Moses to continue to do (6:11,29)?



**Think about this:** How can we renew our hope and calling (Romans 8:28)? How can we use our faith to encourage others to see the power of God at work so that they will believe and worship Him (Exodus 4:29-31)? How do we fight against those who hinder the time we have to worship Almighty God?



### **Bible reading: Exodus 7 to 10**

## **GOD HELPS MOSES TO HOPE**

Moses and the people of Israel gave up hoping (6:9,12,30). Then God spoke to Moses again. God repeated what He said before. He told Moses He was given the power and authority of Almighty God. He reminded Moses he had

the spiritual support of his brother Aaron (7:1). He also told him new things to make him go again to Pharaoh with new hope.

This is what God said (7:1-5):

- "I will make you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron will be as a prophet."
- "You must say everything I tell you to say to Pharaoh. Your brother Aaron will speak to him."
- "Aaron must tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave Egypt."
- "I will make Pharaoh's heart stubborn (hard)."
- "I will do many miracle signs and wonders in Egypt."
- "Pharaoh will not listen. I will use My power to show Egypt that I am judging them because of their bad ways."
- "I will bring the people of Israel out of Egypt like a mighty army."
- "Then Egypt will know that I am the Almighty God of Israel."

It is always important to seek and to understand the mind of God. It is also important to obey what we believe is right to say and do. In this way our faith in God will grow as things begin to happen that are normally impossible to happen. Also in this way, others will see the works of our Almighty God and He will have the glory. Some will renew their faith in God and worship Him (4:31). Moses and Aaron did exactly as the LORD commanded them. Moses was 80 years old. Aaron was 83 when they spoke to Pharaoh (7:6-7).

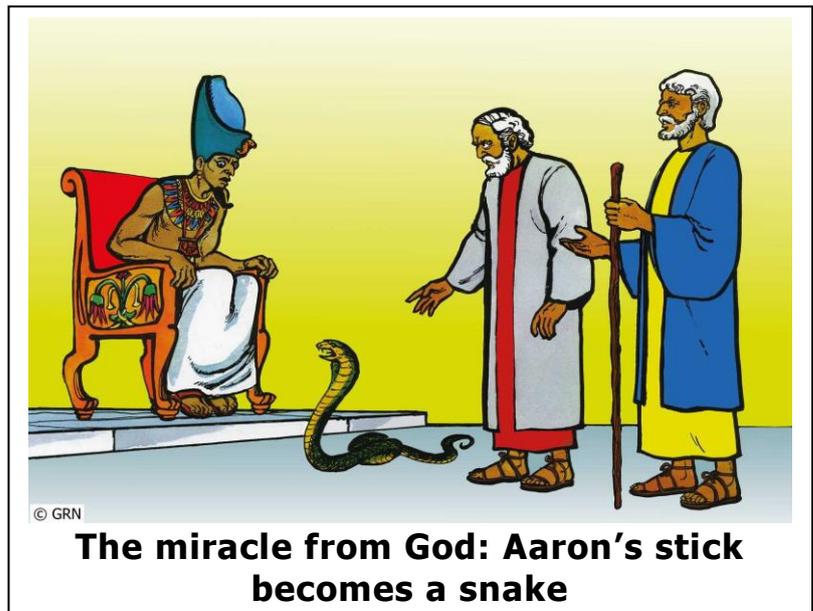
## THE MIRACLE OF AARON'S ROD

Moses and Aaron went back to Pharaoh. This time they knew from God that Pharaoh would not listen.

God made his heart even harder. They also knew that God wanted to show Egypt and Israel that He is the Almighty God, who created the world. They now understood more about the purpose of God for the people of Israel to leave Egypt. Moses and Aaron obeyed God and did exactly what He told them to do (7:6,10).

So Aaron did the miracle

God told him to do (7:9). God turned his rod (stick) into a snake. But Pharaoh would not listen. He told his witch doctors to do the same. They could make their sticks into snakes, but Aaron's snake swallowed the snakes of Pharaoh's witch doctors.



**The miracle from God: Aaron's stick becomes a snake**

Pharaoh still did not listen. It happened as God said (7:13). This time Moses and Aaron did not give up hope.

In this way, Moses and Aaron helped to fulfil the promise God made to Abraham several hundred years before. They helped to fulfil the plan of God for the people of Israel to live in the promised land of Canaan. They also helped to fulfil the plan for the land of Israel to become the birthplace of the Son of God, Jesus the Christ, Israel's promised Messiah and Saviour of the world.

## **GOD SENDS TEN PLAGUES ON EGYPT**

After the miracle of Aaron's rod, God sent the famous ten plagues of Egypt:

1. All the water in Egypt turned to blood and smelled bad; the fish in the River Nile died (7:19-21).
2. A plague of frogs; many, many frogs came into the Egyptians' houses (8:3-6).
3. A plague of gnats bit the Egyptians and their animals (8:17).
4. A plague of flies covered the people and the land (8:24).
5. All the animals of the Egyptians died (9:6).
6. A plague of boils appeared on the skin of the Egyptians (9:11).
7. A plague of hail damaged the crops in the fields (9:25)
8. A plague of locusts destroyed every plant and tree (10:13-15).
9. Three days of total darkness (10:22).
10. The firstborn son of every Egyptian died (11:5,6).

A plague is big trouble. The plagues are written in three groups. Before each group of plagues, God warned Pharaoh. God warned Pharaoh before he punished him. Aaron was the prophet of God who spoke God's judgement (7:1,4).

God told Moses that He sent the plagues so that the Egyptians would 'know Him' (7:5). They would know He was the Almighty God. But Israel too would know His power and also His love and mercy. He saved them from the plagues and then He saved them from the cruel slave masters of Egypt. God judged their gods and showed how powerless they were. And He set His own people free

Moses did not always understand God's ways. He wanted a simple, one-step plan, but God was teaching Moses to have strong faith. Some of the lessons were hard. God is love but also our judge.

God said to Pharaoh, "My people are different from your people so I will care for them and the plagues will not hurt them" (8:22,23; 9:4,26; 10:23). As Christians, we know that we are different from other people. We must always show that we belong to God (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

When God sent the ten plagues:

- Each time God warned Pharaoh and the Egyptians what would happen to encourage them to repent.

- Moses and Aaron obeyed God but Pharaoh did not obey God.
- The witch doctors copied the first two miracles but they could not do anything else (8:18).
- The plagues came on all the Egyptians but they did not come on the people of Israel in the land of Goshen in the north of Egypt.
- Finally the Egyptians stopped persecuting the people of Israel and the people of Israel stopped complaining to Moses and God.

## **WHY GOD SENT THE PLAGUES**

God sent plagues on Egypt because He wanted all the world to hear about the miracles and to know how powerful He is (Exodus 9:15-16). Instead of killing the Egyptians, He sent the plagues as His punishment. Paul describes this in Romans 9:17. In the Old Testament writings, God says to Pharaoh, "That is why I made you ruler. I wanted to show my power through you. I wanted people to know about me all over the Earth."

