

Exodus Devotionals

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES ON EXODUS

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How Big is your God'

What would have happened had Moses tried to figure out what was needed to accomplish God's command? One of the biggest arithmetical miracles in the world was required in the desert.

Moses led the people of Israel into the desert....Now what was he going to do with them? They had to be fed, and feeding 3-1/2 million people required a lot of food. According to the U. S. Army's Quartermaster General, Moses needed 1500 tons of food a day, filling two freight trains, each a mile long. Besides, you must remember, they were cooking the food (not to mention for keeping warm, and if anyone tells you it doesn't get cold in the desert don't believe them!). Just for cooking this took 4000 tons of firewood and a few more freight trains, each a mile long and this is only for one day!!! They were for forty YEARS in transit!!!

Let's not forget about water, shall we? If they only had enough to drink and wash a few dishes (no bathing?!), it took 11,000,000 gallons EACH DAY—enough to fill a train of tanker cars 1800 miles long.

And another thing! They had to get across the Red Sea in one night. Now if they went on a narrow path, double file, the line would be 800 miles long and require 35 days and nights to complete the crossing. So to get it over in one night there had to be a space in the Red Sea 3 miles wide so that they could walk 5,000 abreast. Think about this; every time they camped at the end of the day, a camp ground the size of Rhode Island was required, or 750 square miles.

Do you think that Moses sat down and figured out the logistics of what God told him to do before he set out from Egypt? I doubt it. He had faith that God would take care of everything. Let us have courage, we share the very same God!

Source unknown

[Exodus 2:11](#) My Utmost For His Highest Oswald Chambers

Exodus 2:1-5 Train a Child; Affect the World

Although Moses belonged officially to Pharaoh's daughter, God allowed his own mother to have the privilege of giving him his early training.

The exact number of years Moses was in the care of his own mother is unknown, but it was long enough for her to give him the basic training that would last throughout his lifetime.

It was doubtlessly under his mother's care that Moses trusted God for his salvation. Also, it would have been only normal for his mother to have impressed on him the need for the Israelites to be delivered from Egypt.

Perhaps his mother reminded him often that God promised to deliver the Israelites in the fourth generation and that he was a member of that generation.

The faith of Moses' parents caused them to risk the wrath of the king. Their love for God and for their child caused them to devise an ingenious way to evade the king's ruthless edict.

God honored their faith and rewarded their love. As a result, Moses had the benefit of a godly home and the heritage of his Hebrew parents, which proved to be more than enough to counteract the later adverse education received from the Egyptians.

In a sense, Moses' parents influenced the course of history, although they were slaves to the Egyptians at the time. Think of what they personally accomplished by properly rearing Moses.

One never knows how one person or group may affect large numbers of people--even the world.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment" (Gen. 18:19).

[Exodus 3:4](#) My Utmost For His Highest Oswald Chambers

Exodus 3:1-14 Frail Man Cannot Limit God

At the burning bush, Moses was intensely aware of his previous failures. "Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Ex. 3:11).

Moses was aware that he had tried this once and it hadn't worked. He had so thoroughly mastered the lesson of human inadequacy that he was too timid, too reserved and too nonaggressive to respond to the call of God.

Before, he had been confident of his own ability, but now he had absolutely no confidence. This is what God had taught him during his 40 years in the desert, but God wanted Moses to respond to Him and to His ability.

The verses following Exodus 3:11 record a deeply revealing dialogue between God and Moses. The once self-sufficient Egyptian prince pleaded total lack of qualification for the task God was calling him to do.

Moses was negative, but God was now dealing with him to be positive. Moses had yet to understand what God meant when He said, "Certainly I will be with thee" (v. 12) and "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (v. 14).

Before, Moses had been too quick and impetuous; now he was too slow and reluctant. But what a lesson God had for Moses and for us; His purpose will not be thwarted by the whims and moods of His servants.

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chron. 16:9).

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Exodus 3:7

Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

"I know their sorrows." — [Exodus 3:7](#)

The child is cheered as he sings, "This my father knows"; and shall not we be comforted as we discern that our dear Friend and tender soul-husband knows all about us?

1. He is the Physician, and if he knows all, there is no need that the patient should know. Hush, thou silly, fluttering heart, prying, peeping, and suspecting! What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter, and meanwhile Jesus, the beloved Physician, knows thy soul in adversities. Why need the patient analyze all the medicine, or estimate all the symptoms? This is the Physician's work, not mine; it is my business to trust, and his to prescribe. If he shall write his prescription in uncouth characters which I cannot read, I will not be uneasy on that account, but rely upon his unfailing skill to make all plain in the result, however mysterious in the working.

2. He is the Master, and his knowledge is to serve us instead of our own; we are to obey, not to judge: "The servant knoweth not what his lord doeth." Shall the architect explain his plans to every hodman on the works? If he knows his own intent, is it not enough? The vessel on the wheel cannot guess to what pattern it shall be conformed, but if the potter understands his art, what matters the ignorance of the clay? My Lord must not be cross-questioned any more by one so ignorant as I am.

3. He is the Head. All understanding centres there. What judgment has the arm? What comprehension has the foot? All the power to know lies in the head. Why should the member have a brain of its own when the head fulfils for it every intellectual office? Here, then, must the believer rest his comfort in sickness, not that he himself can see the end, but that Jesus knows all. Sweet Lord, be thou for ever eye, and soul, and head for us, and let us be content to know only what thou chooseth to reveal.

Exodus 3:12

A Man without Fear

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee.—[Exodus 3:12](#)

OF course, if the Lord sent Moses on an errand, He would not let him go alone. The tremendous risk which it would involve, and the great power it would require, would render it ridiculous for God to send a poor lone Hebrew to confront the mightiest king in all the world and then leave him to himself. It could not be imagined that a wise God would match poor Moses with Pharaoh and the enormous forces of Egypt. Hence He says, "Certainly I will be with thee," as if it were out of the question that He would send him alone.

In my case, also, the same rule will hold good. If I go upon the Lord's errand, with a simple reliance upon His power and a single eye to His glory, it is certain that He will be with me. His sending me binds Him to back me up. Is not this enough? What more can I want? If all the angels and archangels were with me, I might fail; but if He is with me, I must succeed. Only let me take care that I act worthily toward this promise. Let me not go timidly, halfheartedly, carelessly, presumptuously. What manner of person ought he to be who has God with him? In such company it behoveth me to play the man and, like Moses, go in unto Pharaoh without fear.

John Henry Jowett

MAY The Tenth

GOD'S USE OF MEN

"I have surely seen the affliction of My people ... come now, therefore, I will send thee."

Exodus 3:1-14.

DOES that seem a weak ending to a powerful beginning? The Lord God looks upon terrible affliction and He sends a weak man to deal with it. Could He not have sent fire from heaven? Could He not have rent the heavens and sent His ministers of calamity and disasters? Why choose a man when the arch-angel Gabriel stands ready at obedience?

This is the way of the Lord. He uses human means to divine ends. He works through man to the emancipation of men. He pours His strength into a worm, and it becomes "an instrument with teeth." He stiffens a frail reed and it becomes as an iron pillar.

And this mighty God will use thee and me. On every side there are Egypts where affliction abounds, there are homes where ignorance breeds, there are workshops where tyranny reigns, there are lands where oppression is rampant. "Come now, therefore, I will send thee." Thus saith the Lord, and He who gives the command will also give the equipment. (**John Henry Jowett - My Daily Meditation for the Circling Year**)

Exodus 3:2-4

The Lesson of the Thorn-Bush

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

"The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush ... And God called unto him, and said, Moses, Moses, and he said, Here am I."-- [Exodus 3:2-4](#).

MOSES was an old man of eighty years! For forty years--the spring-tide of his life--he had basked in Court favour. The son of the palace, though born in a slave-hut According to Stephen, renowned in deed and word, eloquent in speech, learned in the highest culture of his age, accustomed to lead victorious armies in the field, or to assist in raising pyramids or treasure-cities in peace--all that the ancient world could offer was at his feet ([Acts 7:22](#); [Heb11:24, 25, 26, 27](#)). But this had been followed by forty other years--- of exile, poverty, and heart-break. Instead of the riches of Egypt, he was engaged in tending the sheep of another and the years slowly passed away in obscurity. He was a disappointed and perplexed man. His own record was that when a man's life reaches four-score years, it is labour and sorrow, and he welcomes the cutting, off of the web ([Ps 90:10](#)).

One afternoon suddenly a common thorn-bush seemed wrapt in flame. The blaze was pure and clear, and as he watched, "Behold! the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Small wonder that he arose from the shelter which screened him from the sun, and drew near to "see this great sight." Then was heard that inner Voice, familiar to all pure and humble hearts, which bade him realise that the fire was no ordinary flame, but the pledge and sign of God's Presence.

We must not suppose that there was more of God in that common bush than in the surrounding landscape. It was simply the focusing of His Presence which had always been there, as it is always everywhere. God is as near to each reader of these pages as He was to Moses at that moment! Take this to heart, you most forlorn, most down-hearted, most helpless soul! Be of good cheer! God comes to you, though humbled and scorched, and at the end of yourself! He wraps you around, interpenetrates you, and concentrates Himself on your need, saying: "I AM"--leaving you to fill in His blank cheque, and to claim what you most need. "For the

mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but His kindness shall not depart from you."

PRAYER - Some of us sorely need Thee, O God; we have been disappointed many times in the things we thought would yield us profit and satisfaction. When we are most absorbed in our necessary business, may Thy Presence be manifested to us. May we realise that we are not wondering aimlessly upon the trackless desert, because Thou art leading us. May every common bush be aflame with God. AMEN.

Exodus 3:10-14

God's Partnership with Man

F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

"Come now, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh And God said, I AM THAT I AM: Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."-- [Exodus 3:10, 11, 12, 13, 14](#).

NOTHING IS more needed to-day than God's Partnership as a realised fact in Christian experience. Many of us may assent to what is written in these lines, and then put it aside, as a dream which is too ethereal to be of practical service. But when the Apostle said that "our fellowship, i.e. our partnership, is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" it is surely meant that we should enter upon our inheritance. "I AM..." says our great Partner; "fill in your need, and I will meet your demand, according to the riches of My glory in Christ Jesus." Let us tear out the order-forms from God's service-register, fill them up, and present them for delivery. Not one of them would be dishonoured. And if it happened that we had wrongly diagnosed our need, He would erase the demand based on our imperfect knowledge, and substitute what we would ask if we knew. There is nothing more certain than that the more we ask of God, the more pleased He is to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think.

Our Lord made use of this incident when He was challenged by the Sadducees to adduce proof of the future life from the Books of Moses. He answered by quoting this paragraph of the burning bush, calling special attention to the fact that Moses referred to God as the "God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." He said that the use of the present tense--I AM--proved that God is not the God of the dead but of the living, and that all live unto Him.

What a comfort there is in this thought, that our beloved who have passed from us are in-breathing the same atmosphere as we are. We all eat the same spiritual meat and all drink the same spiritual drink. We see in a mirror darkly, but they face to face; but this identity of fellowship, of partnership with the "I AM," the ever-present God who fills heaven and earth, is a proof and a pledge that they have not altered essentially. They are drinking of the same stream higher up and nearer its source: "One family we dwell in him."

PRAYER - Accomplish thy perfect work in our souls, O Father. As yet we are bound with many chains; we tarry among things seen and temporal," we are exposed to the storms of the outer world, and are wrestling with its ills. But we are not dismayed, for we are more than earth and dust, we are akin to Thee, O Spirit of the Lord, and can experience Thy heavenly influence. Fill us with faith and love and hope. AMEN.

Exodus 4:1-17 God Enables Whom He Calls

Moses gave seven reasons why he wasn't the man for God's task: lack of capability, lack of message, lack of authority, lack of eloquence, lack of fitness or adaptation, lack of previous success and lack of previous acceptance.

Instead of receiving God's approval, the excuses Moses gave only kindled God's anger. The Bible says, "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses" (Ex. 4:14).

This does not mean that God had a fit of temper; rather, it means that God was not pleased with the excuses Moses offered. In effect, God was saying, "Moses, you have no right to make these excuses, and if your faith were in the right place and Person, you would not be making them."

Just as God became angry with Moses because of his excuses, so He becomes angry with any believer who limits Him by a lack of faith. Actually, the excuses Moses gave were the exact reasons why God had selected him for the task.

For each lack that Moses expressed, God had a satisfying and abundant provision. What Moses failed to understand at this time was that when God calls, He always guarantees and furnishes all that is needed to accomplish His will.

This is also true of believers today. When God calls you to do something, He always guarantees and furnishes all you need to do what He asks.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil.

1:6).

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Exodus 4:2 The Little Things

And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? Exodus 4:2

Our Scripture reading for today contains Moses' response to God's call at the burning bush. Having just been commissioned to lead the children of Israel out of bondage, he was apprehensive about how the Egyptians, and even his countrymen, would react. But the Lord said to him, "What is that in thine hand?" "A rod," Moses answered. Then He said to him in verse 17, "And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." Most of us are familiar with the great miracles associated with that rod when Moses obeyed the Lord. It was insignificant in itself, but it became a powerful instrument when committed to the Lord.

Writing on this theme, J. W. Johnson imagined the following conversation between God and some of His faithful servants down through the centuries: "What is that in thine hand?" asked the Lord. 'A sling,' said David. 'It is enough; go up against the giant,' and the great Goliath fell before the shepherd boy. 'What is that in thine hand?' 'A sword,' answered Jonathan. 'It is enough,' and the brave youth, followed by his armor-bearer, went up against an army, and the Philistines were defeated....'What is that in thine hand?' 'A pen,' said John Bunyan, as he spoke from the arches of Bedford prison. 'It is enough,' and he wrote the story Pilgrim's Progress, which will live while the world endures."

Don't sell yourself short, friend! If God has called you to a task, He'll equip you for it. He merely asks, "What is that in thine hand?" Give it to Him, and you'll see what He can do with little things. R.W.D.,

Our Daily Bread

Ministry

An elderly widow, restricted in her activities, was eager to serve Christ. After praying about this, she realized that she could bring blessing to others by playing the piano. The next day she placed this small ad in the Oakland Tribune: "Pianist will play hymns by phone daily for those who are sick and despondent—the service is free." The notice included the number to dial. When people called, she would ask, "What hymn would you like to hear?" Within a few months her playing had brought cheer to several hundred people. Many of them freely poured out their hearts to her, and she was able to help and encourage them.

Source unknown

Exodus 4:12

Speak What He Teaches

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

"Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."—[Exodus 4:12](#)

MANY a true servant of the Lord is slow of speech, and when called upon to plead for his Lord, he is in great confusion lest he should spoil a good cause by his bad advocacy. In such a case it is well to remember that the Lord made the tongue which is so slow, and we must take care that we do not blame our Maker. It may be that a slow tongue is not so great an evil as a fast one, and fewness of words may be more of a blessing than floods of verbiage. It is also quite certain that real saving power does not lie in human rhetoric with its figures of speech, and pretty phrases, and grand displays. Lack of fluency is not so great a lack as it looks.

If God be with our mouths and with our minds, we shall have something better than the sounding brass of eloquence or the tinkling cymbal of persuasion. God's teaching is wisdom; His presence is power. Pharaoh had more reason to be afraid of stammering Moses than of the most fluent talker in Egypt, for what he said had power in it; he spoke plagues and deaths. If the Lord be with us in our natural weakness, we shall be girt with supernatural power. Therefore, let us speak for Jesus boldly, as we ought to speak.

John Henry Jowett MAY The Eleventh BUT——!

"And Moses answered and said, But——"

Exodus 4:1-9.

WE know that "but." God has heard it from our lips a thousand times. It is the response of unbelief to the divine call. It is the reply of fear to the divine command. It is the suggestion that the resources are inadequate. It is a hint that God may not have looked all

round. He has overlooked something which our own eyes have seen. The human “buts” in the Scriptural stories make an appalling record.

“Lord, I will follow Thee, but——” There is something else to be attended to before discipleship can begin. Obedience is not primary: it must wait for something else. And so our obedience is not a straight line: it is crooked and circuitous; it takes the way of by-path meadow instead of the highway of the Lord. We do not wait upon the Lord’s pleasure; we make Him wait upon ours.

There need be no “buts” in our relationship to the King’s will. Everything has been foreseen. Nothing will take the Lord by surprise. The entire field has been surveyed, and the preparations are complete. When the Lord says to thee or me, “I will send thee,” every provision has been made for the appointed task. “I will not fail thee.”

John Henry Jowett MAY The Twelfth

MOUTH AND MATTER

“Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth.”

Exodus 4:10-17.

AND what a promise that is for anyone who is commissioned to proclaim the King’s decrees. Here can teachers and preachers find their strength. God will be with their mouths. He will control their speech, and order their words like troops. He does not promise to make us eloquent, but to endow our words with the “demonstration of power.”

“And I will teach thee what thou shall say.” The Lord will not only be with our mouths, but with our minds. He will guide our thoughts as well as our words. He will be as sentinel at the lips. He will be our guide in our processes of meditation and judgment, and He will bring us to enlightened ends. All of which is just this: He will give us mouth and matter.

This does not put a premium upon idleness. The Lord guides when men are honestly groping. He gives us fire when we have built the altar. He works His miracle when we have provided the five loaves. He sends His light through diligent thinking. The divine power is given through the consecrated strength.

Exodus 5:10-23 Rejected by One's Own

As Moses was rejected by Pharaoh and then by his own people, he was learning what it meant to stand alone with God.

Not only did Pharaoh refuse his request, but he essentially called Moses a liar. And the Israelites went around Moses by taking their case directly to Pharaoh. It was one thing to be rejected by Pharaoh, an unbeliever, but it was quite another thing to be rejected by his own people.

Moses experienced a bitter and painful lesson in learning to trust God alone. Every vestige of hope in others was ripped away, and he had no other choice than to stand alone with God.

The entire plan of delivering Israel seemed to have backfired. Once again his own people were bitter toward him and accused him of being directly responsible for their troubles, even though Moses had been willing to give his life for them. How those words must have cut deeply into his heart.

One's heart goes out to Moses because his troubles were only beginning. He had been prepared for the rebuff that he received from Pharaoh because he had been warned of this by God. But no warning had been given him concerning the rebuff by his own people, which was much harder to take.

How discouraging it is when one is criticized by those he is trying to help. This teaches us, too, that it is easier to take criticism from unbelievers than it is to take it from believers.

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1:11).

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Exodus 6:1-13 Learning to Stand Alone

After Moses had cast himself completely on the Lord and the Lord had assured Moses of what He would do, “Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage” (Ex. 6:9).

This reaction must have been very hard for a leader like Moses to accept, but it only verified that he had to learn to stand alone with God. Every true leader has to come to the realization that at times he will have to stand alone.

Throughout biblical history men have stood alone with God--men like Noah, Abraham, Joseph and Elijah. Although their friends turned against them and they had no one to lean on for support at times, they stood strong for God because they were willing to stand alone.

And Moses' successor was no exception. After the death of Moses, Joshua faithfully led the people of Israel, but at the end of his life he presented the people with a decision they had to make.

Joshua told the people, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; ... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15).

Whether we are in a high position of leadership or not, it is important for us to realize that there will be times when we must stand alone with God for the convictions He has given us through His Word.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41:10).

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Exodus 7:1-13 Unquestioned Obedience

Moses went before Pharaoh, and from this point forward we see unquestioned obedience on his part. Total obedience is really recognition of God's absolute sovereignty, and this is what Moses finally recognized.

The complete obedience of Moses is also seen in Exodus 7:10: "And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded."

Verse 20 emphasizes the same theme: "And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded." Twelve times God gave the orders, and twelve times Moses and Aaron did as God said.

Miracles began to happen one after another as they gave unquestioned obedience to the Lord. This teaches us that we must be where God wants us to be at the time He wants us to be there, and we must do what He says if we expect to see things happen.

As the believer desires to act and obey, he will see God work mightily in and through him.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people" (Ex. 19:5).

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Exodus 7:8-10 Unmasking Egypt's Magicians

Now the magicians of Egypt....cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents. Exodus 7:11,12

When I was young, I often wondered how the magicians of Egypt could make snakes out of their rods in the presence of Pharaoh like Aaron had done. I knew God had divinely commissioned His ambassadors to perform a miracle, but were those on Satan's side permitted special demonic power to do the same? Perhaps in reproducing some of the plagues they were, but I don't think that was true in this case. Commentators say that serpents engraved on Egyptian monuments have the appearance of an Irish-thorn cane, with the head turned over the body as a handle. From this they conclude that the magicians knew how to paralyze a snake by putting pressure on the back of its neck so that it would become rigid. The sorcerers used these reptiles as walking sticks. The people would stare in amazement when they threw these 'canes' on the ground, for with the pressure released, the snakes would begin to crawl away. Then the magicians would seize the serpents and pinch their neck nerves, and they again became paralyzed and stiff.

Prior to the account in Exodus 7, Moses had been told to take his staff, which through God's power had become a serpent, and hold it not by the neck but "by the tail" to turn it into a rod (Ex. 4:4). Assuming that Aaron did the same thing in Pharaoh's presence, it would be obvious that his act was a true miracle and not trickery.

The devil's followers are still using deception, and they counterfeit God's power to gain attention. Because "many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1), beware lest they trick you. -H.G.B.

O Let us learn from Thy blest Word
Base error to discern,
And by Thy Spirit's light and help

From Satan's snares to turn.

Bosch

THOT: Error often comes dressed in the garment of truth.

Our Daily Bread, Sunday, March 23.

Exodus 7:5

God's Enemies Shall Bow

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

"The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord."—[Exodus 7:5](#)

THE ungodly world is hard to teach. Egypt does not know Jehovah, and therefore dares to set up its idols, and even ventures to ask—"Who is the Lord?" Yet the Lord means to break proud hearts, whether they will or not. When His judgments thunder over their heads, darken their skies, destroy their harvests, and slay their sons, they begin to discern somewhat of Jehovah's power. There will yet be such things done in the earth as shall bring skeptics to their knees. Let us not be dismayed because of their blasphemies for the Lord can take care of His own name, and He will do so in a very effectual manner.

The salvation of His own people was another potent means of making Egypt know that the God of Israel was Jehovah, the living and true God. No Israelite died by any one of the ten plagues. None of the chosen seed were drowned in the Red Sea. Even so, the salvation of the elect and the sure glorification of all true believers will make the most obstinate of God's enemies acknowledge that Jehovah, He is the God.

Oh, that His convincing power would go forth by His Holy Spirit in the preaching of the gospel till all nations shall bow at the name of Jesus and call Him Lord!

Exodus 7:12

Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

"But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." — [Exodus 7:12](#)

This incident is an instructive emblem of the sure victory of the divine handiwork over all opposition. Whenever a divine principle is cast into the heart, though the devil may fashion a counterfeit, and produce swarms of opponents, as sure as ever God is in the work, it will swallow up all its foes. If God's grace takes possession of a man, the world's magicians may throw down all their rods; and every rod may be as cunning and poisonous as a serpent, but Aaron's rod will swallow up their rods. The sweet attractions of the cross will woo and win the man's heart, and he who lived only for this deceitful earth will now have an eye for the upper spheres, and a wing to mount into celestial heights. When grace has won the day the worldling seeks the world to come. The same fact is to be observed in the life of the believer. What multitudes of foes has our faith had to meet! Our old sins—the devil threw them down before us, and they turned to serpents. What hosts of them! Ah, but the cross of Jesus destroys them all. Faith in Christ makes short work of all our sins. Then the devil has launched forth another host of serpents in the form of worldly trials, temptations, unbelief; but faith in Jesus is more than a match for them, and overcomes them all. The same absorbing principle shines in the faithful service of God! With an enthusiastic love for Jesus difficulties are surmounted, sacrifices become pleasures, sufferings are honours. But if religion is thus a consuming passion in the heart, then it follows that there are many persons who profess religion but have it not; for what they have will not bear this test. Examine yourself, my reader, on this point. Aaron's rod proved its heaven-given power. Is your religion doing so? If Christ be anything he must be everything. O rest not till love and faith in Jesus be the master passions of your soul!

Exodus 8-10

The Danger of Compromise

1. You can't go at all, Ex 5:1-5, 7:13
2. Practice your religion, but don't go too far, 8:25
3. Only the men can go, 10:11
4. Leave your possessions, treasure, business

Exodus 8:23 Maintain the Difference

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

“And I will put a division between my people and thy people: tomorrow shall this sign be.”—Exodus 8:23

PHARAOH has a people, and the Lord has a people. These may dwell together, and seem to fare alike, but there is a division between them, and the Lord will make it apparent. Not forever shall one event happen alike to all, but there shall be great difference between the men of the world and the people of Jehovah's choice.

This may happen in the time of judgments, when the Lord becomes the sanctuary of His saints. It is very conspicuous in the conversion of believers when their sin is put away while unbelievers remain under condemnation. From that moment they become a distinct race, come under a new discipline, and enjoy new blessings. Their homes, henceforth, are free from the grievous swarms of evils which defile and torment the Egyptians. They are kept from the pollution of lust, the bite of care, the corruption of falsehood, and the cruel torment of hatred which devour many families.

Rest assured, tried believer, that though you have your troubles, you are saved from swarms of worse ones which infest the homes and hearts of the servants of the world's prince. The Lord has put a division; see to it that you keep up the division in spirit, aim, character, and company.

