

THE VOICE OF THE LORD - OLD TESTAMENT

PREFACE

The Bible Study Workbook entitled *THE VOICE OF THE LORD* covers the Old Testament only. The study originated as a VOICES AND CHOICES tape sharing the Scriptures between UK Christians and friends in a country of the former Soviet Union.

There are four Parts:

- * 1. THE PENTATEUCH
- * 2. HISTORICAL BOOKS
- * 3. MAJOR PROPHETS
- * 4. MINOR PROPHETS



The Voice of the Lord as recorded in the WRITINGS, the third section of the Hebrew canon, occurs throughout the study. These Writings include the Poetical books of the Psalms, Song of Solomon, Lamentations and the Wisdom Books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

The Voice of the Lord study is primarily for adults, students or older teenagers and is best led by a Christian group leader or leaders sharing sections. It is important for every group member to have their own copy of the script. It is also suitable for personal study and for students interested in studying the Scriptures and English as a foreign language; also for Seekers in their search for the light of Truth as revealed in the Bible. It is important to have a good knowledge of the prophetic Old Testament because the New Testament is its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. A deeper insight into the Old Testament will yield a better understanding of the New Covenant expressed in the life and ministry of Jesus. Each section, set in its historical background, should provide a learning experience of the wondrous ways of the Lord.

There are 39 books in the Old Testament all written by authors inspired by God as if breathing His words into them. His living word is recounted through the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Historical books, the Poetry and Wisdom books. The Old Testament or Covenant is a wonderful record of God's word to the Jews, His Chosen People. In the books of Ruth and Esther, there is no *Voice of the Lord* in the text, but His divine presence is apparent throughout. The Holy Scriptures record many instances of God speaking to individuals and in many different ways. He still speaks today through His word; even in dreams, visions, in signs and wonders. Often the Lord speaks to the people of Islam in this way for they do not possess the Bible.

The Old Covenant is a Messianic message of restoration and redemption bringing abundant blessings to fallen mankind. Throughout the centuries, the Lord's voice has this constant theme - the promised coming of the Messiah. In the Old Testament the New Covenant blessing is foretold, being ultimately fulfilled in the New Testament by God's free gift of salvation in the forgiveness of sin through the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, His only Son. God's message to mankind expresses His longing for holy fellowship with His created people in a personal, living and obedient relationship.

The Voice of the Lord (text in red italics) in this O.T. Study can only be a summary, the briefest outline of His words. The Study will take time and application; but when completed, with prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance, will give an enlarged understanding of the plans and ways of God's loving heart for the restoration of sinful mankind - all that is best for His Creation. May this study awaken or renew a daily thirst for reading the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments.

Oh, that my people would listen to Me!

Psalm 81: 13a

May you be encouraged to meditate on the Scriptures with a listening ear more and more as you read the often repeated words:

Thus says the Lord.



THE VOICE OF THE LORD

INTRODUCTION

In the pages of the Old Testament, Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth, speaks to all mankind. By His written word, energized by the Holy Spirit, the sovereign Lord God communicates with nations, rulers, peoples, individuals - and to each one of us - and to you! By studying these Scriptures, you will learn more of God's precious word as you meditate upon it and hear the Lord speaking to your heart. Truly, you can take God at His word. What He says He will do.

How does the Lord God manifest Himself to people? In many ways - by His glory, His majestic presence in the radiance, light and the beauty of Creation. His awesome yet loving voice is ever calling and speaking through the patriarchs and prophets of Israel; in the Covenants, in the words of the psalmists and in His promises of redemption, restoration and blessing. There are countless facets of His ways and words - commanding, persistent, acts and words of righteous anger in judgement against sin, a crying and grieving voice, even a jealous voice because He loves us so much in His gracious voice of gentleness and compassion.

The Voice of the Lord, as He communicates, is described in one of the oldest books of the Bible, by His servant Job, who suffered under Satan's affliction.

Lord, call, and I will answer, or let me speak and You answer me. Job 13: 22

Hear, oh, hear the roar of His voice and the sound of rumbling that goes out of His mouth. Under the whole heaven He lets it loose, and His lightning to the ends of the earth. After it His voice roars; He thunders with the voice of His majesty and He restrains not His lightnings against His adversaries when His voice is heard. God thunders marvellously with His voice; He does great things which we cannot comprehend. Job 37: 2-5

It is out of the storm that Job hears the answering *Voice of the Lord* asking His servant many unanswerable questions.

I will demand of you and you declare to Me . Job 38: 3b

Can you thunder with a voice like His? Job 40: 9b

At the mighty and wonderful words of the Lord, Job came to loathe his own words and repented in dust and ashes. God doubly blessed the latter years of Job when he prayed for his friends.

THE PENTATEUCH

THE CREATION

Read Genesis Chapters 1, 2

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Genesis 1: 1

The book of Genesis lays the foundation of God's eternal word of truth.

God said, Let there be light, Genesis 1:3a



Out of darkness, as the Spirit of God moved over the waters the wonderful works of Creation of divine order came into being - sky, earth and sea, plants of all kinds, the sun, moon and stars; with fish in the sea, birds in the sky and animal life on land.

Then God said: **Let Us** (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) **make mankind in Our image.** Genesis 1: 26a
Man was created, not evolved. As the Lord had spoken, it was done - the heavens and the earth were created and all that is in them.