God also wanted the people of Israel to know His power. "You will be able to tell your children and your grandchildren how I made fools of the Egyptians and the great miracles I did. All of you will know that I am Yahweh, the Almighty God" (Exodus 10:2). You can read God's special name nearly 100 times in the story of the ten plagues.

As Pharaoh's heart grew harder, so God's punishment of the Egyptians became worse. But God said that after the tenth plague Pharaoh would send the people of Israel away out of Egypt.

God told Abraham this would happen. Over 400 years before, God told Abraham "Your children who come after you will be strangers in a country that does not belong to them. They will become slaves. They will be treated badly for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that makes them slaves" (Genesis 15:13-14).

## **WHAT PHARAOH SAID**

Pharaoh could see now it was no longer a fight between the Egyptian gods and the God of Israel. It was a fight between Pharaoh and God.

Pharaoh tried to win but the Almighty God of Israel won. When Pharaoh thought he was winning, he changed his mind and would not let the people of Israel go to worship their Almighty God. He tried to trick Moses:

- He said if God stopped the plague he would let them go (8:8).
- He said the people of Israel could worship God "here in Egypt" (8:25).
- He said he would let them go just a little way into the desert to worship God (8:28).
- He asked Moses to pray for him (8:28).
- He said he had sinned (9:27; 10:16).
- He said he would let only the men go away to worship God (10:11).
- He said he would let the people go but they must leave all their animals behind (10:24).

Pharaoh's tricks and his hard heart brought many troubles for the people of Egypt. He tried to reject the truth of Almighty God. God was punishing the nation who were so cruel to the Hebrews. Now this strong nation had to do what God wanted.

In the end Pharaoh knew that Yahweh, the God of Israel, was the most powerful. Many Egyptians knew this (8:19; 10:7). The people of Israel knew this. The whole world heard about it.

God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that He could show His great power to Egypt, to Israel and to the other nations. He would also destroy the heathen power of Egypt at that time.

Many years later, the prophet Isaiah looked forward to the time when Egyptians would worship with Israel (Isaiah 19:16-25). Pharaoh failed to admit that the God of Israel is the God of the whole world.



### **Talk about this:**

1. Why did Moses and Aaron obey God (7:1,5)?
2. Why did Pharaoh disobey God (7:13)?
3. Why did God send the plagues to Egypt? Give three reasons (Genesis 15:14; Exodus 9:16, 10:2).
4. What three things happened first (6:5)?
5. What did Pharaoh say (9:27; 10:16)?
6. What did the people of Egypt say (10:7)?
7. How did God protect the people of Israel (9:7; 9:26; 10:23; 11:7)?
8. What does Paul say about the way God used Pharaoh (Romans 9:17,18,21-26)?
9. What did Moses tell Pharaoh must happen to Israel (10:25-26)?
10. What did Moses tell Pharaoh would happen to Egypt (11:6,8)?



**Think about this:** How we can grow in faith and give glory to God by obeying and not giving up hope? Why is it important to read and understand more and more about the eternal love and purposes of God? Do you trust in the power and purposes of God and in the support of other believers in Jesus Christ who are close to you? How can we spread the truth of God to stop the persecution of believers today?



### **Bible reading: Exodus 11 to 12**

## **THE FINAL PUNISHMENT**

After each plague, God did what Moses asked. He proved that His word to Moses was true (8:13).

Moses knew God would bring one final plague on Pharaoh and Egypt. After that, Pharaoh would let His people go. He would drive them out (11:1). God would also make the people of Egypt kind towards the people

of Israel (11:3). Then Moses told Pharaoh about God's tenth plague (11:4-8).

God said, "About midnight, I will go through the land of Egypt. Every firstborn son of Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl" (11:5). This was a terrible thing, because it was the custom for fathers to give everything to their firstborn sons. God's angel of death would visit the Egyptians. At the same time He had a final plan to save the people of Israel from slavery and death.

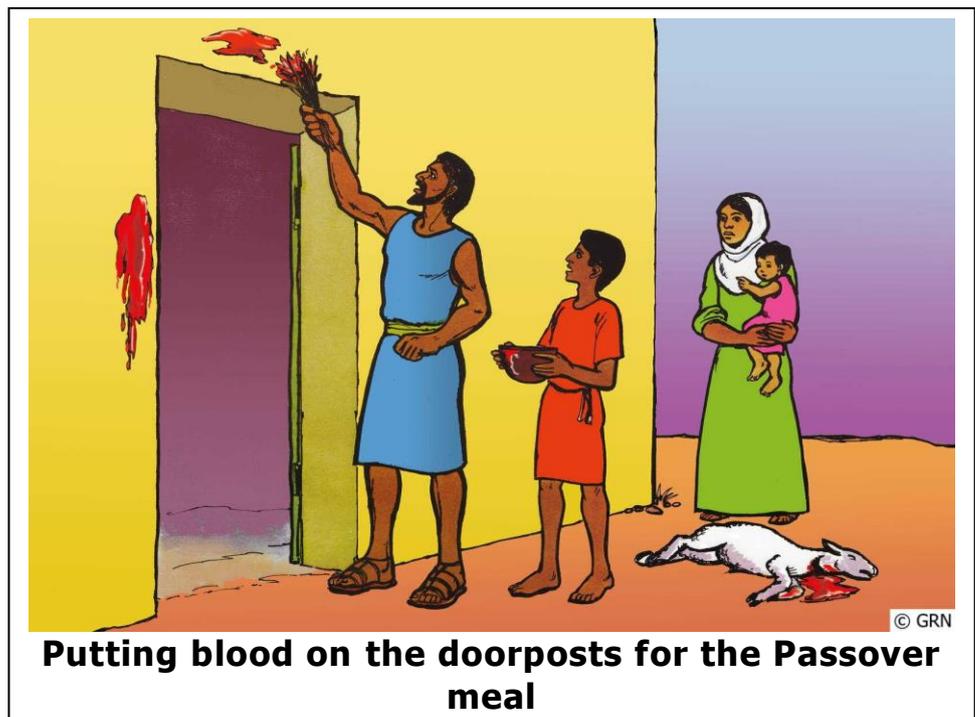
## THE NIGHT OF THE PASSOVER

God told Moses to tell the people of Israel to get ready to leave Egypt (12:1-11). On the tenth day of the month, each Hebrew must take a lamb for his family, enough for each person to eat. The lamb must be male with nothing wrong with it. They must take care of the lambs until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of Israel must kill them at sunset. Then they must each take their lamb and put some of the blood of the lamb on the sides and tops of the door frames of the house where they lived. Then they must roast and eat all the lamb. "Eat the food quickly; it is called God's Passover" (12:11).

"The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you" (12:13). God sent His angel of death who would see the blood and know not to kill the firstborn in that house. The blood of the lamb saved them from the curse of death.

The Passover was so important that God told them always to remember it each year in a special way (12:14). You can read how they did this: Numbers 9:2,3; Joshua 5:10; 2 Chronicles 30:1; 35:1; Ezra 6:19; Luke 2:41; John 2:13.

When Moses explained this to the people, 'they bowed down and worshipped' (12:27). Then they went and did what Almighty God told them to do.



