

## Out of Egypt: Introduction

In 1 Corinthians 10:11, Paul writes, "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." In its context, this applies specifically to the events of the Exodus.

There is no other Old Testament event that so closely parallels the life of the Christian. Just as the Israelites were in bondage in Egypt, we were in bondage to sin. Just as God redeemed them by bringing them through the Red Sea, He redeems us through baptism. Just as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, so we wander throughout our lives. Just as they eventually crossed the Jordan to enter the promised land, so we must one day pass the river of death to enter heaven.

As Paul notes, though, the bad things that happened to Israel on this journey are equally instructive. God took Israel out of Egypt with ease, but He couldn't get Egypt out of the hearts of Israel until a new generation arose that had never known it. That struggle is our struggle. Every Christian who falls away does so because in his heart, he longs for the Egypt of sin.

If we want to understand the Bible and make it to heaven ourselves, we need to understand this story. We need to understand why so many New Testament writers use it. We need to understand how it applies to us today. We need to understand what it means to come out of Egypt.

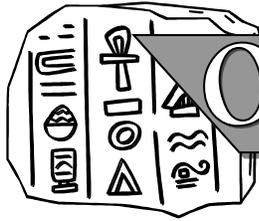
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Many of the "Context" articles in this book were written with the help of information from the revised edition of the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

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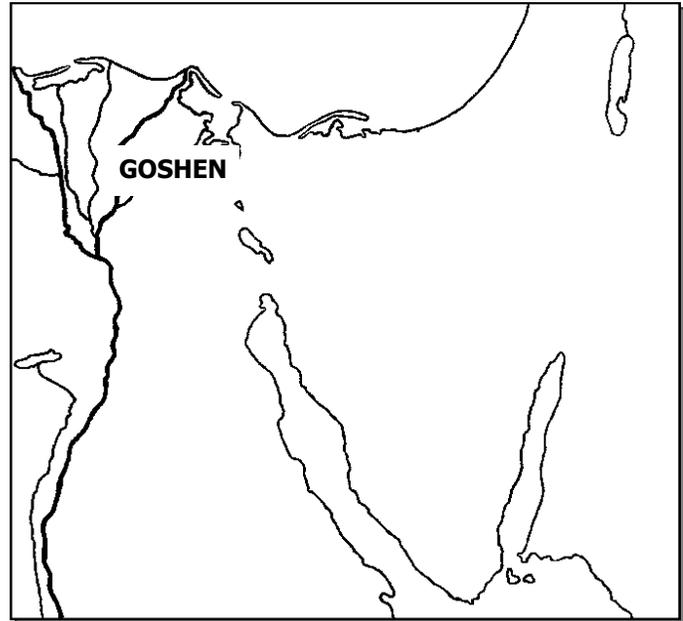
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson One: Israel's Oppression

### Introduction

Perhaps the most important verse in all of the story of the Exodus is Exodus 2:23, the verse in which the oppressed Israelites cried out to God for deliverance. God had had a plan for them since before the foundation of the world, complete with some of the most spectacular miracles ever seen, but that plan could not begin until God's people recognized that they needed His help.

In the same way, God's work in our lives won't begin until we admit that we need Him too. One of Satan's first stratagems is to persuade us to believe in our own self-sufficiency. This is a deadly delusion. It is both untrue and deprives us of the help of the One who is sufficient. As Christians, we can tap into help from God that makes the Ten Plagues look like a party trick, but God will not give us that help until we ask for it.



▲ GOSHEN is the land that was given to Jacob and his descendants by Pharaoh as a reward for Joseph's services, and the Israelites still lived there at the time of the birth of Moses.

### Context: A King Who Did Not Know Joseph

In Exodus 1:8, Moses attributes the beginning of the oppression of the Israelites to the appearance of a king "who did not know Joseph." It is likely that this Scripture refers to the displacement of a people called the Hyksos from the rulership of Egypt and their replacement by native Egyptians. The Hyksos were a confederation of Semitic and Indo-European tribes who invaded Egypt from the east about 1786 BC and reigned until they were driven out in about 1567 BC.

Most likely, the Israelite arrival in Egypt predated the Hyksos, and the Hyksos at least tolerated them as fellow non-Egyptians, but once the foreigners were ejected, the period of tolerance ended. Because the Hyksos came from such a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, the new Egyptian monarchs probably concluded that the Israelites had been part of the invasion too, which made them unwelcome interlopers at best and potential rebels at worst. We hear an echo of this concern in passages like Exodus 1:9-10. This potential problem caused the Egyptians to formulate a program of oppression that they hoped would keep the Israelites subjugated. Little did they know it would lead not to continued Egyptian prosperity, but to the Exodus.

**Questions: Exodus 1-4**

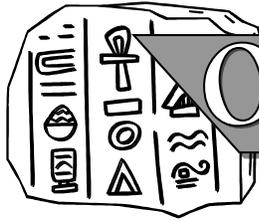
1. Whom does Exodus 1:1-5 describe as going to Egypt? How many of them are there? What happens to them and their descendants in Egypt? (1:6-7)
2. What new character appears in Exodus 1:8? How does He react to the Israelites? (1:9-10) How do the Egyptians attempt to solve the Israelite problem? (1:11, 13-14) How well does this succeed? (1:12)
3. According to Exodus 1:15-16, what solution does the king of Egypt come up with next? Does this plan succeed? Why or why not? (1:17-21)
4. In Exodus 1:22, what is Pharaoh's third plan for dealing with the Israelites? How does one of the daughters of Levi circumvent this plan? (2:1-4)
5. In Exodus 2:5-10, what happens to this "abandoned" child? Why is this important to future events?
6. What problem does Moses encounter in Exodus 2:11? How does he decide to respond? (2:12) What is the fallout from this decision? (2:13-15)
7. What action of a different sort does Moses take in Exodus 2:16-17? What effect does this end up having on the life of Moses?
8. What course of events is narrated in Exodus 2:23? What happens as a result? (2:24-25)

**Questions: Exodus 1-4 (continued)**

9. According to Exodus 3:1-3, what strange sight does Moses see? What happens to him when he investigates? (3:4-6)
  
10. How does God define His purpose in Exodus 3:7-9? How does God propose to carry out this purpose? (3:10) How does Moses react? (3:11)
  
11. What first "What if" does Moses present to God in Exodus 3:13 in an attempt to avoid doing God's will? How does God answer him? (3:14-16) What result does God predict? (3:18)
  
12. According to Exodus 3:18, how does God say the Egyptian king will respond to Moses? What will happen as a result? (3:20-22)
  
13. What second "What if" does Moses come up with in Exodus 4:1? How does God address this concern? (4:2-9)
  
14. According to Exodus 4:10, what excuse does Moses next make? What assurance does God offer in return? (4:11-12)
  
15. Having run out of excuses, what does Moses do in Exodus 4:13? How does God react to this? (4:14-17)
  
16. As per Exodus 4:18, what does Moses do next? What response does he meet with? (4:27-31)

## Questions: Application

1. What does the increase of Israel described in Exodus 1:1-7 have to do with the providence of God? Is there anything that we today should learn from this?
2. How challenging a position were the Hebrew midwives placed in in Exodus 1:15-21? What happened when they chose the courageous course instead of the easy course? What can we take from this?
3. In Exodus 2:11-15, were Moses' intentions good? What happened, though, when he acted on what he thought was best? What should this teach us today about following our own wisdom instead of God's wisdom?
4. When Moses helped Reuel's daughters in Exodus 2:16-17, does he appear to have any hope of reward in mind? What actually happens? What does this teach us about what the effects may be for us when we choose to be kind?
5. In Exodus 2:24, what is it that moves God to react to the outcry of Israel? What should this teach us about His faithfulness to His covenant with us today?
6. According to Exodus 3:10, who was directly responsible for bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt? What does this teach us about God's preferred methods? Why is this important?
7. What should we learn from the story of Moses' excuses and God's reactions throughout Exodus 3 and Exodus 4? Can we make a similar mistake today?
8. What result does Moses see when he finally gets over his excuses and obeys God in Exodus 4:29-31? What result will we see when we get over our excuses and obey God too?



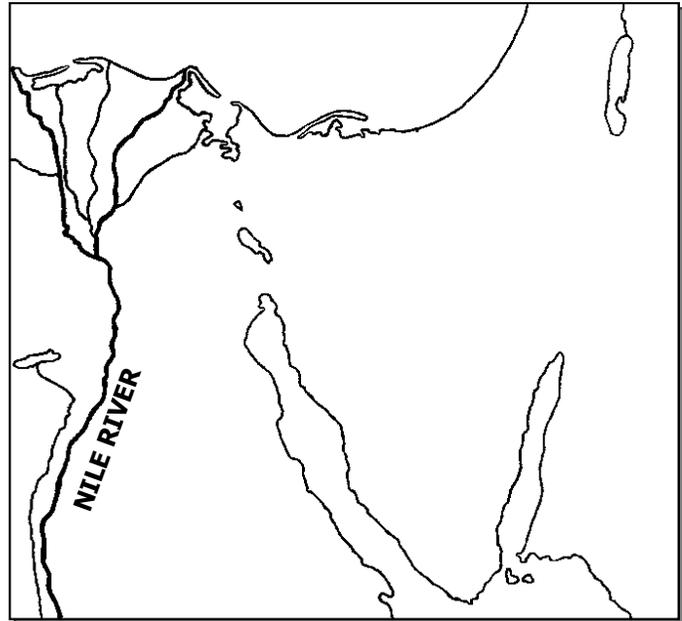
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Two: The First Nine Plagues

### Introduction

In Exodus 5:2, Pharaoh asks arguably the dumbest question in the entire Bible when he says, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?" Even today, it has the sound of the schoolboy saying, "Why don't you come over here and make me?" God, of course, was happy to provide the education, and by the time Pharaoh had been utterly humbled, he ended up doing what God wanted anyway.