Exodus 8:28 Spurgeon Morning and Evening

“Only ye shall not go very far away.” — Exodus 8:28

This is a crafty word from the lip of the arch-tyrant Pharaoh. If the poor bondaged Israelites must needs go out of Egypt, then he bargains with them that it shall not be very far away; not too far for them to escape the terror of his arms, and the observation of his spies. After the same fashion, the world loves not the non-conformity of nonconformity, or the dissidence of dissent; it would have us be more charitable and not carry matters with too severe a hand. Death to the world, and burial with Christ, are experiences which carnal minds treat with ridicule, and hence the ordinance which sets them forth is almost universally neglected, and even condemned. Worldly wisdom recommends the path of compromise, and talks of “moderation.” According to this carnal policy, purity is admitted to be very desirable, but we are warned against being too precise; truth is of course to be followed, but error is not to be severely denounced. “Yes,” says the world, “be spiritually minded by all means, but do not deny yourself a little gay society, an occasional ball, and a Christmas visit to a theatre. What's the good of crying down a thing when it is so fashionable, and everybody does it?” Multitudes of professors yield to this cunning advice, to their own eternal ruin. If we would follow the Lord wholly, we must go right away into the wilderness of separation, and leave the Egypt of the carnal world behind us. We must leave its maxims, its pleasures, and its religion too, and go far away to the place where the Lord calls his sanctified ones. When the town is on fire, our house cannot be too far from the flames. When the plague is abroad, a man cannot be too far from its haunts. The further from a viper the better, and the further from worldly conformity the better. To all true believers let the trumpet-call be sounded, “Come ye out from among them, be ye separate.”

Exodus 8:20-32 Refusing to Compromise

As the plagues came on Pharaoh and the Egyptians, he began to weaken a little bit.

Pharaoh said to Moses, "Go, sacrifice to your God [here] in the land [of Egypt]. And Moses said, It is not suitable or right to do that; for the animals the Egyptians hold sacred and will not permit to be slain, are those which we are accustomed to sacrifice to the Lord our God; if we did this before the eyes of the Egyptians, would they not stone us? We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as He will command us" (Ex. 8:25-27, Amplified).

This was Pharaoh's first offer, but Moses was bold in faith and refused to compromise. Moses spoke for God and completely refused anything less than what God demanded.

Moses even exposed Pharaoh's false religion as he mentioned that the Egyptians held certain animals to be sacred. Moses made it clear that his firm intention was to obey God completely.

That Moses' faith was becoming bolder and bolder is also seen in that he prayed for an end to the plague of flies. This was not presumption on Moses' part because he already had assurance from God that such a prayer was in accordance with His will.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccles. 12:13).

Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 9:22-35 God Knows the Heart

Against the backdrop of this awful judgment is a verse that reveals God's protection of His own: "Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail" (Ex. 9:26).

Goshen was part of Egypt, but God controlled the circumstances so that the Israelites were untouched by the judgment that Egypt experienced.

Notice what Pharaoh's response was to this awful judgment: Although Pharaoh seemed to be conscious of his wickedness before God, it was only a feigned confession made in order to escape judgment.

Moses was not fooled by Pharaoh's false confession. God had given Moses insight so he knew what was in Pharaoh's heart and was not fooled in any way.

This reveals how hardened Pharaoh really was; it did not bother him even to fake a confession of sin to God. But God knows what is in each person's heart, and He was not deceived for one minute.

God had showered His mercies on Pharaoh, but Pharaoh had refused to respond positively in any way. So in the remaining plagues God further hardened Pharaoh's heart so as to fulfill His plan of total revelation of Himself as absolutely sovereign.

"Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Ps. 44:21). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 10:12-29 Resisting God

When the judgment of darkness came on Egypt, Pharaoh called for Moses and told him, "Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you" (Ex. 10:24, NASB). "Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you" (Ex. 10:24, NASB).

This was Pharaoh's fourth and final compromise offer. Pharaoh wasn't dumb; he realized that people are attached to their property and that if the Egyptians could keep the property of the Israelites, then they could be assured that the Israelites would return. "Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you" (Ex. 10:24, NASB).

But Moses was not about to accept a compromise offer. He said, "Not a hoof will be left behind" (v. 26, NASB).

Pharaoh was now past feeling, and the omniscient God also knew that he was unchangeable. Thus, the Bible says again, "But the Lord made Pharaoh's heart stronger and more stubborn, and he would not let them go" (v. 27, Amplified).

Then the proud king, unchanged by all of these judgments, said to Moses, "Get away from me! See that you never enter my presence again, for the day you see my face again you shall die!" (v. 28, Amplified).

Moses answered Pharaoh, "Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more" (v. 29).

What terrible grief results when people set their wills against God as Pharaoh did.

"This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun.... yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live" (Eccles. 9:3). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 11 God's Judgment Announced

Moses' announcement of the final plague is recorded in Exodus 11. Verse 1 is the key to understanding its purpose: "The Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether."

Not only would Pharaoh be willing to let the Israelites go, he would actually push them out of his country. This reveals the folly of fighting against God, because He finally brings a person to his knees. The creature is impotent before his omnipotent Creator.

As the Israelites prepared to leave Egypt, God instructed, "Let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her

neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold" (Ex. 11:2).

The word "borrow" does not accurately convey the meaning of the Hebrew word from which it is translated. The Hebrew word is shaal, which basically means "to ask." The Israelites were to ask the Egyptians for the back wages owed them.

God had waited and waited on Pharaoh, and Moses had been patient as he warned Pharaoh of coming judgment. But both God and Moses were to be vindicated.

Moses, however, only announced this final judgment, which was entirely from God. The Passover lamb speaks of salvation, and salvation is only of God, although men are used to announce the message.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccles. 12:14). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 11:7 Is There a Difference?

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.—[Exodus 11:7](#)

WHAT! has God power over the tongues of dogs? Can he keep curs from barking? Yes, it is even so. He can prevent an Egyptian dog from worrying one of the lambs of Israel's flock. Doth God silence dogs, and doggish ones among men, and the great dog at hell's gate? Then let us move on our way without fear.

If He lets dogs move their tongues, yet He can stop their teeth. They may make a dreadful noise and still do us no real harm. Yet, how sweet is quiet! How delightful to move about among enemies and perceive that God maketh them to be at peace with us! Like Daniel in the den of lions, we are unhurt amid destroyers.

Oh, that today, this word of the Lord to Israel might be true to me! Does the dog worry me? I will tell my Lord about him. Lord, he does not care for my pleadings; do thou speak the word of power, and he must lie down. Give me peace, O my God, and let me see thy hand so distinctly in it that I may most clearly perceive the difference which thy grace has made between me and the ungodly!

Exodus 12:1-14 A New Beginning

That the time of the Exodus was also the time of the birth of Israel as a nation is evident from what God told Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt.

This was actually a fulfillment of what God had told Jacob: "Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation" (Gen. 46:3).

The month referred to in Exodus 12:2,3 is the month of April, known to the nation of Israel as "Abib." From that point on, Israel was to keep the Feast of the Passover during this month.

Deuteronomy 16:1 refers to this: "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night."

The Feast of the Passover was a remembrance of the beginning of the nation of Israel. As such, the Passover reminded the Israelites of everything that was foundational to the nation itself.

Just as the Israelites needed to be reminded of their beginning as a nation, those of us who know Jesus Christ as Saviour need to be reminded of the deliverance we have experienced.

Colossians 1:12-14 refers to this deliverance: "Giving thanks unto the Father, . . . Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phil. 3:13). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 12 Saved by the Blood

The Israelites were not spared judgment in Egypt because they prayed or because they fasted or because of their own merits but

only because they applied the shed blood as God instructed. They were in houses behind the blood that had been applied to the doorposts; thus, their firstborn were spared from death.

In order for the firstborn to be spared, a lamb had to be killed and its blood applied to the doorposts. Death would be inflicted either on the firstborn or on the substitute for the firstborn. But the death of the lamb alone would not do; its blood had to be applied as God instructed. God said, "They shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses" (Ex. 12:7). Nothing was left to chance or to man's ingenuity. Salvation was, and is, totally of God.

Although Christ shed His blood for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2), no one is saved from condemnation unless he personally trusts Christ as Saviour (John 1:12). Receiving Christ as Saviour is appropriating to oneself what Christ has made available. Not until the blood has been applied does it actually provide safety. It is not enough to know that the blood of Jesus Christ was shed for the forgiveness of sin--one must personally trust Him as Saviour.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18,19). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 12:13 Justice Satisfied

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

"When I see the blood, I will pass over you."—[Exodus 12:13](#)

MY own sight of the precious blood is for my comfort, but it is the Lord's sight of it which secures my safety. Even when I am unable to behold it, the Lord looks at it, and passes over me because of it. If I am not so much at ease as I ought to be, because my faith is dim, yet I am equally safe, because the Lord's eye is not dim, and He sees the blood of the great Sacrifice with steady gaze. What a joy is this!

The Lord sees the deep inner meaning, the infinite fullness of all that is meant by the death of His dear Son. He sees it with restful memory of justice satisfied, and all His matchless attributes glorified. He beheld creation in its progress, and said, "It is very good;" but what does He say of redemption in its completeness? What does He say of the obedience even unto death of His Well-beloved Son? None can tell His delight in Jesus, His rest in the sweet savor which Jesus presented when He offered Himself without spot unto God.

Now rest we in calm security. We have God's Sacrifice and God's Word to create in us a sense of perfect security. He will, He must, pass over us, because He spared not our glorious Substitute. Justice joins hands with love to provide everlasting salvation for all the blood-besprinkled ones.

John Henry Jowett JUNE The Tenth

PILLARS OF CLOUD AND FIRE

"The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud." —Exodus 13:17-22, 14:1-4.

I NEED His leadership in the daytime. Sometimes the daylight is my foe. It tempts me into carelessness. I become the victim of distraction. The "garish day" can entice me into ways of trespass, and I am robbed of my spiritual health. Many a man has been faithful in the twilight and night who has lost himself in the sunshine. He went astray in his prosperity: success was his ruin. And so in the daytime I need the shadow of God's presence, the cooling, subduing, calming influence of a friendly cloud.

"And by night in a pillar of fire." And I need God's leadership in the night. Sometimes the night fills me with fears, and I am confused. The darkness chills me, sorrow and adversity make me cold, and I shiver along in uncertain going. But my God will lead me as a presence of fire. He will keep my heart warm even in the midnight, and He will guide me by the kindlings of His love. There shall be "nothing hid from the heat thereof." And my bewildering fears shall flee away, and I will sing "songs in the night."

Exodus 13:17-22 God Leads His Own

The route God chose was not by an easily traveled road but was a detour through the wilderness. The other road led through a populated area; it was easier and much more traveled, but in His wisdom, God chose the long road for the Israelites.

On this long route there were no highways, no bridges, no resources to supply their needs and no signs to direct their paths. In fact, it took them two years to reach Kadeshbarnea, which was on the southern extremity of the land of Canaan. But even this teaches us that God chooses the way His people should go. There is a very important lesson to be learned from this incident. We should not

only realize that God chooses the way, but we should recognize that it is for our best if we respond to His direction.

When God began to lead them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, Israel's walk of faith really began. They were to move when the cloud moved, and they were to stay when the cloud remained stationary. They were to depend totally on the Lord for leadership.

Just as the cloud went before the Israelites, the Lord goes before those who are His own. The Bible says, "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" (John 10:4).

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye" (Ps. 32:8). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 14 Released From Bondage!

Just as the crossing of the Red Sea completed the deliverance of Israel from Egypt in order that they could begin their journey toward the Promised Land, so also when a person trusts Christ and has complete salvation, he is to progress in his Christian walk.

The crossing of both the Red Sea and the Jordan River illustrate what was accomplished for the believer in the death of Christ. At the Red Sea there was separation from Egypt; at the Jordan River there was an entering into the place of rest.

The place of rest for the believer is referred to in Hebrews 4:9,10: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

For the believer the death of Christ not only separates him from this present evil world, but it also makes him spiritually alive and seats him with Christ.

What a glorious truth this is! We are on the resurrection side. We have much more than the forgiveness of sin; we have been associated with the risen Christ so that we may be united with Him forever and live the heavenly life.

He who was dead is now alive! And this same Jesus indwells the bodies of believers in order to live His life in them (1 Cor. 6:19,20). What a glorious privilege is ours!

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 14:13 Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." — [Exodus 14:13](#)

These words contain God's command to the believer when he is reduced to great straits and brought into extraordinary difficulties. He cannot retreat; he cannot go forward; he is shut up on the right hand and on the left; what is he now to do? The Master's word to him is, "Stand still." It will be well for him if at such times he listens only to his Master's word, for other and evil advisers come with their suggestions. Despair whispers, "Lie down and die; give it all up." But God would have us put on a cheerful courage, and even in our worst times, rejoice in his love and faithfulness. Cowardice says, "Retreat; go back to the worldling's way of action; you cannot play the Christian's part, it is too difficult. Relinquish your principles." But, however much Satan may urge this course upon you, you cannot follow it if you are a child of God. His divine fiat has bid thee go from strength to strength, and so thou shalt, and neither death nor hell shall turn thee from thy course. What, if for a while thou art called to stand still, yet this is but to renew thy strength for some greater advance in due time. Precipitancy cries, "do something. Stir yourself; to stand still and wait, is sheer idleness." We must be doing something at once—we must do it so we think—instead of looking to the Lord, who will not only do something but will do everything. Presumption boasts, "If the sea be before you, march into it and expect a miracle." But Faith listens neither to Presumption, nor to Despair, nor to Cowardice, nor to Precipitancy, but it hears God say, "Stand still," and immovable as a rock it stands. "Stand still;"—keep the posture of an upright man, ready for action, expecting further orders, cheerfully and patiently awaiting the directing voice; and it will not be long ere God shall say to you, as distinctly as Moses said it to the people of Israel, "Go forward."

Exodus 15 From Singing to Complaining

In the Israelites' song recorded in Exodus 15, the word "Lord" occurs 11 times, and various personal pronouns referring to Him occur more than 30 times. So it is clear that the song was sung to Him and about Him. All the honors of the victory were reverently laid at His feet.

In this song of assurance and praise, Moses is not mentioned once. This indicates that the Israelites now had complete confidence

in the trustworthiness of God. Only three days after the Red Sea experience, however, the Israelites were grumbling against Moses and against God.

Why such a change of attitude in just three days? They had overlooked the fact that the cloud had led them in this direction, and since God was leading them, He would supply their needs.

When the people murmured against Moses (v. 24), they were actually murmuring against God. Every complaint against circumstances, every grumbling about the daily trials of life is directed against the One who "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11).

Although the Israelites did not have this verse at the time, they had seen enough of God's work to know that He did not make mistakes and that He could perform anything necessary to provide for them.

And remember, what happened to Israel is to serve as an example to us (1 Cor. 10:11).

"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness)" (Heb. 3:7,8). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 15:21-22 Living in the Valleys -

Mountaintops are great places. As you stand on some lofty peak it seems as if you can see forever. But most people don't live on mountains. The demands of reality require that life is generally lived in the valleys.

The Israelites had just come through one of the high points of their nation's history--a mountaintop experience. Pursued by Pharaoh's army, they crossed the Red Sea with dry sandals and then saw the waters rush together again upon their enemy's horses and chariots. With tremendous joy, they sang God's praise. Then they hit the valley--from the fresh air of the mountaintop to the dry, oppressive air of the wilderness. For three days they traveled without finding water. Compared to the mountaintops, the valleys are real spiritual challenges.

But that's the way real life is. Spiritual mountaintops are wonderful. You feel particularly close to God during your devotional time; you return from a weekend retreat knowing the living Lord has met with you in a special way; you come home from church after the pastor's sermon has met a deep spiritual need in your life. You revel in the warmth of these marvelous mountaintop experiences.

But that's not where you live. You live in the valley, where there are dirty dishes to wash, lawns to mow and children to raise. Often real life isn't much fun.

Fortunately, Israel discovered, as will you, that God is with you both on the mountain and in the valley. He never leaves you, never allows you out of His loving care. We all appreciate those times when we encounter God in a special way, but we know that God is also with us when we sink to spiritual lows and feel a little dry. The God you meet in the good times is the same God who meets you in the hard times.

The God who dwells on the mountains also inhabits the valleys. Woodrow Kroll [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 15:23 By the Waters of Bitterness -

A bitter spirit will keep you from being a better person.

During the last few decades the news has been filled with stories about a pollutant called acid rain. It's an increasing problem in the northeastern United States and Canada. Acid rain is the result of sulfur and nitrogen oxides being washed from the air by normal rainfall. These pollutants are killing whole forests and destroying fish and other aquatic life in numerous lakes.

The people of Israel encountered a similar situation at an oasis they called Marah, which means "bitter." Something had so polluted the water that it was undrinkable. The people of God were in danger of dying of thirst. But when we need God most, He is always there. Jehovah directed Moses to a tree that miraculously restored the pureness of the water when cast into it (v. 25).

Bitter water also can destroy our spiritual lives. James asks, "Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?" (James 3:11). The sweet spirit God wants for us cannot exist in a heart polluted by bitterness. Bitterness on the inside will eventually manifest itself on the outside. No matter how carefully we think we have concealed it, bitterness will contaminate all we are, all we say, and all we do. The only solution is to apply the healing balm of God's Spirit to the bitterness of our lives.

If you are being polluted by bitterness, isn't it time for God's freshness? Confess that your bitterness is a sin that is keeping you miserably distant from God. Ask for His forgiveness and begin to enjoy a renewed sweetness.

A bitter spirit will keep you from being a better person. Woodrow Kroll [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 15:24 The Attitude of Ingratitude -

Hot springs and cold springs are found side by side in some parts of Mexico. Because of the convenience of this natural phenomenon, women often bring their laundry to such places so they can boil their clothes in the hot springs and then rinse them in the cold ones. A tourist who was watching this procedure commented to his Mexican guide, "I imagine they think Mother Nature is pretty generous to supply such ample, clean, hot and cold water here side by side for their free use." The guide replied, "No, Sir, there is much grumbling because she supplies no soap."

Ingratitude is not limited to Mexican peasants; Israel demonstrated the same attitude. God had just performed some awe-inspiring miracles for His people's benefit. He had slain the first born of Egypt so that Pharaoh would free the Israelites. He had provided a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night to guide their journey. He had opened the Red Sea for them to cross and brought it crashing back on the Egyptian army pursuing them. Yet when they hit their first snag, instead of trusting God, they turned to complaining.

Times of need are times for praying, not complaining. Complaining says to God, "You aren't taking very good care of me." Prayer says to God, "I may not understand what's happening, but I trust You to take care of me."

Do you feel life is treating you unfairly? Are you tempted to complain? Try this. Take a notebook and list some of the marvelous things God has already done in your life, such as providing your salvation, a measure of health, a supportive family and an inspired Bible. Then look with confidence that He will provide for your situation today as well.

Nothing cures ingratitude as quickly as a good memory. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 15:25 Cry Out by Dr. Woodrow Kroll

So he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree; and when he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them.

On a gloomy day in 1857, a man in New York City, Jeremiah Lanthier, scanned the morning newspaper. He was distressed to read that the depression gripping the nation was causing fear and panic among the people. Factories were closing and thousands were unemployed. Although Lanthier didn't know what to do, he knew who did! That day he sent a note to all his business acquaintances, telling them that at noon a prayer meeting would be held in his office.

On the first day no one came. All alone he prayed fervently that God would bring about a great change in him and in America. The second day a few friends joined him. A short time later similar gatherings were started around the city. Then like wildfire, the movement spread to all parts of the country. Some historians say that this effort of united prayer and faith was an integral part of the improvement in the economy that soon followed.

Moses also faced a situation for which he had no answers, but he knew who did. Fervently he cried out to God, and God showed him what to do. It was not something he would have dreamed up on his own; it was better. The waters of Marah were bitter, and so were God's people about the quality of the water. The Israelites grumbled about many little things, but this was life-threatening. All Moses could do was pray to God and trust His answer, regardless of how unorthodox that answer may be.

What do you do when you don't know what to do? Follow the example set by other godly people--cry out to the Lord and He will answer. If you are willing to follow His instructions, you will never be left without the right answers.

It's not what you know but who you know that counts. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 15:26 The Key to Health -

Millions of people are exploring alternatives to traditional Western medicine. Such approaches as biofeedback, autogenics training, kinesiology, bioenergetics, reflexology, stress management, homeopathy, naturopathy and macrobiotics are just a few of the possibilities. But God offers the real key to health; it's called obedience.

God told the Israelites if they would "give ear to His commandments" and "keep all His statutes," they would avoid many of the illnesses that plagued the people of Egypt. This was not a matter of "buying" their obedience; it was a matter of natural consequences. By avoiding sin, they would avoid the unhealthy results of sin as well.

This principle still holds true today. We talk a great deal about breaking God's laws, but we really only break ourselves against God's

laws. By living contrary to God's commandments, people contract sexually transmitted diseases; others weaken their bodies by a lack of exercise, poor diets and high stress; still others smoke or drink themselves into life-threatening danger.

It is God's will that you treat your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). Don't take it anywhere or expose it to anything that you know to be contrary to God's law. Get appropriate rest, eat healthy food and reduce stress. Obedience is the key. Living in harmony with His commandments will avoid many illnesses and make others more easy to overcome.

An ounce of obedience is worth a pound of protection. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 15:26 Jehovah-Rophi: I am the Lord that healeth thee

Heal us, Emmanuel! here we are,
Waiting to feel Thy touch:
Deep-wounded souls to Thee repair,
And, Saviour, we are such.

Our faith is feeble, we confess,
We faintly trust Thy word;
But wilt Thou pity us the less'
Be that far from Thee, Lord!

Remember him who once applied,
With trembling, for relief;
"Lord, I believe," with tears he cried,
"Oh, help my unbelief!"

She too, who touch'd Thee in the press,
And healing virtue stole,
Was answer'd, "Daughter, go in peace,
Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Conceal'd amid the gathering throng,
She would have shunn'd Thy view;
And if her faith was firm and strong,
Had strong misgivings too.

Like her, with hopes and fears we come,
To touch Thee, if we may;
Oh! send us not despairing home!
Send none unheal'd away!

Olney Hymns, William Cowper, from Cowper's Poems, Sheldon & Company, New York

Exodus 15:27 Does Jesus Care?

Almost a hundred years ago, a minister was plagued with ongoing trials and discouragements. When he thought he no longer could stand it, Rev. Frank Graeff remembered 1 Peter 5:7, which says, "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." A new joy and peace encouraged his soul and he penned a song in which every stanza began with the question, "Does Jesus care...?" The refrain echoes back, "O yes, He cares--I know He cares! His heart is touched with my grief."

The Israelites had reached a point in their journey where they were asking, "Does God care?" There had been years of hardship in Egypt. Then there was the hard trek through the wilderness. Finally they came upon a campsite where the water was unfit to drink. Life was not easy, but at last God brought them to Elim, where the water was plentiful and the trees were lush and shady. In the midst of their adversity, God brought them to a place of relief.

Does God care about you? He really does. If you're going through a tough time, don't give up. God has an Elim in your future. Scripture promises that God "will not allow you to be tempted [tried] beyond what you are able" (1 Cor. 10:13). Ahead, at God's rest stop, there is rest for the weary and tranquility for the distressed. If you're at Marah, the water of bitterness, look ahead to Elim, the place of peace.

In His time, God gives us rest from every test. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 16:2-3 Selective Memories -

It's amazing how we are able to pick and choose the things we want to remember. A young boy was confronted by his father about the poor grades on his report card. "It's not my fault, Dad. I can't remember anything." "Well," his father assured him, "you're not going to any more baseball games until you get your grades up. And to begin with, forget tonight's game." "Wait a minute," said the boy. "You can't do that to me. The Braves are in town and Maddux is pitching. He was 15-11 last year with a 2.72 earned run average. He won four consecutive Cy Young awards and seven straight Gold Gloves. He led the league in ERA for three straight seasons, has been on five All-Star teams, and has won at least 15 games each of the last nine years."

Israel had the same problem--a selective memory. After only a short time in the wilderness, they had forgotten how they were required to make bricks without straw, how they had been beaten by merciless taskmasters and how the midwives were commanded to kill the infant Israelite boys to appease Pharaoh's fears. Instead, they remembered only the pots of meat and the loaves of bread they had enjoyed.

Satan may be tempting you in the same way. Maybe this new life is more difficult than you expected and your days as an unbeliever, as you now remember them, are looking pretty good after all. Perhaps the devil is reminding you of the sinful things you enjoyed in your old life and blocking the memories of despair and emptiness you felt as an unbeliever. Ask God to cut through these selective memories and help you recall the reality of the past. Don't be fooled by Satan's selective memories.

The memories Satan selects never reflect the way it really was. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 16:4 Tested By the Blessings -

Many tests come in the guise of hardship, illness or some other unpleasant experience--but not all of them. The good times can be just as much a test as the bad times.

When the people of Israel reached the Wilderness of Sin, they were unable to find food. This hot, barren wasteland offered nothing that would sustain a multitude of people. But God used this experience to test His children and teach them to trust Him. He graciously supplied a heavenly food that looked like a dewdrop, which the people called "manna." This miraculous gift was more than just a blessing, however. It was also God's test to see whether they would walk in His law or not.

Being obedient in the midst of plenteous blessings is often more difficult than when we are experiencing a multitude of difficulties. Pleasures can easily dull our spiritual ears so we no longer hear the Lord saying, "This is the way, walk in it" (Isa. 30:21). A lack of trials lulls us into a false sense of security and leaves us vulnerable to the attacks of Satan. It's no wonder that some people claim it's easier to survive poverty than wealth. Agur, the writer of Proverbs 30 prayed, "Feed me with the food You prescribe for me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, 'Who is the Lord?'" (vv. 8-9).

If you are experiencing a time of blessing, that's wonderful--but be sensitive to the potential for danger. Testing doesn't stop just because the trials have ceased. The need for obedience is constant whether the sun shines or not.