Then God rested on the seventh day, made it the holy Sabbath; for there was no more to be done because everything He had created was - *very good.* Genesis 1: 31

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Yes, everything in Creation was - very good but God's voice expressed - ONE condition - and Man failed! With God there is always a choice to be made.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Genesis 2: 17

THE FALL

Read Genesis Chapter 3

Mercifully, God not only speaks but He also seeks the fallen and afraid as He asked the first questions.

Adam! Where are you?

Genesis 3: 9



And the Lord God said to the woman, What is this you have done? Genesis 3: 13a

The serpent (Satan) had beguiled them with cunning deceit; and so with their sin came death and sorrow; and the ground was cursed with thorns and thistles.

BUT, the Lord voiced His plan of Man's salvation to the serpent, in this earliest Messianic prophecy.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her Offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel.

Genesis 3: 15

The first book of the Bible predicts the coming Messiah to be the Saviour of mankind and the last book of the New Testament records the complete fulfilment of God's plan of divine grace.

The lamb slain in sacrifice from the foundation of the earth. Revelation 13: 8b

To cover their nakedness -

The Lord God made coats of skins to clothe them.

Genesis 3: 21

For - without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Hebrews 9: 22

To protect the Tree of Life, Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

CAIN AND ABEL (a tiller and a herdsman respectively)

Read Genesis 4: 1 - 16

The firstborn son, Cain, offered the fruits of the ground but the younger brother, Abel, sacrificed the firstborn of his flock.

Although there was nothing wrong with Cain's offering in itself, God accepted Abel's offering but not Cain's. Abel was forgiven because his sin was covered by blood, for again without the sacrifice of blood there is no forgiveness.



This is a hard saying but we serve a holy God.

Human life is sacred to God being made in His image, for -

the life of the flesh is in the blood.

Leviticus 17: 11a AV

God asked more questions on the violent murder of Abel by his jealous brother:

The Lord said to Cain, *Where is Abel your brother?*

Genesis 4: 9a

What have you done?

The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. Genesis 4: 10

Although Cain's life was now cursed; God, in His love and mercy, put a distinguishing mark upon Cain to prevent anyone killing him in revenge.

With the Lord there is always a Remnant and it began here. God gave a Godly seed in Seth, another son born to Eve after Abel's murder.

NOAH AND THE FLOOD

Read Genesis Chapters 6: - 9: 17

In the days of Noah, to preserve a righteous seed from the line of Seth, God sent the Flood, because He was grieved at the wickedness of mankind. Even in the remnant line of Seth, the earth was filled with violence except for righteous Noah. He was instructed to build an ark (place of safety) to save his family and animal life on earth, according to *The Voice of the Lord*.

After the Flood Noah offered sacrifices for God's forgiveness.

And God made a covenant with Noah not to destroy all life on earth by flood again.

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Genesis 8: 22

The rainbow was the sign of the Noahic Covenant.



I set My bow (rainbow) in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.

Genesis 9: 13

God blessed Noah; and his family was fruitful and multiplied in succeeding generations.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

Read Genesis 11: 1 - 9

The whole earth was then of one people and language, when a city and a temple tower (ziggurat) ascending heavenwards began to be built by the sons of men. The earliest name of this Sumerian pagan city, when translated, means - gate of god.

Knowing their pride and what Man's dominance would do, the Lord said:

Come, let Us go down and confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

Genesis 11: 7

The city, then called Babel (Hebrew root = confusion) and later Babylon, ceased to be built, for the people were scattered and their speech became a confused babble of sounds of different languages.



ABRAHAM

From Noah's three sons- Shem, Ham and Japheth, the Lord chose Abram, from the seed of Shem (Semites) Read Genesis 12: 1 - 5

God called Abram to the land of Canaan and made a sevenfold everlasting Covenant with him. Whenever God says, 'Go!' He goes with you.

Go away from your country and your father's house to the land that I will show you. Genesis 12:1
Abram obeyed in faith even though he did not know where he was going!

GOD'S EVERLASTING SEVENFOLD COVENANT WITH ABRAM

I will make you into a great nation.

I will bless you.

I will make your name great.

You will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you.

Those who curse you I will curse.

All peoples on earth will be blessed by you.

Genesis 12: 2, 3

God later repeated these pledges to Abram, all the land of Canaan being given to his posterity through Isaac, the promised son of his old age.

Read Genesis 15: 13 - 14

The Lord told Abraham that his seed would suffer affliction in Egypt.

Know positively that your descendants will be strangers dwelling in a land that is not theirs (Egypt) and they will be slaves there and will be afflicted for 400 years. Genesis 15: 13

Read Genesis 17: 1 - 19

My covenant is with you and you shall be the father of many nations. Genesis 17:4

Just as the Rainbow was the sign of God's covenant with Noah, the irreversible sign of the Abrahamic covenant was circumcision. This cut, shedding blood, was God's mark of ownership and is still continued by Jews today. It was a sign of total consecration to the Lord and again Abraham showed his obedience. More important than the outward sign of circumcision was the inward obedience of the heart - the spiritual sign of true faith.

The Lord changed Abram's name to Abraham and also that of his wife, Sarai, to Sarah.