Before midnight, each man of Israel brought his family into his house. Nobody outside the house was safe. They were safe in the house because of the blood of the lamb on the door. At midnight, when the angel of death came, he would see the blood, and pass over that house.



### **The Passover and the Last Supper**

Each year at the time of the Passover, the Jews remember that God saved the firstborn son of each family. The sacrifice of the lamb was sufficient to redeem or pay the price for the life of the firstborn.

Christians believe that God gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die in their place, for their sins. If you repent of your sins and you believe Jesus is the Son of God, then His death on the cross brings you everlasting life, even though you deserve to die because of sin. His blood sacrificed on the wooden cross saves you from death. God pays the price and buys back your life through the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God. You are forgiven. You are redeemed. You are set free from sin and from the punishment of sin. Jesus is therefore your Redeemer.

This is the most important teaching of the Christian Bible. Believe in faith and receive the salvation of our loving and merciful God!

1500 years after the first Passover in Egypt, at His Last Supper, Jesus remembered and celebrated this same Passover meal. He ate the special bread and drank the wine with His disciples. But as He gave thanks to God and broke the bread He said, "This is My body". And as He poured the wine and passed it to His disciples He said, "This is my blood" (Matthew 26:26-29).

These things help Christians remember that Jesus is the special Lamb of God, who died as a sacrifice so we do not have to be punished or die for our sins. Through Jesus, the special Lamb, God made a way for us to be saved from punishment and to receive everlasting life with Him. We can only be saved by the blood of the Lamb who had no sin and was perfect in every way. Jesus asked His followers to remember His sacrifice whenever they share bread and wine together.

2000 years after the Last Supper, Christians still remember the death of Christ as believers gather together for the Lord's Supper (Communion). Christ is our Passover Lamb: His blood on the wooden cross saved us from God's punishment. The red wine helps us to remember the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God. The broken bread reminds us of His broken body.

Once a year, Jews today still remember the Passover when the blood of a lamb was used to save the people of Israel from punishment in Egypt.

Every week, Christians around the world meet together to remember and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus through breaking bread and sharing wine together.

God told the Hebrews always to remember the meaning of the Passover and how they were saved from the punishment of God whilst in Egypt through the blood of a perfect and innocent lamb. God saved them because of His love and care. This is why today Jews remember the Passover every year at a special meal and remind themselves they belong to God. Christians believe that under God's new covenant, people are saved by the blood of Jesus who is often called the Lamb of God.

Jesus always remembered the Passover meal. He also told His followers always to remember His own death. The death of Jesus, the perfect and sinless Lamb of God means we are saved from the punishment of God through the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus saves us and leads us to everlasting life, when we repent and believe in Him.

## THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL LEAVE EGYPT

That night there was loud crying all over Egypt (12:30). All the first-born Egyptian boys died. Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron in the middle of the night. Pharaoh said to Moses:

- "Go! Leave my people!"
- "Go! Worship Yahweh, your God!"
- "Go! Take your animals with you!"
- "Go! And give me your blessing!"

Pharaoh had changed his mind. He now knew that Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, was greater than all the gods and kings of Egypt.

The Egyptians said to the people of Israel (12:33):

- "Go! Or we will all die!"

So the people of Israel took their dough, even before the yeast was added, and they left their houses. They left quickly. 'The Lord God Almighty caused the Egyptians to treat the people of Israel in a kind way. So they gave them what they asked for' (12:26). They asked the Egyptians for jewellery, gold and clothes, just as God promised (3:21-22).

Over one million men, women and children left Egypt that night. They took with them all their clothes and animals plus their great riches. They baked their bread without yeast as they went. Many Egyptians joined them (12:36-39). They left after 430 years in a foreign land, just as God promised Abraham (Genesis 15:13,14).



### Talk about this:

1. How were the people of Israel saved from death?
2. Why do the Jews remember the Passover today (Exodus 12:27)?
3. How do Christians remember the Passover today (Luke 22:13-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25)?



**Think about this:** God's main purpose in saving Israel was for them to worship Him and to prepare the way for the salvation of the world

through their promised Messiah. What does this purpose of God mean for us all today?



## **Bible reading: Exodus 13**

### **THE LORD LEADS THEM THROUGH THE DESERT**

The people remembered the words that Joseph said to the leaders of Israel, "God will take care of you and lead you out of this place, and then you must take my body with you" (Exodus 13:19; Genesis 50:25). So they carried Joseph's bones with them to bury them in the Promised Land of Canaan.

The people marched out of Egypt in tribes and families. Every family leader kept his family with him. They kept in order as they went through the desert towards Horeb, Mount Sinai.

If people move away from home they must take with them food, clothes and money. But most important of all they must take with them their faith in God. God is with us at all times and in all places. Ask Him to give you peace and all you need, and protect you when others try to stop you.

The people of Israel now believed God's promises. Many had died before seeing God's purpose fulfilled. However, their families worshipped God and obeyed Him. They believed God's words and talked about them. The truth given by God was 'on their lips' and 'in their hearts' (13:9).

The Old Testament writings give a summary of the Passover in Exodus 12:43 to 13:16. They remind the Jews to repeat the story of the Passover each year, especially to the eldest boy of each family (13:2,8,14). In this way, God is honoured in Jewish homes to this day.

It was the eldest son of each family who was saved from punishment in Egypt. God's angel of death passed over the homes which were covered by the blood of the lamb (12:13). Now they were all free to begin a new life led by God. They were saved through the blood of the lamb.

God gave a tower (or pillar) of cloud in the daytime and of fire in the night to go in front of the people of Israel. In this way He led them through the desert (13:21-22). And we know the Holy Spirit leads us and His angels guard us today. We must always believe that God goes with us even if we cannot see Him. And we must also remember that we have been saved from punishment through the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

God guided the people of Israel away from their enemies, the Philistines (13:17). He guided them instead on a long journey through the desert (13:18) towards the Red Sea.

God gave them all they needed, but He wanted them to learn to trust Him and love Him. It would take them a long time to learn to trust God always. In Egypt they looked at the food in their gardens and water in the river. Now they learned to look up to their Almighty God, for everything they needed.



### **Talk about this:**

1. How do Jews honour God in their homes today (13:6-10)?
2. In what ways did God help the people of Israel get away from Egypt (13:5,14,17,21)?
3. Talk about the sacrifice of innocent blood in God's plan of salvation (Genesis 4:4; 22:13; Exodus 12:13).



**Think about this:** How did the blood of a lamb set the people of God free from slavery (12:13)? How did the blood of the Lamb of God set all believers free from sin (Matthew 26:19,27; Romans 5:9).



### **Bible reading: Exodus 14**

## **THE EGYPTIANS TRY TO STOP THE EXODUS**

One more time God hardened the heart of Pharaoh (14:4). He was told that the people of Israel had gone away and would not come back (14:5). So he planned to go after God's people and bring them back. But God saved his people so the Egyptians would know He is the Almighty God (14:4).