Trust and obey--every day. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 16:7 Glory in the Morning -

Some days make you wonder if you should have stayed in bed. You cut yourself shaving, you spill coffee on your clothes, you have a computer crash at work, you receive overdue notices in the mail, and your son breaks his arm on the jungle gym at school. It's enough to make you want to crawl under the covers and hide.

The Israelites also were experiencing difficulties. They were hot, tired, hungry and upset. They even wondered if they should have stayed in Egypt. This trip was more difficult than they thought it was going to be.

In the midst of these trials, God did two things: He gave them manna for their physical bodies, but He also promised to reveal His glory to them "in the morning" for their spiritual well-being. God knew that the trials of the day needed a spiritual response as well as physical relief. And He chose to meet that spiritual need while the day was yet young.

When the day is hectic, the frustrations plentiful and the disappointments thick, it's time to turn to God. Yet how different the day might have gone had we turned to the Lord before we ever got started. Whether the events of the day change or not, when we have first spent time fellowshiping with God, we are better prepared to face them.

Perhaps you aren't a morning person--many people aren't. Yet getting up even 10 minutes earlier and spending those moments reading your Bible and praying will yield greater dividends than you might imagine. When you meet with God first in the morning, it's

much easier to keep Him first all day.

How you begin your day will frequently determine how you end it. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 16:8 I Hate to Complain -

Certain expressions in the English language raise doubts in our minds, such as: "Your check is in the mail," from a debtor; "This shouldn't cost much," from your mechanic; or "This won't hurt," from your dentist. Another such expression we often hear is, "I hate to complain." How often have you heard someone say, "I hate to complain, but . . ." and then launch into a lengthy tale of how, in some fashion, you've fallen short of his expectations?

Moses and Aaron heard it a lot. At least on three occasions (at Marah, Ex. 15:24; in the Wilderness of Sin, Ex. 16:2; and at Rephidim, Ex. 17:3), the people complained about the hardships encountered on their journey. In fact, at Rephidim, Moses told God, "The people are ready to stone me!" (17:4).

The truth is, most of us don't mind complaining at all. Yet we need to remember that when we complain, ultimately the person we're finding fault with is God. He is sovereign, so everything that comes into our lives must first meet His approval. When we complain, we are telling God, "You've made a mistake. You shouldn't have allowed this to happen to me." But God is too wise to make a mistake and too loving to permit unnecessary heartache.

When you are next tempted to complain, remember that you have a sovereign God who loves you. All that you experience is to shape and mold you into the best person you can be. Instead of complaining, be happy that God cares enough about you even to allow you hardship under His watchful eye.

Ultimately, all our complaints are directed against God. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 16:11-36 Feeding on God's Provisions

As the manna fell in the wilderness for the Israelites, each person was to gather what he needed.

The Lord instructed, "Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents" (Ex. 16:16).

The Bible records that the Israelites "gathered every man according to his eating" (v. 18). From these statements we see that there was personal responsibility to gather the food that each one needed; some gathered more, others gathered less, but each was to gather according to his particular need.

Think of the parallel this has for our feeding on God's Word. Each one must gather spiritual food for himself. A believer cannot live on another person's experience.

Testimonies are interesting, and it is wonderful to have a pastor who preaches good messages, but a believer cannot live on those things alone. Each Christian must gather his own spiritual food according to his own need.

If each one is feeding himself individually, then the testimonies and messages of others will be of encouragement to him, and he will be of much encouragement to others.

How much appetite for the Word of God do you have? Do you come to the Word with a hungry heart to learn all you can in order that you might know God better? The more we learn about Him, the more we will want to learn. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

John Henry Jowett SEPTEMBER The Twenty-eighth

THE DAILY MANNA "I will rain bread from heaven for you." —Exodus 16:11=18.

AND this gracious provision is made for people who are complaining, and who are sighing for the flesh-pots of Egypt! (Ex 16:3KJV) Our Lord can be patient with the impatient: He can be "kind to the unthankful." If it were easy to drive the Lord away I should have succeeded long ago. I have murmured (Php 2:14-note), I have sulked, I have turned Him out of my thoughts, and "He stands at the door and knocks!" I yearn for "the flesh-pots," "He sends me manna," "Was there ever a shepherd half so gentle, half so sweet?"

"And they gathered it every morning." And that I think is the best time to gather the heavenly food. At night I am weary, my body is craving sleep, and I am not vitalized in the fields of grace. But in the morning I am refreshed, and I can go to the heavenly fields and gather "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1Co 2:9) I can be fed as the day begins, and I can set out to my

daily work with the taste of God in my mouth (Job 23:12-note, Ps 34:8, 19:10, 63:5, 119:103), and His mighty grace in my heart (Heb 13:9), and I shall delight to "walk in the paths of His commandments." (Ps 119:35)

Exodus 16:21 Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

"They gathered manna every morning." — [Exodus 16:21](#)

Labour to maintain a sense of thine entire dependence upon the Lord's good will and pleasure for the continuance of thy richest enjoyments. Never try to live on the old manna, nor seek to find help in Egypt. All must come from Jesus, or thou art undone for ever. Old anointings will not suffice to impart unction to thy spirit; thine head must have fresh oil poured upon it from the golden horn of the sanctuary, or it will cease from its glory. To-day thou mayest be upon the summit of the mount of God, but he who has put thee there must keep thee there, or thou wilt sink far more speedily than thou dreamest. Thy mountain only stands firm when he settles it in its place; if he hide his face, thou wilt soon be troubled. If the Saviour should see fit, there is not a window through which thou seest the light of heaven which he could not darken in an instant. Joshua bade the sun stand still, but Jesus can shroud it in total darkness. He can withdraw the joy of thine heart, the light of thine eyes, and the strength of thy life; in his hand thy comforts lie, and at his will they can depart from thee. This hourly dependence our Lord is determined that we shall feel and recognize, for he only permits us to pray for "daily bread," and only promises that "as our days our strength shall be." Is it not best for us that it should be so, that we may often repair to his throne, and constantly be reminded of his love? Oh! how rich the grace which supplies us so continually, and doth not refrain itself because of our ingratitude! The golden shower never ceases, the cloud of blessing tarries evermore above our habitation. O Lord Jesus, we would bow at thy feet, conscious of our utter inability to do anything without thee, and in every favour which we are privileged to receive, we would adore thy blessed name and acknowledge thine unexhausted love.

Exodus 16:23 Rest -

In 24 hours the average adult accomplishes much: his heart beats 103,689 times, his blood travels 168 million miles, he breathes 23,040 times, he inhales 438 cubic feet of air, he eats 3 1/2 pounds of food and drinks 2.9 quarts of liquid, he speaks 4,800 words, he moves 750 muscles, his nails grow .000046 inch, and he exercises 7 million brain cells. It's no wonder we need rest!

When God established the laws governing the lives of the Israelite people, He built into their schedule a time for rest. Physically it enabled their bodies to recuperate. Spiritually it reminded them that their salvation was not complete. They needed a spiritual "rest" that would come only when the Messiah would take away their sins. The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that even though the Jewish people practiced Sabbath-keeping, the real "rest" was a future event. He declared, "For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:8-9).

In the New Testament the command to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" is the only one of the Ten Commandments not repeated--and for good reason. The spiritual rest that the Old Testament saints looked forward to and which the Sabbath represented is now a reality. Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

Taking a day to rest is still an important part of maintaining a healthy body. But it's a physical necessity, not a spiritual law. Now we can rejoice in the true rest that comes in Christ.

Rest is a matter of wisdom, not law. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 17:1-3 Give 'Em A Brake -

Where highway construction is taking place, a sign frequently will be posted that reads, "Give 'Em a Brake." This has a double message: one is to slow down, and the other is to spare the workers from injuries caused by carelessness. Highway workers do their job under hazardous conditions and we need to give them a "brake."

The same sign could have been posted outside the tents of Aaron and Moses. Time after time the people of Israel rushed into judgment against their leaders until finally, here at Rephidim, they were ready to stone Moses to death (v. 4). Only God's intervention prevented a tragedy. Without question, these people needed to give Moses a break.

This sign would fit equally well in front of the homes of many pastors and other church leaders. A study by Leadership Journal and Christianity Today, Inc., found that 22.8 percent of pastors have been fired or forced to leave their churches at least once in their career, and one in four of these has experienced this more than once. Sixty-two percent of the discharged pastors said the church that let them go was a "repeat offender" and had fired at least one previous pastor. Isn't it time we gave a break to those called of God to lead His church?

Be very careful when tempted to be critical of your pastor or other church leaders. You may find yourself not only opposing them but

God as well. Slow down before passing judgment, sincerely check your motives, and make sure there is a sound, biblical reason for your complaint and not simply a personality issue. More often than not, what you need to do is "give 'em a brake."

Pastors need your grace, not your gripes. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 17:5-6 Water From the Rock -

The importance of water can never be underestimated. Sixty percent of a lean, adult body is composed of water. A person can fast from food for 40 days or longer, but the human body can go only for about 7 days without water even under ideal circumstances.

It's no wonder, then, that the Israelites were getting desperate. The wilderness was far from ideal. It was a hot, desert-like stretch of land dotted with huge rocks but little vegetation. Without water they would quickly perish. So God instructed Moses to strike a rock, and out of this flinty hardness flowed sufficient water to meet the needs of all the people and their livestock.

The Bible writers later saw this rock as a symbol of Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). In the midst of a sin-parched life, Christ offers a well of living water that never runs dry, no matter how often we drink from it.

Have you received Christ as your Savior? If not, trust Jesus today and you will never thirst again. If you want eternal water, come to Jesus who said, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

The world offers a cistern; Christ offers a well. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 17:1-7 Life to All Who Drink

The water flowing from the rock indicates the provision for life. The psalmist said, "Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed" (Ps. 78:20).

The smitten rock pointed to the smitten Christ who paid the penalty of sin. The gushing streams of water picture the gracious supply of life through the Holy Spirit.

God smote His Son and raised Him from the dead, thereby sending forth the life-giving stream, but man must come and drink.

Although Jesus Christ has paid the penalty of sin for all (1 John 2:2), only those who personally receive Him as Saviour have forgiveness of sin and eternal life (John 1:12; 5:24).

When God provides, He provides abundantly. When God provided water for the Israelites, the psalmist said, "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river" (Ps. 105:41).

Concerning the life that the Lord Jesus Christ provides, He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

This coincides with the way Jesus compared the Spirit to the abundance of running water (John 4:14; 7:37,38). So the rock in the wilderness prefigured Jesus Christ.

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 17:8 When Life Isn't Fair -

Chris was a young father of four. He had grown up in a Christian home, received Christ as his Savior at a young age, lived a healthy lifestyle and demonstrated a consistent Christian testimony. It was a complete shock when he was diagnosed with cancer. There was no reason for this to happen...except that life isn't fair.

The Israelites also found themselves being treated unfairly. For no apparent reason, a nomadic tribe known as the Amalekites chose to attack them. They had no quarrel with these people, yet for the next several hundred years, off and on, Israel was the object of the Amalekites' hatred and harassment. Life isn't fair.

Fortunately, we have a sovereign God who is able to overrule all circumstances (Rom. 8:28). After three years of treatments, Chris finally recovered. Israel eventually destroyed the Amalekites. Life is not fair, but God is. Sooner or later, God will see that justice is served. It may not be as soon as we would like; it may not be in the way we expect; but God will never be unfair. David declared, "Upon the wicked He will rain coals, fire and brimstone and a burning wind; this shall be the portion of their cup" (Ps. 11:6).

Perhaps you also are experiencing unfair treatment. It might be a coworker who delights in making life difficult for you. It may be a health problem that is keeping you from reaching your fullest potential. Maybe it's an automobile the garage has "fixed" a dozen times, and yet it still doesn't run right. Trust God with your situation. Be patient and let Him work out a solution to your predicament. You may find life unfair, but God never is.

Life is not fair, but God is. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 17:9 The Mentor -

Webster defines a mentor as a "trusted counselor or guide." He comes alongside you not to control, but to advise. He is a source of wisdom and counsel. He does not live your life for you, but gently guides you through the potholes and the obstacles so that you can live successfully.

Mentoring may be a new concept for many Christians today, but it's an old idea rooted in biblical tradition. Moses acted as a mentor to Joshua. He advised and trained this young man in all areas of life until, when it was time to receive the mantle of leadership, Joshua was ready.

The Church today needs to return to the practice of mentoring. Paul was a mentor to such young men as Timothy and Titus, whom he called "sons" (1 Tim. 1:2,18; 2 Tim. 2:1; Titus 1:4). To the senior women of the church he commanded, "the older women likewise, that they . . . admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5).

If you are mature in the faith, find someone of the same gender who would be interested in learning from your experiences. If you are a new Christian, seek out the companionship of a believer who demonstrates by the fruit in his life that he has a dynamic relationship with Christ and then seek his counsel. This is God's plan for leadership training. Every Christian should either be mentored or be a mentor.

In helping others, we help ourselves. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 17:11-12 A Little Help From Your Friends -

Few things of importance come easy. Noah Webster worked 36 years on his dictionary, while Gibbon labored 26 years on his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. When Milton was writing Paradise Lost, he rose at 4:00 every morning to begin work. Plato wrote the first sentence of the Republic nine times before it was acceptable to him.

In the midst of challenging circumstances, it's wonderful to have friends who will come along and give their help. Moses experienced such a blessing. The conflict with the Amalekites was a key battle. If the Israelites were defeated at such an early stage on their journey, they likely would become so discouraged that they would turn around and go back to Egypt. Victory was essential, but it wouldn't come easy. The Israelites were winning only when Moses held up his hands in prayer. After hours in this position, however, his arms began to tire and defeat seemed a real possibility. That was when Aaron and Hur stepped in. With a little help from his friends, Moses was able to keep his hands held up until the enemy was thoroughly defeated.

Prayer is the key to victory, but it's also hard work. Often our spirits, if not our hands, grow weary and we face the potential of defeat. That's when we need other believers like Aaron and Hur to step in and lend their strength to our efforts. Praying with friends gives us renewed vigor.

Be sensitive to the opportunities to respond as Aaron and Hur did. Maybe there is someone today who needs you to lend your prayers to his efforts. God will lead you to that person; just make yourself available. Your strength may be essential for his victory. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 17:14 Write It Down -

Have you noticed how prone to forget we humans are? Abraham Lincoln observed about his own generation, "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and which multiplied, and enriched, and strengthened us."

God recognized that people have the habit of forgetting, so He instructed Moses to write down in a book what had taken place in the battle against the Amalekites. Furthermore, this was to be read to Joshua, the future leader of Israel, so he would be sure to remember as well. This victory would become a source of encouragement for Christians throughout history--all because it was

written down.

Are you keeping a written account of the good things God has done for you? Is there a record of the victories that God has brought about in your life? Some people keep a daily spiritual diary; others record only special events. But in some fashion God's blessings need to be committed to something more dependable than our faulty memories.

When you're feeling discouraged, or perhaps even wondering if God loves you, take out your journal and refresh your memory. The entries in your journal can be a continuing source of encouragement for you. In addition, take the opportunity to share with your children or grandchildren what God has done for you. The God who has dealt with you so graciously in the past is the same God who wants to work in their lives as well. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 17:15-16 His Banner Over Me -

Queen Elizabeth II of England has three royal residences (Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyrood) plus two private homes. This could be confusing for those who want to find her except for one important fact: the queen's banner always flies over whichever residence she is currently occupying. If her banner of blue and gold is on the flagpole, the queen is sure to be present.

Moses also had a banner. After the battle with the army of Amalek, he built an altar and called it "The-Lord-Is-My-Banner." Moses wanted everyone to know that God was in residence with His people. Despite the attacks of the Amalekites, God would never desert the people of Israel. Generation after generation could look up and know that the Lord was present in their midst.

As Christians, we should raise the Lord's banner over our lives. No matter how difficult our situation becomes, God will not abandon His residence in our midst. The apostle John declared, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). And Jesus said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). If the King is present, His banner should fly.

Is it obvious to those around you that the King is in residence in your life? Make sure that His flag, colored with faith, hope and love, flies high over the castle of your life. It's a privilege to fly that banner; it's a shame not to.

If the King is in residence, be sure to fly His flag. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 18:2-5 A Family Reunion -

Beau Arceneaux was 15 months old when he was kidnapped by his father and taken from Louisiana to live in Austin, Texas. Years later, as he visited a chat room on the Internet, a couple of people became curious about this boy who had no contact with his mother. So they informed the police. In December 1995, the FBI showed up at Beau's home to tell him his mother had been searching for him for the past 12 years. On December 20, mother and son were joyfully reunited.

Have you ever been separated from your family? If you have ever been apart from your family for any length of time, you know how difficult it is. I was apart from my wife and children during my last semester of seminary while I was studying in France. I was thousands of miles away, living in a foreign country, knowing I would not see them for months. It wasn't easy.

Moses also had been separated from his family. Zipporah, his wife of 40 years, and his two sons had been sent back to the land of Midian while he returned to Egypt to lead Israel to freedom. With that challenge behind him, Moses was ready to be reunited with his loved ones and Jethro was gracious enough to bring this about. While Scripture gives no details, you can imagine what a joyful reunion it was.

As Christians we also have the joy of anticipating a very special reunion. Scripture says,

"And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17). Now that's a family reunion! Someday we'll experience a reunion that never ends. Hallelujah!

Christians never say "good-bye"; just "until we meet again." Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 18:7-8 Respecting Your Elders -

Rodney Dangerfield is the original "I don't get no respect" man. No matter how hard he tries, to hear the comedian tell it, no one shows him any respect. Some of the elderly could voice the same complaint. As more people are living longer, they are becoming the victims of everything from physical abuse to con artists' scams.

This differs significantly from the respect Moses showed his father-in-law. Even though Moses was the leader of a great host of

people, he bowed before Jethro as a sign of humility and kissed him as a sign of affection. And in the midst of the many needs of a demanding people, he took time to share with Jethro all the events that had transpired since he had seen him last.

As we deal with the elderly, we must do so with patience and compassion. Most of them have made significant sacrifices to raise their families, to defend their country and to make an honest living. In their golden years they deserve to be treated with respect.

If you have elderly parents, take time to be involved in their lives. Listen to their stories (even if you've heard them a hundred times before); sympathize with their aches and pains; look for opportunities to make their lives a little easier. If your parents are no longer alive, perhaps there is an elderly neighbor or someone at church who could benefit from your attention. We are not judged by how we treat the strong and powerful but by how we respect the weak and helpless. Besides, having made an investment of time and interest in an elderly person, you may discover that the return on your investment was greater than the investment itself.

Treat the elderly as a nonrenewable resource; they are! Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 18:10-11 Great is the Lord -

Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev once boasted that he would display the last Soviet Christian on television by 1965. Khrushchev is long dead; Christianity is more alive than ever in Russia. Karl Marx called a belief in God "the sign of the oppressed creature, the opium of the people." Marx also has gone to his eternal destiny, but the "opium" he spoke of continues to spread throughout the world. And so it has been. Leaders rise up, shake their fists at God, and then sink back into the oblivion from which they came. In the meantime, God continues to work out His plan for the world, undisturbed by their puny efforts against Him.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, observed the same truth about Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. Arrogantly they had shaken their fists at God, but "He was above them." Like an ant trying to stop a locomotive, they challenged the Almighty and lost. Once again God proved "that the Lord is greater than all the gods."

Throughout history, God has demonstrated that He is greater than any person, any movement, or any situation. It is obvious why the psalmist could confidently boast, "I will lift up my eyes to the hills--from whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1). God Himself declares, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?" (Jer. 32:27).

If you are fearful about some godless person, some anti-Christian movement, or some threatening situation, remember where your help comes from. The God who is above all other gods will never be overwhelmed by your difficulties. The God who delivered Moses will deliver you as well. He's just that kind of God.

Trouble never troubles God. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 18:13-27 Delegating Responsibility

As I have studied the Word of God concerning leadership, I have come to certain conclusions about spiritual principles of good leadership. These principles can be applied not only by leaders of organizations but by Sunday school teachers or by anyone with responsibility.

First, God uses people to do His work. When He has a job to do, He calls an individual to do it. Remember, however, that it took Moses a long time to become prepared for his task, and it sometimes takes leaders today a long time to be prepared for their tasks.

Second, when the task becomes too much for the one person God originally called, He calls others to work with the first individual.

Third, God holds the first individual responsible for the work done by the other individuals. This principle applies especially to the spiritual aspects of the work.

This principle was particularly evident in Moses' leadership. Even though responsibility and authority could be delegated to others, he was still directly responsible before God.

God knows what work He wants accomplished, and He gives individuals responsibilities in order to accomplish that work. The only way that God's work can be done effectively is for individual believers to know what God wants them to do.

"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (1 Cor. 12:18). Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 18:14,17 The Test of a True Friend -

Antisthenes, the cynic philosopher, use to say, "There are only two people who will tell you the truth about yourself--an enemy who has lost his temper and a friend who loves you dearly." The true test of a friend is not how frequently he is with you but how honest he is with you.

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was a true friend. When he saw Moses wearing himself out doing something that others could do just as well, he plainly said, "The thing that you do is not good." His concern for his son-in-law's health would not allow him to stay quiet.

Telling our friends the truth has its hazards because the truth often hurts. Their initial reaction may not be a positive one. Yet Scripture says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:6). The role of a faithful friend is not always an easy one.

If you find it necessary to share a potentially hurtful truth with your friend, approach the situation only after much prayer. Pray that your attitude would be one of humility and servanthood. Ask God to provide the right situation in which to share the truth. Seek wisdom in how to best express yourself so that what you say will be viewed by your friend as constructive rather than destructive. Pray, prepare, then just do it. Faithfulness is not gauged by your intentions but by your actions. You never help your friend with good intentions alone, but with good intentions that result in good actions.

A faithful friend is a truthful friend. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 18:21 Looking for Leadership -

In 1789 an uncertain George Washington was urged to seek the presidency by Governor Morris, a Pennsylvania delegate to the Constitutional Convention. Morris wrote Washington, "No constitution is the same on paper and in life. The exercise of authority depends upon personal character."

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, recognized this truth as well. He knew that his plan to relieve some of the stress in his son-in-law's life depended on the character of the men who were chosen to execute it. That's why he urged Moses to choose men who were not only competent but who also had a healthy fear of God, who spoke the truth and avoided greed.

Unfortunately, this fundamental principle of public service is often not carefully observed. In both church and government, people have been put into positions of leadership based on their abilities with little regard for their character. In fact, one poll found that 67 percent of voters think a political leader can have "substantial flaws in personal character" but still govern effectively. Such a position is contrary to Scripture, experience, and common sense.

As you face the responsibility of electing officials in your church and government, give careful consideration to their character. Select individuals who not only are able, but who also fear God, uphold the truth and reject greed. People of good character who possess no skills in leadership usually do not make good leaders. But people with leadership skills and little character make even worse leaders. They lead us wherever their character will permit, and that is usually not toward God.

What a man is will always determine what a man does. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 18:22 Burden Bearers -

Andrew C. Davison wrote about an encounter with Dr. Albert Schweitzer at Lambarene, on the banks of the Ogowe River. It was about noon and the sun was beating down mercilessly as a group walked up a hill with Dr. Schweitzer. Suddenly the doctor strode across the slope to where an African woman was struggling with a load of wood for the cooking fires. The 85-year-old doctor took the entire burden and carried it up the hill for the relieved woman. When they reached the top of the hill, someone asked Dr. Schweitzer why he did things like that, implying that in that heat and at his age he should not. Albert Schweitzer pointed to the woman and said simply, "No one should have to carry a burden like that alone."

That was Moses' problem--he was trying to carry his burden alone. It took the wise insight of his father-in-law, Jethro, to point out the fact that others "will bear the burden with you."

God's people were never meant to carry their burdens alone. That's why we have the privilege of prayer. Peter urged us to cast "all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). Bearing burdens is also the role of the Church. Paul instructed believers, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

Are you willing to help others bear their burdens? Perhaps even today there is someone who needs you to pray with him, cook a meal or provide transportation for him. It's not hard to spot burdens that need to be borne when you are looking for them. Our responsibility is to do whatever it takes to make a burden lighter. That's a responsibility that brings great satisfaction now and eternal reward in the future.

A burden shared is a lighter load. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 19 Preparing to Give the Law

Exodus 19 and 20 record an event that was a great turning point in the life of the Israelites as well as all mankind. These chapters record the giving of the Law by God through Moses to the nation of Israel.

Exodus 19:1,2 says, "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount."

God fulfilled His promise to Moses. When God had called Moses at the burning bush in the wilderness of Sinai, He said, "I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (3:12).

Moses and the Israelites were now at Mount Sinai, thus fulfilling God's promise to him. At Mount Sinai the covenant by which God would deal with them for about the next 1500 years was given.

In other words, this covenant remained in effect until the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified at Calvary, thus changing the order of God's dealings with mankind.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 19:3-4 No Obstacles Allowed -

A friend told me that when he was a young boy, he lived on one side of his small town and the school he attended was located on the other. Bus transportation was limited to the students who lived out of the city limit, so he had to walk many blocks both to and from school. "After a tiring day at school," my friend explained, "I would sometimes fantasize on my way home of having wings that would lift me over all the houses and trees and deposit me directly on my front porch."

It was wings like these that God figuratively used to bring Israel to Himself. In spite of the obstruction of Pharaoh and his army, through the barrier of a seemingly uncrossable sea, over the hurdle of a dry and barren wilderness, God lifted His people up and brought them safely to their destination. No obstacle was allowed to stand between Him and those He loved.