Sarah your wife shall bear you a son and you shall call his name Isaac (laughter) and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant and with his posterity after him.

Genesis 17: 19

Being well-beyond child bearing age, both Abraham and Sarah laughed in disbelief.

Is anything too hard for the Lord?

Genesis 18: 14a

Abraham did truly believe God, as he waited years for the promised son to be born.

His faith was counted as righteousness in God's sight. During this time, through Sarah's lack of faith, Abraham's son Ishmael was born to Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian maid-servant.

Although Ishmael was not the promised son, he was the first child to be named by God before his birth. To the Arab people, Ishmael is their ancestor.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Read Genesis 18: 16 - 19: 29

During this long time of waiting, God spoke to Abraham as His friend in the matter of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the region's extreme wickedness.

And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham (My friend and servant) what I am going to do?

Genesis 18: 17

ABRAHAM - MAN OF FAITH

Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born.

Genesis 21: 5

Read Genesis 22: 1 - 19

God further tested Abraham's faith and obedience, when later he was told to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac (then about 25 years old and a willing offering).

Abraham truly believed God's promises as he answered Isaac with these words:

God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

Genesis 22: 8 A V

The Lord did provide a ram for an offering but Abraham spoke prophetically about God's provision of the Anointed One to come - God's sacrifice of Himself in His promised Messiah. It should be noted as further evidence that Abraham completely trusted God by the following words to his two servants -

I and the young man will go yonder and worship and come again to you.

Genesis 22: 5b

In response to Abraham's obedience to sacrifice Isaac, the Lord reaffirmed by oath His promised blessings to multiply Abraham's descendants as the stars in the sky and the sand upon the seashore.

And in your Seed (Christ) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have heard and obeyed My voice.

Genesis 22: 18



These promises were made only to Abraham's Seed, (Offspring, Heir) and not seeds - his other children by Hagar and Keturah.

In New Testament times Christ's followers are the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

Read Galatians 3: 16, 29

ISAAC

Read Genesis 26: 3 - 5

The Covenant blessing was next given to Isaac, when God spoke to him because -

Abraham listened to My voice and kept My charge, My commands, My statutes and My laws.

Genesis 26: 5

Isaac married Rebekah and she eventually became pregnant with twins struggling within her. Hear *The Voice of the Lord* answering Rebekah's question - Why I am like this? Genesis 25: 22

The founders of two nations are in your womb and the separation of two peoples has begun in your body; the one people shall be stronger than the other, and the elder shall serve the younger.

Genesis 25: 23

Their struggle within her continued the antagonism which had already begun with the hostility between Ishmael and Isaac; and still exists between Arab and Jew today.

JACOB

The Covenant promise then passed to Jacob, the younger twin grandson of Abraham, but not to Esau the older brother. Esau held his birthright with little regard and lost it to Jacob for a meal of lentils! Jacob's name means (deceiver, supplanter, swindler) and in time, he also gained the Covenant Blessing by deception. On leaving his father's house to escape Esau's anger after stealing the Blessing, Jacob heard in a dream the word of the Lord voicing the Covenant promise. Unlike Esau, Jacob held the Covenant Blessing in highest regard.

JACOB'S DREAM AT BETHEL (house of God)

Read Genesis 28: 10 - 22

Alone at night for the first time with his head resting on a stone for a pillow, Jacob dreamed of a heavenly ladder with angels ascending and descending on it, as the Lord stood over and beside him and said:

I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac; I will give to you and to your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your offspring shall be as countless as the sand and you shall spread abroad to the west and the east and the north and the south; and by you and your Offspring (Christ) shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you will go, and I will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done all of which I have told you. Genesis 28:13 - 15



THE WRESTLING AT PENIEL

Read Genesis 32: 24 - 32,

At Bethel, Jacob had vowed that the Lord would be his God and after twenty years, it was the Lord Who told Jacob to return with his family to the Promised Land.

Again, Jacob was alone at night when the wrestling with the Angel of the Lord took place at Peniel when his name was changed.

Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel for you have contended and have power with God and with men and have prevailed. Genesis 32: 28, 35: 10

Read Genesis 35: 9 - 15

God spoke to Jacob again on his return to Bethel:

I am God Almighty, Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you and kings shall be born of your stock; The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and to your descendants after you I will give the land. Genesis 35: 11, 12

JOSEPH

Read Genesis Chapters 37, 39 - 45

The twelve sons of Jacob were known as the Children of Israel.

His favourite son Joseph, the Dreamer, was sold into slavery in Egypt by his jealous older brothers. During this time of hard affliction, first as a slave and then as a prisoner for no fault of his own, God blessed Joseph.

The Lord was with him; and even blessed those he served.

At the age of thirty, Joseph the interpreter of Pharaoh's dreams, became Pharaoh's Prime Minister. Joseph was in charge of everything including the storing and distribution of corn during the seven years of plenty for the following seven years of severe famine.

God had spoken to Abraham that his descendants would sojourn in Egypt for 400 years and eventually become slaves.

This revelation began to be fulfilled when Joseph's brethren came there to buy corn for the famine was extensive and long lasting.

In the succeeding years the Children of Israel multiplied, and when another king became ruler in Egypt, who had no knowledge of Joseph, the Israelites endured harsh slavery. Not only had they to labour making bricks for Pharaoh's building projects but all male Israelite babies had to be thrown into the Nile.