God had a plan for the people of Israel. He did not take them the short route to the Promised Land. This was too dangerous because of the Philistines (13:17). So God led them to the Red Sea (14:1). He showed them the way by the pillar of fire and cloud. God's plan was to test the people of Israel and then to increase their faith in Him. He told them exactly where to go (14:2). The route that God chose deceived Pharaoh and made him think the Israelites were trapped (14:3) but in fact it was a trap for the Egyptian armies (14:13).

"What have we done?" Pharaoh asked. "We let the people of Israel go and now we have no-one to work for us" (14:5). So he took his war chariots, with horses to pull them, and went after the Hebrews (14:7). The Hebrews looked and saw Pharaoh's army coming and they were very afraid. And they had nowhere to go! They had reached the Red Sea. There was no escape. They complained to Moses but God led them there to teach them to trust Him (14:10-14).

Then God's pillar of fire moved between them and Pharaoh. During the night it gave light to the people of Israel, but darkness for the Egyptians (14:19,20). God's people all saw that Almighty God was at work when He separated them from their enemies.

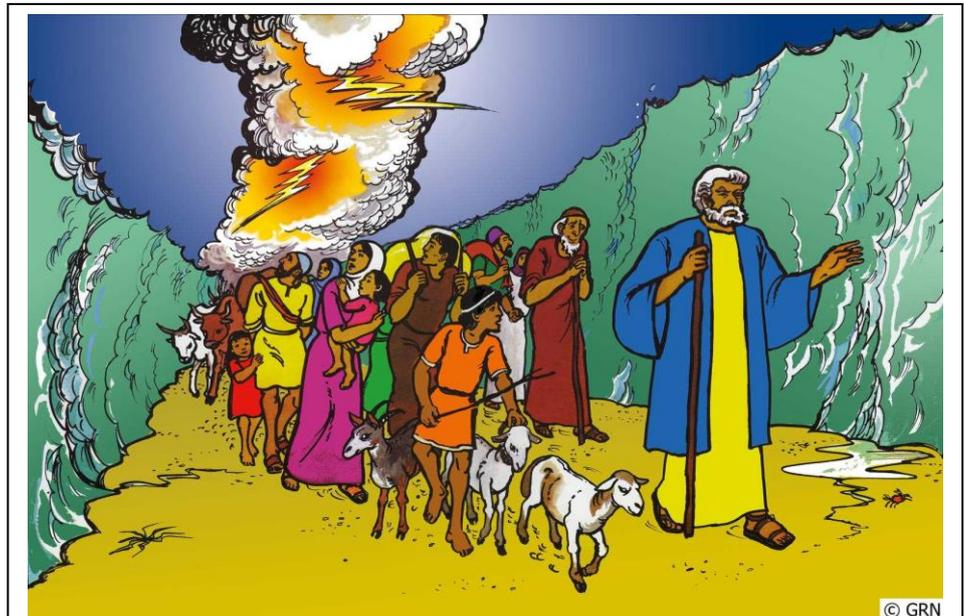
## **GOD SAVES THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL**

Moses told the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm."

That night God told Moses, "Everyone will see what happens to Pharaoh and know that I am Almighty God... Lift up your rod and hold it out over this sea to divide the water" (14:16). God can win the war against His enemies without us, but He wants us to do our part in faith.

All night God made a strong wind blow back the waters and dry the land. The next morning, the people of Israel walked through the Red Sea on dry ground. It was a miracle (14:22). God delayed the Egyptians until the people of Israel were safely across. When the Egyptians tried to pursue them God broke the Egyptians' chariots and then allowed the waters to flow back. They all drowned (14:28). Because of this, the people of Israel learned to trust God more. And they learned to trust Moses (14:31).

Christians should 'stand firm' and see God answer prayers. God will win the battle against the enemy if we trust Him and do what He says in faith.



**The children of Israel pass through the waters of the Red Sea with the pillar of cloud behind them**

We do not need to fear Satan. Jesus won the battle for us on the cross. We 'stand' because of His victory (John 16:33; 1 Corinthians 15:57).

The worst punishment for Egypt came AFTER the ten plagues. Instead of being a rich and famous country, now they were very poor. The Egyptians gave away a lot of their gold and silver to the people of Israel (Exodus 12:35-36). Then they also lost their slaves, who helped them to build big cities and work in the fields. They lost their strong army in the Red Sea.

Why did God punish Pharaoh and the Egyptians so much? It was so the Egyptians would know that Yahweh was the one true and Almighty God (14:4,18,25b) and not their gods and witchdoctors. And it was so that other nations should know God is the greatest. People would say, "See what God has done" (Numbers 23:23; Joshua 2:9).



### **Talk about this:**

1. Why did God change the route of the exodus (14:1-14)? Is change good or bad?
2. What should we do when there is no way forward and no way back (14:13,15)?
3. What did the people say to Moses when they were afraid (14:11-12)?
4. What things did Moses do in faith (14:15,16)?



**Think about this:** What can we do to encourage the people of God and their leaders?



## **Bible reading: Exodus 15**

### **THE SONG OF MOSES**

Moses sang a song of praise! Moses sang because God saved His people by His great power. In his song he called Almighty God by His special name, Yahweh, 10 times (15:1-18). Moses knew God was powerful and mighty because He saved them. He now knew God personally.

He sang these wonderful words:

- "He is my God and I will praise Him (15:2)."
- He calls God "my strength and my salvation" (15:2).
- He says God's power is wonderful (15:6).
- "God is angry at evil" (15:7).
- "God does wonderful things" (15:11).
- "He goes on loving us" (15:13).
- "God cares for His people and plans for the best" (15:17).

The people also sang this song in praise to God. The people of Israel did not know God personally. But they were learning about God. They knew about God because of what He did for them. Soon they would know a lot more about God.

The sister of Moses, Miriam, led the women. They danced with their tambourines. She also sang praises to God (15:20-21).



#### **No way ahead in life?**

The people of Israel came to a place where there was no way ahead. They were afraid (14:10). The Red Sea stopped them going forward. Their enemies were behind them. There are three things to do when we come to a stop in our life:

1. We must **be still** until God gives us His peace (14:13,14). We cannot change things by worrying. We must first find peace before seeking wisdom.
2. We must **wait** until God speaks (14:15). His time is best and He knows what He is doing. We must listen to God.
3. We must be ready to **obey** what God tells us. When we trust God, He separates us from our enemies (14:20) and opens up the way ahead (14:21-22). We must be prepared to change.

Also, we can ask our friends to pray for us. Their faith in God will encourage us. Remember, too, that God's guardian angels surround us (Psalm 78:49).

## A WAY THROUGH THE DESERT

The people of Israel looked forward to the time when they would live in the land called Canaan which God promised them.

They believed:

- God was with them and would show them the way (15:13).
- It would be God's land (15:13).
- Other nations will be afraid and they will let God's people go through their lands (15:14-16).

God does not tell us everything that will happen to us. He tells us some things to help us to be strong. He wants us to trust Him and go forward even when it is difficult and we do not know what will happen on the way.