Amazingly enough, there are millions today who use their lives to ask basically the same question as Pharaoh. They're not going to do what God wants until He comes over there and makes them. Of course, sooner or later, God will, and they won't like the result either. Let's be wise and do what God wants while we still have a choice about it.



▲ The NILE RIVER is the longest river in the world. It is also the reason for the existence of the ancient kingdom of Egypt, which used water from the Nile to transform what would otherwise be desert to the breadbasket of the Mediterranean.

### Context: The Miraculous Plagues

In today's community of religious scholars, there is a substantial group that begins its study of the Bible by dismissing the possibility that supernatural events can occur. Because of this, they accept none of the miracles recorded in Scripture. Instead, they invest much ingenuity in constructing plausible versions of non-miraculous events that gave rise to the Biblical "myths."

Not surprisingly, these scholars have paid a great deal of attention to the miracles of the ten plagues, and they have actually come up with a non-miraculous sequence that they claim is responsible for the story. Flooding and red-colored microorganisms make the Nile appear blood-red, the infestation drives the frogs inland where they die, the frog corpses breed disease-carrying insects, and so forth. Of course, this fits the Exodus narrative poorly. Each plague was only unleashed when Pharaoh disobeyed, Moses controlled both the onset of each plague and its end, and all the plagues were of such unnatural severity that even the unbelieving Egyptians acknowledged that they were the work of God. In this, as in all things, the Bible narrative has the distinctive ring of truth. Rather than searching for answers that explain away God, all men would do well to listen instead.

**Questions: Exodus 5-10**

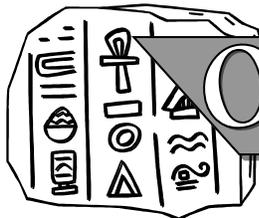
1. What first request do Moses and Aaron make of Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1, 3? How does Pharaoh reply to this request? (5:2, 4-5)
2. What orders does Pharaoh give in response to the request from Moses? Why? (5:6-9) What happens as a result? (5:10-14)
3. How do the foremen of Israel deal with this problem? (5:15-16) What does Pharaoh say to them? (5:17-18) What do the foremen do then? (5:19-21) How does Moses take this? (5:22-23)
4. What does God tell Moses to say to cheer up the Israelites? (6:1-8) Does it do any good? (6:9)
5. What mission does God then give to Moses? (6:10-11) What objection does Moses raise to this? (6:12) What does God say that overcomes Moses' objections? (7:1-5)
6. What happens in the first encounter between the power of God vs. Pharaoh and his magicians? (7:8-12) What impact does this have on Pharaoh? (7:13) How does God describe Pharaoh and his heart? (7:14)
7. How does God describe the purpose of His actions in Exodus 7:17?
8. What first three plagues does God send against Egypt?
  - a. (7:17-21)
  - b. (8:1-6)
  - c. (8:16-17)

**Questions: Exodus 5-10 (continued)**

9. How do Pharaoh and the Egyptians respond to each of these three plagues?
  - a. (7:22-25)
  - b. (8:7-8, 15)
  - c. (8:18-19)
  
10. What new objective for the next three plagues does God describe in Exodus 8:22-23?
  
11. What second trio of plagues does God now send against Egypt?
  - a. (8:20-24)
  - b. (9:1-6)
  - c. (9:8-10)
  
12. How do Pharaoh and the Egyptians deal with these more severe plagues?
  - a. (8:25-32)
  - b. (9:7)
  - c. (9:11-12)
  
13. Before the last of the three sets of plagues, what does God say He wants to prove? (9:14) How does He explain why He chose to prove His worth in this way? (15-16)
  
14. What final set of plagues does God now send against Egypt?
  - a. (9:18-19, 22-26)
  - b. (10:3-6, 12-15)
  - c. (10:21-23)
  
15. How do Pharaoh and the Egyptians react to this set of intensifying plagues?
  - a. (9:20-21, 27-28, 34-35)
  - b. (10:7-11, 16-17, 20)
  - c. (10:24-29)

### Questions: Application

1. According to passages like Exodus 5:2 and 7:14, who is it that first hardened Pharaoh's heart? What should we learn from this?
2. Sometimes in our lives, we get discouraged when those around us don't listen to God's will. What does the story of Moses and Pharaoh tell us about how unusual this is? What should we take from this?
3. From what we see in Exodus 5:20-21, 6:9, can we even expect God's people to listen to God in adversity? What makes this relevant to us?
4. In the first nine plagues, God demonstrates vast power in fulfillment of a promise He made to the ancestors of the Israelites. Why should we care about this?
5. In Exodus 9:16, God says that He has sent forth the plagues "in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth." Is this still one of God's goals today? How does He accomplish it now? What should this teach us?
6. In Exodus 9:34, 9:35, and 10:20, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is described in three different ways. What are they? How do we reconcile these different descriptions? Why is this important?
7. In the academic world, there are those who try to explain the 10 Plagues as a fortunate combination of entirely natural events. Is there anything about the Biblical account that makes this unlikely? If so, what?
8. Many of the unbelievers around us say that they would believe if God demonstrated His power to them in a miraculous way. What does the story of Pharaoh teach us about this claim?



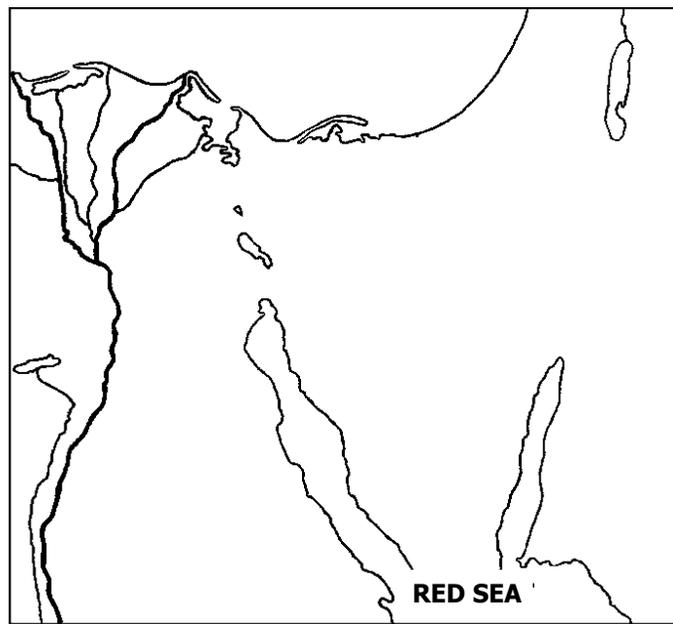
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Three: The Exodus

### Introduction

Of all the festivals of the old covenant, the Passover was the most important. Year by year, the faithful children of Israel used it to commemorate their salvation. It recalled the time when the Lord their God "brought them up out of the land of Egypt with a mighty arm and an outstretched hand," and the blood that they smeared on the door-frame recalled the blood that had saved them from death on that dreadful night.

As the saying goes, history might not repeat itself, but it sure rhymes a lot. We echo the Passover in our weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper, by which we remember our salvation. The bread that we eat and the cup that we drink are the reminder to us of an even more dreadful day when we were saved from death by the body and blood of the Son of God. Let us never forget.



▲ The RED SEA was the final barrier between the Israelites and freedom from captivity. When they arrived at its banks, most likely at its western arm, the Gulf of Suez, they saw quite clearly that they could not escape without the help of God.

### Context: Crossing the "Red Sea"

In Exodus 14, the crossing of the Red Sea is presented as a journey through the depths of a literal sea, with its waters "like a wall to them on the right hand and on the left." (Exodus 14:22) Not so, according to liberal students of the Bible. They translate the Hebrew phrase *yam sup* as meaning not "Red Sea," but "Reed Sea." As they tell the story, the Israelites merely passed through one of the many marshy areas between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Suez. The Egyptian chariots bogged down in the soft ground, and the Israelites ambushed them and defeated them.

There are several difficulties with this theory. First, when the Israelites vanquished an enemy in battle, although they gave credit to God, they weren't shy about recording their role in the victory either. Second, it seems strange that the sons of Israel would commemorate this marshland victory in Exodus 15:5 by singing of Pharaoh's army, "The deeps cover them; they went down into the depths like a stone." Finally, though, this same Hebrew phrase *yam sup* is used to describe the place where Solomon sails a trade fleet in 1 Kings 9:26. The crossing of the Red Sea wasn't a battle in a bog; it was an unquestionable display of the might of God.