Are you facing obstacles today that threaten your joy as a Christian? Maybe these obstacles are health problems, financial struggles or family relationships. Perhaps you are frustrated by circumstances beyond your control. Well, don't fantasize as my friend did. Instead, look to God's mighty wings to lift you up and carry you to where He wants you to be. Remember the promise of Isaiah 40:31: "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Claim that promise today.

What you can't go through, God will help you fly over. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 19:9 No Room For Doubt -

A popular definition of faith is "believing something without proof." Someone else said that faith "is believing something you know isn't true." Yet neither of these is the kind of faith the Bible talks about.

When God prepared to speak to Moses, He came in a thick cloud--something that would be obvious to everyone. This was not for God's benefit; He chose to manifest Himself in this way so that everyone would have undeniable proof that He truly had spoken to Moses and they would believe him forever.

Throughout history, God has left a record of these undeniable proofs. No one needs to take the Christian faith merely on the basis that "someone says so." Instead, God has provided such evidence as changed lives, the inerrant Word and, most important, the empty tomb. The apostle John wrote near the end of his Gospel: "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31). And Luke wrote near the beginning of the Acts that Jesus "presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3).

During those times when doubts arise, quench them with a healthy dose of proof. Read your Bible and you'll be filled with confidence. God doesn't ask us to take a leap into the unknown. Instead, He says, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa.

1:18). Don't be afraid to take God up on His offer. He will leave no room for doubt.

Our faith is based on facts, not fiction. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 19:10-11 The God Who Is Near -

A supposedly true story tells that a very rich man in London died and left a large gift to one of the hospitals there. His will stipulated, however, that as a condition for the gift, his ashes were to be brought to the board room for each board meeting and placed at the head of the table. Accordingly, for more than 100 years the secretary of the board added these words to the minutes of each meeting: "Jeremy Benthan, present but not voting."

While this ongoing request may seem a bit ludicrous to you and me, the God of Israel also desired to be present with His people, and that wasn't ludicrous at all. As they prepared to receive His law, He came down upon Mount Sinai in such a way that everyone knew He was present in their midst. In a very visible manner, God demonstrated His desire to have fellowship with His people.

John made the same observation about Jesus. When it was time to redeem the human race, the apostle said, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Jesus promised, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). And again He said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20).

Do you see the evidences of God's presence in your life? Have you felt the warmth of His presence, the gentleness of His touch or the strength of His everlasting arms? Take both joy and comfort in knowing that you have a God who not only loves you but also wants to be with you.

When you put your hand in God's hand, you will never walk alone. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

[Exodus 20:19](#) My Utmost For His Highest Oswald Chambers

Exodus 20 Law Reveals Need of Grace

The Mosaic Law was not given to produce salvation. The purpose of the Law was to help people see how far short they had fallen of God's righteous demands so they would cast themselves on the grace of God.

Even during the time of the Law, grace was made available through the specified sacrifices for sin. These pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the sacrifice for sin.

But because Jesus Christ came and offered Himself as the sacrifice for sin, the Law is no longer needed.

According to Romans 5:20, the Law was given so that God could reveal more of His grace: "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

When the people gathered at Mount Sinai and heard God speak, they became frightened and "stood afar off" (Ex. 20:18). This is also the result of today's preaching of the Law apart from the context of the grace of God.

Law set forth what man ought to be; grace sets forth what God is. We behold the face of Christ in the Holy Scriptures, and we see who God is by beholding Christ, "for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

We know and understand what Christ has done for us as we study the Scriptures and see Him revealed in even the Mosaic Law.

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 20:1-3 Priority One -

John Wanamaker was a man who had his priorities straight. In the late 19th century he opened a department store in Philadelphia. Within a few years the enterprise became one of the most successful businesses in the country. But operating his store wasn't Wanamaker's only responsibility. He was also named Postmaster General of the United States and served as the superintendent for what was then the largest Sunday school in the world at Bethany Presbyterian Church. When someone asked him how he could hold all these positions at once, he explained, "Early in life I read, 'But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you' [Matt. 6:33]. That's what I've done." In the midst of a busy life, Mr. Wanamaker made God his number-one priority and the results speak for themselves.

As the Israelites began their new life of freedom, God instructed them to "have no other gods before Me." This was not for His benefit, but for theirs. To live life successfully, we must know what's most important. All of our other priorities will be out of kilter until we get our first priority straight. When we know what comes first, the rest will fall into place. God must always come first in our lives, in our daily schedules, our checkbooks, our estate plans, our thoughts and our actions. He is priority one.

If your life is chaotic, it may indicate your priorities are jumbled. Make God priority one in your life and you may be surprised at how easily everything else comes together. Only by starting your priorities right can you hope to end them right.

Everything begins with the right priorities, and right priorities begin with God. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

John Henry Jowett May The Third OTHER GODS!

"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

Exodus 20:1-11.

IF we kept that commandment all the other commandments would be obeyed. If we secure this queen-bee we are given the swarm. To put nothing "before" God! What is left in the circle of obedience? God first, always and everywhere. Nothing allowed to usurp His throne for an hour! I was once allowed to sit on an earthly throne for a few seconds, but even that is not to be allowed with the throne of God. Nothing is to share His sovereignty, even for a moment. His dominion is to be unconditional and unbroken. "Thou shalt have no other gods beside Me."

But we have many gods we set upon His throne. We put money there, and fame, and pleasure, and ease. Yes, we sometimes usurp God's throne, and we ourselves dare to sit there for days, and weeks, and years, at a time. Self is the idol, and we enthrone it, and we fall down and worship it. But no peace comes from such sovereignty, and no deep and vital joy. For the real King is not dead, and He is out and about, and our poor little monarchy is as the reign of the midge on a summer's night. Our real kingship is in the acknowledgment of the King of kings. When we worship Him, and Him only, He will ask us to sit on His throne. (**John Henry Jowett - My Daily Meditation for the Circling Year**)

Exodus 20:3-6 Agent Orange

In 1968, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Jr., took command of the American naval forces in Vietnam. In an effort to reduce U.S. casualties, he ordered the waterways sprayed with the chemical defoliant Agent Orange. It was a move designed to push back the jungle and make it harder for North Vietnamese to ambush Navy river patrol boats at pointblank range. One of those boats was commanded by 21-year-old Lt. Elmo Zumwalt III. The tragedy and irony of the story is that today he suffers from an unusually fatal form of lymph cancer that both father and son believe was caused by his exposure to Agent Orange. Theirs is the heartbreaking story of a father who made a decision that unintentionally resulted in great suffering for his own son. Yet they both agree that it was the right one.

Our Daily Bread, Saturday, November 21.

The Trail of a Right Choice

...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15

A young man by the name of James Taylor had lived a worldly life, and was a leader in opposing a revival that had swept his neighborhood. The morning of his wedding day he awoke with the words of Joshua 24:15 on his mind. In earlier years he had memorized that verse. Unlike our modern customs, he put in a full day's work before his wedding that evening. As he went about his labors, the Holy Spirit convicted his heart, and he accepted Jesus as his Savior. He said, "Yes, we will serve the Lord!" At first his bride was dismayed by this decision, but she soon became a believer, and a Christian home was established.

You say, "What's so unusual about that story?" Well, that young man was the great-grandfather of J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, now called the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. Nor has the influence of that first decision been without present-day consequences. The newly appointed general director of that organization is the great-grandson of the founder.

Though saving faith cannot be transmitted from parents to children, God does use the holy influence of fathers and mothers upon their offspring and upon successive generations. What if James Taylor hadn't yielded to Christ? What if his decision had been different? It is possible that a company of dedicated missionaries would not be serving in the Orient now under an organization whose founding was a direct result of that man's conversion.

The trail of a right choice in your home may lead to great blessings many years down the road.- P.R.V.

Parents, remember you bear Christ's dear name,
Your lives are for children to view;
You are living examples—they'll praise you or blame,
And measure the Savior by you.

-Anon.

A child may not inherit his father's talent, but he will absorb his values.

Our Daily Bread, Thursday, September 10.

Exodus 20:4 George McCluskey

You've probably never heard of George McCluskey. To my knowledge, no biographies have been written about his life. McCluskey was a man who decided to make a shrewd investment. As he married and started a family, he decided to invest one hour a day in prayer. He was concerned that his kids might follow Christ and establish their own homes where Christ was honored. After a time, he decided to expand his prayers to include not only his children, but their children and the children after them. Every day between 11 A.M. and noon, he would pray for the next three generations.

As the years went by, his two daughters committed their lives to Christ and married men who went into full time ministry. The two couples produced four girls and one boy. Each of the girls married a minister and the boy became a pastor. The first two children born to this generation were both boys. Upon graduation from high school, the two cousins chose the same college and became roommates. During their sophomore year, one of the boys decided to go into the ministry as well. The other one didn't. He knew the family history and undoubtedly felt some pressure to continue the family legacy by going into the ministry himself, but he chose not to. In a manner of speaking this young man became the black sheep of the family. He was the first one in four generations not to go into full-time Christian ministry. He decided to pursue his interest in psychology and over the years, met with success. After earning his doctorate, he wrote a book to parents that became a best-seller. He then wrote another and another, all best-sellers. Eventually he started a radio program that is now heard on more than a thousand stations each day. The black sheep's name? James Dobson, without a doubt the most influential and significant leader of the pro-family movement in America. His ministry is the direct result of the prayers of a man who lived four generations ago.

Steve Farrar, Point Man, p. 154

Jukes & Edwards

Perhaps the deepest imprints of human faults are made by parents upon their children. Moses told the Israelites that in some cases God visits the iniquity of 'the fathers on the children, on the third and fourth generations? (Exodus 20:5). And he doesn't have to work to do it. When our sins and failures run their normal course, they harm future generations. Our hang-ups are passed to our children, who in turn pass them to their own. The New Testament says that parents' sins may cause specific problems like angry, resentful behavior or depression (Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21).

A comparison of the offspring of two marriages clearly illustrates this. Over four hundred descendants of Jonathan Edwards, America's first great theologian, have been traced. Similarly, over twelve hundred offspring of a criminal named Jukes have been studied. Of the descendants of Jonathan Edwards: one hundred became ministers, missionaries, or theology teachers; one hundred became professors; over one hundred were lawyers and judges; sixty became doctors; and fourteen were college presidents. Among the descendants of Jukes; one hundred and thirty were convicted criminals; three hundred and ten were professional paupers; four hundred were seriously injured or physically degenerated due to their life-styles; sixty were habitual thieves and pickpockets; seventeen were murderers; only twenty ever learned a trade, and half of these learned their trades in jail.

From Bruce Narramore (with Bill Counts), Freedom From Guilt, pp. 90-91.

Jukes & Edwards

Of 1026 total for Jukes: 300 were sent to prison for an average term of 13 years; 190 were public prostitutes; 680 were admitted alcoholics. His family, thus far, has cost the state in excess of \$420,000.00.

Of 929 total for Edwards, 430 ministers, 86 university professors, 13 university presidents, 75 authored books, 5 elected to U.S. Congress, 2 to the Senate, one was vice-president.

Homemade, Vol. 10, No. 9

Jukes & Edwards

In 1677 an immoral man married a licentious woman. Nineteen hundred descendants came from the generations begun by that union. Of these, 771 were criminals, 250 were arrested for various offenses, 60 were thieves, and 39 were convicted of murder. These people spent a combined total of 1300 years behind bars and cost the state of New York nearly \$3 million.

The Edwards family represented another union of the same era. The third generation included Jonathan Edwards, the great New England revival preacher and president of Princeton University. Of the 1344 descendants, many were college presidents and professors. One hundred eighty-six became ministers of the gospel. Eighty-six were state senators, three were Congressmen, thirty were judges, and one became Vice President of the United States.

Discoveries, Vol. 1, #2

NOTE: concerning the Jukes stats you might want to compare the following article

<http://www.trivia-library.com/b/human-disasters-the-jukes-criminal-family-part-2.htm>

Exodus 20:8 Human Error

Oil tankers suffer a quarter of their total spills on Saturdays—well over the one-seventh that one might expect. These “extra” spills amount to some 163,000 gallons a year – and early all are due to human error.

The Economist, Signs of the Times, August, 1992, p. 7

Fourth Commandment

When I first held meetings in Glasgow, my committee (without my knowledge) sent to a livery establishment that kept a thousand horses to engage a cab to drive me to my meetings on Sunday. The proprietor was a godly man, and sent me this message: “Tell Mr. Moody he will do as much good by walking to his meetings as by driving three or four miles through the Fourth Commandment.”

Moody's Anecdotes, p. 54

Exodus 20:12 Honor Your Parents -

On her 80th birthday, a woman from Brooklyn decided to prepare her last will and testament. She went to her pastor to make two final requests. First, she insisted on cremation.

"What is your second request?" the pastor asked.

"I want my ashes scattered over Bloomingdale's."

"Why Bloomingdale's?"

"Then I'll be sure that my daughters will visit me twice a week."

Unfortunately, there's a lot of truth in that humor. In Japan, for instance, a company is offering actors to play the part of family members. The actors will visit elderly parents as surrogates for the real family members. In Oakland, California, a 62-year-old man who could neither walk nor talk was found abandoned on a flight from El Paso, Texas. A note was pinned to his clothing saying he needed medical attention.

Such disregard for one's parents is directly contrary to God's instructions. He exhorts us to show respect and concern for our parents and even attaches promises of longevity for those willing to obey.

As life becomes crowded with a multitude of commitments--at school, at church and at home--don't forget that the ones who gave you life may now require your attention as well. Check to see if they have needs that are going unmet; if they live close by, invite them to join you in your family's activities. Most of all, demonstrate your love and respect for them by simply taking time to be with them and listen to them. If you can't do that, pick up the telephone and call them often. Let them talk as long as they want. Their days may not be long now, but God promises that your days will be long upon the land if you honor your father and mother. Don't allow this treasure to pass by your life unenjoyed.

Honor your parents and the Lord will honor you. Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 20:12

Honor Your Father and Mother

“Honor your father and mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

I talked to a husband and wife who have deliberately moved south so they don't have to be around their aging parents. In this case, both husband and wife agree that they can “no longer stand” being around their parents. They are both career people with extremely busy schedules. When the old parents call on the phone, they cut them off because the time is never right. Both young parents are in poor health and two of their three children are experimenting with drugs. They fail to see the connection between their attitudes toward their parents and what is happening in their own lives. - Marsha Drake

Homemade, November, 1984.

A Fairy Tale

Once there was a little old man. His eyes blinked and his hands trembled; when he ate he clattered the silverware distressingly, missed his mouth with the spoon as often as not, and dribbled a bit of his food on the tablecloth. Now he lived with his married son, having nowhere else to live, and his son's wife didn't like the arrangement.

“I can't have this,” she said. “It interferes with my right to happiness.” So she and her husband took the old man gently but firmly by the arm and led him to the corner of the kitchen. There they set him on a stool and gave him his food in an earthenware bowl. From then on he always ate in the corner, blinking at the table with wistful eyes. One day his hands trembled rather more than usual, and the earthenware bowl fell and broke. “If you are a pig,” said the daughter-in-law, “you must eat out of a trough.” So they made him a little wooden trough and he got his meals in that.

These people had a four-year-old son of whom they were very fond. One evening the young man noticed his boy playing intently with some bits of wood and asked what he was doing. “I'm making a trough,” he said, smiling up for approval, “to feed you and Mamma out of when I get big.”

The man and his wife looked at each other for a while and didn't say anything. Then they cried a little. They then went to the corner and took the old man by the arm and led him back to the table. They sat him in a comfortable chair and gave him his food on a plate, and from then on nobody ever scolded when he clattered or spilled or broke things.

One of Grimm's fairy tales, this anecdote has the crudity of the old, simple days.

Unfinished Business, Charles Sell, Multnomah, 1989, pp. 121ff

Longevity

You've probably heard about the old fellow who lives to be 100 and attributes his longevity to booze, black cigars, beautiful women—and never going to church. “That kind of impious longevity may be the exception, not the rule,” says Dr. George W. Comstock of Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health.

In a study of the relation of the social and economic factors to disease, Comstock and his colleagues made an incidental but fascinating discovery. Regular churchgoing and the clean living that often goes with it seem to help people avoid “a whole bagful of dire ailments and disasters.” Comstock concludes, “Nice guys to seem to finish last.”

Our Daily Bread

Exodus 20:13 Respect for Life -

Every 22 seconds someone in the United States is beaten, stabbed, shot, robbed, raped or killed. The average American citizen has a 1 in 153 chance of being murdered. Intentional killings--murders and suicides--rank fourth among causes of U.S. deaths, after heart disease, cancer and accidents. Obviously, such a low regard for human life is appalling and reflects how far America has strayed from the principles of the Ten Commandments.

But Jesus broadened the "You shall not murder" commandment even more. He said, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. 5:21-22).

While Christians are unlikely to murder someone physically, they can easily be murderers in their heart. Perhaps you can identify with Clarence Darrow, the famous criminal lawyer, who said, "Everyone is a potential murderer. I have not killed anyone, but I frequently get satisfaction out of obituary notices."

When we have hatred in our hearts toward someone or we nurse an angry attitude toward a person who has offended us, we qualify

under Jesus' guidelines as murderers. That may be shocking, but it's true. If you fall into this category, ask God to forgive you and to replace your anger and bitterness with an unconditional love for the one you previously hated. Go to that person and seek reconciliation. Ask for forgiveness because of your inappropriate attitudes. Reach out to her and try to make your one-time enemy your friend. It's the only way to remove murderous attitudes from your heart. Since your attitudes are just as important as your actions, don't dismiss too quickly what the Lord Jesus said. Take an attitude check today and see if there is murder in your heart, even if it is not in your head.

An attitude can murder just as easily as an ax. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 20:14 An Undeified Bed -

A newspaper publisher offered a prize for the best answer to the question, "Why is a newspaper like a good woman?" The winning answer was, "Because every man should have one of his own and not look at his neighbor's!"

While the publisher's contest may not have been in the best of taste, the winning answer certainly contains an important truth. As the Israelites moved out into pagan nations that worshiped fertility gods and goddesses, God knew they would face strong temptations to sexual immorality. Therefore He bluntly commanded them, "You shall not commit adultery."

This same command is repeated in a number of ways in the New Testament. The writer of Hebrews says, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). The apostle Paul ranks adultery on the same level as idolatry, sorcery, murder, and drunkenness, among other sins of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21). We must also remember that Jesus expanded the meaning of adultery beyond the physical act to include lusting in our hearts (Matt. 5:27-28). In fact, almost all adultery begins in the heart.

In our own day, when adultery and almost every other form of sexual immorality is accepted as commonplace, Christians need to walk carefully as well. Satan will use everything including the scantily clad person on the beach, the pornographic magazines sold at the local gas station or the suggestive shows on television to cause you to stumble.

If you struggle with sexual temptation, begin to memorize God's Word, especially verses that talk about purity (such as Matt. 5:8 and 1 Tim. 5:22). If the problem begins in the heart, hide God's Word there so you can nip temptation at the point of origin (Ps. 119:11). Share your struggle with a trusted friend who can both keep your confidence and keep you accountable. Whatever it might cost in terms of wounded pride and denied desires, it will be worth it all.

When adultery walks in, everything worth having walks out. Woodrow Kroll - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 20:25 Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

"If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." — Exodus 20:25

God's altar was to be built of unhewn stones, that no trace of human skill or labour might be seen upon it. Human wisdom delights to trim and arrange the doctrines of the cross into a system more artificial and more congenial with the depraved tastes of fallen nature; instead, however, of improving the gospel carnal wisdom pollutes it, until it becomes another gospel, and not the truth of God at all. All alterations and amendments of the Lord's own Word are defilements and pollutions. The proud heart of man is very anxious to have a hand in the justification of the soul before God; preparations for Christ are dreamed of, humblings and repentings are trusted in, good works are cried up, natural ability is much vaunted, and by all means the attempt is made to lift up human tools upon the divine altar. It were well if sinners would remember that so far from perfecting the Saviour's work, their carnal confidences only pollute and dishonour it. The Lord alone must be exalted in the work of atonement, and not a single mark of man's chisel or hammer will be endured. There is an inherent blasphemy in seeking to add to what Christ Jesus in His dying moments declared to be finished, or to improve that in which the Lord Jehovah finds perfect satisfaction. Trembling sinner, away with thy tools, and fall upon thy knees in humble supplication; and accept the Lord Jesus to be the altar of thine atonement, and rest in him alone.

Many professors may take warning from this morning's text as to the doctrines which they believe. There is among Christians far too much inclination to square and reconcile the truths of revelation; this is a form of irreverence and unbelief, let us strive against it, and receive truth as we find it; rejoicing that the doctrines of the Word are unhewn stones, and so are all the more fit to build an altar for the Lord.

Exodus 22:6 Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

"If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution." — Exodus 22:6

But what restitution can he make who casts abroad the fire-brands of error, or the coals of lasciviousness, and sets men's souls on a blaze with the fire of hell? The guilt is beyond estimate, and the result is irretrievable. If such an offender be forgiven, what grief it will cause him in the retrospect, since he cannot undo the mischief which he has done! An ill example may kindle a flame which years of amended character cannot quench. To burn the food of man is bad enough, but how much worse to destroy the soul! It may be useful to us to reflect how far we may have been guilty in the past, and to enquire whether, even in the present, there may not be evil in us which has a tendency to bring damage to the souls of our relatives, friends, or neighbours.

The fire of strife is a terrible evil when it breaks out in a Christian church. Where converts were multiplied, and God was glorified, jealousy and envy do the devil's work most effectually. Where the golden grain was being housed, to reward the toil of the great Boaz, the fire of enmity comes in and leaves little else but smoke and a heap of blackness. Woe unto those by whom offences come. May they never come through us, for although we cannot make restitution, we shall certainly be the chief sufferers if we are the chief offenders. Those who feed the fire deserve just censure, but he who first kindles it is most to blame. Discord usually takes first hold upon the thorns; it is nurtured among the hypocrites and base professors in the church, and away it goes among the righteous, blown by the winds of hell, and no one knows where it may end. O thou Lord and giver of peace, make us peacemakers, and never let us aid and abet the men of strife, or even unintentionally cause the least division among thy people.

Exodus 23:22

God Is Our Ally

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

"But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries."—[Exodus 23:22](#)

THE Lord Christ in the midst of His people is to be acknowledged and obeyed. He is the vice regent of God and speaks in the Father's name, and it is ours implicitly and immediately to do as He commands. We shall lose the promise if we disregard the precept.

To full obedience how large the blessing! The Lord enters into a league with His people, offensive and defensive. He will bless those who bless us, and curse those who curse us. God will go heart and soul with His people and enter in deepest sympathy into their position. What a protection this affords us! We need not concern ourselves about our adversaries when we are assured that they have become the adversaries of God. If Jehovah has taken up our quarrel, we may leave those foes in His hands.

So far as our own interest is concerned, we have no enemies; but for the cause of truth and righteousness, we take up arms and go forth to conflict. In this sacred war, we are allied with the eternal God; and if we carefully obey the law of our Lord Jesus, He is engaged to put forth all His power on our behalf. Wherefore we fear no man.

Exodus 23:25

Commonest Things Blessed

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

"Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless thy bread, and thy water."—Exodus 23:25

WHAT a promise is this! To serve God is in itself a high delight. But what an added privilege to have the blessing of the Lord resting upon us in all things! Our commonest things become blessed when we ourselves are consecrated to the Lord. Our Lord Jesus took bread and blessed it; behold, we also eat of blessed bread. Jesus blessed water and made it wine: the water which we drink is far better to us than any of the wine with which men make merry; every drop has a benediction in it. The divine blessing is on the man of God in everything, and it shall abide with him at every time.

What if we have only bread and water! Yet it is blessed bread and water. Bread and water we shall have. That is implied, for it must be there for God to bless it. "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy waters shall be sure." With God at our table, we not only ask a blessing, but we have one. It is not only at the altar but at the table that he blesses us. He serves those well who serve Him well. This table blessing is not of debt, but of grace. Indeed, there is a trebled grace: He grants us grace to serve Him, by His grace He feeds us with bread, and then in His grace blesses it.

Exodus 23:28

God's Hornets

Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. —Exodus 23:28

WHAT the hornets were we need not consider. They were God's own army, which He sent before His people to sting their enemies and render Israel's conquest easy. Our God, by His own chosen means, will fight for His people and gall their foes before they come into the actual battle. Often He confounds the adversaries of truth by methods in which reformers themselves have no hand. The air is full of mysterious influences which harass Israel's foes. We read in the Apocalypse that "the earth helped the woman."

Let us never fear. The stars in their courses fight against the enemies of our souls. Oftentimes when we march to the conflict, we find no host to contend with. "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." God's hornets can do more than our weapons. We could never dream of the victory being won by such means as Jehovah will use. We must obey our marching orders and go forth to the conquest of the nations for Jesus, and we shall find that the Lord has gone before us and prepared the way, so that in the end we shall joyfully confess: "His own right hand and his holy arm, have gotten him the victory."

Exodus 25:6 Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

"Oil for the light." — Exodus 25:6

My soul, how much thou needest this, for thy lamp will not long continue to burn without it. Thy snuff will smoke and become an offence if light be gone, and gone it will be if oil be absent. Thou hast no oil well springing up in thy human nature, and therefore thou must go to them that sell and buy for thyself, or like the foolish virgins, thou wilt have to cry, "My lamp is gone out." Even the consecrated lamps could not give light without oil; though they shone in the tabernacle they needed to be fed, though no rough winds blew upon them they required to be trimmed, and thy need is equally as great. Under the most happy circumstances thou canst not give light for another hour unless fresh oil of grace be given thee.