After they crossed the Red Sea, the people were led by God's pillar of fire. Soon they had no water and when they found water, it was bad (Deuteronomy 8:2). God tests His children to see if they trust Him, and to make their faith stronger (James 1:15:4). Satan tempts us to try to make us stop trusting God.

When God tested the people, they did not trust Him nor ask Him to give them the water they needed. Sadly, three days after they crossed the Red Sea, the people grumbled at Moses. This meant they grumbled at God too (Exodus 15:24). Then God showed Moses a piece of tree. He used it in faith to make the bad water taste sweet. This was one of many miracles that God performed in the desert.

If Israel obeyed God, and listened carefully to Him, He promised to keep them safe from getting sick (15:26) and from other troubles. They must learn to trust God and to ask in faith and not moan in fear.

Soon they came to Elim on the way to Mount Sinai. God blessed them there. The name 'Elim' means 'large trees'. There were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees there; twelve springs for the twelve families of Israel!



### **Talk about this:**

1. How much did the people change (15:1)? Why did they change?
2. Why is verse 2 an important verse in the song of Moses?
3. What does the song of Moses say about trusting God in the future (15:13-18)?
4. Was their trust in God weak or strong (15:24)?



**Think about this:** Explain how believing, trusting and obeying God leads us to know Him personally.



## Bible reading: Exodus 16

### MANNA FROM HEAVEN

One month after leaving Egypt, they came to a very hot part of the desert.

Day after day they marched through the desert, near Mount Sinai. They soon forgot to trust God. The people were angry with Moses and Aaron: "You brought us out into the desert to starve us to death", they said (16:3). They wanted meat to eat. They needed much food every day.

God spoke to Moses and promised to send food that very evening (16:12). Large numbers of birds came (16:13). This provided fresh meat for everybody. They dried some of the meat to eat later.

God also promised food from Heaven in the night (16:4). The next morning, God sent this special food from Heaven (16:13). We call it 'Manna'. It was like coriander seed (Numbers 11:7). Every morning for six days each week the people gathered it into their pots. Then they ground the grains, boiled them in a pot and made them into cakes (Numbers 11:8).

God told Moses, 'Six days you are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any.' God wanted His people to rest on the seventh day so on the sixth day He gave them enough food for two days (Exodus 16:28-29).

The Manna fell at night, so they got up early and gathered it. If they tried to keep it for the next day, it spoiled. On the sixth day they gathered enough for two days and this did not spoil on the seventh day (Saturday). Always there was enough for the young and the old and the weak ones. No-one had too much; no-one had too little (16:17-18).

God sent Manna from Heaven until the people came to Canaan (16:35). This supplied their daily need for bread. The birds supplied their meat. God also guided the people through the desert and supplied their water.

1500 years later, Jesus spoke about the bread of Moses and called Himself the 'Bread of Heaven' who came to give us everlasting life (John 6:32-35, 48-54, 57-58). 'Those who feed on this bread will live forever.'



#### Talk about this:

1. Why is it not good to grumble when we need something (16:8; 1 Corinthians 10:10)? What should we do instead?



**Think about this:** Can we trust God to give us what we need day by day? What does it mean for us to feed on Manna or bread from Heaven (John 6:51)?



## Manna from Heaven: old and new

For forty years in the desert, God gave His people everything they needed. He gave them special bread from Heaven called Manna. Moses wrote about this. Many years later, other friends of God wrote about this: "Because You loved them so much, You did not leave them in the desert. You gave them Your good Spirit to teach them. You did not hold back Your Manna from their mouths. You gave them water when they were thirsty" (Nehemiah 9:19-20.) Also, "He opened the doors of the heavens. He rained down Manna for the people to eat. Men ate the bread of angels" (Psalm 78:23-25.)

Later still, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth... He who comes down from Heaven is the bread that God gives. He is the one who gives life to the world... I am the bread that gives life. Anyone who comes to Me will never be hungry. Anyone who believes in Me will never be thirsty... The person who believes in Me will live for ever. I am the bread that gives life. Your fathers ate Manna in the desert long ago, but they died. Here is bread that comes down from Heaven. The person who eats this bread will never die. I am the bread that gives life." (John 6:32-51)

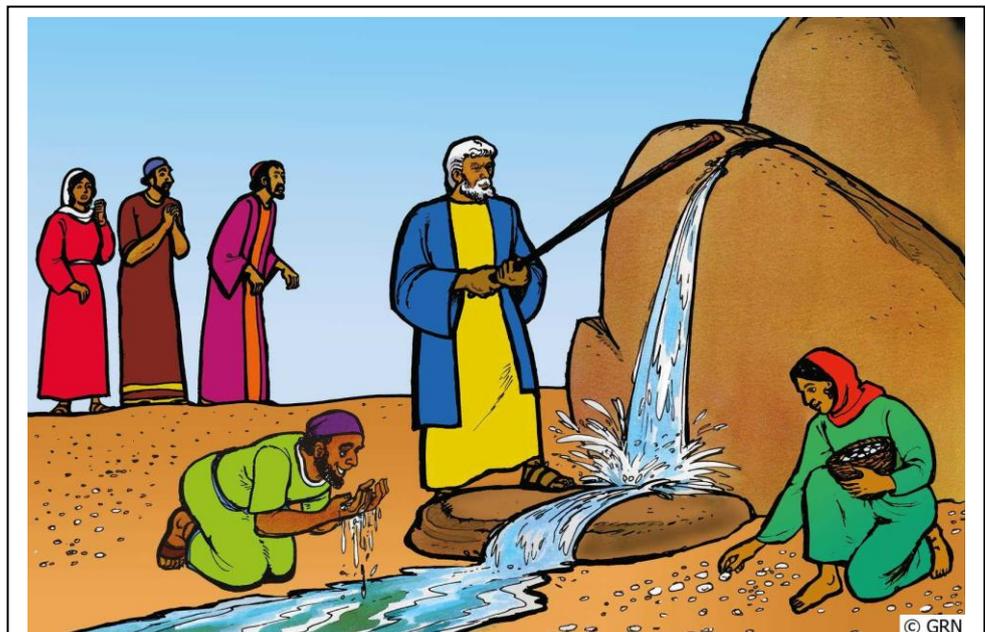


## Bible reading: Exodus 17

### THE ROCK IN THE DESERT

The people came to Rephidim, but there was no water there. They were angry and grumbled again at Moses. They wanted to throw stones to kill him but Moses called out to the LORD to help him to know what to say and do (17:4).

Each time their life was difficult in the desert for the people of Israel, they said they wanted to go back to Egypt (14:12; 16:3; 17:3). The LORD God wanted them to trust Him and look forward with hope. He did not want them to go back to slavery. Their memories of



**Moses obeys God and provides water from the rock**

Egypt hindered them from going forward.

So God told Moses, "Take your stick and walk in front of the people. I will stand in front of you beside the rock at Horeb. Hit the rock then water will come out" (17:5-6). Moses did this so the elders of Israel could see. Later, Israel's hymn writers and prophets wrote songs about this (Psalms 78:15-16; 105:41; Isaiah 48:21).