**Questions: Exodus 11-14**

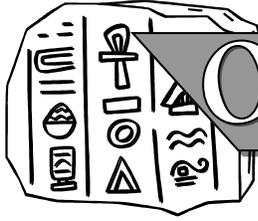
1. In Exodus 11:2, what command does God give? How is this carried out? (11:3) When in the chronology of Exodus is this act carried out? (12:35-36)
2. What does Moses prophesy in Exodus 11:4-5? What results does God say this event will have? (11:6-8)
3. According to Exodus 11:9-10, how does Pharaoh respond to this warning? How does Moses react to Pharaoh? (11:9) Taken together with Exodus 10:29, what does this tell us about chronology?
4. What day does God designate for Himself in Exodus 12:1-3, 6? What animal is to be involved in the commemoration of this day? (12:3-5) What is to be done with this animal? (12:6-11)
5. What parallel feast does God set up in Exodus 12:17? When is it to be observed? (12:18) How is it to be observed? (12:16, 19-20)
6. What commandment does Moses make in Exodus 12:21-22? Why? (12:23) How long are the Israelites to continue doing this? (12:24) Why? (12:25)
7. How does God fulfill His earlier promise in Exodus 12:29-30? How do the Egyptians react to this? (12:31-33)
8. How do the Israelites leave Egypt? (12:39) With what do they leave? (12:34-38)

**Questions: Exodus 11-14 (continued)**

9. According to Exodus 13:17, what was the obvious route from Exodus to Canaan? Why did the Israelites not go that way? What way did they go instead? (13:18)
  
10. What does Moses command the children of Israel to take with them in Exodus 13:19? Why? Genesis 50:24-25 may help you with your answer.
  
11. As per Exodus 13:21-22, what guide does God provide the Israelites?
  
12. What commandment does God give in Exodus 14:1-3? Why? (14:4) How does Pharaoh react to this? (14:5-9)
  
13. How do the people respond to the appearance of the Egyptian army in Exodus 14:11-12? What does Moses say to them? (14:13-14) What plan does God then reveal? (14:15-18)
  
14. What delaying tactic does God use in Exodus 14:19-20? What does Moses use the time to do? (14:21) What does this allow the Israelites to do? (14:22)
  
15. How do the Egyptians react to this unexpected occurrence in Exodus 14:23? What initial obstacles do they face? (14:24-25) What eventually happens to them? (14:26-28)
  
16. When Israel reaches the far side of the Red Sea, what does Exodus 14:30 tell us that they saw? How did they react to this? (14:31)

**Questions: Application**

1. According to 1 Corinthians 5:7, who is our Passover today? What should this tell us?
2. As 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 relates, what similar event to the Passover do we observe? What should we learn from the Scriptural connection between these two memorials?
3. Could the angel of the Lord have distinguished between Israelites and Egyptians without the blood on the doorposts? Why did God have them put the blood there, then? What would probably have happened if some of the Israelites had disobeyed? What should we take from this?
4. How important was it that the Israelites teach their children about the meaning of the Passover? What should we learn from this today? How should we apply it?
5. What does the story of the bones of Joseph teach us about the meaning and importance of faith?
6. We see yet another take on the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Exodus 14:1-9? What does this tell us about the hardening process? What does that tell us about the existence of free will?
7. Liberal theologians like to argue that the Israelites passed through the "Red Sea," not the Red Sea, that the Red Sea story is the distorted record of a battle in the marshes that the Israelites won. Is this a textually defensible position? Why or why not?
8. According to 1 Corinthians 10:1-2, what is the typical significance of the children of Israel passing through the cloud and the sea? John 3:4-6 may help you with your answer. What should we take from this?



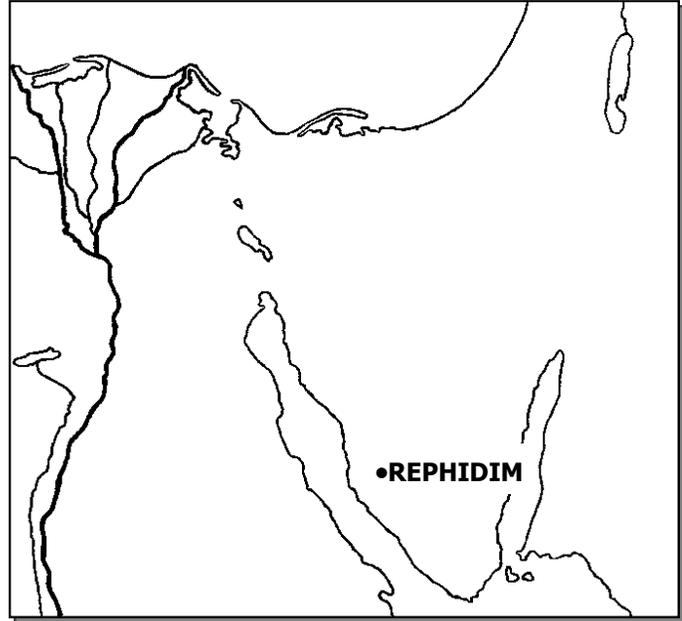
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Four: Journeying to Sinai

### Introduction

One of the struggles that God's people today face is the struggle of keeping the fire of our devotion burning. It's very easy for us to serve God at first, when we're alive with the joy of our salvation, but as Satan begins to paint beguiling pictures of the sin we left behind, our determination begins to waver. We have to work to maintain the zeal for God that we had so easily at first.

We see a marvelous example of why we need to invest the effort in the story of the children of Israel. The Red Sea hadn't even finished sloshing yet before they started complaining. God had done amazing things to rescue them from Egypt, yet many of them wanted nothing more than to return there. What they didn't realize was that they could die, but they couldn't go back. No more can we.



▲ REPHIDIM was the place where the children of Israel stopped on their way from the wilderness of Sin to the wilderness of Sinai. There was no water there. The people complained. They would do that a lot.

### Context: The Sinai Peninsula

Certainly, there is not much good to be said for the Israelites' constant complaining about food, water, and weariness during their wanderings in the wilderness. However, we gain a little more insight into their position when we consider the physical characteristics of the Sinai Peninsula itself. The Sinai is right next to the Fertile Crescent, one of the most heavily inhabited areas of antiquity, yet its physical characteristics are such that almost no one lived there.

Indeed, the Sinai may well be one of the most wretched places on earth. It is sandy in the north and rocky in the south, but it is equally inhospitable everywhere. The picture on the cover of this workbook, which was taken from the top of the traditional location for Mt. Sinai, reveals a landscape that would fit as well on Mars as on Earth. Rainfall in the Sinai is minimal, and like most deserts, it experiences wide variations in temperature, from blistering days to frigid nights. Agriculture in such a place is impossible, and tending flocks and herds is little easier. A journey through such a moonscape with hundreds of thousands of others, whom the land could not possibly support, would have tested the faith of anyone. Nonetheless, it was the route that God had chosen to the Promised Land.

**Questions: Exodus 15-19**

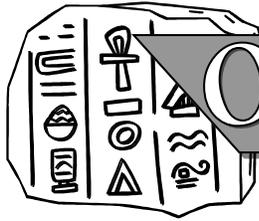
1. What do we see the people doing in Exodus 15:23-24? How long does it take them to reach this point? (15:22) What solution do God and Moses provide? (15:25)
2. What do we see the Israelites doing in Exodus 16:2-3? How long does it take them to reach this point? (16:1)
3. What solution does God promise to this problem in Exodus 16:4? What special provision does God make for the sixth day? (16:5)
4. In Exodus 16:6-7, what does Moses say the people will see in God's deliverance? What seems strange about this?
5. According to Exodus 16:13-14, how does God provide for the people? As the Israelites were collecting this bounty, what unusual thing did they discover? (16:16-17)
6. What commandment does Moses give the people about their new food source in Exodus 16:19? Do the people listen? What happens? (16:20)
7. In Exodus 16:22, what happens on the sixth day? What are the people commanded to do on the seventh day? (16:25-26) What do they do anyway? (16:27)
8. What do the children of Israel call God's gift in Exodus 16:31? How does God preserve the memory of this gift for later generations? (16:32-34)

**Questions: Exodus 15-19 (continued)**

9. According to Exodus 17:1, what happens at Rephidim? How do the people react to this? (17:2-3)
  
10. In Exodus 17:5-6, how does God respond to the grumbling? To what is the name of the place changed? (17:7) Why?
  
11. Where does Exodus 19:2 say the Israelites go after Rephidim? What happens there? (19:3)
  
12. What promise does God make to Israel in Exodus 19:5-6? Is this promise conditional or unconditional? How do the people react to it? (19:7-8)
  
13. In Exodus 19:9, what does God declare is going to happen? What preparations are the people to make? (19:10-12)
  
14. What happens after the third day, according to Exodus 19:16? How does Moses respond to this unusual event? (19:17)
  
15. Describe the spectacle unfolding atop Sinai in Exodus 19:18? How does Moses deal with the awe-inspiring scene? (19:19-20)
  
16. What warning does God give in Exodus 19:21-22? What does this tell us about the relationship between the people and God at this time?

**Questions: Application**

1. What is our predominant impression of the children of Israel at this stage of their wilderness journey? In retrospect, how reasonable does this seem to us? How often are we likely to seem this way to God? What should we learn from this?
2. Does there appear to be a disconnect between what the Israelites have literally seen from God and the level of their faith in God? What lesson should this teach us?
3. Throughout this portion of the story, how thoroughly does God provide for Israel's needs? What does this tell us we can expect God will do for our needs? What, then, should we not do?
4. Before Sinai, how many commandments do the Israelites have to deal with? How do they do in obeying these commandments? What does this tell us about their hearts and the hearts of the disobedient generally?
5. What does the conditional nature of the "holy nation" promise in Exodus 19 tell us about the nature of God's promises to man in the Christian era?
6. How important was it for the Israelites to prepare for God in Exodus 19? How important is it for us to prepare for God today? How should we do it?
7. What picture does Exodus 19 paint of the awesomeness of God? What should we take from this today?
8. So far, what's the biggest difference between the relationship of the people to God under the old covenant and their relationship to God under the new covenant? What should we take from this?