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SLAVES IN EGYPT

Read Exodus 1: 6 - 22, 2: 1 - 10

In fulfilment of the revelation to Abraham, God had prepared Moses, a descendant of the house of Levi for the deliverance of Israel.

Moses, a Hebrew baby saved in an ark of bulrushes from drowning in the Nile, was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter. He was therefore brought up as a royal prince and became learned and able in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

BUT - *By faith Moses, when he had grown to maturity and become great, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.* Hebrews 11: 24

Instead Moses chose to identify himself with his own people but was forced to flee Egypt when he killed an Egyptian taskmaster for beating one of the Hebrew slaves.

Moses at the age of forty escaped from Pharaoh to the safety of Midian in Arabia beyond the borders of Egypt.

MOSES IN MIDIAN

For another forty years, he learned the skills of wilderness survival in the lonely life of a shepherd, caring for the flocks of Jethro, the priest of Midian (a descendant of Abraham) who became his father-in-law.

THE BURNING BUSH

Read Exodus 3 - 4: 23



It was here on the backside of the Midian desert in the wilderness (Sinai - Horeb) out of the Burning Bush that God made Himself known to Moses when *The Voice of the Lord* called him:

Moses! Moses!

Do not come near; put your shoes off your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob .

Exodus 3: 5, 6a

And God said to Moses

I AM WHO I AM and WHAT I AM, and I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE.

You shall say this to the Israelites, I AM has sent me to you!

Exodus 3: 14

The Lord gave Moses powerful signs and was promised God's presence and instruction.

In Egypt his brother Aaron would be his spokesman before Pharaoh, Moses being slow of tongue.

The Lord said to him, Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Is it not I, the Lord?

Go, and I will be with your mouth and will teach you what you shall say. Exodus 4: 11, 12

You shall say to Pharaoh, thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn. Exodus 4: 22

Read Exodus 6: 1 - 8

Unlike Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses knew the name of Almighty God as -

JEHOVAH - The LORD.

I have also established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they were strangers.

Exodus 6: 4

Say to the Israelites: I am the Lord

** I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*

** I will free you from their bondage.*

** I will rescue you with an outstretched arm and by mighty acts of judgement.*

** I will take you to Me for a people; and I will be to you a God.*

** I will bring you into the land concerning which I lifted up My hand and swore that I would give it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

** I will give it to you for a heritage. I am the Lord - you have the pledge of My changeless omnipotence and faithfulness.*

Exodus 6: 6 - 8

The Israelites needed to know that the LORD was the only One who could give them freedom. The Lord God knew that Pharaoh would not let the people go because of the hardness of his heart, except when forced to do so by the mighty hand of the Lord manifested in the ten plagues.

THE TEN PLAGUES OF EGYPT

- * 1. *I will smite with the rod in my hand the waters in the Nile River, and they shall be turned to blood.* Exodus 7:17
- * 2. *Frogs shall come up on you, and on your people and all your servants.* Exodus 8: 4
- * 3. *Strike the dust of the ground, that it may become biting gnats or mosquitoes throughout all the land of Egypt.* Exodus 8: 16b
- * 4. *There came swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and his servants' houses.* Exodus 8: 24
- * 5. *All the livestock (out in the field) of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the Israelites not one died.* Exodus 9: 6
- * 6. Moses and Aaron took dust (ashes or soot) and it shall *become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast -* (of the Egyptians). Exodus 9: 10
- * 7. *Behold, I will cause it to rain a very heavy fall of hail, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now.* Exodus 9: 18
- * 8. *Locusts came up over all the land of Egypt.* Exodus 10:12
- * 9. *Moses stretched his hand toward the sky, and for three days a thick darkness was all over the land of Egypt.* Exodus 10: 22
- * 10. *All the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die.* Exodus 11: 5a



Not only would the Israelites know the power of the Lord but also the surrounding Gentile nations.

** For this very purpose have I let you live, that I might show you My power and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth.* Exodus 9: 16

THE LORD'S PASSOVER

Read Exodus Chapter 12

The words of the Lord to Moses and Aaron:

Each Israelite family was to take a lamb without blemish on the 10th day of the month (Abib - April). After close inspection and on the evening of the 14th Abib to kill it, the blood being sprinkled on the lintel and the two doorposts of each house before eating all the roasted meat - the Passover Lamb, together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.



DEATH OF THE EGYPTIAN FIRST BORN

There was no time to leaven the dough for at midnight, on the first Passover, the Angel of the Lord passed over the land of Egypt.

The houses of the Children of Israel were protected by the sign of the blood; but the firstborn sons of Egypt died (except in homes marked by blood); including firstborn male livestock.

A great cry arose in Egypt and Pharaoh finally let the Israelites go to serve the Lord and leave the land of their bondage.

It was the Lord's Passover, a feast of celebration to be observed every year throughout their generations because of the mighty deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

The firstborn sons, including male livestock, were therefore in future to be set apart in consecration to the Lord, the sons being redeemed by the life of a lamb.

At the end of 430 years, even that very day, all the hosts of the Lord went out of Egypt.

THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

Exodus 12: 41

Read Exodus 14

A mixed multitude of about 2 million people and livestock left Egypt in haste, the people carrying their unleavened dough. The Lord by His mighty hand guided them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night, the Angel of the Lord going before the host of Israel.

Having lost his slaves, once more Pharaoh's heart became hardened, so with a great army of horses and chariots he pursued the escaping Israelites to the Red Sea.

The people were terrified but Moses kept his faith.

At *The Voice of the Lord*, Moses with the rod of God in his hand, stretched it out over the sea, dividing the waters, enabling the Israelites to cross on dry ground. When daybreak came Moses, at the word of the Lord, raised his rod again and the waters returned engulfing and destroying the entire Egyptian army.

The Lord God, with a mighty outstretched arm, through His servant Moses, had delivered the Hebrew slaves from Egypt and across the Red Sea.

Probably the crossing point was not, as usually explained, through the so called Sea of Reeds, but miraculously across the deeper waters of the eastern fork of the Red Sea, where there is a sand ridge leading to the Arabian side.

Here, it is reported, archaeological finds of Egyptian armour and chariot wheels of the period have been discovered. Remember - for safety Moses had to escape to Midian in Arabia beyond the Egyptian border. Although exhaustively investigated, there have been no finds in the area of the Sea of Reeds.

It should be noted that both Moses and the apostle Paul dwelt for a time in Arabia.

Galatians 1: 17

It would seem from the Galatian epistle, that Paul knew the location of Mt. Sinai was in Arabia and not in the Sinai Peninsular.

Now Hagar (mother of Abraham's son, Ishmael) stands for Mt. Sinai in Arabia. Galatians 4: 25

Read Exodus 15: 1 - 21

In the Song of Moses, no wonder the Israelites sang and praised the Lord!

Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing.

Exodus 15:20



WILDERNESS JOURNEY

Life in the wilderness was harsh causing the Children of Israel often to grumble against Moses whenever there was a lack of food and water to drink. In these murmurings they were in fact complaining against the Lord. Leaving the Red Sea behind them, the Israelites first came to Marah, where the Lord tested them for the waters were bitter. As the people grumbled, Moses was commanded to cast in the wood of a certain tree to make the waters sweet and drinkable. The Lord gave the following decree to prove their obedience -

If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God and will do what is right in His sight, and will listen to and obey His commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord who heals you.

Read Exodus 16

Exodus 15: 26

Throughout their journeys, it was God alone Who provided the necessities of life - fresh water and bread. They called the bread, Manna, meaning - What is it?

That's what the grumbling people said, when they saw it on the ground for the first time after the dew had gone. It was white in colour, looked like hoar frost or coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. The manna was to be gathered every morning because it did not keep; except on the 6th day when a double amount was to be collected in preparation for the 7th day of rest -the holy Sabbath. On the morning of the 7th day, the Lord again tested the obedience of the Israelites in keeping the Sabbath, for there was no manna on the ground!

Read Exodus 19: 1 - 9

If you will obey My voice in truth and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own peculiar possession and treasure from among and above all peoples; for all the earth is Mine. You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS GIVEN ON MT. SINAI

Exodus 19: 5, 6a

As the trumpet blast grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with a voice.

Exodus 19: 19

Read Exodus 20: 1 - 17

Then God spoke all these words -

- 1. I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods besides Me.*
- 2. You shall not make any graven image to worship it or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them.*
- 3. You shall not use or repeat the name of the LORD your God in vain - lightly, frivolously, or profanely; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.*
- 4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work.*
- 5. Honour your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God gives you.*
- 6. You shall not commit murder.*
- 7. You shall not commit adultery.*
- 8. You shall not steal.*
- 9. You shall not witness falsely against your neighbour.*
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbour's house, your neighbour's wife, or anything that is your neighbour's.*



Exodus 20: 1 - 17

The first 4 commandments of the covenant are man's duty to God, the 5th to 10th are man's duty to Man. Not only did the Lord give the Ten Commandments both oral and written to Moses but God pronounced many other ordinances and regulations.

The Ten commandments are recorded twice in the Pentateuch - (Exodus 20: 1 - 17, Deuteronomy 5: 6 - 21)

THE VOICE OF THE LORD

The LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the voice of the words, but saw no form; there was only a voice.

Deuteronomy 4: 12

Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you heard, and live?

Deuteronomy 4: 33

Read Deuteronomy 5: 22 - 33

The Israelites hear - *The Voice of the Lord.*

Behold, the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire; we have this day seen that God speaks with man and man still lives.

Deuteronomy 5: 24

Oh, that they had such a heart in them always to fear Me and keep all My commandments, that it might go well with them and with their children forever!

Deuteronomy 5: 29

Read Deuteronomy Chapter 6

Moses was commanded to teach all the Law to the Children of Israel that they might walk in God's ways in the Promised Land.

They were to love the Lord with all their mind, their heart and with all their strength; and warned not to worship other gods of the surrounding pagan nations (Commandment Law).

The ordinances of the TORAH (Law) regulated the lives and conduct of the Children of Israel for holy living such as - keeping the Sabbath, Redemption of the Firstborn, the six Cities of Refuge, all the various Sacrifices, offerings and vows under the ministry of the Aaronic priesthood (Sacrificial Law), together with the three yearly seasonal Feasts to the Lord; and also the Day of Atonement.