The people of Israel tested God to see if He was with them or not (Exodus 17:7). God answered and gave them a stream of water. It was pure and clean and gave them life.

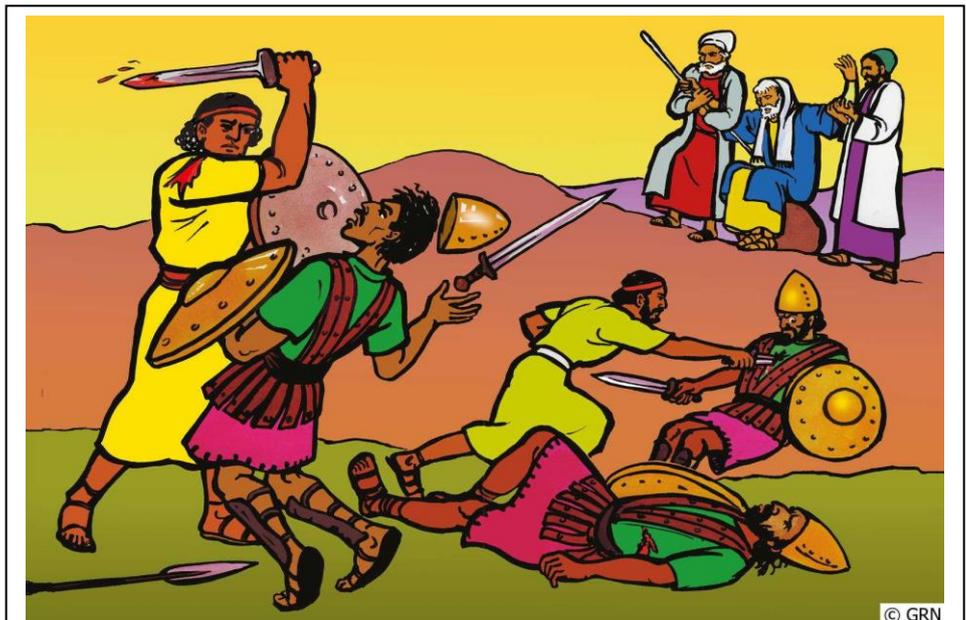
## GOD FIGHTS FOR ISRAEL

The Amalekites lived in the desert of Arabia. This was the first nation to fight Israel after they left Egypt. They were from the family of Esau. (Esau was the twin brother of Jacob.)

Moses sent Joshua and his men to fight the Amalekites. This was Joshua's first battle. Joshua was afraid, but he trusted God. He and his men won the battle with God's help because their leader, Moses, held up 'the rod of God' while they fought.

When Moses got tired, and his hands dropped to his side, the people of Israel began to lose the fight. So Aaron and Hur stood one on each side of Moses and held up his hands (17:12).

God chose his leader, Moses, to help the people win the battle. God could give victory without Moses. But God used Moses to bless the people. If Moses did not hold up the rod, then they did not win. The people saw if they did not trust God and His servant Moses, they would all die in the desert.



**Joshua wins the battle as Moses holds up the rod of God**

Moses held up his rod for them to see him while they fought the battle, like holding a flag or banner. It was to show them that Moses trusted in God and that God was in control. They could see Moses on top of the hill holding his rod. Christians must learn from this:

- God gives us leaders to care for His church and we must trust them.

- Church leaders can get tired and need their family and friends to help them.
- Leaders have no power without God to help and guide them.
- They must remember to obey God and do what He tells them.
- Churches must not give up the battle against evil powers and against sin. It is important to win every battle however small.

God knew Moses and Joshua needed to win their first battle. Then they would trust Him when harder things happened. God also knew the people must learn to trust Him and to trust Moses and to trust Joshua. Everyone, including Aaron and Hur, learned to trust God and to help and trust each other.

God wanted the people to remember these important things (17:14). So He told Moses to write down on a scroll the story of the battle. God also wanted Joshua to remember how He won the battle against the Amalekites. Joshua became the leader of the people of Israel when Moses died nearly 40 years later.

God promised He would destroy Amalek. Moses built an altar there to remember their victory. He named it 'The LORD is my Banner' (17:15).



### **Talk about this:**

1. Why did God lead the people of Israel to a place without water (17:7)?
2. What would happen if they went back to Egypt?
3. Why was it important for Israel to win the battle against the Amalekites (13:17)? Why was it important for Joshua (17:14; Joshua 1:1-9)? Why was it important for the people?
4. How did Aaron and Hur help to win the battle?
5. Why did God ask Moses to write everything down (17:14)?



**Think about this:** Do your memories of the past help you or hinder you going forward in life? Why does not God remove ALL your troubles along the way? Do you trust Him to lead you (17:1)?



### **Bible reading: Exodus 18**

## **JETHRO VISITS MOSES**

In Midian, Jethro heard about his son-in-law Moses. He heard of God's miracles in Egypt and how God made a path through the Red Sea for the people of Israel to cross over.

So he went to meet Moses. Moses told Jethro everything that God did. He also told Jethro how much God loved Israel (18:8). He told Jethro about the good times and the bad times in the desert. In this way Moses was teaching Jethro about the love and the power and the mercy of God. God did these things for His people in Egypt because He loved them. He called them His own special people. Moses praised God and When Jethro heard

Moses tell him the story, he too praised God. "Praise to the Almighty God, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians", he said.

Jethro believed in the gods of Midian, but he said, "Now I know that Yahweh, the Almighty God, is greater than all other gods." Moses told him how to worship God and they made a 'burnt offering and other sacrifices' (18:12). The leaders of Israel's tribes ate a meal with Jethro, Aaron and Moses. They knew that God was there with them: they were in His sight.

It is good to meet with family and friends to worship God, to talk about His goodness and to eat a meal together, knowing that God is with you.



### **Talk about this:**

1. How did Jethro come to believe in the LORD God (18:8-9)?
2. What did Jethro say to show he believed in God (18:10-11)?
3. What did Jethro do to show he believed in God (18:12)?
4. What did the leaders of Israel do to show they were happy that Jethro believed in God (18:12)?



**Think about this:** What does it mean to us to eat a meal together 'in the sight of God'? How can we welcome new believers and help them to be strong in faith?

## **MOSES TRIES TO GUIDE THE PEOPLE**

Next day Moses sat down to give guidance to the people, and they stood waiting from morning till evening (18:13). Everyone came to ask Moses about his or her problems. He taught them what God said and asked Him to show each person what He wanted them to do. Moses spoke to God and God spoke to Moses many times, so Moses knew what God wanted. He could teach the people the truth of God. The people could trust Moses for God's guidance.

God gave His people laws, so they knew how to live. They are part of the Jewish Torah, the first five books of the Bible written down by Moses. The earliest laws were about:

- Worship, sacrifices and priests (Exodus 12:2-8, 14-20; 18:12).
- Feast days (12:14-27; 43-49).
- The first born male (13:2).
- The Sabbath (seventh) day and rest (16:23-26).

And there were many other laws to help the people to live holy lives. (See the Manna book 'Moses part 2' for more information.) But there were many other things that the people wanted to know. So they came to Moses to tell him about their problems. Moses listened first then gave them guidance from God. He did not force his own opinions on the people. He also waited for them to come to him first (18:16).