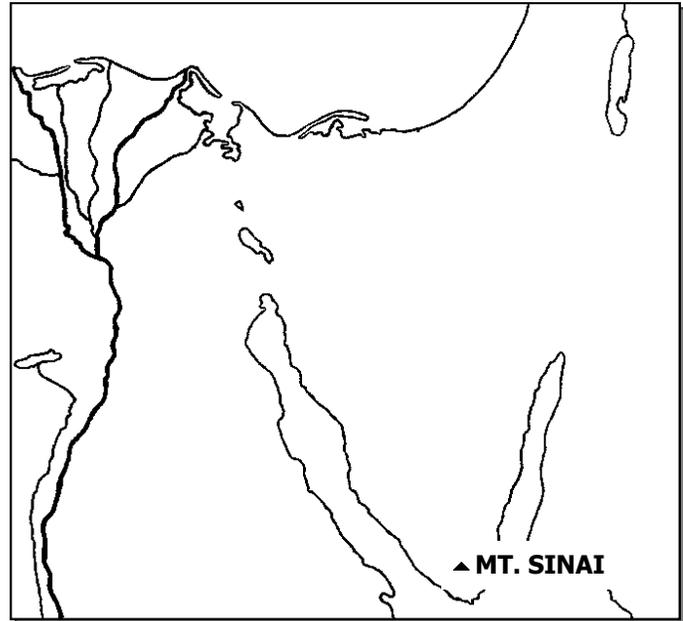
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Five: The Covenant

### Introduction

One of the most striking things about the story of the Exodus is the sheer spectacle of the story. It contains some of the most vivid and awe-inspiring passages in some of the Bible. Exodus 19 describes God arriving on Sinai with all the force of a volcanic eruption. No wonder that the people were terrified and didn't want to go near Him!

Sometimes, we forget that about God. We're so used to calling Him Father and traipsing up to His throne in prayer whenever we want to that we forget the awesomeness of the One we approach. God is not cute and cuddly. God is terrifying, and the only reason that He does not terrify us is that we are protected from His wrath by the blood of Jesus. He is much too dangerous to be taken lightly. Let's treat Him with the reverence and awe that He deserves.



▲ MT. SINAI, usually identified with Jebel Musa in the southern Sinai peninsula, is the mountain to which God called Israel to receive His law. It is at once spectacular and forbidding.

### Context: The Location of Sinai

Unless a place mentioned in Scripture has been known by that name since antiquity, identification of its precise location is often quite difficult. This is the case with Mt. Sinai. None of the Israelites lived on or near the mountain, so the connection of the name with a particular place became tenuous. The first positive identification we have of a mountain as Mt. Sinai comes from the 4th century A.D., nearly 2000 years after the time of the exodus.

Some scholars have attempted to locate Mt. Sinai at al-Hrob in northwest Arabia because the story of God's appearance at Sinai seems to manifest volcanic activity, and al-Hrob is in the vicinity of the nearest volcanic peaks. Probably the best guess as to the location of the holy mountain, however, is the traditional one, with the mountain of Jebel Musa in the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula. This rugged peak of granite is about 7500 feet high and has near it several different locations where the Israelites could have assembled. It provides a likely setting for the spectacle of God giving the law to His people.

**Questions: Exodus 20, 24, 32-34**

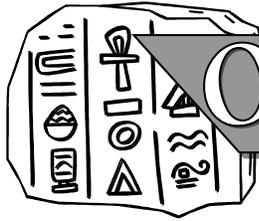
1. According to Exodus 20:18, what did the people see? How did they react to this sight?
2. What did the people request from Moses in Exodus 20:19? How does Moses reply to this? (20:20)  
What was the result of this encounter? (20:21)
3. What commandment does God give in Exodus 24:1-2? What restriction does God place upon the elders and the people?
4. In Exodus 24:3, what does Moses do? How do the people respond to this?
5. What do Moses and his helpers do in Exodus 24:4-5? What does Moses do with the blood that this process generates? (24:6)
6. What does Moses read, according to Exodus 24:7? How do the people reply? How does Moses respond? (24:8)
7. According to Exodus 24:12, what does God command Moses to do? How long is Moses on the mountain? (24:18)
8. What does Moses do to ensure order while he is on the mountain, according to Exodus 24:14?

**Questions: Exodus 20, 24, 32-34 (continued)**

9. What do the people say to Aaron in Exodus 32:1? What command does Aaron give in response? (32:2) What does Aaron then do? (32:3-4)
  
10. What do the people do before the new golden calf, according to Exodus 32:6? What does God want to do in response? (32:9-10) How does Moses dissuade God? (32:11-13)
  
11. When Moses sees the calf, how does Exodus 32:19-20 describe him as reacting?
  
12. What does Moses ask Aaron in Exodus 32:21? How does Aaron respond? (32:22-24) What judgment does Moses bring against Israel for their sin? (32:26-28)
  
13. What penalty does God pronounce on the people in Exodus 33:2-3? How does Moses react to this? (33:15-16) What does God ultimately decide to do? (33:17)
  
14. What command does God give Moses in Exodus 34:1-2? What happens to these tablets? (34:27-28)
  
15. According to Exodus 34:29, what happens to Moses' face because of his prolonged contact with God? How do Aaron and the people respond to this strange sight? (34:30)
  
16. What solution does Moses eventually arrive at to his face problem in Exodus 34:32-33)?

**Questions: Application**

1. In Exodus 20, the Israelites want someone else to stand between them and God. In what way is this an attitude we should share? (Hebrews 9:15) In what way is it not an attitude we should share? (Hebrews 12:18-28) Does this attitude cause problems in the religious world today?
2. What makes the exchanges of Exodus 24:3, 7 important? Do we do anything similar today? When? How should this affect our view of serving God?
3. How was the old covenant sealed? (Hebrews 9:18-21) How is our covenant today sealed? (Luke 22:20) What should we take from this about the solemnity of our commitment to God?
4. When Moses picked Aaron to lead the people in his absence, how wise a choice did that prove to be? What should this teach us about the way we should select leaders in the Lord's church today?
5. When the children of Israel committed idolatry before the golden calf, how visible was the presence of God on the mountaintop? What does this tell us about the evil heart?
6. How would you describe Moses' response to the sin of the golden calf? What should we learn from this about our response to sin?
7. How important does Moses think it is that the presence of God remain with the children of Israel? How often do we take the presence of God for granted? How should we deal with this problem?
8. How does Paul's use of the type of Moses' veiled face help us to understand an important spiritual topic? Consider 1 Corinthians 13:12 and 2 Corinthians 3:7-8, 16-18 in your answer.



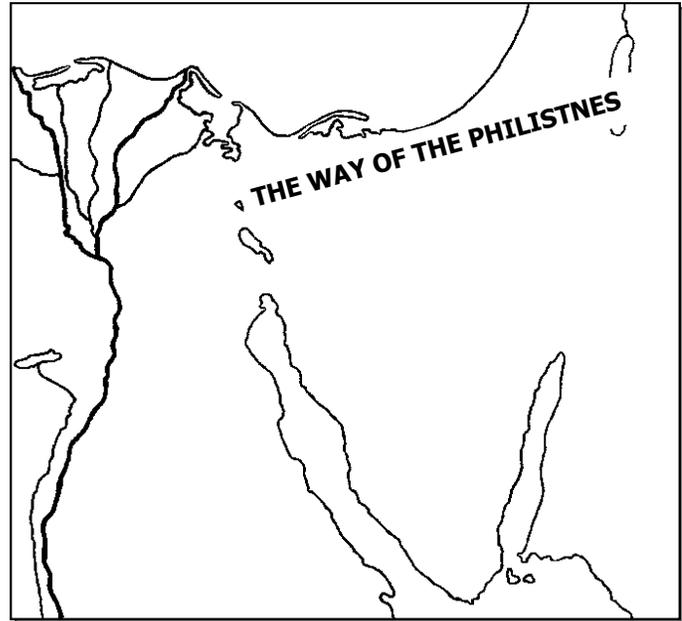
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Six: The Heart of the Law

### Introduction

Sometimes, in our desire to make the word of God fit into a nice, neat, tidy package, we make generalizations that distort the meaning of Scripture. One of the big distortions we make occurs when we compare the Law of Moses to the law of Christ. We like to say that the Mosaic law was all about rigid, ritualistic law-keeping, but the law of Christ is about love and the heart.

That's completely inaccurate. Certainly, the Pharisees of the time of Jesus had reduced the Law to ritual, but that was not its original intent. The first command that Moses gave was to love, and the word "love" actually occurs more densely in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. Some of the rules may have changed, but what God wants from His people has always been the same: the free obedience of love.



▲ THE WAY OF THE PHILISTINES was the road that ran from Egypt to Canaan. God instructed the people not to travel to the promised land along that route because of the risk that it would cause war.

### Context: Covenants in the Ancient World

God has always spoken to people in a language they understand. This includes not just the words He uses, but also the symbols and themes He employs. For instance, John 1 does not attempt to explain Jesus without a mental point of reference for the peoples of the first century. Instead, John uses the *Logos*, a familiar tenet of Platonic philosophy, as a starting point for his revelation of the Son of God.

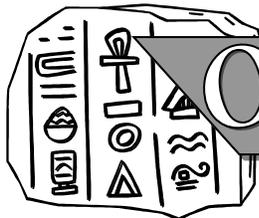
We see a similar regard for cultural understanding in the covenant that God makes with His people at Mt. Sinai. The concept of the covenant would have been familiar to Israel, and even the way that God proclaims his covenant fits what they would have expected. When an earthly king made a covenant with a lesser, he began by proclaiming his identity. So did God in Exodus 20:1. The king then described his interactions with the other party of the covenant. So did God in Exodus 20:2. Both then outline the stipulations of the covenant and conclude with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (see Deuteronomy 28). Both want to see the covenant ratified (Exodus 24), and both require the lesser party to keep a copy to remind him of his obligations (Exodus 25:16). God spoke to His people in a way they would understand. Their disobedience was their fault.