(See Bible Study - The Thin Red Line of Scripture)

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

Read Exodus 23: 14 - 17

Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to Me.

Exodus 23: 14

* *Feast of Passover - or Unleavened Bread.* (Easter)

Exodus 23: 15

* *Feast of First Fruits - or Weeks* (Pentecost).

Exodus 23: 16a

* *Feast of Ingathering* - Harvest at the end of the year.

Exodus 23: 16b

Give heed to Him, listen to and obey His voice.

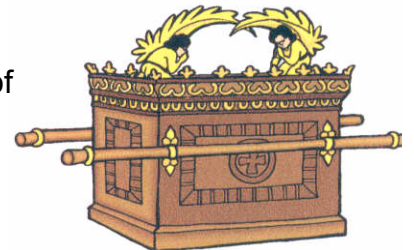
Exodus 23: 21a

The Children of Israel were encamped at Sinai for a whole year receiving these awesome ordinances and detailed regulations through Moses in preparation for entering the Promised Land. Many times the words - The Lord said to Moses - are recorded in the books of Exodus and Leviticus as God gave detailed instructions for both the building of the Tabernacle and its animal sacrifices for the forgiveness of sin.

(See Bible Study - The Tabernacle)

Read Exodus 31: 1 - 11

The Lord must have spoken for He called, by name, Bezalel and Aholiab to build the Tabernacle; make all its furniture, such as the Ark of the Covenant and all the hangings. Everything was of exquisite design for the Lord had given these men wisdom and ability in all manner of craftsmanship. Not only Moses and Aaron were called to minister, for God's service also included the priesthood family of Aaron, the Levites and the people who offered with willing hearts.



Read Exodus Chapter 32

The Ten Commandments (moral law) on two stone tables were written on both sides by the finger of God and given to Moses on Mount Sinai (Horeb). Before Moses even came down from Mt. Sinai, the important first two Commandments had been broken by the people's great sin in their worship of the idolatrous Golden Calf. The Lord was greatly angered, threatened their destruction; but Moses interceded for the people even though God said:

I will make of you a great nation.

Exodus 32: 10b

In righteous anger, Moses broke the tablets at the foot of the mountain. The tribe of Levi stood by Moses that day and at *The Voice of the Lord* about 3000 men were killed because of their idolatry. Again, Moses interceded for their forgiveness; with prayer to the Lord that His presence should continue to go with them and that he should see the Lord's glory for -

The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Exodus 33: 11a

Although the Tabernacle was no longer in the midst of the camp but outside, the Lord's presence did go with the people *My Presence shall go with you and I will give you rest.* Exodus 33: 14

THE LORD PROCLAIMS HIS NAME TO MOSES

Read Exodus 33: 18 - 23,

And God said, I will make all My goodness pass before you and I will proclaim My name, THE LORD, before you; for I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy and loving-kindness on whom I will show mercy and loving-kindness. Exodus 33: 19

Read Exodus 34: 1 - 17

The Lord said to Moses, Cut two tables of stone like the first, and I will write upon these tables the words that were on the first tables, which you broke. Exodus 34: 1

The Lord proclaimed His name to Moses in the cloud on the top of Mt. Sinai,

The Lord! the Lord! a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness and truth. Exodus 34: 6

Moses was on Mt. Sinai in the presence of God forty days and forty nights before coming down from the mountain with the second tablets - and the skin of his face shone.

AARON

Read Leviticus 10: 8 - 11

The Lord speaks to Aaron, the High Priest, after the death of his two sons for offering unholy fire.

You are to teach the Israelites all the statutes, which the Lord has spoken to them by Moses.

Leviticus 10: 11

For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God; therefore - You shall be holy, for I am holy.

Leviticus 11: 45

For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you;

from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord.

Leviticus 16: 30

For the life is in the blood, and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls. (See Bible Study - The Thin Red Line of Scripture).

Leviticus 17: 11

Each of you shall give due respect to his father and mother and keep My Sabbaths holy.

I the Lord am your God.

Leviticus 19: 3

You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind.

Leviticus 19: 14

You shall not take revenge or bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19: 18

Turn not to mediums who have familiar spirits or to wizards; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 19: 31

You shall have accurate and just balances, just weights.

Leviticus 19: 36

You shall observe all My statutes and ordinances and do them. I am the Lord. Leviticus 19: 37

The stranger who dwells with you - - - you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19: 34

These are the commands the Lord gave Moses on Mt. Sinai for the Israelites. Leviticus 27: 34

THE AARONIC BLESSING

Aaron and his sons (the Priesthood) were instructed by *The Voice of the Lord* through Moses to bless the Israelites and say to them:

The Lord bless and keep you;

The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Numbers 6: 24 - 26

When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting (the Tabernacle) to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was upon the ark of the Testimony from between the two cherubim; and He spoke to Moses.

Numbers 7: 89

In the Book of Numbers, Moses was instructed to take a census by numbering all the men able to serve in Israel's army, as a muster before entering the Promised Land.

The Levites were excluded from this census, being numbered separately, because they stood on the Lord's side in the matter of the Golden Calf. They were, therefore, given the charge of the Tabernacle and its furnishings; though only Aaron and his sons as priests could enter the Tabernacle. The tribe of Levi represented the Israelite firstborn sons who were passed over and saved from death when all the Egyptian firstborn died in the tenth plague.