Jethro saw Moses sitting to teach God's people. He said, "What you are doing... is too much for you... Teach them the rules and laws, show them

the way to live... then choose men who fear God... to serve as judges" (18:17-22). Jethro also knew it was important for Moses to first seek God's wisdom to do what was right. "You must speak to God... If that is what God wants" (18:19,23). Jethro was a new believer yet could understand things clearly. He was given this wisdom from God.

Moses did what Jethro said. Sometimes God gives new believers important things to say to us. We should always listen to new believers and then see if what they say is right. We should encourage new believers, listen to them, teach them and share meals with them and with the leaders (18:12). Like Jethro, they may be with us only for a short time (18:27).

So Moses chose good men to lead the people. Each man led a group of ten people. Then he chose other men to lead five groups, other men to lead ten groups and other men to lead 100 groups. He taught them how to live to please a holy God. The leaders over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens of people judged the small problems (18:21). When there were difficult problems they went to ask Moses for his advice.



### **Talk about this:**

1. What was the method used to solve disputes (18:16)?
2. Is Jethro's plan good for choosing leaders today (18:21-22)?
3. Which people did Moses choose as leaders (18:21)?
4. Jethro told Moses what to do. What was the result (18:23)?



**Think about this:** How can we encourage new believers to work in our churches? How can they encourage us?



### **Bible reading: Exodus 19**

## **GOD PREPARES THE PEOPLE TO MEET HIM**

The people of Israel came to Mount Sinai and camped in front of the mountain. It was now three months since leaving Egypt. Mount Sinai was a high mountain. People call it a holy mountain, but God does not live in a mountain or in anything that He has made. He is much greater. He is all-powerful and has control over everything He has made.

God spoke to Moses from the mountain and told him, "This is what you are to say to the family of Jacob (Israel) (19:3). "Tell them, 'If you obey Me and keep My Covenant, then of all the nations you will be My special treasure. You will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a special nation' " (19:5-6).

Moses went to the people. He called the leaders of Israel and told them what God said. All the people answered Moses, "We will do everything the Lord says" (19:8).

So Moses went back up the mountain and told God what they said. The Lord God Almighty spoke to Moses. "I will come to you in a thick cloud. The

people will hear Me speaking with you. They will always put their trust in you" (19:9).

Then God told Moses, "Go to the people and make them ready... Make barriers so the people do not come too near to the mountain" (19:10-12). The people had to be 'clean' before they could worship God. No Israelite could come to God without getting ready. This is why they had to wash their clothes and not sleep with their wives (19:10,15). They must let the desire to worship God be stronger than the desire to sleep with their wives. Their thoughts must be on God alone.

'On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning... a thick cloud covered the mountain, and the sound of a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp shook with fear. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with Almighty God... They stood at the foot of the mountain' (19:16,17).



### **Every believer today is a priest**

God told Moses "You will become a kingdom of priests to serve Me" (Exodus 19:6). God wants all believers to be priests and no special clothes are required. The sacrifice of Jesus made it possible for all believers to be God's holy people. We can come to God at any time, tell him what we need and what others need. He will listen to us. "You will be holy priests. You will offer spiritual sacrifices. God will accept them because of what Jesus Christ has done" (1 Peter 2:5).

The people at the time of Moses could not come close to God to talk to Him (Exodus 19:21). Only the priests that God chose could come near to God (19:22). Aaron, the chief priest, was the only one who could go near to the top of Mount Sinai with Moses to talk to God (19:24). Joshua was later allowed to go near to God (24:13).

God has made us holy by the sacrifice of Jesus and so all believers can now come near to God. This is a great blessing. Through Jesus we meet God. God raised Jesus from death and His Spirit now lives in all who believe in Him. Now His Spirit works through us. This is why we say all Christians are priests (1 Peter 2:9-10). We can come close to God at any time. We can pray to God for ourselves and for other people. We do not need the power of another priest to help us to come close to God. God gives us this power to come to Him through the blood of Jesus and His resurrection life at work in us. This enables us to pray to God for ourselves and for others at any time and in any place through the power of the promised Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus.



## **A New Beginning: The Fear and Love of God**

What does it mean to 'fear God'? Should we be afraid of God? In Exodus 19:9-24 God tells Moses the people must fear Him. The people must get ready, wash their bodies and their clothes, and start to think about meeting their holy God. Their desire must be for God alone. Then they must come near the holy mountain to listen to what He says. But they must not touch or climb the mountain or they might die.

The Bible says "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). For the people of Israel, the fear of God was the start of getting to know Him personally and to trust His servant Moses.

This was a new beginning for the people of Israel. They were the special people that God promised to Abraham. This was also a new beginning between God and the whole of mankind. For through their Messiah, Jesus, the whole world can have a new beginning. It is the story of God's love. It is the story of God's desire for righteous people to worship Him and to live at peace and to rule the world with justice.

The apostle Stephen describes the history of the Jewish people and their Messiah in Acts 7:2-53. Read about this in the Manna Bible Commentary on Acts Part 1.

There will be another loud trumpet blast when Jesus Christ returns and appears to all nations (Matthew 24:30,31, 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

'Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him' (Exodus 19:19). Again God told Moses, "Warn the people not to force their way through the barrier to see Me. If they do, many of them will die" (19:21,24).

The people knew it was Almighty God who spoke to Moses. They knew that He created the world and saved His special people from Egypt.

This is what God told the people of Israel to do. They must get themselves ready to meet God and then:

- Be quiet and no pushing in front of the others (19:21,24).
- Priests, leaders and people must all be ready together (19:22,24).

Why did they have to get ready to meet God? God told them:

- You will be God's special treasure [people] (19:5).
- You will serve as God's priests (19:6).
- You will be a holy nation (19:6).

They must learn to fear and obey God in order to know God. In this way they would understand God more and then experience His love and His provision.

The New Testament teaches believers to repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Then we can worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

Leaders and people must be ready to worship God together as equals before God. The Kingdom of God includes the least and the greatest.



### **Talk about this:**

1. Why did God show Himself to Moses in a way so the people were afraid (19:9)?
2. Why did God tell the people to prepare themselves before they gathered at the foot of the mountain (19:10,14-15)?



**Think about this:** What did Jesus do so we are able to come near to meet God? What does it mean to Christians to become 'God's special people' and 'to serve as priests' and to be 'a special nation'? What is the connection between 'fear of God', 'knowledge of God' and 'love of God'?



### **Bible reading: Exodus 20**

## **GOD'S TEN COMMANDMENTS**

On Mount Sinai, God gave to Moses the Law that His people must obey. This includes the Ten Commandments. The laws of many countries in the world are based on these commandments.

For 430 years the Hebrew people were slaves in Egypt. They had no written laws. God wanted to make them become a holy people to obey His laws (Leviticus 19:2). The first four commandments are about God. The last six are about the people of God. The Law tells you what God wants to change in your life.