## Questions: The Heart of the Law

1. What commandment does God give the Israelites in Exodus 20:4? What reasons does God give for this commandment? (20:5-6) Did it matter if the Israelites made an idol to Jehovah? What should this tell us?
2. What commandment appears in Exodus 20:7? What does this mean?
3. What commandment does God give in Exodus 20:8? How does God explain this commandment? (20:9-11) Does this apply to us today? Why or why not?
4. What commandment is given in Exodus 20:12? What does this mean? Mark 7:9-13 may help. Should we obey this commandment today? Why? How?
5. What commandment appears in Exodus 20:16? What does this mean? How does this commandment interact with the New Testament?
6. What commandment does God give in Exodus 20:17? How does this commandment differ from the preceding nine? Why is this difference important?
7. According to Deuteronomy 5:22, what makes the 10 Commandments unique among all the laws of the Old Testament? Why do you think God chose those commandments and not others?
8. What commandment does God give in Leviticus 19:18? Considered in the context of Leviticus 19:9-17, what does this mean? How does that fit in with Jesus' comments on the subject in Matthew 23:40? What does this tell us about the Mosaic Law?

**Questions: The Heart of the Law (continued)**

9. What commandment is presented in Deuteronomy 6:5? What does this mean? What does this tell us about the Law of Moses?
  
10. What commandments does God give in Deuteronomy 6:6-9? What is the connection between these and Deuteronomy 6:5? How should we apply these things today?
  
11. What does God say the Israelites will receive in Deuteronomy 6:10-11? Why? How does this relate to the description of God in Nehemiah 9:32? Why is this important to us today?
  
12. What does Moses have to say in Deuteronomy 28:1-2? How important is it that this promise is conditional? Why?
  
13. Briefly, summarize the content of Deuteronomy 28:3-14. How far-reaching do these blessings appear to be? How does this compare to the description of Christianity in Ephesians 1:3?
  
14. What does Moses reveal in Deuteronomy 28:15? Why is it important that this promise is conditional?
  
15. Briefly, describe the message of Deuteronomy 28:16-46. How does this litany compare to the blessings of 28:3-14? Why do you think the list of curses is longer?
  
16. What additional curse does Moses pronounce in Deuteronomy 28:63-65? Why is this significant? How is it an important proof of the authenticity of Scripture?



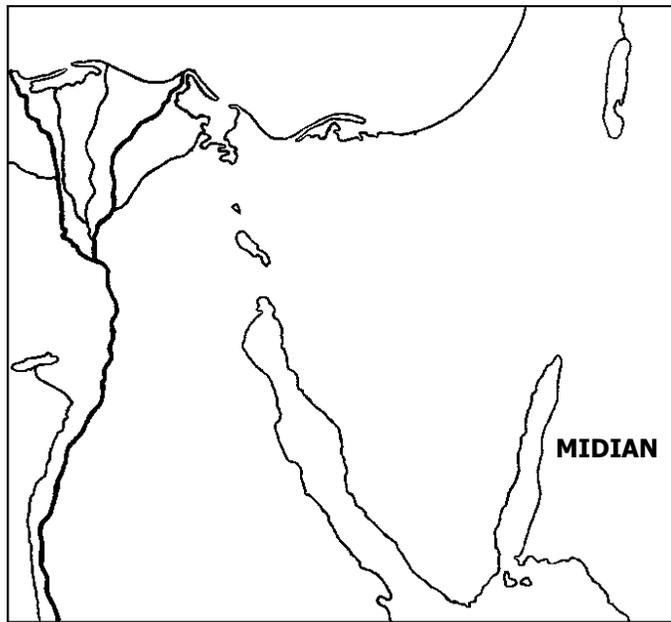
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Seven: Details of the Law

### Introduction

As we saw in the last lesson, the Law was centered around the idea of loving God and loving one's neighbor. However, as people demonstrate daily with all the evil things they do in the name of "love," we don't know how to do that without additional guidance. That's why the Mosaic Law, and indeed the law we follow today, are filled with a number of smaller ordinances.

The details of the law aren't unrelated to the main purpose of the law. They are an expression of that purpose. They are God saying, "If you want to love Me and love other people, here's how you need to go about doing it." It's up to us to obey, not to pick and choose what we think is loving. If we rebel, God will judge us at the end of our lives, not just for our failure to carry out the details, but for our failure to love.



▲ MIDIAN was the homeland of the Midianites, a people that appears both for good and ill in the story of the Exodus. Moses' father-in-law Hobab was a Midianite, but other Midianites attacked the Israelite stragglers as they traveled toward Canaan.

### Context: Creating the Concept of Holiness

When we study the many ordinances of the Law from a distance of 3500 years, we find ourselves bemused by many of the things that God required. Why all the rules about washing and eating and sacrificing? In many cases, these laws clearly have a practical purpose. When the Israelites were instructed to quarantine the sick, it clearly hampered the spread of disease.

Other prohibitions are less easily explained. Certainly, the consumption of poorly prepared pork can cause health problems, but so can the consumption of many of the clean meats if they are not dealt with in a hygienic way. Instead, the best explanation for these and many other laws is that they were designed to create within the Israelites the idea of holiness. Just like a child is taught math in a simple and abstract way before the complexities of the real world were introduced, God used simple and easily understood commandments to teach the Israelites about the way they were supposed to hold themselves apart from sin. The restrictions on eating meat helped them to understand the restrictions on idolatry. Those laws created in them the mindset that they were different and required to behave in a different way, something that they had to understand before the Messiah could come.

## Questions: Details of the Law

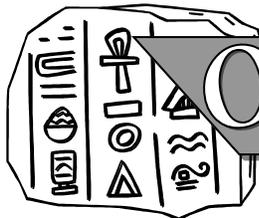
1. According to Exodus 25:1-2, how were the resources for the construction of the tabernacle to be gathered? How did the people respond to this appeal? (36:3-5) What should this teach us?
2. How does God say the children of Israel should construct the tabernacle in Exodus 25:9? Why is this important?
3. What does God command to be built in Exodus 25:10-16? What did this item look like?
4. What are the children of Israel told to construct in Exodus 25:17-22? How is it described?
5. What item of furniture is presented in Exodus 25:23-30? What is this to be used for? (Leviticus 24:5-8) What is to be done with the week-old bread? (24:9)
6. What item does God describe in Exodus 30:1-5? What is its purpose? (30:7-10)
7. What does God command to be made in Exodus 26:31-33? What is this item for?
8. According to Exodus 26:35-37, 30:6, how are all these items to be arranged?

**Questions: Details of the Law (continued)**

9. What does God command the Israelites to do in Exodus 31:12-13? Why? How long are they to observe this commandment? (31:16)
  
10. What penalty does God pronounce against those who violate this commandment in Exodus 31:14? How seriously are the Israelites supposed to take this? (Numbers 15:32-36) What is another example of work on the Sabbath? (Exodus 35:3)
  
11. What animals did God declare clean and therefore allow the Israelites to eat, according to Leviticus 4:3-8? What sea creatures were clean? (4:9)
  
12. In Leviticus 4:13-19, what birds does God exclude from the general cleanliness of birds? What swarming things were acceptable to eat? (4:20-23)
  
13. In Leviticus 4:44, 46-47, how does God describe the purpose of this lengthy list of clean and unclean animals? What penalty attached to someone who even touched the corpse of an unclean animal? (4:31)
  
14. According to Leviticus 12:1-2, what was to be done at the birth of any male child? How long after giving birth to a boy did a woman remain unclean? (12:4) What was to be done at the end of this time period? (12:6-8)
  
15. What does Leviticus 13:1-2 instruct anyone with a strange mark on his skin to do? What is the priest to do once the infected person shows up? (13:3-6)
  
16. What happens if the leprous mark doesn't fade? (13:7-8)

**Questions: Details of the Law (continued)**

17. What basic rule does the second half of Leviticus 14:9 establish for the purification of unclean people? What basic rule exists for the purification of unclean things? (13:58)
  
18. Generally speaking, what does Leviticus 18:16 command the Israelites not to do? What exception to this rule is made in Deuteronomy 25:5? Why? (25:6)
  
19. What command is given in Leviticus 19:12? Why is this important?
  
20. What instruction is given in Leviticus 24:19-20? Is this to be a punishment that is inflicted personally or judicially? (Deuteronomy 19:16-21) Why is this important?
  
21. What are the children of Israel commanded not to do in Deuteronomy 6:16? What is the opposite of this sin? (6:17)
  
22. What crime is described in Deuteronomy 17:2-4? How are the people to respond to this crime? (17:4-5)
  
23. What standard of judgment is to be used in this case, according to Deuteronomy 17:6? Who is to execute the judgment? (17:7) Why is this significant?
  
24. According to the first part of Deuteronomy 29:18, what does God not want to see? How does the second part of the verse describe the person who disobeys this?