It was not every oil that might be used in the Lord's service; neither the petroleum which exudes so plentifully from the earth, nor the produce of fishes, nor that extracted from nuts would be accepted; one oil only was selected, and that the best olive oil. Pretended grace from natural goodness, fancied grace from priestly hands, or imaginary grace from outward ceremonies will never serve the true saint of God; he knows that the Lord would not be pleased with rivers of such oil. He goes to the olive-press of Gethsemane, and draws his supplies from him who was crushed therein. The oil of gospel grace is pure and free from lees and dregs, and hence the light which is fed thereon is clear and bright. Our churches are the Saviour's golden candelabra, and if they are to be lights in this dark world, they must have much holy oil. Let us pray for ourselves, our ministers, and our churches, that they may never lack oil for the light. Truth, holiness, joy, knowledge, love, these are all beams of the sacred light, but we cannot give them forth unless in private we receive oil from God the Holy Ghost.

J H Jowett APRIL 13 PURE GOLD

"Thou shalt overlay it with pure gold... And there I will meet with thee."

Exodus 25:10-22.

MUST put my best into my preparations, and then the Lord will honour my work. My part is to be of "pure gold" if my God is to dwell within it. I must not satisfy myself with cheap flimsy and then assume that the Lord will be satisfied with it. He demands my very best as a condition of His enriching Presence.

My prayers must be of "pure gold" if He is to meet me there. There must be nothing vulgar about them, nothing shoddy, nothing hastily constructed, nothing thrown up anyhow. They must be chaste and sincere, and overlaid with pure gold.

My home must be of "pure gold" if He is to meet me there. No unclean passion must dwell there, no carnal appetite, no defiling conversation, no immoderateness in eating and drinking. How can the Lord sit down at such a table, or make One at such a fireside?

Let me present to Him pure gold. Let me offer Him nothing cheap. Let me ever make the ark of my best, and the Lord will meet me there. (John Henry Jowett - My Daily Meditation for the Circling Year)

Exodus 28:38 Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

"The iniquity of the holy things." Exodus 28:38

What a veil is lifted up by these words, and what a disclosure is made! It will be humbling and profitable for us to pause awhile and see this sad sight. The iniquities of our public worship, its hypocrisy, formality, lukewarmness, irreverence, wandering of heart and forgetfulness of God, what a full measure have we there! Our work for the Lord, its emulation, selfishness, carelessness, slackness, unbelief, what a mass of defilement is there! Our private devotions, their laxity, coldness, neglect, sleepiness, and vanity, what a mountain of dead earth is there! If we looked more carefully we should find this iniquity to be far greater than appears at first sight. Dr. Payson, writing to his brother, says, "My parish, as well as my heart, very much resembles the garden of the sluggard; and what is worse, I find that very many of my desires for the melioration of both, proceed either from pride or vanity or indolence. I look at the weeds which overspread my garden, and breathe out an earnest wish that they were eradicated. But why? What prompts the wish? It may be that I may walk out and say to myself, 'In what fine order is my garden kept!' This is pride. Or, it may be that my neighbours may look over the wall and say, 'How finely your garden flourishes!' This is vanity. Or I may wish for the destruction of the weeds, because I am weary of pulling them up. This is indolence." So that even our desires after holiness may be polluted by ill motives. Under the greenest sods worms hide themselves; we need not look long to discover them. How cheering is the thought, that when the High Priest bore the iniquity of the holy things he wore upon his brow the words, "Holiness to the Lord:" and even so while Jesus bears our sin, he presents before his Father's face not our unholiness, but his own holiness. O for grace to view our great High Priest by the eye of faith!

Exodus 32:1-18 Trust in God, Not Man

Aaron and Hur had been left to look after the affairs of Israel while Moses was absent. Joshua, Moses' servant, had gone partway up the mountain with Moses, so he was not with the people at the time of this sin.

But while Moses was on the mountaintop speaking to God face to face, the people wanted some likeness to worship as a substitute.

The people were never allowed to see God face to face, but they knew He was on the mountaintop because of all the evidences they saw. But they wanted something they could feel with their hands, something they could see.

The religion of the natural man demands something he can perceive with his eyes. That is why so many people today--even Christians--go after things that are earthly. They need the security that is provided only by what they are able to touch and see.

The Israelites were no different; they wanted a god they could see. Moses was gone, and because their eyes had been on him rather than on God, they wanted an image.

Perhaps this is why God took Moses away from them for a time. God not only wanted to talk to Moses face to face, but He also wanted to reveal to the Israelites that they were not really trusting God as they thought they were.

What a lesson this is for believers today! Our trust should be in God, not in man.

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Ps. 118:8). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 32:19-35 Stand Up for Jesus!

The people were terror-stricken and awed by the irrefutable power exercised by Moses. He stood, one man against more than 600,000 soldiers (Num. 1:46), and commanded that those who were guilty of this sin be put to death.

Moses had just been in the very presence of God, and no one was able to resist his authority and power.

As the people viewed the threatening cloud on the mountaintop above them, revealing God's presence, they could offer no resistance, and 3000 were slain because they had repudiated God.

Every person must have been weighed down--some with remorse for their sin, others with dread that the wrath of God would destroy even more of them.

They undoubtedly remembered the awful voice of God they had heard about six weeks earlier, specifically prohibiting them from making any graven images.

They had been quick at that time to say they would do everything God commanded, but they had committed a terrible sin. They had not feared God as they should have.

May those of us who know Jesus Christ as Saviour determine within our hearts to fix our eyes on Christ and to serve and honor Him, regardless of the apostasy that is everywhere about us.

Remember Moses' searching question: "Who is on the Lord's side?" (Ex. 32:26).

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 33:12-23 Desiring to Know God Better

Having succeeded in receiving several answers to his prayers, Moses then evidenced his greatest boldness in what he requested of God. Moses said, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory" (Ex. 33:18).

Moses had been so encouraged by God's answers to his prayers that he sought for the ultimate. The one desire that burned within Moses was to know God better. There is a tremendous need for each believer to have this same desire.

God is spirit, so no one is actually able to see Him. If a person could see God, he would be unable to stand the awesomeness of His glory. Thus, even Moses was able to see God only by what He is and by what He does.

In effect, God was telling Moses, "I can't show you My face, because if I did, you would not live. But I will show you My goodness, which reveals who I am and what I do." God was going to reveal Himself to Moses by showing His grace and mercy to him.

As the believer walks in close communion with God, there is always the desire to know Him better. If this is not the desire of the believer, something is seriously lacking in his spiritual life.

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Phil. 3:10). Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

John Henry Jowett JUNE The Seventeenth THE INVISIBLE PRESENCE

"Show me Thy glory." —Exodus 33:12-23.

MOSES wist not what he asked. His speech was beyond his knowledge. The answer to his request would have consumed him. He asked for the blazing noon when as yet he could only bear the quiet shining of the dawn. The good Lord lets in the light as our eyes are able to bear it. The revelation is tempered to our growth. The pilgrim could bear a brightness in Beulah land that he could not have borne at the wicket-gate; and the brilliance of the entry into the celebrated city throws the splendours of Beulah into the shade. Yes, the gracious Lord will unveil His glory as our "senses are exercised to receive it."

"My Presence shall go with thee." That is all the glory we need upon the immediate road. His companionship means everything. The real glory is to possess God; let Him show us His inheritance as it shall please Him. Life's glory is to "feel Him near." When the loving wife feels that the husband is in the house, and when the loving husband feels that the wife is in the house, that is everything! The joy of each other's presence is the crown of married bliss. And so it is with the soul that is married to the Lord: His presence is the soul's delight. "Thou, O Christ, art all I want." "O Master, let me walk with Thee."

Exodus 33:14 Rest in All Thy Goings Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook

"And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." —[Exodus 33:14](#)

PRECIOUS promise! Lord, enable me to appropriate it as all my own.

We must go at certain times from our abode, for here we have no continuing city. It often happens that when we feel most at home in a place, we are suddenly called away from it. Here is the antidote for this ill. The Lord Himself will keep us company. His presence, which includes His favor, His fellowship, His care, and His power, shall be ever with us in every one of our marchings. This means far more than it says; for, in fact, it means all things. If we have God present with us, we have possession of heaven and earth. Go with me, Lord, and then command me where thou wilt!

But we hope to find a place of rest. The text promises it. We are to have rest of God's own giving, making, and preserving. His presence will cause us to rest even when we are on the march, yea, even in the midst of battle. Rest! Thrice blessed word. Can it ever be enjoyed by mortals? Yes, there is the promise, and by faith we plead it. Rest comes from the Comforter, from the Prince of Peace, and from the glorious Father who rested on the seventh day from all His works. To be with God is to rest in the most emphatic sense.

Exodus 34 Reflecting God's Glory

Moses was changed when he came down from the mountain. Earlier, he had asked to see the glory of the Lord, but when he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of stone, he did not know "that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him" (Ex.

34:29).

Moses did not realize that his face reflected the glory of God. This was proof of the closeness between Moses and God, and it revealed to those who saw him that he had truly been in the presence of God's glory.

"When Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him" (v. 30).

Moses still did not realize the extent to which his face reflected the glory of God. He was not glorious in his own eyes, but he was in the eyes of others.

Every day before you go out to meet the world, spend some time with God by reading His Word and talking to Him in prayer. Spending time in His presence will bring the sunshine of heaven to your face, and others will observe this in you throughout the day.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18) Theodore Epp - [Back to the Bible](#) (Used with permission)

Exodus 34:2 Joseph Parker

"So be ready by morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain."

My Father, I am coming. Nothing on the mean plain shall keep me away from the holy heights. Help me to climb fast, and keep Thou my foot, lest it fall upon the hard rock! At Thy bidding I come, so Thou wilt not mock my heart. Bring with Thee honey from Heaven, yea, milk and wine, and oil for my soul's good, and stay the sun in his course, or the time will be too short in which to look upon Thy face, and to hear Thy gentle voice. Morning on the mount! It will make me strong and glad all the rest of the day so well begun... **The morning is the time fixed for my meeting the Lord** This very word morning is as a cluster of rich grapes. Let me crush them, and drink the sacred wine. In the morning! Then God means me to be at my best in strength and hope. I have not to climb in my weakness. In the night I have buried yesterday's fatigue, and in the morning I take a new lease of energy. Sweet morning! There is hope in its music. Blessed is the day whose morning is sanctified! Successful is the day whose first victory was won in prayer! Holy is the day whose dawn finds thee on the top of the mount! Health is established in the morning. Wealth is won in the morning. The light is brightest in the morning. "Wake, psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early."

Exodus 34:20

Spurgeon, C. H. - Morning and Evening

"But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck." — Exodus 34:20

Every firstborn creature must be the Lord's, but since the ass was unclean, it could not be presented in sacrifice. What then? Should it be allowed to go free from the universal law? By no means. God admits of no exceptions. The ass is his due, but he will not accept it; he will not abate the claim, but yet he cannot be pleased with the victim. No way of escape remained but redemption—the creature must be saved by the substitution of a lamb in its place; or if not redeemed, it must die. My soul, here is a lesson for thee. That unclean animal is thyself; thou art justly the property of the Lord who made thee and preserves thee, but thou art so sinful that God will not, cannot, accept thee; and it has come to this, the Lamb of God must stand in thy stead, or thou must die eternally. Let all the world know of thy gratitude to that spotless Lamb who has already bled for thee, and so redeemed thee from the fatal curse of the law. Must it not sometimes have been a question with the Israelite which should die, the ass or the lamb? Would not the good man pause to estimate and compare? Assuredly there was no comparison between the value of the soul of man and the life of the Lord Jesus, and yet the Lamb dies, and man the ass is spared. My soul, admire the boundless love of God to thee and others of the human race. Worms are bought with the blood of the Son of the Highest! Dust and ashes redeemed with a price far above silver and gold! What a doom had been mine had not plenteous redemption been found! The breaking of the neck of the ass was but a momentary penalty, but who shall measure the wrath to come to which no limit can be imagined? Inestimably dear is the glorious Lamb who has redeemed us from such a doom.

Exodus 35:8 Spurgeon - Morning and Evening

"Spices for anointing oil." — Exodus 35:8

Much use was made of this anointing oil under the law, and that which it represents is of primary importance under the gospel. The Holy Spirit, who anoints us for all holy service, is indispensable to us if we would serve the Lord acceptably. Without his aid our religious services are but a vain oblation, and our inward experience is a dead thing. Whenever our ministry is without unction, what

miserable stuff it becomes! nor are the prayers, praises, meditations, and efforts of private Christians one jot superior. A holy anointing is the soul and life of piety, its absence the most grievous of all calamities. To go before the Lord without anointing is as though some common Levite had thrust himself into the priest's office—his ministrations would rather have been sins than services. May we never venture upon hallowed exercises without sacred anointings. They drop upon us from our glorious Head; from his anointing we who are as the skirts of his garments partake of a plenteous unction. Choice spices were compounded with rarest art of the apothecary to form the anointing oil, to show forth to us how rich are all the influences of the Holy Spirit. All good things are found in the divine Comforter. Matchless consolation, infallible instruction, immortal quickening, spiritual energy, and divine sanctification all lie compounded with other excellencies in that sacred eye-salve, the heavenly anointing oil of the Holy Spirit. It imparts a delightful fragrance to the character and person of the man upon whom it is poured. Nothing like it can be found in all the treasures of the rich, or the secrets of the wise. It is not to be imitated. It comes alone from God, and it is freely given, through Jesus Christ, to every waiting soul. Let us seek it, for we may have it, may have it this very evening. O Lord, anoint thy servants.

F B Meyer Devotionals

Our Daily Walk, Our Daily Homily

- Exodus 1:12
- Exodus 2:12
- Exodus 3:13
- Exodus 3:2-4
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- Exodus 5:22
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Our Daily Bread Radio Bible Class

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- [Exodus 3:1-15 Don't Be Surprised](#)
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Moody Bible Institute

Devotionals on Exodus

Exodus 1:1-22

The righteous will live by his faith. - Habakkuk 2:4

TODAY IN THE WORD

Members of presidential administrations often publish “kiss-and-tell” books soon after they leave government. These memoirs typically present the author in a flattering light while reporting their angle on the “truth.” Some authors criticize the President under whom they served, including David Stockman (budget director for Ronald Reagan), George Stephanopoulos (advisor to Bill Clinton), and Scott McClellan (press secretary for George W. Bush).

What's the real story, we ask? We ask it when we study history or read today's paper, and we have to ask it along our faith journey. Sometimes the struggles of our lives seem to be telling a story from which God feels absent. We lose faith and hope, wondering, “Where is God?” Are we to believe that God has abandoned us when life gets hard?

The Israelites must have been asking that same question as they lived through what is described in Exodus 1:11-22. Their oppression was extreme. As slaves, their work was both physically exhausting and utterly meaningless: no compensation and no sense of accomplishment. Their sweat was all for Pharaoh and for the coffers of Egypt. But not only did they lose the dignity of their work, they were losing their lives. Their newborn boys were being murdered ruthlessly, thrown in the river like trash to be disposed. These were dire days for the Israelites.

Yet another story is here to be told. There is hope in the struggle. God is present. Verses 1 through 7 make that clear. These verses provide clear allusions to the promises God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He had promised to bless them with descendants and land and nationhood. As their numbers multiplied, they could see these promises were being fulfilled. God wasn't as far away as He seemed.

The book of Exodus is a book all about faith. It reminds us that our struggles, our enemies, and our feeling of abandonment are only half the story. It takes faith to see beyond our circumstances and remember the promises of God.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Faith asks the question, “Can God be trusted?” There is no time more difficult to trust God than in the midst of suffering. We feel abandoned by God. We fear our prayers are futile. We want to give up on God because we feel He's given up on us. Reading the other half of the story, the behind-the-scenes work of God found in the Bible, strengthens our faith in those dark days. To find encouragement in your own difficult times, review Romans 10:17, and commit to reading God's Word to see God work.

Exodus 1:8-2:1

About twelve hours before a scheduled abortion some twenty years ago, a young, unwed mother chose not to go through with it. Instead, she gave birth to a son, who was adopted into a Christian family. His name is Mike Glass—he praises God more than most of us do for the gift of life. And he mourns, in a very personal way, for the 40 million babies aborted in America since Roe v. Wade.

“Thanks God, Mom, Mom and Dad,” he wrote in World magazine. “I love you all. Thank you for letting me breathe my first breaths; I could have easily been one of the 40 million.”

Human life is sacred. So when the Israelite midwives in today’s reading refused to kill newborn babies, their actions honored God. Shiphrah and Puah were probably the heads of a larger association of midwives, reminding us that faith and wisdom can and should be lived out collectively as well as individually.

Many years had passed since the days of Joseph. A new dynasty had come to power in Egypt and had begun to oppress the Hebrew foreigners in their midst. As God had promised, the Israelite population had multiplied, and despite their enslavement, continued to do so. This fed a cycle of Egyptian mistrust, fear, and violence against them (vv. 12–14).

In a cruel attempt at “population control,” the Hebrew midwives were ordered to kill all baby boys at birth. Although they were slaves and subject to Pharaoh’s power, they did not obey, instead offering a transparently weak excuse. While we can assume that one of their motivations was loyalty to their own people, their main motivation was fear of the Lord (v. 17). “Fear of the Lord” is a reverence or respect based on knowledge of who God is. The midwives knew that He had created human beings, that we are made in His image, and thus that human life possesses intrinsic value (cf. Gen. 1:27; Ps. 139:13-16). God’s law clearly outweighed Pharaoh’s decree!

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

In honor of the Israelite midwives in today’s reading, take the initiative sometime soon to find out about Christian crisis pregnancy centers in your neighborhood or town. What are churches and parachurch organizations doing to help women in difficult circumstances? When voices on all sides are telling them abortion is the easy way out, who is speaking up to say that human life is made in God’s image and must be treated as sacred?

Exodus 2:1

You are my hiding place. - Psalm 32:7

TODAY IN THE WORD

When asked what had sparked his interest in science, Albert Einstein frequently recalled two gifts he had received as a child. One was a magnetic compass. He was transfixed by the needle's northward-pointing constancy and the idea of invisible magnetic forces. The second was a geometry book. He was impressed by its logic and began to realize that nature, even its invisible features, could be explored and explained.

These two gifts helped shape the direction of Einstein's remarkable life and career. In a similar way, the basket Moses' mother made in today's reading foreshadowed the direction and themes of his entire life: protection and deliverance (Ps. 32:7). At Joseph's invitation, Jacob and his family had gone down to Egypt to escape famine. While at first welcomed, over the course of 400 years, their descendants had been forced into slavery. A fearful Pharaoh had issued orders that Hebrew babies were to be killed to control the population.

We don't know if Moses' mother's action was one of desperation, or if she had a hopeful scheme all along. We do know that she and her husband acted in faith (Heb. 11:23). In God's sovereignty, an Egyptian princess found the basket with the Hebrew baby inside; she rescued and adopted him, which meant she also concealed the truth about him. It was she who named him Moses, meaning "to draw out" (of the water). Moses' own mother was hired to nurse him, and he was raised as a prince of Egypt.

Unlike Joseph, though, Moses' earthly position would not be the means God used to accomplish His intentions. To become the deliverer God planned, he would have to repudiate his royal upbringing and choose to suffer with the people of God (Heb. 11:24-26).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The story of Moses and the Exodus is a classic narrative of bondage and freedom. These themes are found throughout the Bible, and today we encourage you to do more in-depth study searching for them.

A wide-ranging look at narrative, poetry, prophecy, and the epistles will give you a greater appreciation for the God who sets the captives free (Isa. 42:7).

<p>Exodus 2:1-25</p>	<p>Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways. - Psalm 37:7</p> <p>TODAY IN THE WORD</p> <p>Life doesn't stop when we suffer. It would certainly be easier if it did: we could give our pain its due attention, write the finale, and open a new chapter. But when we grieve the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, or the betrayal of a friend, we do so in the middle of going to school, getting married, raising children, and advancing our careers. This was true in the story of Moses' parents. They belonged to a generation of slaves with no real freedom and no hope in sight. Nevertheless, they found love and married. They gave birth to children.</p> <p>The realities of life were harsh, but they could embrace small evidences of God's grace. Their son's life was saved, and the mother would be paid for nursing the very son to whom she gave birth. At least for a short season, she was restored the joy not only of raising her son but work that was meaningful and rewarding.</p> <p>Starting in verse 11, we see Moses as a grown man at the age of 40. Nothing has changed about the Israelites' suffering. Pharaoh has not backed away from his determination to make life miserable for the Hebrew slaves. Moses, raised an Egyptian, identified himself now as a Hebrew and acted as a vigilante on their behalf.</p> <p>He did exactly what we must avoid when we suffer. Our impulse is to do something drastic to change our circumstances. Like Moses, we want to right the wrong. Or we might try to dull the pain. We want to make it stop, and we end up acting rashly.</p> <p>Moses didn't yet know how to turn to God, but our passage today tells us exactly why we should turn to God when we suffer (vv. 23-25). God can be trusted. Even when we don't have the faith to compose prayers, God hears our cries and complaints. God can be trusted because God doesn't forget His promises, and He isn't indifferent to our pain. God can be trusted because He is not far from us when we suffer: He knows everything we endure, and His compassion is real.</p> <p>TODAY ALONG THE WAY</p> <p>If you're facing something difficult now, don't make the same mistake Moses did. If you've been hurt by someone, don't act rashly on your feelings of bitterness and anger. Instead, ask the Holy Spirit to help you forgive. If you're grieving a loss in your life, turn to God as a source of comfort, rather than to empty substitutes. If you see injustice being done, ask for God's help to be an agent of righteousness in His way and His time. All of these responses require patience and prayer.</p>
<p>Exodus 2:23-4:10</p>	<p>Positioned in front of a Hollywood backdrop, with staff in hand and a stoic expression on his face, Charlton Heston made a formidable Moses in the classic movie The Ten Commandments. More recently, the story of Exodus received an animated face-lift in 1998's The Prince of Egypt, complete with awe-inspiring special effects. While both movies take liberties with the biblical account of the Israelites' flight from Egypt, they draw attention to an event so significant that its memory permeates the whole of the Old Testament and the history of the Jewish nation.</p> <p>God responded to the Israelites' cry because of His covenant with Abraham and His ensuing relationship with the patriarchs. But He was also motivated out of compassion for their sufferings, which included infanticide and forced labor. To set His people free, God called upon the reticent Moses. And through the battle of wills with Pharaoh, the escape, and the establishment of society in the wilderness, God's role in the lives of the Israelites moves from that of distant deity to personal and present provider. "What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him?" (Deut. 4:7).</p> <p>Oppression and injustice are a fact of life for many people around the world. But groups like the International Justice Mission (IJM) are working to confront these evils in the name of Christ. The IJM serves all victims of injustice by investigating allegations of abuse and pursuing evildoers worldwide. The IJM also seeks to mobilize the American Christian church to aid the victims of injustice overseas. Visit their web site today at http://www.ijm.org. Lift in prayer the work of organizations like this.</p>

Exodus 3:1-22

I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt . . . I am concerned about their suffering. - Exodus 3:7

TODAY IN THE WORD

Throughout Jesus' ministry, He called people in the context of their everyday lives. He invited Simon, James, and John to follow Him when they had fishing nets in their hands. He called Matthew from the seat in a tax collector's booth. He met blind men alongside the road and Zacchaeus in a tree. These encounters with God happened during the activities of ordinary life.

Moses met God on what was likely a very ordinary day. He was tending the sheep and cattle for his father-in-law, enjoying the solitude of the mountains, perhaps lost in the quiet reverie of his own thoughts. Forty years had been sufficient time to forget the responsibility he had once felt toward the suffering Hebrew slaves in Egypt. And then he heard the voice of God.

Moses may not have recognized the voice of God, but he recognized his own name. It's significant that the first word God spoke to Moses was Moses' name. Sometimes the only thing we can hear in our first encounters with God is our own name. What's most real in our lives is how we feel, how we hurt, how we have been wronged. Our lives convince us that we, not God, are the center of our world. When God speaks our name, we realize we're not as alone as we once thought.

God then spoke His name to Moses. He is the God of Abraham. He is Yahweh, the eternally existing God, the I AM. By His name, He reveals that He is the center and the source of life. He isn't unaware of what we endure, and He isn't ambivalent to what we suffer.

He spoke hope to Moses. He told Moses about His plan to rescue His people from Egypt and take them to a better place, the land He had already promised to Abraham. Their slavery would end, their freedom would be guaranteed. All was not lost! God was coming to the rescue.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden after His resurrection (John 20:10-18). She, beset with grief, mistook Him for the gardener. It was when He spoke her name that she recognized Him. God knows you by name. Do you know how much He loves you? Read Psalm 139 as a reminder of your unique value to Him. If you are going through a difficult time, let this Psalm encourage you, or use it to encourage someone close to you who is suffering.

God testified to [this salvation] by signs, wonders and various miracles. - Hebrews 2:4

TODAY IN THE WORD

Ancient Egyptian religion was quite superstitious. According to historian Will Durant, "Egyptian religion had little to say about morality; the priests were busier selling charms, mumbling incantations and performing magic rites than inculcating ethical precepts."

If someone read only the first portion of Exodus, the same claim might be leveled against Hebrew religion. God gave Moses incredible power to perform miracles, and in the context of some of the plagues, it looked like a showdown between Yahweh and the Egyptian magicians.

We need to understand the purpose for which God designed these miracles. They aren't for special effects, but for revealing the power of God over the created order. Egyptian religion centered on the worship of creation, and these miracles, which overturned natural laws, struck at the heart of that religion. God wanted the Israelites to acknowledge His absolute authority over creation and His superiority over the Egyptian gods. These miracles were also intended to authenticate Moses as God's spokesman. God wanted the Israelites to believe that what He says is true and that this man, Moses, was indeed His chosen leader.