**Moses with the Ten Commandments from God**

Before God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He reminded the people that they were once slaves in Egypt (20:2). God saved them to be His special people. He promised this to Abraham nearly 500 years before. Now He told them how to live like holy people.

Our list below includes the teachings of Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah, 1500 years later. His teachings support the Ten Commandments of His Father in Heaven. They teach a life of worshipping only the LORD God Almighty, and respecting His holy name without misusing it. The Commandments also include setting aside a Sabbath day of rest and holiness. Also, building righteous relationships with family, friends and neighbours, through honouring parents, avoiding murder, adultery, theft, false testimony, and envy of other's possessions.

**Commandment One: WORSHIP GOD ONLY**

"I am Yahweh, the Lord your God. Worship no other god" (20:2,3).  
See Matthew 4:10.

**Commandment Two: NO IDOLS**

"Do not make statues ... or worship them" (20:4-6).  
See Luke 16:13.

**Commandment Three: RESPECT GOD'S NAME**

"Do not use the name of the LORD your God in wrong ways" (20:7).  
See Matthew 5:34.

**Commandment Four: REMEMBER GOD'S DAY**

"Remember the Sabbath day. Keep it holy.  
Do all your work in six days" (20:8-11). See Mark 2:27-28.

**Commandment Five: RESPECT YOUR PARENTS**

"Respect your father and mother, so you will live a long time" (20:12).  
See Matthew 10:37.

**Commandment Six: DO NOT KILL ANYONE**

"Do not murder" (20:13). See Matthew 5:21,22.

**Commandment Seven: NO SEXUAL ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE MARRIAGE**

"Do not commit adultery" (20:14). See Matthew 5:28.

**Commandment Eight: DO NOT STEAL**

"Do not steal" (20:15). See Matthew 19:21.

**Commandment Nine: DO NOT LIE**

"Do not accuse anyone falsely" (20:16). See Matthew 12:36.

**Commandment Ten: DO NOT ENVY**

"Do not wish for anything that belongs to your neighbour" (20:17).  
See Luke 12:15.



## **The Ten Commandments and salvation through Christ alone**

Remember that laws cannot save us from sin. God's laws show us what is right and what is wrong. But they cannot take away our sin. This is why the people of Israel were told to bring animal offerings to the altar for the forgiveness of sins through the sacrificed blood of lambs and goats.

Only the blood sacrificed by Jesus can do that today. The Ten Commandments help us to know that we need the risen Jesus Christ in our lives and His forgiveness through the blood sacrifice He made as the Lamb of God. Both Moses and Elijah met with Jesus when He was on Earth to talk to Him about His sacrifice in Jerusalem 2000 years ago (Luke 9:30-31).

The Ten Commandments help us to obey God and to warn us what is right and wrong. But Jesus enables us to know God personally by saving us from sin that separates us from our Creator. His sacrifice enables us to do what is right and have victory over what is wrong through the punishment He took for our sins to bring us close to God.

## **A NEW BEGINNING TO WORSHIP GOD**

After hearing the Ten Commandments, the people of Israel were afraid of dying before Almighty God (20:19). Moses advised them 'Do not be afraid. God has come to test you. He wants you to respect Him' (v.20). This would help to keep them from sinning. But the people refused to draw near to God (20:21). However, He promised to draw near to them when they sacrificed their sheep and goats (20:24).

God gave the Ten Commandments to show the people how to worship and obey Him. He wanted them to live clean holy lives. He wanted them to love Him and each other. This was a new beginning for the children of Israel as a holy people of God.

Now they must build only simple altars to burn their sacrifices (20:25). They must not worship God by building tall altars with steps to go up, nor carved out of stone. This might cause some people to worship the building instead of God. When we worship God, we must not make or do anything that hinders us from worshipping Him. Nor must we wear clothes that attract or distract others away from worship (20:26).



### **Talk about this:**

1. Why do we say the Ten Commandments do not save us from sin?
2. Why were the Ten Commandments an important new beginning for God's people?
3. How were the children of Israel able to come close to God (20:25)?



**Think about this:** How do we understand the 'mystery of Christ' that enables us to draw close to God today? How can we prepare ourselves,

our meetings and our buildings for true worship of Almighty God without hindrance?

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The Bible tells us that God reminded the people of Israel more than 100 times that He saved them from the land and the gods of Egypt. He told them again and again, "You must not do what the people of Egypt do" (Leviticus 18:3). God prepared Moses to lead the people out of Egypt. And God prepared the people to be led by Moses. God showed them miracles and He gave them instructions for living. He prepared them for a new life of holiness in the Promised Land. He prepared them to trust Him and to worship Him during many troubles.

The Ten Commandments reminded the people that they must be a special people, holy and different from other people. They must love and worship only Yahweh, Almighty God. They must also love and respect other believers. The Commandments say what is right and what is wrong. They speak about the old life of sin. They remind the people that God had saved them and set them apart to be holy. Today, they continue to remind us how much God wants to save us from sin. He wants us to be a holy people so that we are set apart to worship Him and be a blessing to other believers.

Moses was saved from death in Egypt as a baby in order to save the Hebrew (Israelite) people from slavery. He was called to do this by Almighty God, even though he murdered an Egyptian and ran away for 40 years leaving everything behind. His power in Egypt was destroyed but God later called him and gave him His own power to defeat the king of Egypt and his men.

The amazing story of Moses, the ten plagues, the Passover, the exodus from Egypt, the provision of food and water and the Ten Commandments, all teach us a lot about God and about ourselves. It teaches us to understand the need to fear God, to respect God, to trust God, to obey God and His commandments, to know God, to love God and to worship God.

God's Ten Commandments still guide us today by reminding us that we are sinners, and therefore need Jesus Christ as our Saviour. He is the Son of God who was prepared to suffer and die on a cross to save us. The Law, which is God's truth, warns us and guides us but cannot save us on its own. It proves that we are all sinners. Praise God for all that Jesus has done to give us a new life with Him and to know the love and forgiveness of Yahweh, Almighty God. It is by the grace and mercy of God that we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ alone (Ephesians 2:5,8).

What joy it is when we are forgiven, to enter into His holiness surrounded by His love, peace and provision! What joy it is to serve others filled with God's love, purpose and power! May this be the experience of all who read and obey God's truth.

Through the Hebrew people who Moses saved, the holiness and purpose of God was shown to the world and written down for us to read. It was through these same people of God, the Jews, that Jesus their Messiah came to live, suffer, die and rise from death. God sent Him to bless and save the world from the slavery of sin if they follow Him as the Son of God.

<b>Published by:</b>	<b>Printed by:</b>  <b>Typeset by:</b> MissionAssist (UK)
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>God has enabled Manna Bible teaching commentaries to be published in:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Angola, Armenia, Benin, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Congo Dem. Rep. (Kinshasa and Katanga), Congo Rep. (Brazzaville), Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar (Burma), Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>and in 42 languages plus 2 in Braille</b></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Contact us at: <b><a href="http://www.manna-publications.org.uk">www.manna-publications.org.uk</a></b> Affiliated to <b>Avail</b>, UK registered charity 1017386</p>	