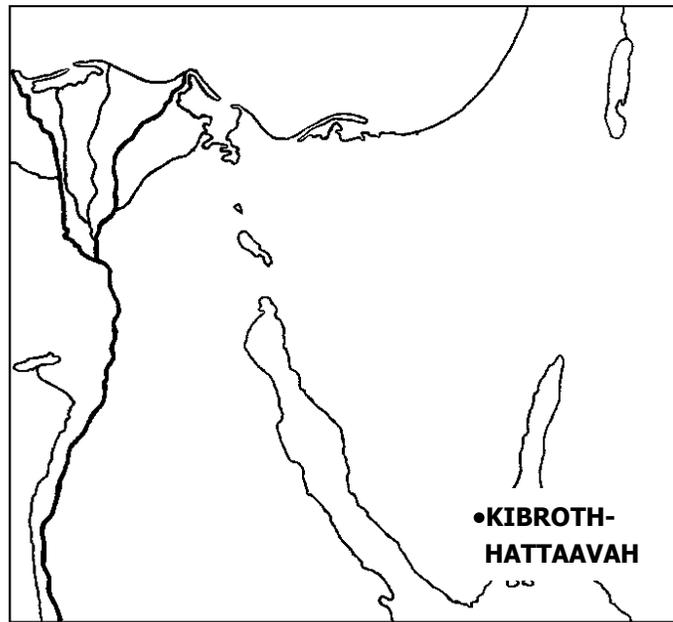
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Eight: Spies and Rebellion

### Introduction

Despite the fact that God is the omnipotent and omniscient Creator of the universe, most so-called “Christians” doubt His competence when He laid out the much simpler pattern of the church. They don’t say that, of course, but their actions prove it. Just like the ten wicked spies did, they veto God’s plan and substitute something they are convinced will work better.

Our attitude needs to be precisely the opposite. We need to have the humility and faith to admit that God knows better than we do, and follow His directions instead of our desires. A church without denominational structure, instrumental music, fellowship halls and whatever else is not doomed to failure. In fact, it is the only organization that can succeed in accomplishing God’s purposes. Let’s trust Him through obedience.



▲ KIBROTH-HATTA AVAH was the site of the Israelites’ first encampment after setting out from Mt. Sinai. This is where the people complained about lack of meat, were given quail, and were decimated by the resulting plague. In Hebrew, it means “the graves of greediness.”

### Context: The Canaanites

Other than the helpful command, “Kill them all,” the Bible has very little to say about the native inhabitants of Canaan. However, other records from the time, combined with archaeology, have taught us a great deal. Like the modern-day word “American,” “Canaanite” is a geographical and cultural, rather than a racial, designation. There was no Canaanite race; instead, the land was settled by a hodgepodge of Amorites, Hittites, Philistines, and all the other myriad groups recorded by Scripture. However, as a result of their geographical proximity, all of these groups soon began to develop a shared way of life in terms of organization, commerce, and the lax moral code that brought about their downfall.

However, just because the Canaanites were evil doesn’t mean they were incompetent. Their nations were well-organized and warlike. Excavation of the Canaanite city of Hazor has revealed that its ramparts were 100 feet thick. To a ragtag collection of escaped slaves, without either modern weaponry or the expertise to besiege cities, the Canaanites would have appeared a formidable foe indeed.

**Questions: Numbers 11-12**

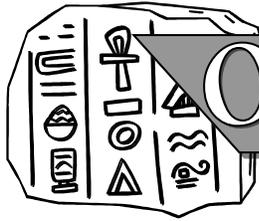
1. What happens in Numbers 10:11-13? Why is this significant?
2. What do some of the people do in Numbers 11:1? Did they have any real reason for doing this at this point? How did God react to this? What did Moses do to intercede for the people? (11:2)
3. What do the people say in Numbers 11:4-6? How do Moses and God take this? (11:10-11)
4. How does Moses especially react to the complaint of the people, according to Numbers 11:11-14? What does God say to respond to Moses' problem? (11:16-17)
5. According to Numbers 11:18-20, what does God promise the people? How does God fulfill this promise? (11:31-32) What judgment does God exact for the faithlessness of the people? (11:33)
6. What complaint do Miriam and Aaron raise in Numbers 12:1-2? Why do they do this? How valid is the complaint? (12:3)
7. How does God initially respond to Miriam and Aaron, according to Numbers 12:4? What does He say to them? (12:6-8) What happened to Miriam as a punishment?
8. What does Aaron ask for in Numbers 12:11-12? How does Moses respond to this? (12:13) What's God's reaction to Moses' petition? (12:14) What eventually happens? (12:15)

**Questions: Numbers 13-14**

9. What command does God give in Numbers 13:1? What does Moses ask of these men in addition? (13:17-20) How do they fulfill part of Moses' request? (13:23-24)
  
10. According to Numbers 13:25, how long does the spying mission last? What first impressions do the spies return with? (13:27-29)
  
11. What advice does the spy Caleb give about entering the land in Numbers 13:30? What do the other 10 spies (besides Joshua) say? (13:31)
  
12. How do the people react to the spies' commentary, according to Numbers 14:1? What do they decide they want? (14:4)
  
13. How do Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb respond to the outcry of the people in Numbers 14:5-9? What do the people want to do in response to this appeal? (14:10)
  
14. What does Numbers 14:11-12 say that God wanted to do to the rebellious people? What does Moses ask for instead? (14:19) Does God listen to Moses? (14:20)
  
15. What judgment does God pronounce against the people in Numbers 14:21-23? What exception does He make to this? (14:24) What happens to the other 10 spies? (14:36-37) What command does God now give to the people? (14:25)
  
16. How do the people react to God's judgment in Numbers 14:39-40? What warning does Moses give them? (14:41-42) Do the people listen? (14:44) What happens to them? (14:45)

### Questions: Application

1. One of the grimly amusing things about the story of the Exodus is how good Egypt began to look to the children of Israel as it receded in the rearview mirror. Do Christians today sometimes have a similar problem? If so, what is it? How do we need to deal with it?
2. At times, we tend to complain without too much thought or too much reason. Judging from the story of the Exodus, is God likely to take our complaining as lightly as we do? Why wouldn't He? What should this teach us?
3. Even a spiritual giant like Moses got worn down by the disobedience of the people. Are there times when we get worn down by our lives too? How can we find help like Moses did?
4. Miriam learned the hard way not to complain against Moses, the leader whom God appointed. Do we have leaders today whom God has also appointed? If so, what lesson should we take from this about complaining against them?
5. Caleb made his report to the people based on his faith in God. The other 10 spies reported based on their faithlessness. What does this tell us about the way faith should change our perspective?
6. Just like the Israelites were, there will be times in our lives when we will be faced with a choice between "common sense" and obeying God. What should we do then? Why?
7. How many times does Moses intercede for the children of Israel, even when they wanted to disobey or kill him? What should this teach us about our compassion today?
8. The Israelites compounded their sin of refusing to take the land by attacking it when God had told them not to. Do we sometimes compound our sin with more sin? How can we avoid this?



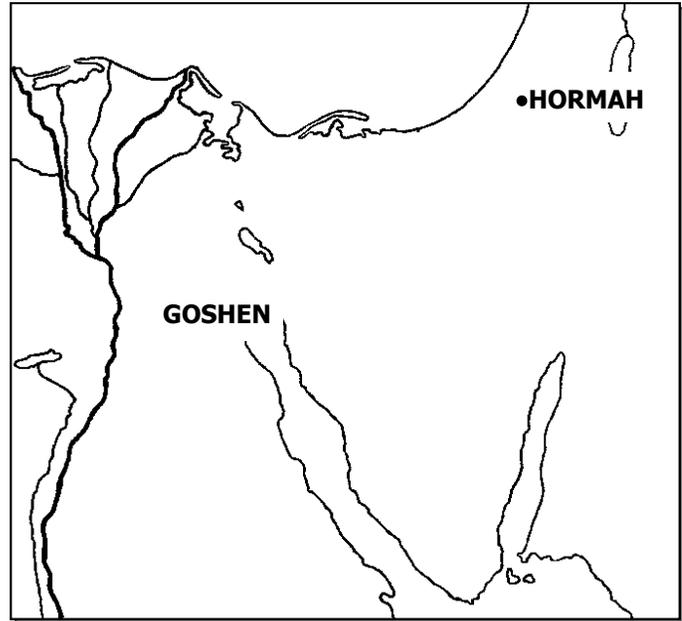
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Nine: The Levitical Priesthood

### Introduction

This lesson looks at only a tiny portion of the commandments that God gives concerning the Levitical priesthood and the sacrifices that they were to carry out. The detail of the full scheme is quite literally dizzying. Even the experienced Bible student can get lost in the nuances of wave offerings, heave offerings, grain offerings, and red heifers.

However, inside all the detail, we see an important message about the seriousness of sin and the importance of dealing with it. A substantial proportion of the manpower and resources of Israel was constantly invested in propitiation for the sins of the people, and even all that effort produced only postponement, not atonement. Only the blood of Christ would purchase final forgiveness. Sin is a big deal. Just because we have a better sacrifice is no reason to take it lightly.



▲ HORMAH was a fortified city in southern Palestine. It was where the Israelites attacked and were defeated after God condemned them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

### Context: The Duties of the Priesthood

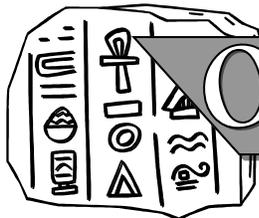
Even though this lesson focuses primarily on the sacrificial duties of the priest, more was required of the Aaronic priesthood than merely that. During the time of the tabernacle, they were the ones who were responsible for preparing the furniture so that the Levites could transport it. (Numbers 4:1-20) They were the ones whom God directed to inspect people, houses, and items that were suspected of having leprosy, and then determining what should be done with them. (Leviticus 13-14) In the absence of a judge, they were even the ones who were supposed to decide difficult legal cases, and their judgment was binding. (Deuteronomy 17:8-13)

Perhaps most importantly, though, it was the priests who were supposed to instruct Israel in godly conduct. In Deuteronomy 33:10, Moses says of the priests and Levites, "They shall teach Your ordinances to Jacob, and Your law to Israel." As with many other commands of God in the Law of Moses, this one was more honored in the breach than in the observance. Hosea rebukes the priests for their failure to teach in Hosea 4:6. Malachi does the same in Malachi 2:4-9. It is likely that priestly failure in this critical responsibility was at least partially responsible for the repeated apostasy of Israel.