You shall separate the Levites from among the Israelites, and the Levites shall be mine.

Numbers 8: 14

THE ISRAELITES DEPART SINAI

At the beginning of the second year before leaving Sinai, the Children of Israel kept the Passover, a memorial of their deliverance from slavery in Egypt where the first Passover took place.

The Passover was not celebrated again until Israel entered the Promised Land.

At the Lord's command the Israelites journeyed and at His command they encamped.

As long as the cloud rested upon the tabernacle they remained encamped.

Numbers 9: 18

During the second month of the second year, the cloud covering the Tabernacle lifted and the Israelites left Sinai. On the march with all its hardships the people often grumbled against Moses. In their discontent, the Israelites were also complaining against God, the LORD Who had delivered them from slavery, causing the fire of the Lord to burn in the outer parts of the camp; but Moses prayed for the people and the fire died down.



Still their complaining and weeping before Moses continued, for they remembered the food they had in Egypt. Thirsting for water and tired of the manna, they also desired meat. The burden on humble and troubled Moses was so great, that the Lord enabled 70 of the Israelite elders to receive some of the Spirit from Moses to help bear his load.

Their craving for meat angered the Lord, Who promised an abundance of quail.

The Lord said to Moses, Has the Lord's hand become short?

You shall see now whether My word shall come to pass for you or not.

Numbers 11: 23

Such numbers of quail flew in, that the abundant supply was soon followed by a very great plague.

Read Numbers Chapter 12

Even Moses' brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, were jealous of his authority and complained because he had married a Cushite (Ethiopian) wife.

In the pillar of the cloud before the Tabernacle, *The Voice of the Lord*, uttered these words in defence of Moses. His special servant, priest and prophet -

whom the Lord knew face to face.

Deuteronomy 34: 10

If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make Myself known to him in a vision and speak to him in a dream. But not so with My servant Moses; he is entrusted and faithful in all my House.

With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly and not in dark speeches; and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses? Numbers 12: 6 - 8

In the Lord's anger and defence of Moses, Miriam became leprous. She remained outside the camp for seven days until she was healed according to Moses' prayer.

JOSHUA AND CALEB

Read Numbers 13: 17 - 33, 14: 1 - 38



Only Joshua and Caleb, two of the twelve spies sent to explore Canaan, gave a good report of the fertile land on their return after 40 days. It was the season of the first ripe grapes and a heavy cluster on a pole, together with some pomegranates and figs, were carried back. Joshua and Caleb believed God's promise that the Children of Israel would enter the Promised Land. The people instead believed the bad report given by the ten spies and became fearful of the inhabitants of the land - the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and the Jebusites - seven neighbouring nations mightier than the Israelites.

In rebellion, the Israelites grumbled once more against Moses and Aaron. The people remembered Egypt and wanted to return there - and even talked about stoning Joshua and Caleb!

The Lord said to Moses, How long will this people provoke Me? And how long will it be before they believe Me, for all the signs which I have performed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and will make of you (Moses) a nation greater and mightier than they.

Numbers 14: 11, 12

As before, Moses interceded for the people, even though they had no excuse.

And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to your word.

Numbers 14: 20

WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

Nevertheless, the Lord decreed that the people should wander in the wilderness for forty years - (a year for every day taken to spy out the land) until all those who failed to trust the Lord, and instead believed the evil report, had died - Of that generation only Caleb and Joshua survived to enter the Promised Land. After the 10 spies died of the plague, there followed a vain attempt to go up into the Promised Land but it was doomed to failure for the Lord was not with them.

REBELLION OF KORAH

Read Numbers Chapter 16

During the wilderness wanderings, the discontent against Moses and Aaron continued in the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, together with 250 elders. They challenged Moses' leadership and complained because he had not brought the people into the Promised Land. Korah, a Levite wanting the priesthood, considered all the people holy. The service of the priesthood was a gift only given to Aaron and his sons.

The next day to show who was holy before the Lord, since only priests burned incense; these men were to take censers and burn incense.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Say to the congregation,

Get away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

Numbers 16: 23, 24

As Moses foretold, Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their families were buried when the earth suddenly split and enclosed them. Fire from the Lord destroyed the elders offering the incense. As a reminder of the sin of this serious rebellion, their 250 bronze censers were made into sheets to cover the altar of burnt offering.

The next day, a divine judgement of severe plague followed, Moses and Aaron then being accused by many of killing the Lord's people. Aaron, the High Priest, made atonement for them and the plague, when thousands died, was finally stopped.

AARON'S ROD BLOSSOMS

Read Numbers Chapter 17

God continued to uphold the Aaronic priesthood before the people. The head of each tribe was to present a named rod before the Ark of the Testimony.

The rod of the man whom I choose shall bud and I will make to cease from Me the murmurings of the Israelites, which they murmur against you. Numbers 17: 5

The next day only Aaron's rod had sprouted and even produced buds, blossoms and ripe almonds!



Read Numbers 20: 1 - 13

After leading the Israelites through the desert wilderness for nearly 40 years, even Moses was not allowed to cross over Jordan into Canaan. Aaron and Miriam also died before entry into the Promised Land. Moses failed to honour the Lord when, yet again, the Children of Israel complained against him because there was no water for them to drink.