Exodus 4:1-19, 29-31

The first sign involved a snake, the Egyptian symbol of wisdom and life, worn by the Pharaoh himself. The second involved the body, proving God's power to heal (cf. Ex. 15:26). The third involved the Nile River, the lifeblood of Egyptian civilization. These three signs, similar to the plagues to come, provided compelling evidence of God's authority and power.

In our key verse, the writer of Hebrews tells us that every miracle God performed was for the purpose of verifying His message about Himself and about salvation. God doesn't always choose to work miraculously. In fact, the story of Exodus teaches us that miracles alone can never fully persuade us to trust God. Faith is more than being wowed by something God does; faith is responding obediently to what God says.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

As you read the book of Exodus this month, unfortunately you'll find a lot of doubt and rejection of God's word. This leads us to examine our own lives. In certain seasons, the action of God is very plain. We can see His involvement in our lives, and it's easy to respond obediently to Him. At other times, God's ways aren't so clear, and we're left with no visible testimony of God in our lives except the words of Scripture. Do we treasure His words? Do we believe His promises? Or do we demand that He work miracles?

Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance. - Isaiah 19:25
TODAY IN THE WORD

The civilization of Sumeria from which God called Abram practiced polytheistic religion. Every city had its own god. Religion was provincial; people worshiped the god their ancestors had worshiped. Imagine how extraordinary it was when Abram left his family and their gods to follow the commands of the strange God their clan had never known.

It may be true that the Israelites, from Abraham's time until the time of the Exodus, did not fully grasp who it was that called Himself the "God of Israel." Perhaps they persisted in a belief that this God was no more than a national deity; the Egyptians had their gods, the Sumerians had their gods, and the Hebrews had Yahweh. In the opening verses of chapter five, Moses calls God the "God of Israel" and the "God of the Hebrews." His argument to Pharaoh for letting the people go is not that the Egyptians would be punished for refusing to liberate the Israelites, but that the Israelites themselves would suffer at the hands of this God. This may have been an argument that he thought Pharaoh would understand, or perhaps evidence that Pharaoh would have been spared the plagues had he relented and released the Israelites earlier.

Exodus 5:1-6:8

The experience of the Exodus would redefine the Israelites' understanding of God, but it took time. Today's reading proves that there would be no immediate deliverance. It was going to get worse before it got better. Their slavery worsened; Egyptian sentiment hardened further against the Israelites after Moses' initial plea.

This turn of events left Moses leveling what sounds like an accusation against God: "You have not rescued your people at all!" It's a question that many of us feel like asking when, by faith, we choose to believe and follow God, and invariably, He seems to disappoint us. We expect something from Him, and He doesn't deliver. Worse, our expectations have been shaped by His promises. Has His Word failed? It's often a painful process to revise our expectations and understanding of God.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Reread Exodus 6:1-8. Make a two-column list of the things God has already done for the Israelites (past-tense actions) as well as the things He promises to do ("I will" statements). Here's a critical spiritual truth, especially in times of darkness and difficulty: we can trust God and live with hope today, no matter what the circumstances, by recognizing what God has done in our past and what He promises for our future. Read Ephesians 1:17-23 as a reminder of this truth.

Even from eternity I am He . . . I act and who can reverse it? - Isaiah 43:13

TODAY IN THE WORD

In his book, *Eternity in Their Hearts*, Don Richardson provides numerous accounts of previously unevangelized people who had a particular legend handed down from ages past. Despite widely-scattered geographic regions, these tales are remarkably similar, often describing some type of “book of knowledge” that had been taken away from the group because of transgression. Yet this book would someday be restored--brought back by people from far away.

That’s pretty amazing considering these people groups were illiterate! Somehow God had prepared their hearts for the advent of missionaries who would bring both the Word of God and literacy.

This type of “heart preparation” may be close to what the Jews in Egypt received. The story of God’s promise to their ancestor Abraham must have been recounted over and over. However hard it may have been to believe, it’s possible there wasn’t a descendant of Abraham who didn’t know the story.

Eventually God raised up a leader for His oppressed people in Egypt. Yet even Moses seemed to have a hard time believing that the promise given to Abraham would soon begin to be fulfilled. So, after forty years of desert training, the Lord reiterated to Moses the promise of the inheritance given to Abraham.

First, God reminded Moses of who He was (Ex. 6:2) and that He was the same One who had appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v. 3). Then, He reminded Moses that He had not forgotten the covenant in which He promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham’s descendants (v. 4). In fact, God’s promise of the land to Abraham became the basis of the nation’s confidence that God would deliver them from Egypt and lead them to the promised land.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

It’s easy to lose sight of eternity, perhaps because heaven often seems far off.

Exodus 5:22-6:8

Exodus 7:1-13

The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment. - 2 Peter 2:9

TODAY IN THE WORD

One question haunts human existence: "Why does evil exist?" Rousseau, a French thinker of the Enlightenment, believed that we are born innately good and our environment corrupts us. His American contemporary, Jonathan Edwards, a Puritan preacher, preached that evil emerges from within us because of our sin nature.

Many get stuck on the question on evil, especially when we suffer unjustly. How can we surrender our lives to a God who's either ambivalent to cruelty or powerless to do anything about it? We might have better luck playing Russian roulette.

But God can be trusted, as the book of Exodus wants us to understand. The idea of judgment as it first appears in our reading today and in chapters to come provides a critical framework for our faith. In earlier chapters we've seen God's compassionate response to His people in their suffering. He had set in motion a plan to rescue them. But God's goodness includes more than just compassion for His people; He is also good because He upholds justice against those who perpetrate evil.

As we saw earlier, one purpose of the plagues was to inspire faith in the one true God, Yahweh; the plagues also served as judgment against the false gods of Egypt. The Egyptians worshiped creation, and they also worshiped the false gods of power and prosperity. They enslaved the Israelite people because they wanted to control any threat to their power and to enrich themselves. They did not want the Israelites mounting a rebellion that would jeopardize their grandiose building projects. They committed the evil act of dehumanizing an entire group of people for their own self-advancement.

God would act decisively to right the wrongs the Israelites have suffered. In this situation, He would no longer tolerate the evil and injustice suffered by His people. His judgment is an expression of His goodness, and His goodness is reason for trusting Him.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Read the passage from where we take our key verse, 2 Peter 2:4-10. Here we find more examples of God rescuing the godly and punishing evildoers, such as in the stories of Noah and Lot. If you're struggling to trust God's justice, read passages like Psalm 73 and Romans 12:14-21. Other vivid pictures of God's wrath against injustice are included in Revelation; read chapter 16 as an example, and meditate on verse 7: "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments."

Exodus 7:14-8:19

God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. - Romans 9:18

TODAY IN THE WORD

John Piper, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minnesota and founder of Desiring God ministries, has written many sermons and books on the sovereignty of God. In one sermon, he describes God's sovereignty this way: "God's freedom in mercy and hardening is at the heart of God's glory and God's name. This is what it means to be God—to be ultimately free and unconstrained from powers outside himself."

The first chapters of Exodus confront questions concerning God's sovereignty and human free will. Before the plagues even began, God committed to hardening Pharaoh's heart (7:3). In essence, he declared Pharaoh the loser before the start of the games. Can this be fair? Were the plagues no more than a divine charade to keep alive the illusion that humans have a choice in the matter when it comes to God's plans?

We see in our reading today that Pharaoh was not a pawn in God's divine schemes. He was making real decisions. The language of the text suggests that Pharaoh himself chose not to listen to God. Even in the face of the miraculous, Pharaoh refused to believe. He was guilty of hardening of his heart (8:15). The passage suggests that God's choice and Pharaoh's choice work together in a way that we might not fully understand. We cannot minimize either God's sovereignty or human responsibility.

What we actually see from the account of the plagues is not injustice on God's part, but rather His magnificent patience. As early as Exodus 4:23, we have a warning from God about the final plague, the plague of the firstborn. God gave Pharaoh nine chances to heed His word.

God could have forced Pharaoh's hand earlier. He could have launched a divine blitz to get His people out of Egypt. But He confronted Pharaoh with His word before He ever drew His sword. Ten times Moses said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go." Ten times, Pharaoh chose not to listen. And he was held accountable for that choice.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

In Romans 9, Paul teaches the doctrine of divine election, that God freely chooses who will receive His mercy and who will receive His wrath.

But we are not powerless. Paul himself says in Romans 10:1 that he prays for his fellow Israelites to be saved. He maintained a confidence in the power of prayer and the mercy of God to be moved by prayer. We, too, have to keep praying for people who are still far from God.

Exodus 8:20-9:12

I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. - Exodus 6:7

TODAY IN THE WORD

John Sailhamer, in his book, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, underscores the importance of seeing the first five books of the Bible as a single book written by Moses. Pentateuch is a carefully constructed literary work of someone, who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wanted to communicate important truths to the people of Israel. Studying Exodus can lead us to examine the literary structures of the book as well as to discover its theological principles.

One interesting literary element of the plagues narrative is that the first nine plagues are grouped into triplets. Each triplet of plagues shares similarities: in the first, fourth, and seventh plagues, Moses delivered his warning to Pharaoh early in the morning by the Nile. In the second, fifth, and eighth plagues, Moses confronted Pharaoh in his palace. In the third, sixth, and ninth plagues, God gave no warning of the plague to come. The final and most devastating plague stands alone.

In our reading today, we are explicitly told for the first time that God spared the Israelites from the plague of the flies and the plague of the livestock. Miraculously, the land of Goshen was shielded from these harbingers of death. In today's passage, Moses details why God visited these plagues on the Egyptians and not on the Hebrews.

God dealt differently with the Israelites than with the Egyptians. As God's chosen people, they received God's preferential treatment. He was in their midst: "I, the Lord, am in this land" (v. 22). As this distinction became evident, notions of what makes people valuable were turned on their head. Pharaoh, the most powerful ruler of the ancient world at this time, could not escape the judgment of God. The flies poured into his palace, and his royal livestock lay dead in the morning. Yet the Egyptian slave labor force, the Israelites, the people whose babies had been so carelessly thrown into the river, were divinely spared.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The world defines and values people according to their power and prestige. But the Bible teaches us that what matters most is our identity as the beloved children of God. Read the following passages about our identity and worth: Romans 8:12-17; Galatians 3:26-4:7; 1 Peter 2:4-12. What implications do these truths have for how we live? And where can you find evidence of God's special provision and protection in your life, similar to the example we have in our reading today?

I have raised you up for this purpose, that I might show you my power. - Exodus 9:16

TODAY IN THE WORD

In 2005, David Samuels wrote an article in The Atlantic entitled, "How Arafat Destroyed Palestine: The Legacy of One Man's Corrupt Personal Rule." Samuels cites evidence that Arafat lined his pockets with money pilfered from the Palestinian treasury. During his tenure as Palestinian president, a mere 10 percent of the Palestinian budget was actually spent on the needs of the people in the West Bank and Gaza.

Arafat is one of many leaders throughout history whose personal greed and pride destroy the people they intend to lead. The Egyptian Pharaoh in the book of Exodus is another such leader. Egypt had been utterly devastated by the plagues: their crops destroyed, their livestock dead. Egyptian officials were pleading with Pharaoh to give in to the demands of Yahweh and save Egypt from further destruction.

But pride tightened its death grip on Pharaoh's heart, and he refused their pleas. He could not humble himself. His authority had been challenged with each plague, and the one remaining vestige of power—that of determining the fate of the Israelites—he could not concede.

Exodus 9:13-10:29

God opens His playbook in today's reading and reveals His strategy behind the plagues. First, He was making a name for Himself. "There is no one like me in all the earth" (v. 14). Pharaoh was not God: He is. And He is not just the God of the Israelites. Yahweh rules over Egypt and over the entire earth (v. 29). It's as if the plagues themselves were like a full-page ad in the Egyptian Times: "I am God. I rule the earth. You worship creation: I am the Creator. Nothing can thwart my power and my plans."

Through the story of the plagues and eventually the Exodus, God was also authoring what would be the defining story for future generations. This story of God's judgment on the Egyptians and God's rescue of the Israelites would be the compelling reason why future generations would know and trust the Lord.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

God doesn't just give us His truth in a theological lists and formulas. He gives us stories, which speak powerfully about His salvation. The central story of the Old Testament is the Exodus. The central story of the New Testament is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The parallels between both of these stories are extraordinary. When you teach your children the truths of the faith or when you share the gospel with friends, capture the character and plan of God's redemption through these two events.

Exodus 11:1-10

Blessed are you, O Israel . . . a people saved by the Lord. - Deuteronomy 33:29

TODAY IN THE WORD

The AIDS virus has ravaged sub-Saharan Africa. It has orphaned 15 million children and shortened life expectancy in some countries to a mere 37 years. In countries like Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, AIDS is believed to affect 15 to 20 percent of the adult population. The AIDS crisis is a modern-day plague of death.

In the next few days, we'll read about the tenth and final plague visited upon Egypt. It, too, is a plague of death. The Israelites would be spared, but the firstborn of every Egyptian family and herd would die as night fell.

We can't help but think about the innocent children who suffered under this plague. What's more, Pharaoh, the evil man behind the melodrama of the last several chapters, lost a son, yet his own life was preserved. How do we reconcile what we know of God's goodness and justice with the tenth plague?

This death knell might be more horrific than what we would prefer to find in the Bible. Think back to Genesis: Adam and Eve died for transgressing God's command, the generation of Noah died in the Flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah were obliterated because of their sin. Why are the pages of Scripture stained with blood?

It isn't because God takes pleasure in anyone's death (cf. Ezek. 18:23). It is because death is the ultimate reality of fallen humanity: for the Egyptians on the night of the Passover, and for every human being. God had not created humanity to experience death, but the consequence of sin has brought upon each of us its curse (cf. Rom. 3:23).

The Passover story doesn't just include death; we miss the whole picture if that is all we see. Passover also proclaims life for the people of God. It reveals gospel truth. At the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ is a message about God rescuing us from spiritual death. The Passover foreshadows this message and adds an important word to our spiritual vocabulary: salvation.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

We don't all have dramatic testimonies of God saving us from drugs, alcohol, or crime, especially if we professed our faith in Christ at an early age. But it's still true that we've been saved. Think of some of the synonyms for saved: rescued, delivered, liberated, set free. Reflect on how God has rescued you. From what have you been delivered and liberated? Do you live as one set free? "Jesus saves" may sound like a worn-out revival phrase, but it captures what's true of us as Christians.

Exodus 12:1-30, 43-51

Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. - 1 Corinthians 5:7

TODAY IN THE WORD

Pat Tillman left a lucrative football career with the Arizona Cardinals to join the army after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The news of his death in 2004 made headlines, and Tillman was heralded a hero. More than a month later, however, his family learned that American—not Taliban—troops had fired the fatal shot. Tillman had been killed by “friendly fire.”

The event of the Passover foreshadows Jesus' death on the cross, the ultimate example of “friendly fire” when God the Father fired a shot, and God the Son took the bullet.

Our reading today describes the fateful night when the angel of death visited every Egyptian household, and none were spared. Even the firstborn son of Pharaoh, thought to be a son of god, died. The language of verse 29 is unequivocal. God has authority over all of creation, to give life and breath, or to take it away. The night of the Exodus, He took Egyptian life as an act of judgment on their sin (v. 12).

But just as He acted in judgment, He also acted in mercy. He spared the Hebrew people. The same God who visited the Egyptian homes to bring death is the God who passed over the Israelite homes. In Isaiah 31:5, we learn that to “pass over” means to shield and defend. God Himself stood in the doorway of Hebrew homes to defend its occupants. The sign of their deliverance was the blood on the doorposts of their homes.

In the Passover and at the cross, sin is judged, and the penalty is death. God, being a holy God, must execute His just wrath against sin.

His love, however, makes way for mercy. In the Passover, the lamb is sacrificed as a symbol of what Jesus would do for every person on the cross, when Jesus would die by “friendly fire.” He took the bullet of the Father's wrath on our behalf.

His death and resurrection makes it possible for us to be brought out of bondage to sin.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Jewish people today still celebrate the Passover, usually around the time of the observance of Easter. At the heart of the Passover celebration is the Seder, a communal meal to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt. Many Jewish Christian fellowships celebrate a Christian Passover meal, which highlights the Christian symbolism of the Exodus story. Consider attending a Seder meal this spring as a means of understanding more completely these symbols that illustrate Jesus' death on our behalf.

Exodus 12:3-42; 13:1-22

He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. - Psalm 40:2

TODAY IN THE WORD

On September 9, 2008, Leona Baxter was sucked down a storm drain as she and the family dog splashed in puddles in a park near her home. She was dragged through a concrete pipe nearly 50 feet long. Her dad describes her rescue: "I ran across to the river and saw what I thought was Leona's coat. It wasn't—it was Leona floating face down in the river. I jumped in and grabbed her."

We all have a story like Leona's, a story of how God our Father jumped in the river after us. It's the story of our salvation. The book of Exodus recounts the story of Israel's salvation, and in Exodus 13:14-15, that story is summarized. It gives us a framework for understanding our own salvation stories.

"With a mighty hand," the story begins (13:14). Every act of salvation demonstrates the awesome power of God, whether it's crossing the Red Sea or kicking addiction. Salvation stories also remind us from where we've come. For the Israelites, it was Egypt. For us, it may be a rebellious adolescence, a messy divorce, or bankruptcy. Salvation is that journey from slavery to freedom, death to life, and brokenness to wholeness. "When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed every firstborn" (13:15) acknowledges the enemies of God but assures us that evil won't always prevail. In heaven, we're going to sing, "Salvation and glory and power belong to our God" (Rev. 19:1).

The epilogue for every salvation story is, "This is why I sacrifice to the Lord" (13:15). Obedience and worship flow from salvation. Without the profound recognition that we've been saved, our spiritual lives can become perfunctory. We do what we have to, but our hearts are disengaged from God. As salvation becomes personal, obedience and worship aren't religious hoops through which we have to jump. We obey and worship the God to whom we owe our very lives (13:8).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Have you ever written down your personal salvation story, or your testimony? This week, set aside time to reflect on how God saved you. Specifically note the elements discussed today: God's power, what you were saved from, and how you live your life differently now that you are saved. After considering your story of salvation, see if you can condense it into one paragraph. If the goal is to share your story with someone lost (and it is!), you may have only five minutes for sharing it.

Exodus 12

Exodus 12:31-42; Psalm 106:6-12

He saved them for his name's sake, to make his mighty power known. - Psalm 106:8

TODAY IN THE WORD

In March, 1849, Henry "Box" Brown mailed himself to freedom.

Born into slavery in Virginia, Brown was brought to Richmond to work in a tobacco factory. After his wife and children were sold to another owner and sent south, he vowed to escape. A friendly white shoemaker helped devise a plan to put him in a packing crate and mail him to a free state.

Brown entered the box with a little food and water, and a tool for boring air holes. Twenty-seven hours later, the "shipment" arrived at the Philadelphia office of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society and was unpacked by abolitionists. Brown is said to have emerged from the crate singing! Free at last!

As they left behind slavery in Egypt, the Israelites no doubt were also singing, "Free at last!" Their journey from slavery to freedom is one of the great journeys in all of Scripture, as well as a thematic parallel to salvation and the background of the Christian journey. After all, Christ came to set the captives free (cf. Isa. 42:6-7; 61:1; Rom. 8:21; Gal. 5:1).

God exercised His power against a mighty nation to liberate His people. Against all odds, they walked away from bondage, their arms filled with Egyptian plunder. God personally guided them with a pillar of cloud and fire. But don't mistake

an epic beginning for a finished journey. The Israelites had a long way to go—even further spiritually than physically. Despite the miraculous start, they fell into idolatry, complaining, and faithlessness on many occasions. We can relate.

Psalm 106 surveys Jewish history, confessing national rebelliousness and praying for God's mercy (v. 47). Liberating them from slavery and opening the Red Sea, God had shown His power and goodness. Israel's mistake was to forget or ignore what they'd seen and known. Nonetheless, God had a plan for His name to be glorified and made known among the nations, so He'd faithfully rescued and guided them.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

To augment both today's topic and our month's theme, we suggest that you read and meditate on Psalm 78 or 105, or the entirety of Psalm 106. These psalms praise God by reviewing the history of Israel. The writers looked back and saw the gracious, powerful hand of God working through past events. The nation was on an extended journey, and God was guiding their national destiny as surely and lovingly as He guides our own journeys down our individual roads.

Exodus 12

He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son. - Colossians 1:13

TODAY IN THE WORD

Gladys Aylward was a British missionary to China, and shortly after her arrival in the 1930s the Japanese invaded China. After the town where she lived was bombed, Japanese soldiers were sent to kill any survivors. Aylward led the survivors, including many children, on a long march through perilous terrain. Miraculously, many survived this harrowing escape and caught the last train for freedom.

There's something very compelling about rescue operations, the greatest of which is surely found in the story of the Exodus. Here we see a pattern of God's redemptive work. Just as He chose one man, Abraham, through whom He would bless all the peoples of the earth, so now He chose this nation, Israel. But before this nation could be a blessing, they would have to be freed.

Exodus 12 is really the climax of the first eleven chapters of Exodus, which record the efforts of Satan to thwart God's redemptive plans and God's sovereignty. The book opens with the cruel plot to crush the Jews through forced labor (1:11), but the Jews continued to increase. Then the Pharaoh ordered the murder of all Jewish baby boys, but God intervened again (1:15-20). The story of Moses' birth (Ex. 2) is an entire rescue operation in itself! God's protection of His people is tied to His covenant promise to Abraham (Ex. 3:13-17).

Exodus 12 describes the final plague. Although this plague was to fall upon every firstborn in Egypt, the Lord provided a substitution for the Israelites: a spotless yearling lamb, whose blood was to be spread on the outside doorframe (v. 7). In this way, the plague would pass over the Israelite households (v. 22).

As we read this account, it can be difficult to see how this was a blessing to the nation Egypt. But notice that many other people, presumably Egyptians, left with the Israelites (v. 38). They likely saw the power of God and wanted to join His people. Keep in mind also that God's purpose for rescuing the Israelites was to make them a great nation that would be a blessing to all the nations around, including Egypt.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

It's not hard to see how the Passover prefigures our Lord Jesus Christ. Like the sacrificial lamb, whose blood offered protection, His death upon the cross offers salvation.

Luke 4:18 says that Jesus came to set the oppressed free, but the oppression here is not physical bondage to a foreign power, but spiritual bondage to the Evil One. By His death and resurrection, Jesus has made possible the greatest rescue operation in the history of the universe—the rescue of a lost person from the realm of darkness (Col. 1:13).

Exodus 12:29-42, 13:17-14:31

In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. - Exodus 15:13

TODAY IN THE WORD

After 29 years of laboring as a slave in Maryland, Harriet Tubman escaped to Philadelphia in 1849. She'd been determined to be free for years, and now she was--but she didn't stop there.

Tubman spent the next decade helping other slaves escape as well. Working as a "conductor" on the Underground Railroad, she made about twenty trips into slave states to guide groups of runaways to safe routes and hiding places. Despite the Fugitive Slave Act and bounties placed on her head by plantation owners, Tubman courageously helped free about 300 slaves, earning her the nickname, "Moses of her people." She earned that name because she, like Moses, led her people to freedom (cf. Heb. 11:27-29).

Of course, it was God who truly led His people to freedom (Ex. 12:42). In the last of the ten plagues, the deaths of the firstborn children demonstrated that His power reached all levels of Egyptian society. The Israelites didn't suffer, for they'd obediently put atoning blood on their doorposts and celebrated the first Passover. Pharaoh was so humbled that he broke his word about never seeing Moses again and he asked him for his blessing (vv. 31-32).

The slaves were set free, and even hustled on their way by Egyptians afraid of further judgment. The Israelites took Egyptian livestock, and were given clothing, gold, and silver by their captors, fulfilling God's promise to Moses (Ex. 3:19-22; cf. Ps. 105:36-39). The bread without yeast symbolized their hurry to leave, which was ironic given the unlikelihood, from a human perspective, of their leaving at all.

God Himself guided the Israelites, taking them down the best, though not the shortest, road. He kept vigil over them, leading, protecting, and encouraging His people with His visible presence through a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. When the Egyptians came in pursuit, He opened a miraculous way of escape for Israel and fought on its behalf (Ex. 14:13-14).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

If you'd like to respond creatively to today's devotion, we could suggest several ideas.

- Make a drawing or a series of drawings to show the main events of the Exodus.
- Write a "journal entry" about the Exodus from the point of view of an ordinary Israelite or even an ordinary Egyptian.

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! - Revelation 19:7

TODAY IN THE WORD

When Lin Miaoke sang “Ode to the Motherland” for the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics, she captured the hearts of the world. Only later was it reported that she had lip-synched to a recording actually sung by Yang Peiyi, whom the Chinese authorities had not considered cute enough to perform the song on camera.

China used its status as host nation for the Olympics to conduct a public relations campaign, choosing the details (and faces!) to present to the world. In the first fourteen chapters of Exodus, God has been launching something like a PR campaign about Himself. In God's case, every act and image represented His true self. Exodus 14 dazzles with His power: the waters of the Red Sea parted, the Israelites crossed to the other side on dry ground, and the pursuing Egyptian army drowned before their very eyes.

The spectacle of God's power in this picture was fantastic. Interestingly, though, if God were only concerned with safe passage to the Promised Land, He could have chosen an easier and more direct route. Surely, God didn't need to command the Israelites to turn around after several days' journey and head back toward Egypt, an action that positioned them for recapture when Pharaoh decided to pursue the Israelites.

God deliberately charted a course that seemed chaotic, and He did so for the purpose of showcasing His glory. Unlike us, who are often motivated to do what is most expedient and comfortable, God isn't pragmatic in His decision-making. Of course, He has purposes to achieve here, and He will make good on His promises to the Israelites. He will deliver them safely to the Promised Land.