## Questions: The Levitical Priesthood

1. According to Exodus 28:1, whom does God select for His priests?
2. What does Exodus 28:2 reveal about the way that the priests are to be dressed? What should we learn from this. Briefly describe the dress of the priests as laid out in the rest of the chapter.
3. According to Exodus 29:1, what needs to happen to these priest candidates before they can serve in the tabernacle? Once again, briefly describe this process. (29:2-9)
4. According to Exodus 29:9, how long is this priesthood to last? Who is to hold it? Why is this important?
5. Who does Leviticus 10:1 say Nadab and Abihu were? Were they qualified to serve as priests? What did they do wrong?
6. How does God respond to this provocation in Leviticus 10:2? Why? (10:3) Is there a lesson in this for us? If so, what?
7. How were Nadab and Abihu's relatives commanded to respond to this occurrence in Leviticus 10:6-7? What should this teach us?
8. What command does God give in Leviticus 10:8-10? Is it coincidence that this command appears here, or might it have something to do with the fate of Nadab and Abihu? What should we take from it?





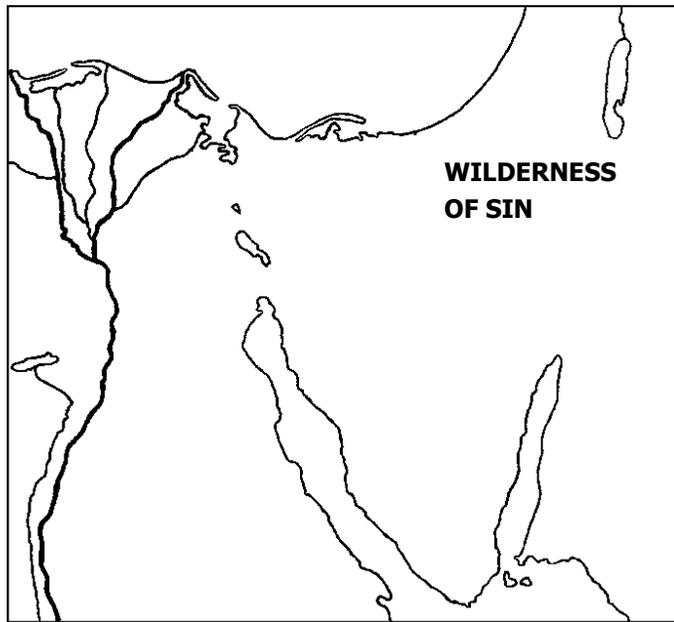
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Ten: Korah's Rebellion

### Introduction

Although it cost thousands of lives, the sad saga of the rebellion of Korah did accomplish one important purpose: it emphasized that only the priests whom God had consecrated had the right to approach Him. Any layman who dared try would be destroyed.

The same principle is operative today. God makes quite clear that He only wants His holy ones to approach them. All Christians have been consecrated to His service by the blood of Christ the High Priest, but no one who is not a Christian can claim this distinction. The "sinner's prayer" is an oxymoron because only Christians have the right to pray. There are many who think otherwise, who believe that they have the right to approach the throne of God like a drunk strolling into a church service, but they are mistaken. Only God's own can draw near Him.



▲ The WILDERNESS OF SIN is a desolate area in the northern Sinai where many of the events recorded in the book of Numbers occurred. It is the likely location of the rebellion of Korah.

### Context: The Political Priesthood

The story of Korah's failed rebellion tells us something important about the way that the priesthood was regarded. Korah was willing to risk everything to become a part of the priesthood, most likely because of the prestige and power that he thought he would attain to as a priest. Indeed, the coming centuries of Israelite history would show not just the spiritual power, but also the temporal power of the priesthood.

Aaron himself is described as a leader alongside Moses in Numbers 33:1. Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was one of Moses' most important lieutenants. (Numbers 32:28) Eli the priest was a judge over Israel for 40 years. (1 Samuel 4:18) Zadok the priest served as kingmaker during the succession dispute between Adonijah and Solomon. (1 Kings 1:38-40) The priest Jehoiada dared to protect Joash, heir to the throne of Judah, from his murderous grandmother Athaliah, masterminded the coup against her, and served as Joash's regent during his minority. (2 Kings 11-12) During the life of Christ, the priests Annas and Caiaphas were among the most important Jews alive. All of this showed the tremendous influence that went with being one of the Lord's anointed.

## Questions: Numbers 16-18

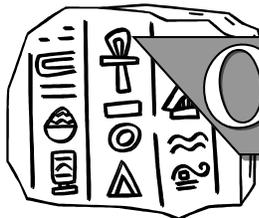
1. What people assert themselves in Numbers 16:1-2? How many are with them? What claim do they make? (16:3) What question do they ask?
2. How does Moses react to this accusation, according to Numbers 16:4? What instructions does he give to the rebels? (16:5-7)
3. What does Moses ask Korah in Numbers 16:8-10? Whom does Moses say the rebellion is really against? (16:11)
4. According to Numbers 16:12, whom does Moses then summon? How do they respond to the summons? (16:13-14)
5. How does Moses reply to the accusations of Dathan and Abiram in Numbers 16:15? What instructions does he then give to Korah and the men with him? (16:16-18)
6. Who then makes an appearance in Numbers 16:19? What does He say? (16:20-21) What response do Moses and Aaron make to this? (16:22)
7. What instructions does God give Moses in Numbers 16:24? What test does Moses then propose for whether he is sent from God? (16:28-30) What are the results of this test? (16:31-33)
8. What happens to Korah and the 250 men with him, according to Numbers 16:35? What does God command to be done with the leftover censers? (16:38) Why? (16:40)

**Questions: Numbers 16-18 (continued)**

9. According to Numbers 16:41, how do the people react to this display of God's power? What do they do next? (16:42) What does it appear that their intent is? What saves Moses and Aaron?
  
10. What does God then say to Moses and Aaron, according to Numbers 16:44-45? How do they react to this? Why?
  
11. What instruction does Moses give to Aaron in Numbers 16:46? Why?
  
12. According to Numbers 16:47, what does Aaron do? What result does this have? (16:48) Despite Aaron's swift action, how many lives does the plague claim? (16:49)
  
13. What does God command Moses to do in Numbers 17:1-3? What test does God describe? (17:4-5) Why?
  
14. What happens to Aaron's rod as a result of this test, according to Numbers 17:8? How do the others acknowledge this? (17:9)
  
15. According to Numbers 17:10, what does God command to be done with the rod that budded? What else ultimately ends up in the same place? (Hebrews 9:4)
  
16. What complaint do the Israelites raise in Numbers 17:12-13? What does God actually want the people to understand? (18:7)

**Questions: Application**

1. Are there people around us who make a claim similar to the claim Korah made? Who are they? What underlying problem do the people who make this claim have? What should this teach us?
2. How does Moses diagnose Korah's heart condition? Do we sometimes struggle with this problem today? How can we address it?
3. Korah and his followers failed to understand that they were actually rebelling against God. When do people today make a similar mistake? What should we take from this?
4. What tactic do Dathan and Abiram use to defend their indefensible actions? Do those in the wrong sometimes use similar strategies today? What does this tell us about the way that we need to deal with accusations?
5. What attitude toward sinners does God repeatedly manifest in this story? What should this teach us about the importance of the sacrifice of Christ?
6. What familiar function does the miracle of the opening of the earth serve? Why do we need to understand this? Mark 16:20 may help you in your answer.
7. How does Israel react to God's judgment? Is this still a common response today? What should it teach us?
8. What does the story of the rebellion of Korah teach us about the priesthood we hold today? How should this change the way we behave?



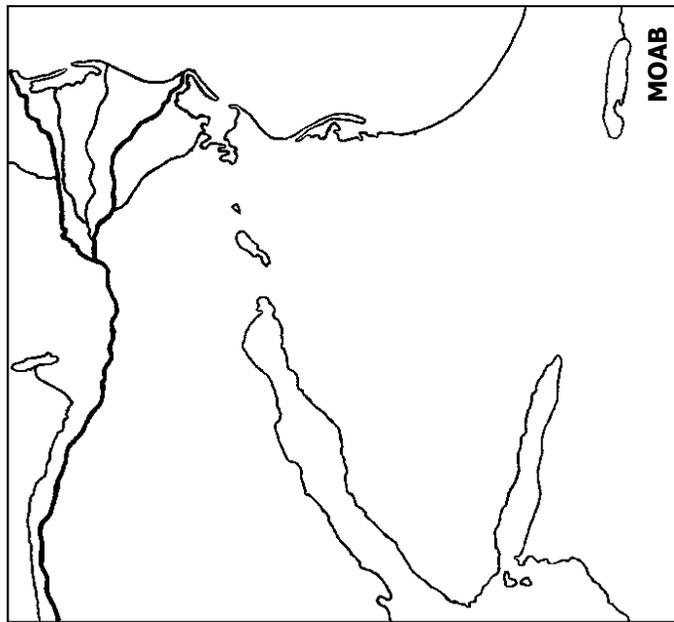
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Eleven: Meribah and Balaam

### Introduction

None of us today get direct messages from God, but there are still many Christians who make the same mistake as Balaam. Just like Balaam kept pestering God until he finally got the answer He wanted, so these Christians ignore the plain message of Scripture and distort the word until they get the answer that they want. Some of the most prominent offenders in this are those who produce inventive ways to make the Bible stand on its head so that they can justify unlawful divorce and remarriage.