The Voice of the Lord commanded Moses to take his rod and *speak* to the rock. Instead, Moses *struck the rock twice* in exasperation after all those years of bitter complaining. The water gushed forth and their thirst was quenched, but Moses was not allowed to enter Canaan. Moses and Aaron, as High Priest, had both failed to honour the Lord's holiness before the people. Just a word was necessary to effect the miracle.

As decreed 38 years before when the land was explored, only Caleb and Joshua of that generation would enter the Promised Land.

The Lord was angry with me (Moses) also for your sakes, and said,

You also shall not enter Canaan. Deuteronomy 1: 37



The people murmured with such impatience and complained to Moses yet again, that the Lord sent venomous snakes amongst the people. Many were bitten and died for their sin against the Lord. Remember - the Israelites were God's Chosen People to convey God's holiness to the Gentiles. In answer to Moses' prayer for them -

The Lord said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent of bronze and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live. Numbers 21: 8

The serpent on the pole symbol is an Old Testament illustration of the healing of the promised Messiah. In the New Testament Christ was uplifted on the Cross to take away our sins, becoming sin for sinners - bitten by the evil serpent Satan in the Fall of Man. Christ's one sacrifice for sin in the New Testament has replaced the countless sacrifices of the Old Covenant. Also, Christ as our one and only High Priest has replaced the Levitical priesthood.

The pole was called Nehushtan and was kept for hundreds of years as a reminder of the Lord's healing when the people responded by a look of faith. This symbol is a sign of healing today in Medical practice. Eventually, Nehushtan was destroyed by King Hezekiah. By then, it had become an idolatrous object; snake worship being not uncommon in the surrounding pagan lands. The propensity of the Children of Israel to worship the false gods of the neighbouring tribes continued even in the Promised Land and was a great evil in the eyes of the Lord - as it was when the Israelites in their wanderings reached Moab.

Read Numbers chapters 22 - 24

Balak, the king of Moab, also, would not allow access. Fearful of the Israelite victories in battle, Balak hired Balaam, a pagan prophet, to curse the Children of Israel. In several prophetic oracles, Balaam could only speak God's words of blessing. Balaam eventually was killed, being the basic cause of Israel's immorality and Baal idol worship in Moab. Many thousands died in the following plague.

THE SECOND CENSUS

After the plague, the Lord commanded Moses and Eleazar (High Priest after death of Aaron) to take a second census. Joshua and Caleb alone of their generation were able to cross the River Jordan into the Promised Land.

BLESSINGS AND CURSES

The Voice of the Lord promised abundant blessings for obeying His commands for holy living in the Promised Land they were about to enter. Even the wearing of tassels with a blue cord on the corners of their garments was a reminder to keep Torah (the Law) - summed in these words -

* *Love the Lord your God.*

Deuteronomy 6: 5

* *Love your neighbour as yourself.*

Leviticus 19: 18

* *Love the stranger who dwells among you, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

Leviticus 19: 34

Read Deuteronomy 27: 1 - 13

The Blessings on Mt. Gerizim and the Curses on Mt. Ebal were to be recorded on great plastered stones once the Israelites had crossed the R. Jordan into Canaan.

Read Deuteronomy Chapter 28

All these blessings shall come upon you if you heed the voice of the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 28: 2

Failure to obey God's Covenant at Sinai would bring instead curses on the people.

Stage by stage the Promised Land would become desolate and barren and Israel would be scattered among the nations in exile. God's word has been fulfilled exactly as He warned!

Read Deuteronomy Chapter 29

Before his death as commanded by the Lord, Moses repeated the words of the Sinai Covenant in Moab - sometimes known as the Canaanic Covenant. It contains one condition - OBEDIENCE.

The covenant, sealed with its oath, confirmed that the Children of Israel were God's people and was addressed to those present and also to future generations.

When all these things have come upon you, the blessings (for obedience) and the curses (for disobedience), and you shall call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and shall return to the LORD your God and obey His voice with all your mind and heart and with all your being, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion upon you and will gather you again from all the nations where He has scattered you.

Deuteronomy 30: 1-3

The Lord's Chosen People were to choose LIFE and receive the blessings of obedience.

I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you that I have set before you life and death, the blessings and the curses; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live and may love the LORD your God, obey His voice, and cling to Him. For He is your life and the length of your days, that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Deuteronomy 30: 19-20

In the purpose of God, the Israelites were to be a witness of LIFE to all peoples.

As decreed by the Lord, His servant Moses died on Mt. Nebo above the plains of Moab and did not enter the Promised Land, only viewed it - a land good and large, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Exodus 3: 8

A good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing forth in valleys and hills. A land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey.

Deuteronomy 8: 7, 8



Thus, it was under the God-appointed leadership of Joshua, the faithful servant of Moses, that the next generation of the Children of Israel crossed the River Jordan into Canaan.

Moses must have been bitterly disappointed; but he was, indeed, a gracious and humble man -

above all the men on the face of the earth.

Numbers 12: 3

Moses placed his hands on Joshua, and so the transition of leadership was made clear before the whole community of Israel.

The account of the entrance into the Promise Land is continued in the next Section -

PART 2 THE HISTORICAL BOOKS



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