But there's something more important than the destination. God chooses to act in such a way as to win renown and honor for His name. For all the nations who would hear the story of the miraculous parting of the Red Sea, God was asserting His supremacy as the one true God. And when God is honored as the supreme God, He is glorified.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

All throughout the Old and New Testaments, we see the preeminence of God's glory. As we see in our text today, God acts to gain the glory He deserves. When you have time for additional reflection on Scripture, review these passages to understand more fully what God's glory is, why it matters, and how we can reflect His glory in our lives: 1 Chronicles 16:7-36; Isaiah 6:1-3; John 1:14; Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 1:11-14; and Hebrews 2:7-10.

Exodus 14:1-31

Exodus 15

I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. - Exodus 15:1b

TODAY IN THE WORD

They say that truth is stranger than fiction. And real-life accounts of God's actions in history are more gripping than any drama ever produced! One example of this is the Exodus, the account of God leading His people out of Egypt to the land He had promised them. As you read this account, you can feel the suspense as the people hurriedly prepare their final "passover" meal (Ex. 12:22). You can almost feel their wonder as they finally begin to follow Moses out of Egypt (Ex. 12:37). And it's hard not to hold your breath as over one million Israelites find themselves trapped between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea! How would God provide this time?

We may be quite familiar with this account, but it's always inspiring to read one of the greatest stories of liberation in all history. Today we'll look at how this part of God's Word impacted a freed slave, Harriet Tubman, who was involved in another liberation story.

In the early 1800s, escaping slaves seemed to "disappear" once they crossed the Ohio River from Kentucky. One slave owner said it was as if the slave had run down an "underground road"--later, this system of escape routes was called the Underground Railroad and homes that offered shelter along the way were called "depots."

Perhaps the most famous "conductor" of this railroad was Harriet Tubman, who escaped from slavery in 1849, from eastern Maryland. Following her freedom, Tubman returned nineteen times to slave states and helped to liberate over 300 slaves. Each return trip was extremely risky, but Tubman's record of never losing anyone entrusted to her care earned her the nickname "Moses." Like Moses, Tubman was completely confident that God would protect her and her charges. She herself looked to the account of Moses crossing the Red Sea, especially his praise song in Exodus 15.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The greatest account of human liberation is even more dramatic than the account of Moses crossing the Red Sea or Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. That's because the greatest story of human liberation is an individual's redemption from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ! As believers, we each have our own account of how God liberated us from the darkness of life without him and brought us into the kingdom. Take some time today to reflect back on your journey of liberation with the Lord.

Exodus 15

Who is like you--majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? - Exodus 15:11

TODAY IN THE WORD

You don't have to remember much about Greek mythology to know that Mount Olympus was the home of the Greek gods and goddesses. From its peak, Zeus hurled down lightning bolts on those who had earned his displeasure. A pantheon of deities "controlled" human destinies from the unapproachable heights of this mountain.

The association between mountains and gods was common in the ancient world. Critics of the Bible like to believe that this explains the origins of today's passage, but we will see significant differences between ancient mythologies and the idea of the mountain of God's inheritance (Ex. 15:17).

For one thing, this passage is a praise hymn composed by Moses to the Lord, extolling Him for His miraculous acts of deliverance. The immediate context of this passage is the crossing of the Red Sea, when the entire nation was safely delivered from Egypt, but when Pharaoh's army was drowned (vv. 1, 4-5).

The ten plagues "proved" beyond any doubt God's complete sovereignty over Egyptian gods--no wonder Moses exclaimed that no other "god" could ever be like the One True God (v. 11). Whereas Canaanite and Egyptian deities were limited to a specific geographic region, God's mighty acts revealed His sovereignty over the entire earth.

Furthermore, God identified Himself on the basis of relationship (for example, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob") and not on the basis of any particular location. That's important, because verse 17 says that God actually was leading His people to the mountain of His "inheritance" (probably a reference to the entire promised land) to establish them firmly there. In ancient mythologies, people were driven from the gods' mountain, not graciously planted and nurtured on it!

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Although most of us don't think of God inhabiting a certain place, we may be guilty of thinking He inhabits a certain time--Sunday morning.

The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. - Exodus 15:2

TODAY IN THE WORD

W. E. B. Du Bois, the first African-American scholar to earn a degree from Harvard, studied the experience of black slaves in America. He wrote about the impact of the spirituals, calling them "Sorrow Songs" and describing them as "the most beautiful expression of human experience born this side of the seas . . . the greatest gift of the Negro people."

Just as it did for the African slaves, music expresses hope in times of despair; music can also declare most eloquently our greatest joys. The hymn of Exodus 15 is the loud and jubilant chorus of an enslaved people who have been delivered. Verse one tells us that Moses and the Israelites sang this song after the spectacular rescue in chapter 14. The theological content given in this passage may be the hymn that develops later, in the days and weeks to come, from the original refrain of verse 21. Miriam sang this chorus on the banks of the Red Sea, using her tambourine as accompaniment. Perhaps as the freed slaves marched toward the Promised Land, they added verses to the this glorious refrain, "The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea."

Exodus 15:1-21

However the song was composed, the hymn has been preserved for us as a theological reservoir for discovering truths about God. All this "wisdom" about God comes from seeing Him in action. The Israelites did not enjoy the privilege of studying a sacred text about God. At that time, there were no worship services or ministry of preaching as we know it. What they knew of God was what had been revealed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and what they had witnessed of His mighty deeds. This hymn expresses these new discoveries about their God.

The strength of God is unrivaled; He easily defeats His enemies. The love of God is undeniable; He rescues the people of His promise. This hymn is a cry of confidence in God; He will lead them. They have nothing and no one to fear.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Music has significant power to focus our minds and hearts on God and His Word. Music was an important part of Jewish worship. The book of Psalms is actually a hymnal! In Christian tradition, music has also played an important role. How can you incorporate more music into your personal devotions? Into your family devotions? Even if your church sings contemporary worship music, invest in owning your own traditional hymnal to learn and to teach your children hymns of the faith.

Exodus 15:22-16:36

Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling. - Exodus 16:9

TODAY IN THE WORD

Deborah Scaling Kiley lived a nightmare. During a fierce storm, the yacht she and her four friends had been sailing sank, and they spent five perilous days in the open sea without food or water. Before Kiley's eventual rescue, two of the men drank salt water out of desperation, and the hallucinations started. They died when they slid off the side of the dinghy into a sea full of sharks to "get cigarettes." In order to drown out the sounds of the sharks, Kiley repeated aloud, over and over, the words of the Lord's Prayer.

Each of us faces times of crisis. Will we react in despair, or will we cling to faith? In today's reading, the Israelites had been walking three days in the desert without water. Their thirst was agonizing, affecting most profoundly children and elderly people. People no doubt were collapsing, and finally, having reached utter desperation, they cried out to Moses, "What are we to drink?" God provided water for them, and all was well—until the provisions with which they left Egypt ran out. Their empty stomachs churned, and they remembered the delicacies of Egypt. This time, their complaining turned to accusation: "You have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death!" (16:3).

Could this be the same community of people who witnessed the cruel effects of the ten plagues on the Egyptians and how God had mercifully saved them? Did they remember how God miraculously parted the Red Sea, how they had walked across on dry ground and the Egyptians had drowned in pursuit?

Everything they'd proclaimed about God in Exodus 15 was forgotten. They made no appeal to the power of God they had seen displayed so visibly. All they now accepted was the evidence of their senses: they felt thirsty, and they felt hungry. This they interpreted to mean that God had somehow forgotten them. They began to despair when they should have been praying.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

We know that we should pray in times of crisis, but hopelessness keeps us from praying. It's impossible to pray when we are somehow convinced that God doesn't love us or is powerless to change our situation. Do you believe either of those two lies? You can know whether or not these lies have taken root, when your impulse, similar to that of the Israelites, is to complain rather than to pray. Confess to God where your faith is weak, and pray that He will strengthen your faith (cf. Mark 9:24).

Exodus 17:1-16

He humbled you . . . to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. - Deuteronomy 8:3

TODAY IN THE WORD

The most recent version of Apple's iPhone supports software that can do much more than make and receive calls. One feature is its ability to recognize any song, sung either by the original artist or a cover band, and display the album cover on its screen. For instance, you might be walking through a store, and your iPhone can identify the songs playing on the store's speaker system.

We don't need an iPhone to recognize the refrain at the beginning of Exodus 17. It's the tune of "Woe is Me!" by the band called the Israelites. It sounds like a funeral dirge played in a minor key. In this variation, the Israelites were thirsty and convinced they were about to die.

As He's done from the very beginning of the book of Exodus, God deliberately seems to bring His people face to face with hardship. When He first commissioned Moses to lead the people out of Egypt and Moses made his plea before Pharaoh for the freedom of the Israelites, their slavery instantly worsened. When they were finally freed, God led them on an indirect route out of Egypt and even commanded them to turn back, inciting the Egyptians to chase them down. And now, as they journeyed through the wilderness, they set up camp (at God's command) at Rephidim, the most unlikely of sites. There was no water, and they were completely vulnerable to the enemy.

God wanted the Israelites to discover that they could depend on Him, not their own ingenuity or sufficiency. Without the thirst and hunger, without being attacked by enemies, they would never have learned that their daily bread came from God, and that God alone was their protection.

The staff, used by Moses to strike the rock at Horeb and used in battle against the Amalekites, was a symbol of the presence of God with His people. The answer to the question, "Is the Lord among us or not?" was a definitive "yes!"

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

God commanded Moses to record the events of their journey through the wilderness, in part because these stories would be sources of instruction and encouragement to us even today. Do you journal regularly? Sometimes, the act of writing and then rereading about our own personal journey can illuminate the patterns of how God is at work. If only the Israelites had seen the pattern of hardship on their journey and understood that it was never a time to despair but to expect God's deliverance!

Exodus 18

We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord. - Psalm 78:4

TODAY IN THE WORD

Growing up under Communism, Karin Krachova had never heard the gospel. One day in 1995, however, she heard some students at her university describe how God had helped protect them and their families, who were all Christians, during the years when the Communists were still in power. As Karin listened, she began to wonder if there really might be a God. Months later, through her friendship with these students, Karin became a Christian herself.

In Exodus 18, we find another individual, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, who was profoundly impacted by hearing what God had done in the lives of others. Somehow word of the Lord's victory over Egypt spread to Jethro, just as it spread to Rahab (as we'll see in tomorrow's study).

Sometime after Moses had returned to Egypt, he sent his Midianite wife, Zipporah, and his sons back to his father-in-law's place. It's possible that Zipporah told her father about the events of the Exodus, but the Bible is not clear about this, nor about why and when Zipporah and the sons returned to Midian. What is clear is that Jethro was eager to see Moses again. Both Rahab and the nations mentioned in Exodus 15:14-16 were terrified by this news, but Jethro rejoiced to hear "everything that the Lord had done for Moses and his people" (v. 1) and sought out Moses.

After Jethro heard first hand from Moses of the Lord's faithfulness, he praised God and confessed that "the Lord is greater than all other gods" (v. 11). Jethro learned from the account of the plagues and the Exodus what the Egyptians were intended to learn, namely that there is only one true God. And Jethro praised and worshiped the Lord. This account gives us a good insight into God's plan for the nations as they hear all that He has done.

It is perhaps ironic that Jethro, a Midianite, had a better grasp of what God had done for the Israelites than they themselves had. Exodus 16 and 17 record the constant grumbling of those who were eyewitnesses of the remarkable events of the Exodus!

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Too often Christians say they don't know how to share their faith. But what many Christians don't realize is that one of the most powerful ways to share the gospel is simply to tell what God has done.

Of course, it's vital to know the gospel essentials—namely, that Jesus paid the price for sin and must be confessed as Lord and Savior. But sharing the good news often means declaring what He has done for us, by bringing about our own Exodus from the bondage of sin and darkness.

Exodus 19

Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. - Exodus 19:5-6

TODAY IN THE WORD

Déjà vu is the phrase used to describe the sensation that we're saying or doing something that we've said and done before. Perhaps Moses felt some déjà vu as we read through the first part of Exodus 19, for it bears striking resemblance to his initial encounter with God at the burning bush in Exodus 3.

Both Exodus 3 and Exodus 19 took place on the "mountain of God," also called Mount Horeb and Mount Sinai. In Exodus 3, God gave Moses words to speak to the Israelites: Return to Egypt, and tell the people that I've seen their misery and will rescue them (3:16-17). In Exodus 19, God again gave Moses a message for the Israelites. In both passages, the response of the Israelites was the same. They believed Moses and worshiped God in Exodus 4:29-31; and in our passage today, the people affirmed their commitment to His words: "We will do everything the Lord has said" (v. 8).

Despite the similarities in these two passages, there are also critical differences. In Exodus 3, God had to make introductions. He gave Moses information about Himself, which he was to carry back to Egypt and convey to the Israelites. In Exodus 19, there was no need for introductions. God affirmed what He had already done: "You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings" (v. 4). Another difference was the message given to Moses. In Exodus 3, God told the Israelites only the opening scene of the story that was about to unfold: they would be rescued. In Exodus 19, He illuminated why they were rescued: they would be His people.

Like the experience of Moses, our spiritual journeys might bring us to familiar places. Sometimes we can almost feel like we're traveling in a circle! However, it's in these familiar places that we can take courage and encouragement that our knowledge of God is deeper than before and that God will give us greater wisdom than before.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

A month's study of Exodus cannot completely cover all of the forty chapters of the book. (For example, you'll note that we skipped Exodus 18.) But when you have extra time for your personal devotions, you are encouraged to read the entire book of Exodus. Look for some of the themes that are being treated in our study this month: the salvation of God, His glory, and how He inspires the trust of His people.

Exodus 19:1-6; Deuteronomy 7:6-11

[H]e is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. - Deuteronomy 7:9

TODAY IN THE WORD

When Scott Siegel knew that God wanted him to ask Charis to be his wife, he prayed to find just the right diamond for her ring. This diamond needed to reflect her purity, her radiance, and above all, her preciousness--both in his sight, but more importantly, in God's sight.

Many people think of diamonds as precious possessions, but how many believers think of themselves in this way? Yet this is exactly what 1 Peter 2:9-10 says! This truth is rooted in the Old Testament. Yesterday we saw that the promised land to which God was leading His people was His own special possession (Ex. 15:17). Today we'll see that the people themselves were also His own special possession (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6).

The context for Exodus 19 is important. Recall that the people had just experienced God's redemptive acts that delivered them out of Egypt (Ex. 14-15). Following this, the people miraculously received manna and quail (Ex. 16), water from rocks, and victory over their enemies (Ex. 17). Such actions revealed God's special care and love for His people, and today's passages reemphasize this truth.

Exodus 19:5 introduces two very important concepts: covenant obedience and God's election, or

Exodus 19

unmerited choice, of the nation. Although some people think that this verse puts a condition on God's promises, God's covenant was evidence of His love and choice of the nation. Obeying God's covenant flowed from the people's special status and demonstrated their love for Him.

God's holy commands showed the people how they would be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6). In essence, because they were to occupy God's holy land, they needed to abide by His holy commands (Ex. 20).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Do you think of yourself as a treasured possession? Because this concept is a bit hard to grasp, why not make it more concrete through the following activity?

Exodus 19:9-25

Worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." - Hebrews 12:28-29

TODAY IN THE WORD

In May 2008, Barbara Walters published her memoir, *Audition*, revealing details about both her personal life and her career. She has spent decades interviewing the world's most prominent politicians and movie stars, from Fidel Castro to Paris Hilton. As a network journalist, Walters enjoyed special access to conversations with famous people, access that most people don't have. Today's reading depicts the extraordinary access that God granted to Moses, access beyond what most Israelites could imagine.

Moses gave the people specific instructions in order to prepare them to meet with God: wash their clothes, abstain from sex, meet at the base of the mountain but do not touch it. Moses' first encounter with God on Mount Sinai, by contrast, required no such preparation: it was unexpected, happening as he was herding his father-in-law's livestock (cf. Ex. 3:1).

Moses' first encounter with God took place at the foot of a burning bush, a spectacular sight but hardly a fearful one. We know that because his first reaction was to approach the bush (cf. Ex. 3:3). The encounter of the Israelites with God in today's reading was much more ominous. The mountain itself became an inferno. The sky was dark, the thunder deafening, and the earth beneath them shook. It was an ominous display of God's presence and power.

Compare another aspect of Moses' interactions with God and those of the Israelites: all throughout the book of Exodus, Moses was freely invited to talk with God. One beautiful element of the book of Exodus is that it records these conversations that Moses, a man, had with God. Notice, however, that the Israelites, with the exception of Exodus 20:1-17 (which we will study tomorrow), relied on Moses to mediate between them and God. They were forbidden from approaching God under penalty of death. Moses' access to God foreshadows some of the same privileges that we, under the new covenant through Christ, enjoy.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The Bible talks about the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom. Even tomorrow, we will learn from our reading that the fear of the Lord keeps us from sin. Fear of the Lord is often misunderstood: it is not simply the trembling fear that the Israelites had at the base of Mount Sinai. Read Hebrews 12:18-28 where the writer of Hebrews uses this account from Exodus to help us understand what it means to relate to God now.

Exodus 20:1-6

Exodus 20:1-26

We love because he first loved us. - 1 John 4:19

TODAY IN THE WORD

Michael Dukakis was asked in the second presidential debate of 1988, "Governor, if Kitty Dukakis were raped and murdered, would you favor an irrevocable death penalty for the killer?" The "Ice Man," as some in the public called him, answered coolly with a policy discussion of his opposition to the death penalty.

The public would have preferred his outrage at the scenario—at least they would have seen that something or someone mattered to him. Anger, when someone we love is violated, is the expected response. The same is true of jealousy. In a marriage relationship, two people pledge to love each other exclusively. If that commitment is threatened, jealousy is in order.

God is a jealous God because He loves us. The Mosaic Law given in the chapters to follow (and more thoroughly, in the book of Leviticus) are set in this context of love. Notice that the book of Exodus doesn't open with the words, "You shall not." It's taken us twenty chapters to get to the commands given by God through Moses, and it's a deliberate choice made by Moses when writing Exodus. The "rules" can only be understood when set in the context of the "rescue." The past nineteen chapters have taken us through God's call to Moses to save His people, the ten plagues to prove His authority and power, and the Exodus itself—a splendid scene of rescue. Even when the people have complained of hunger and thirst in the wilderness, God has provided for them.

His Law makes sense in light of this narrative backdrop. The Israelites needed to see that this God, who described in detail the plagues to befall the Egyptians, this God whose word was always and completely true, was binding upon them. This was a God with authority over all creation. His words to them mattered. They were bound by His words because they were the words of the Rescuer.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Our culture tries to convince us that rules are inherently bad. But the Bible turns that notion on its head. God's rules are good because He is good, and because He wants our best. In fact, the Ten Commandments can be read as rules that, when obeyed, are meant to restore what fell apart in the Garden of Eden. Read through each of the commandments, and reflect on how they can restore our relationship with God and our relationship with one another.

God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. - Genesis 2:3

TODAY IN THE WORD

Last year, a U.S. News & World Report cover story described how work has come to control American life. We work more hours per week than people in any other industrialized nation. Two-income families are “needed” to pursue the desired standard of suburban living. Cell phones, pagers, and e-mail have made escaping the office all but impossible. One third of us feel overwhelmed or even crushed by long hours and heavy workloads. Stress levels are high, especially in a shaky job market--people feel they have no choice but to give up their quality of life in exchange for continued employment.

In such a climate, the principle of Sabbath feels like a fresh breeze. When God finished His work of creation, He rested. What did this mean? That may be a theological puzzler, since we know God doesn't become tired or fatigued. What we do know is why He rested--because He finished His work. It was done, and done perfectly. For this reason, He “blessed the seventh day and made it holy” (Gen. 2:3).

In the Mosaic Law, God commanded the Sabbath day to be kept as part of Israel's covenant responsibilities. God made it holy--now the nation was to keep it holy. How? By imitating God and resting from work. Saturday was to be set apart from the ordinary business of life. In the cycle of consecration, if the people kept holy what God had made holy--that is, if they obeyed the Sabbath and other covenant obligations--then in turn God would make them holy. But He also promised severe punishment for individuals and the nation if they failed to honor the Sabbath (see Ex. 31:12–17; 2 Chron. 36:20–21).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Examine yourself before the Lord today concerning your own patterns and habits in the area of work and rest. Ask the Holy Spirit to convict you about any changes you need to make in your attitudes or actions.

Exodus 20:8-11

At his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD. - Psalm 27:6

TODAY IN THE WORD

Sacrifice played a central role in many ancient religions. Throughout history, sacrificial offerings have consisted of various animals, fruits, flowers, vegetables, and even human beings. The Aztecs, for example, offered as many as twenty thousand human sacrifices yearly to their sun god. The Greeks sacrificed animals such as goats or cattle, sometimes eating the sacrifice in a “celebratory meal” in honor of their gods. Long ago the Chinese practiced human sacrifice and also offered animals and food to their gods and ancestors.

How tragic that all these sacrifices were made in vain! The one true God commanded the Israelites of the Old Testament to follow a sacrificial system that foreshadowed the once-for-all sacrifice of His Son. How did these sacrifices point to Christ? And in retrospect, how did Christ fulfill the Old Testament sacrifices? Answering these questions will be our focus this month.

Exodus 20:22-44

We'll start with several days of “preliminaries”—pre-Law examples of the principles of sacrifice. Then we'll spend several days on each of the five major Old Testament offerings: burnt, meal, sin, guilt, and peace. Just in time for Easter, we'll meditate on Passion Week and the perfect sacrifice of Christ. Finally, we'll apply this to our own lives, discovering how we as believers should be sacri-

ficing today.

Ultimately, this study is about worship--the “worship” of God. True sacrifice is all about worshiping Him, about recognizing and responding rightly to who He is. An obedient, worshipful heart has always been more important to God than any mere ritual, even the rituals of the Law (see 1 Sam. 15:22 and Hos. 6:6).

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The Old Testament sacrificial system can be difficult to understand. Consider using a commentary on the Pentateuch to help you get the most from this month's study. We recommend *New Manners and Customs of Bible Times* from Moody Press.

Exodus 22:1-23:9

What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. - Micah 6:8

TODAY IN THE WORD

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth is an excellent resource for studying Scripture. It explains how to understand the different genres, or literary forms, of the Bible. Some books are poetic; some are historical. Others are books of Law. We read all of the Bible literally and affirm its veracity. But we must take into account the way that each book communicates truth. For instance, we understand that the Psalms are poetry, and that the Epistles are letters. The book of Exodus is a historical book, and this context helps us navigate the portion of the book that describes the details of the Law.

We certainly learn more about God by reading the Law He gave to the Israelites, but we do not assume that the Law is binding upon us. The laws of Exodus 20:22-23:19 are the civil ordinances given to the nation of Israel. This people, freed from Egyptian rule, never enjoyed the status of a nation; now they needed laws to maintain order and justice.

Trying to uncover the principles of justice found in the Law is one of the most helpful ways to read an Old Testament text of Law. God doesn't change, and He still requires His people to act justly.

The principles of fairness, equality, and restitution are three principles found in our reading today. When punishment is necessary, the punishment must fit the crime. The principle of lex talionis, or an eye for an eye, was meant to curb excessive penalties.

Furthermore, there is recognized equality between all peoples. Unlike other ancient law codes from this time and region, which exacted steeper penalties for crimes against nobleman than against common citizens, all crimes in the Mosaic Law are treated alike, no matter the identity of the victim or perpetrator. God is no respecter of persons. And finally, restitution is required for various crimes when appropriate. Making it right when wrong has been done matters in God's economy.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

In the Old Testament Law, specific provisions are given for three vulnerable classes of people: the widow, the orphan, and the alien. Throughout history, these people have been vulnerable to injustice and abuse. God is on their side (cf. Ps. 68:5-6)! Are we on God's side? Does your life reflect a growing concern for these people? Do the ministries in your church reflect God's heart for those who suffer injustice? Pray that God will give you opportunities to "do justice and love mercy."

Exodus 23:20-24:18

Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. - Hebrews 7:22

TODAY IN THE WORD

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is a military alliance formed between democratic states in North America and Europe. NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) is a cooperative trade pact between the countries of Canada, Mexico, and the United States. These are two examples of modern-day treaties. They detail obligations and privileges for the members.

The word covenant, which we see in our reading today, can be understood as something like a treaty. A covenant can be made between two people (cf. 1 Sam. 18:3), two nations (cf. Gen. 21:32), and between God and His people. In today's reading, God put forward a binding agreement with the people of Israel. In it, He made many promises, and He also set forth His expectations for the people.

Israel was now God's chosen people, and they were promised His protection for their journey to the Promised Land. He promised also to provide for them food, water, health, and offspring. Here, God was reiterating the promises He had already made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3: "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse."

God provided for the people and protected them, and in return they were to worship and to obey Him. Notice the number of times the text mentions the "words" of God. When Moses presented God's "words and laws," the people affirmed their intentions to obey. The covenant itself was mediated by words.

The central image of this passage is the stone altar that Moses built at the foot of the mountain. He did what Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had done before him: when God met them and spoke to them, they responded by building an altar of worship (cf. Gen. 12:7-8; 13:18; 22:9; 26:25; 28:18; 35:14). But he also did something unusual, something that had no precedent in Genesis. With the blood of the sacrificed animals, he sprinkled the altar and the people. Again, Exodus foreshadows the person and work of Jesus, whose blood made it possible to be in relationship with God.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The Old Covenant was mediated by the words of God, or the Law. The New Covenant is mediated through the Word of God (John 1:1). The Old Covenant was ratified with the sacrifice of animals, the New Covenant with the sacrifice of Jesus (Heb. 10:10). The Old Covenant inspired worship before an earthen altar; the New Covenant inspires worship at the altar of life (Rom. 12:1). Jesus fulfilled the Covenant given to Israel through Moses (Matt. 5:17).

Exodus 25:1-40

Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. - Exodus 25:9

TODAY IN THE WORD

Good readers notice not only what a text says but also what it doesn't say. An author can communicate by what he puts in the text, but also by what he omits. Let's think of what some things we don't see in the book of Exodus.

Other books of the Pentateuch give a more thorough treatment of the Law. The book of Numbers details the events of the forty-year wandering. Exodus doesn't include much of that information. Instead, this book records specific instructions for building the tabernacle. Indeed, an entire third of the book is dedicated to this subject. Despite the challenges of governing this new nation, God put worship first. He wanted the tabernacle built and the priesthood established before the Israelites ever stepped into the Promised Land. Worship was, and still is, God's top priority.

We no longer use the tabernacle or its forms of worship, but we can learn much that applies to our own faith and worship. Scholars have noted the similarities between the account of constructing the tabernacle and the account of Creation. The tabernacle symbolized a new beginning for God's people. God would be among them as He was in the Garden of Eden.

Moreover, the tabernacle itself, as well as its furnishings, foreshadow the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the back section of the tabernacle, the Most Holy Place, was the ark. Above the ark's atonement cover, God would manifest Himself. No one but the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place, and even he entered only one day a year, on the Day of Atonement (cf. Leviticus 16). This place where atonement was made foreshadowed the atoning work of Jesus on the cross.

Outside the curtain separating the Most Holy Place was the Holy Place, the location of the Bread of the Presence and the lampstand. These also prefigured Jesus, the Bread of Life and Light of the World (see John 6:35; 12:35). Each was either beautifully crafted or overlaid with gold. Everything in the tabernacle is useful, but also beautiful and masterfully crafted.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

In coming weeks, read Exodus 25 through 31. Try to discover parallels to the account of Creation in Genesis 1. Here's a hint: look for "And God said" phrases to signal the seven "acts" of creation. Notice how the account ends. Think through why Moses might have drawn a parallel between Creation and the tabernacle. If you're interested in the New Testament correspondences for the tabernacle, check your concordance for words like light, bread, fragrance, oil, and priests in the New Testament.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name . . . worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. - 1 Chronicles 16:29

TODAY IN THE WORD

The Egyptian temples and pyramids bear witness to the genius and grandeur of the Egyptian civilization. One of Egypt's finest architectural treasures is the Great Pyramid, built over two thousand years before Christ. The Pharaoh, Cheops, spent over twenty years building his elaborate tomb, with more than two million blocks of stone—each stone weighs the equivalent of an elephant.

Our reading today continues our study of the tabernacle, a structure that God had commanded the Israelites to build. Unlike the Egyptian pyramids, it did not endure for millennia. Its design demanded portability: God's presence would remain in the tabernacle, and from there, He would lead the Israelites on their journey. When the cloud of God's presence covered the tabernacle, the Israelites camped. When the cloud lifted, they set out. Sometimes they made camp for a night, sometimes for a month or more. (cf. Num. 9:15-23). They could not be encumbered by heavy stones or materials to carry in the desert. Instead, materials for the tabernacle were fairly lightweight: wood, linen, animal hides, and precious metals used for overlay and adornment.

Exodus 26:1-37

While the tabernacle's design was very functional, it also boasted tremendous beauty and lavishness. The materials and their colors suggest that the tent housed no ordinary inhabitant. These were colors and materials fit for a king, even God Himself. Not only that, but access was extremely restricted for the interior part of the tent, the Most Holy Place. Only the High Priest could enter there once a year. The entire tabernacle was cordoned off by a courtyard and a screen fence (cf. 27:9-19). It was covered by four layers of materials: the innermost was linen, then goats' hair, rams' skins, and finally hides from the sea cow (possibly the dolphin). Even light could not penetrate the Most Holy Place.

The design of the tabernacle reflected the beauty of God's holiness and inspired reverent worship.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

God commanded the Israelites to build something that is functional and yet beautiful. Unlike the generations of the past, which produced artists like Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, we haven't valued beauty as much as they once did. Perhaps we've lost a sense that God is more than the Great Pragmatist, who just cares about getting things done. Scripture also testifies that He is the Great Aesthete, the Creator and Lover of all that is beautiful.

Exodus 29:1-46

Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored. - Leviticus 10:3

TODAY IN THE WORD

In Ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman civilizations, people worshipped a pantheon of gods who were thought to be angry and vengeful. Worship in these cultures was hardly a free response of love; instead, worship resembled acts of appeasement. Mythologies contain the stories of men and women who transgressed against the whims of the gods and forever suffered the consequences of their sins.

The ceremonial requirements for the priesthood and the priestly offerings recorded in Exodus are different from ancient mythology. These were not acts to appease an angry God. The last two verses of our passage provide the framework for understanding why God had these requirements for the priests and the sacrificial offerings: God wanted to meet with His people. Their sin had incurred His wrath, yes, but His posture toward them was love. He had rescued them from Egypt in order to establish a unique allegiance with them. He wanted to be their God.

What stood in the way of establishing this relationship? Sin. When Adam and Eve sinned against God in Genesis 3, they were driven from God's presence. The rest of the Bible narrates the story of man's estrangement from God because of sin. The tabernacle, the Levitical priesthood, and the sacrificial system picture for us how sin must be addressed in order to come into the presence of a holy God.

Atonement is the key word central to understanding how God deals with sin. When an offense has been made, it must be made right. Sin is an offense against a holy God, and the sin offerings of slaughtered animals represent acts of acknowledging offense and making it right. The sacrificial system is called substitutionary atonement. The sinner himself deserved death, but God accepted an appropriate substitute in his place.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Leviticus 8 through 10 describe in greater detail how Aaron and his sons were ordained, how they first began to assume priestly duties, and then tragically how Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, fell under God's severe judgment for transgressing God's commands and regulations. God's holiness and judgment appear not only in the Old Testament: consider the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 4. These passages instruct us about the holiness of God. He doesn't accept deviations from the one way He provided to be in His presence.

Exodus 31

I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts. - Exodus 31:2-3

TODAY IN THE WORD

Earlier this year, the Gallery of the American Bible Society (ABS) mounted an exhibition entitled, "Threads of Faith: Recent Work From the Women of Color Quilters Network." Fifty-three quilts with religious themes were on display, covering everything from biblical narratives to African-American history. The introduction said they "record personal histories, make political statements, celebrate family values, and reflect the role of faith and Christian tradition in shared history."

For example, one quilt by Cynthia Lockhart, Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord, is filled with colorful curving stripes and beads. She said, "This quilt is about the joy I feel when I sing the praises unto the Lord. Music is depicted as colorful and full of rhythms with a multiplicity of vibrations. When I sing and shout the praises I have a spiritual connection with the Lord."

Her quilt and the others at the ABS exhibition show the power of God-honoring creativity. In contrast to the creative sinfulness seen in yesterday's devotion, they enlist art in the service of worship. That's also what God did in His instructions for the tabernacle--He wanted the nation's worship center to be a beautiful, well-made place. To make it happen, He chose two craftsmen, Bezalel and Oholiab, and gifted them with a range of artistic abilities necessary to accomplish and supervise the construction of the tabernacle. Bezalel was actually said to be "filled with the Spirit of God" for this job (v. 3)!

How can we distinguish between righteous and unrighteous uses of creativity? We can compare this passage with the golden calf episode. Who is being honored--God or something else? What is the result--order or disorder, beauty or chaos, sin or holiness? Was there intentionality behind it, a submissive, worshipful attitude and thankfulness for the artistic abilities in use? Or is it reminiscent of Aaron's excuses?

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Here's an idea: organize a "church arts night" when believers can edify one another with their God-given creative talents. One person might read a poem, another sing a song or play an instrument, and another show paintings, photographs, or a video. A group might perform a "worship dance" or a short drama. Or perhaps people can work together to create a mural on an available wall or rehearse a choral Scripture reading for next Sunday's service. The aim is to please and glorify God!

Exodus 32

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. - Psalm 19:7

TODAY IN THE WORD

Last fall, a boy's Bible saved his life. According to police, a Florida mother killed one of her sons at home with a shotgun, then drove to a church where she found her sixteen-year-old son standing outside. She fired at him at close range, but the shot struck his Bible.

"The Bible certainly saved his life," said a sheriff's deputy. "Had his Bible not been in the way he would have sustained the brunt of the blast and very well could have died from that type of injury."

That young man will never forget that he owes his life to the Word of God. More figuratively, today's verse reminds us: "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul." In today's reading, God Himself wrote the tablets of the Law on Mount Sinai. But even before those tablets had reached the people, mercy was needed.

The people of Israel seemed intent on going back into slavery. They "forgot" all that God had done for them, from the miracle of the Red Sea's parting to their very freedom from the bondage of Egypt. Aaron gave in to their demands and fashioned a calf that may have resembled an Egyptian bull-god familiar to the Israelites. The festival they celebrated in the idol's presence included drunkenness and sexual immorality. By the time Moses saw them, they were totally out of control.

God was justly angry. After all, only a short time before He had said, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3). Moses could have pridefully accepted God's offer to destroy the Israelites and create the "Mosesites," but instead he interceded for the people. Why? He understood God's unchanging love and the infinite depth of His mercy.

God showed mercy, but judgment was also needed. The Levites answered the call to purify the people, earning a blessing by siding for God against even family and friends (Ex. 32:29). The powdered drink Moses served the Israelites was just a taste of the consequences of sin.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Do you have the zeal of a Levite? Do you desire to make war against sin and to live for righteousness?

Exodus 32

You shall not make for yourself an idol. - Exodus 20:4

TODAY IN THE WORD

The pornography business brings in \$10 billion a year, with about 11,000 “adult movies” produced every year in America. These are marketed over the Internet, to cable TV companies, and through video distributors, who claim that 30 percent of all video rentals on the east and west coasts are sex films. What’s more, such well-known companies as General Motors, AOL Time Warner, and Marriott are helping themselves to a share of the profits. They do so quietly, omitting or obscuring the information in company reports; and while they may not actually produce pornographic movies, they pipe them into homes and hotel rooms nationwide.

Assuredly, human creativity and our pursuit of pleasure are corrupted by sin! Today’s narrative is a warning and instructive example of how creativity can be twisted to serve the opposite of the purposes for which God gave it. While Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the Law, the impatient, faithless Israelites bullied Aaron into using his skills to fashion a golden calf idol, which seems to have been a representation of the Egyptian god Apis. Despite his pathetic excuse of “out came this calf!” (v. 24), and despite his lame attempt to proclaim the day a “festival to the Lord” (v. 5), Aaron clearly used his creativity to support idolatry.

The nation’s disobedience spun out of control, to the point where Joshua thought a battle was raging and Moses saw a “laughingstock” being made of their covenant witness (vv. 17, 25). The pagan revelry no doubt included sensual dancing, carousing, sexual immorality, and other forms of self-indulgence. The people apparently wanted a god more familiar than the one seen in the pillar of cloud and fire. More to the point, they wanted one who was more permissive, whereas God had already made His standards of purity and holiness quite clear. It took special intercession by Moses, the destruction of the idol, the righteous swords of the Levites, and a plague from God to set things right.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Today we offer our third reading suggestion of the month, a book entitled *The Gift of Art*, by Gene Edward Veith (InterVarsity Press). In a way that is aware of both artistic history and the highs and lows of art in today’s culture, Veith surveys the place of the arts in Scripture. His book presents a solidly biblical perspective and is rich in potential applications for your own interaction with artistic creativity. This is a wonderful resource to introduce and inform your thoughts on how God’s truth can be expressed in art.

Exodus 32:1-35

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. - Psalm 27:14

TODAY IN THE WORD

In our time-pressured society, an array of goods and services has been developed to save people time. Microwaves, drive-thru windows, and Blackberrys should make life easier, right? A generation ago, scientists predicted that Americans would enjoy more discretionary time because of technological advances. The opposite has happened; we've grown more greedy for our time, more impatient with ever having to wait, always trying to cram one more thing into our day.

But impatience is not a modern phenomenon; from today's reading, we could argue that it's a besetting sin of the human condition. The Israelites grew impatient waiting for Moses to come down from Mount Sinai. They blamed Moses (and God) for the delay. Just what was taking so long?

They waited a little over a month for Moses to return from his appointment with God. A month was hardly any time at all compared with the years of harsh slavery they had endured in Egypt. Their actions seemed rash, and God Himself accused them of being "quick to turn away from what I commanded them" (v. 8). Clearly the people saw time differently than God did. Today's reading is only one of many examples throughout Scripture where men and women get tired of waiting on God. When this happens, they take matters into their own hands, usually with disastrous results.

Here, the Israelites directly disobey the second commandment: "You shall not make for yourself an idol" (20:4). The golden calf wasn't a new god other than Yahweh but rather a false representation of Yahweh. They learned this practice from the Egyptians, who worshiped gods represented by animal forms. Thus, their sin came not from an outright rejection of Yahweh, but from trying to blend true worship of Yahweh with false, forbidden worship.

Their sin incited God's wrath against them. After this incident of rebellion, God was prepared to destroy them completely and start over with Moses. And though He relented from this threat, people still die as a result of their sin.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Why is it that God so often forces His people to wait? Abraham waited decades for a son. The Israelites waited over four centuries before they inherited the Promised Land. The disciples waited three days for the risen Christ, and we've been waiting over two millennia now for His return. We have innumerable commands in Scripture to wait on the Lord. Waiting on God forces us to turn from sins such as self-reliance, rashness, and prayerlessness. What are you waiting on God for, and can you wait with hopeful expectation?

Exodus 32

Humans tend to worship what is seen and often what appeals to emotion. The golden calf represented an Egyptian fertility cult. Recall that while the people were in the wilderness God alone provided all that they needed to eat and drink. Rejecting God's promises, they chose to bow down to an idol that falsely gave them a sense of control. Idol worshipers believed that a god had to be manipulated in order to respond.

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The true God is very different! He is the only God, not one among many. He is a personal God, not a dead piece of wood or metal. He is the Creator of all, not merely a god of a river or a mountain. He acts in history and directs people; He is not manipulated by perverse rituals! And finally, He is a holy God who makes moral demands on His people.

- Today in the Word, Dec. 2003, p.11

Exodus 32:7-20

Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. - Exodus 32:12
TODAY IN THE WORD

Mizpah was a key event in Israelite history. The people had been worshiping Canaanite idols, but through the ministry of the judge and prophet Samuel, they decided to return to the Lord. Samuel gathered them at Mizpah, where they fasted, offered sacrifices, and repented of their sins while he interceded for the nation. The Philistines seized the moment for an attack, but God miraculously defended His people, and Samuel set up a “stone of remembrance” to commemorate His rescue (1 Sam. 7).

Samuel and Moses are recognized in Scripture as two of the greatest national intercessors in the history of Israel (Jer. 15:1). While Moses’ life contains many episodes on which we might focus (cf. Heb. 11:24-28), we’ve chosen today’s prayer as a good example of the faith at the center of it.

The Israelites, miraculously released from slavery by God’s mighty intervention, were camped at the foot of Mount Sinai. They had seen God defeat Pharaoh, open the Red Sea, and lead them by the pillar of fire and cloud. Through Moses, God was about to initiate a special covenant and give them His holy Law. But their memory of these awe-inspiring evidences of His power and love didn’t last a month, which is about how long Moses was up on the mountain. Tired of waiting, the people bullied Aaron into making a golden calf as an idol, then worshiped it with pagan rituals and orgies.

God was justly angry. The people had acted impatiently, rebelliously, and faithlessly. Their punishment would be richly deserved! Why not wipe them out and make Moses into a founding father (v. 10)?

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

You might take some time in prayer today to imitate the examples of Samuel and Moses. Intercede before God for the future of our nation.

Exodus 33:1-23

The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. - Exodus 34:6

TODAY IN THE WORD

In January 2000, Illinois became the first state to declare a moratorium on the death penalty. Then Governor George Ryan commuted the sentences of 167 death-row inmates, including the man who had killed Ryan's own neighbor and friend. Ryan's move was controversial, prompting more debate about how to execute justice, mercy, and fairness in the U.S. legal system.

We're going to examine God's mercy and justice in our reading today. Some skeptics have argued that God looks inconsistent in Exodus 32 through 34. Earlier in Exodus, He had gone to great lengths to reiterate His promises to the Patriarchs. Now at the beginning of Exodus 33, we see what seems to be a different side of God. He's had it with these people. He won't renege on His promise to deliver them to the Promised Land, but He is refusing to go with them. In yesterday's reading, He was actually poised to wipe them out, but Moses intervened on their behalf. Today's reading reveals that God's anger had cooled—but not entirely.

Does God respond impetuously in the moment, the way that humans do? Is He at the mercy of human activity, caught by surprise when we don't do what we're supposed to? The answer is an emphatic no. God's mercy is the very thing that allows His plans of redemption to go forward. Mercy has been and will always be necessary for God's purposes to be accomplished.

God was merciful to the Israelites when they least deserved it. God's judgment was in no way exaggerated—they were “stiff-necked” and rebelled again. But He forgave them and restored them to Himself. He would relent and accompany them to the Promised Land. God was merciful to Moses and Joshua, giving them the privilege of unrestricted access to God. His mercy granted them an audience with Him, and His mercy protected them from the danger of their front-row seat.

Sin always provokes God's holy anger and judgment, but amazingly, He also responds with mercy. He brings people to Himself.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Consider what it means that the Israelites were “stiff-necked.” What was the most heinous part of their sin? Was it that they had built an idol? Or was it that, despite God's revelation of Himself and His Word, they refused to believe and to submit to Him? The writer of Hebrews tells us that their greatest sin was unbelief (cf. Hebrews 4). What is it that God has revealed to you about Himself and His plans that you continue to turn away from? What is it that God has promised that you can't bring yourself to believe?

Exodus 34:6

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TODAY IN THE WORD

For 60 years, journalist Walter Cronkite brought the news to America. He reported big stories, such as the first moon landing, President Kennedy's assassination, and Watergate. He interviewed important leaders, including every U.S. President since Truman, and covered hot issues—the arms race, civil rights, and public education. Even after his 1981 retirement, Cronkite was consistently named in surveys as one of the most trusted men in America. If he said it, people believed it. Americans depended on him.

Even more confidently can we depend on God. He can be trusted to be forgiving. How do we know? He said so Himself. That's who He is—that's what He does. Forgiveness is one of His key attributes.

In today's reading, God responded personally to Moses' bold request to "show me your glory" (Ex. 33:18). Jehovah's memorable self-declaration in these verses is repeated numerous times throughout the Bible.

There were many things God could have said to announce Himself. He could have declared Himself as the sovereign Creator or as the Power who defeated the Egyptians. Instead, He testified that His Name means One who is compassionate, gracious, patient, loving, faithful, and forgiving. His forgiveness is not naïve but remains in accord with His holiness (v. 7).

Moses knew that the Israelites stood condemned because of their rebellion and idolatry, but he interceded for them before the Lord. What God had just said about Himself gave Moses hope that Israel's history wouldn't end here. God promised that He would go with them to the Promised Land, prove His covenant faithfulness, and show His power. The Israelites' responsibility was to worship Him alone.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Scripture memory is a valuable spiritual discipline and a good way to remind ourselves of the character of God. This week, make it your goal to memorize Exodus 34:6–7 from today's reading. Following verse 6, which is quoted in the sidebar, it continues: "maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin." This was God's own declaration of who He is, which is why these words are quoted many times in Scripture (see, for example, Joel 2:12–14). We'll benefit from committing to memory the words God uses to describe Himself.

Exodus 35:1-36:7

From what you have, take an offering for the Lord. - Exodus 35:5

TODAY IN THE WORD

Churches adopt a variety of attitudes towards money. Some renounce preaching on the subject of money or passing a collection plate, for fear of offending visitors. Others make passionate and unapologetic pleas for money week after week from the pulpit. Some churches hire consulting groups to manage their capital campaigns.

Today's reading describes an incredibly successful capital campaign! Moses launched the campaign with an invitation to give. He did not use guilt or manipulation to goad the Israelites into giving. There were no gripping emotional appeals. Moses encouraged giving that was not coerced, but cheerful. No one was responsible to keep track of what was given or who was giving; perhaps some did not participate. But those who did bring offerings did so because they wanted to. The offerings presented were called "freewill offerings" for this very reason.

Every person in the Israelite community had an opportunity to get involved. Under the direction of Bezalel and Oholiab, skilled artisans could contribute to the metal and woodworking projects. Women used their skills for spinning the linen, yarn, and goat's hair for the tabernacle curtains. Those who didn't have skills to contribute brought forward some of the gold they had plundered from the Egyptians. Every person had a part, and like an Amish barn-raising, the construction of the tabernacle unified the Israelite community.

What's probably most startling is the overwhelming generosity of the people. They gave so much to the project that they actually had to be restrained from giving. The surfeit of gifts overwhelmed the artisans; they simply didn't know what to do with the extra materials. Moses then issued the command to stop giving.

The last two days of our study haven't depicted the best behavior from the Israelites. Their disbelief led to rebellion, and God called them "stiff-necked." But today's reading renews hope that there's more to this story than disloyalty and disbelief. God's people, however imperfect, do respond with generosity for the glory of God.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Exodus is such an important book because as a salvation story, it mirrors some of our own spiritual experiences. Truth be told, we're a lot like the Israelites: we're all a mixed bag of faith and disbelief, stubbornness and surrender. Who is it that you've recently judged and maybe held in contempt because of their chronic failures? Can you extend grace to them, forgiving their imperfections and giving them a second chance?

Exodus 39:32-42

Six days you shall labor and do all your work . . . For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth. - Exodus 20:9, 11

TODAY IN THE WORD

In the opening chapter of his book, *Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective*, Wheaton College Professor Leland Ryken describes the importance of work to the human experience. "There is something primordial about work. It answers a deep-seated human urge to be useful, to master something, to do something skillfully, to produce something tangible."

The tabernacle was exactly this kind of work: it was a task to make something useful, and it required skill. With the materials brought by the people, Israelite men and women worked to build the tabernacle according to the divine blueprint given to Moses by God. They were building a place of worship, and the materials were themselves offerings of worship, yet their activity was called "work." Our reading today leads us into a biblical discussion of work. What's most evident is that the Bible (and God) does not view worship and work as two separate spheres of human activity. It's not as if we work Monday through Saturday and worship on Sunday. We should be worshipping seven days a week, whether we're sitting in a cubicle or in a pew. The biblical defense of this view of work is found in Genesis 1, when God works to create the world. We've already seen how the construction of the tabernacle has paralleled the account of Creation; we see this again in verse 42, when Moses inspected the work they've done, just as God Himself did after each day of creation.

We tend to think of work in the narrow terms of paid labor. We go to work. But this is not the biblical concept of work. The construction of the tabernacle shows that work is a creative enterprise mirroring the activity of God Himself. In our work, we put to use our God-given skills and abilities, just as Bezalel and Oholiab did. Work can mean producing something that is both purposeful and beautiful, whether we're paid for our labor or not.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Os Guinness has written a compelling book entitled, *The Call*, where he traces the history of Christian thought on the subject of work. He inspires his readers to think broadly about the purposes for which God has commissioned them. It's more than just "work," the way our culture tends to think of it. As Christians, we should recapture biblical thinking about our work. If we understood the dignity of work as a reflection of the character of God, we'd probably go to our jobs with a different (and more winsome) attitude toward work!

Exodus 40:1-38

He decreed statues for Jacob and established the law in Israel . . . Then they would put their trust in God. - Psalm 78:5, 7

TODAY IN THE WORD

In an interview with CNN's Wolf Blitzer, Al Gore credited himself with "taking initiative to create the Internet." His words soon became fodder for the jokes of the late-night talk show hosts. People laughed at the notion that Gore thought he was somehow exclusively responsible for the invention of the Internet.

As ludicrous as it might sound that Al Gore created the Internet, it's also curious how Moses records the work of setting up the tabernacle: he credits himself exclusively. Would it not have been very difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish the work described here without help? Perhaps we are to infer that Moses had gathered the strongest men of every clan to help him. But the author of the text (Moses himself) seems very deliberate in repeating, over and over again, that he alone did the work.

The text uses this device of repetition in more than one way. The first section (vv. 1-15) emphasizes the words of God: "You shall," He instructs Moses. You shall first erect the tabernacle, then you shall place the ark in it, then you shall hang the veil, etc. The second section (vv. 16-33) emphasizes the obedience of Moses, who did everything "as the Lord had commanded."

In many ways, the entire book of Exodus has explored this very dynamic: the revelation of God to His people and their response to Him. He has revealed Himself by the miracles He performed in rescuing them from Egypt, and He's revealed Himself by the words He spoke in the Law given to Moses. But the Israelites have not responded in faith to God's revelation. They have a story of chronic disbelief and disobedience.

Moses stood alone as an example of faithfulness to God. The final chapter of Exodus emphasizes this. It would seem that only Moses has received God's Word and responded faithfully to it. In this final chapter, we find yet another foreshadowing of the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ Himself.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Our reading today announces that it has been exactly one year since the Israelites left Egypt (cf. Exodus 12). For those who have read further into the Pentateuch, we know what's ahead for the Israelites: more disobedience, more rebellion, and forty years wandering in the desert as a result. But the book of Exodus ends with the spectacular sight of God's glory descending and filling the tabernacle. It's a reminder that the last word of our salvation story is not our failure but God's glory.

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