We need to be more honest with the Scripture than that. If we read the Bible and find something we don't like, we must not just twist it until we make it say what we want it to. Not only is such an exercise pointless; it is deadly. We might be able to fool ourselves, but we won't fool God.



▲ MOAB is the country on the east side of the Dead Sea where Balak and Balaam lived. Its people would fight against the Israelites for centuries.

### Context: The Historical Balaam

Other than the Pentateuch, there isn't a great deal of historical confirmation of the existence of the main characters of the Exodus. Moses does not appear in Egyptian records, nor does Aaron. The dealings of Pharaoh with the Israelites also go unchronicled. Minor characters from Jethro to Korah appear nowhere outside of Scripture.

Surprisingly, the most prominent exception to this pattern is Balaam. We think of him as a bit player at best in the story of Israel's wilderness wanderings, but apparently his Canaanite contemporaries disagreed. A 1967 archaeological dig in the Jordan river valley uncovered a number of plaster fragments containing a message that had originally been painted in the outer chamber of a sanctuary. This message describes a man named Balaam the son of Beor, who is a seer of the gods. He brings a warning from them about how the people are going to be destroyed for their evil behavior. Of course, there are differences. In this story, Balaam is depicted as a revered religious leader rather than a sly trickster. He speaks with the gods rather than God. However, the essence of the story is enough to once again reinforce the authenticity of Scripture.

**Questions: Numbers 20-24**

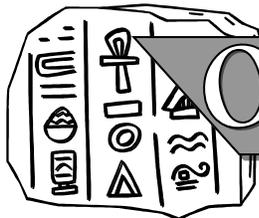
1. By Numbers 20:1, what location had the children of Israel reached? What problem arose here? (20:2) What did the children of Israel do about it? What did they say? (20:3-5)
2. In response, what do Moses and Aaron do in Numbers 20:6? What does God tell them to do? (20:7)
3. What does Moses begin by doing in Numbers 20:9? What does he say to the people? (20:10) What does he end up doing?
4. What does God say in response to Moses, according to Numbers 20:12? What name is given to the place? (20:13) Why?
5. What does God reveal in Numbers 20:24? Why? What command does He then give? (20:25-26)
6. Where do the children of Israel travel thereafter, according to Numbers 21:4? How do the people feel about this? What do they say about it? (21:5)
7. How does God deal with this, according to Numbers 21:6? What do the people then do? (21:7)
8. What command does God give Moses in Numbers 21:8? What does Moses do about it? (21:9) What happens as a result?

**Questions: Numbers 20-24 (continued)**

9. According to Numbers 22:4, who is Balak? How does he feel about Israel? (22:2-3) What does he decide to do about the problem? (22:5-6)
  
10. How does Balaam respond to Balak's request in Numbers 22:8? What does God reveal to Balak? (22:12)
  
11. How do the Moabites react to this, according to Numbers 22:15? What does Balaam tell them? (22:19) What does God tell Balaam to do? (22:20)
  
12. As revealed in Numbers 22:22, how does God actually feel about this? What does God do about it? How does Balaam's donkey react? (22:23-25)
  
13. What does Balaam do to the donkey, according to Numbers 22:27? What does the donkey do about this? (22:28) What conversation do they have? (22:29-30)
  
14. What does God then do for Balaam, according to Numbers 22:31? How does Balaam react to this? (22:34) What does God tell him? (22:35)
  
15. What does Balak tell Balaam in Numbers 22:37? How does Balaam respond to this? (22:38) What does Balaam do when Balak takes him to curse Israel? (23:11)
  
16. How often does this pattern repeat, according to Numbers 24:10? What does Balak say about it? (24:11) What does Balaam tell him in response? (24:14)

## Questions: Application

1. In their continued whining, do the Israelites appear to have learned from past mistakes? How can we do better than they did?
2. During the whole story of the wilderness wanderings, how many times does Moses disobey God? What happens to Moses as a result? What does this teach us about the nature of God?
3. What important information about the Levitical priesthood does the story of the death of Aaron convey? Why is it important?
4. In addition to saving the children of Israel for the time being, what other significance does the bronze serpent have? John 3:14-15 may help you in your answer.
5. What was Balaam's attitude toward the word of the Lord? Can we have a similar problem today? How can we avoid this?
6. Before God opened Balaam's eyes, was Balaam pleased with his donkey? Should he have been pleased? What should we learn from this?
7. What does the story of Balak reveal about opposing the plans of God? Why is this important?
8. What advice does Balaam ultimately give to Balak, according to Revelation 2:14? Does this strategy still have relevance today? What should it teach us?



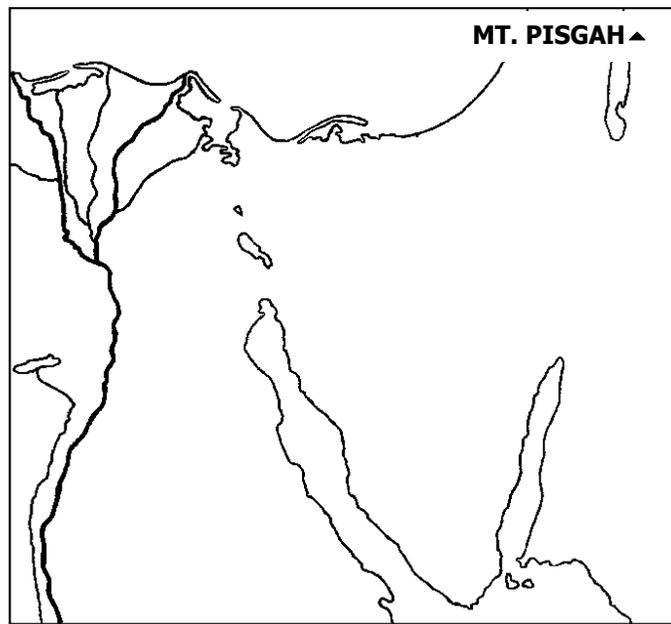
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Twelve: The Death of Moses

### Introduction

One of the central facets of God's character is that He always keeps His promises to man. He keeps the ones that are pleasant, but He also keeps the ones that are not. At Meribah, He told Moses that because of his sin, he would die before the people entered Canaan. Despite all the miracles he had worked, despite a lifetime of near-perfect faithfulness and service, that's exactly what happened. Moses saw the promised land, but he died on the wrong side of Jordan.

God will keep His promises to us too. He promises us that everyone who believes and is baptized will be saved, but He also promises us that everyone who does not obey the gospel will be lost. That's exactly what is going to happen. God's word isn't going to change. We have to. Otherwise, we'll end up on the wrong side of His promise.



▲ MT. PISGAH ▲  
▲ MT. PISGAH is the mountain from which Moses surveyed the promised land, and upon which he died. It is connected by a saddle to nearby Mt. Nebo.

### Context: The Origin of Deuteronomy

For the past hundred years, scholarly interpretation of the first five books of the Bible has been shaped by the work of two men, Graf and Wellhausen. They proposed that the Pentateuch was not actually written and compiled during the time of Moses, but that it represents a body of work derived from four different sources that only reached its final form during the third century B.C. They claimed that one of these sources was the Deuteronomic source, commonly referred to as D, most of which appears in the book of Deuteronomy. The story goes that this book was written during the time of Josiah king of Judah, and that the "discovery" of the book of the law in the temple in 2 Chronicles 34:15 was actually the introduction of Deuteronomy at an opportune time.

It requires as much faith to accept such a far-fetched "critical" reading of Scripture as it does to accept the Bible as the word of God. Even on purely logical grounds, the theory is untenable. Deuteronomy 28:63-65 clearly prophesies that if God's people disobey Him, they will be taken away into captivity. Deuteronomy 30:1-5 predicts that the people would be restored to the land if they repent. Josiah could not have known those things. Only an inspired Moses could.

**Questions: Numbers 25-Deuteronomy 34**

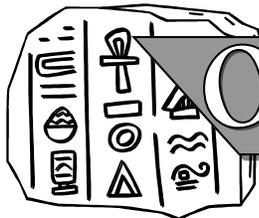
1. What do we see the people doing in Numbers 25:1-2? How does God react to this? (25:3) What command does He give as a result? (25:4)
2. What does Moses instruct the people to do in Numbers 25:5? What happens then? (25:6) How does Phinehas respond to the provocation? (25:7-8)
3. How many people died as a result of the plague, according to Numbers 25:9? Why didn't more die? (25:10-11) What did the Lord say to Phinehas as a result? (25:12)
4. What does Moses ask of God in Numbers 27:15-17? Whom does God select? (27:18) What is done to ensure this? (27:18-20)
5. What command does God give in Numbers 31:1-2? What will happen to Moses afterward? What happens during the resulting battle? (31:7-8)
6. What characteristic of the tribes of Reuben and Gad is remarked on in Numbers 32:1? What, therefore, do they want? (32:1, 5)
7. According to Numbers 31:6-7, what problem does Moses see with this? What response do the leaders of Reuben and Gad make? (31:16-18)
8. What does Moses tell these leaders, according to Numbers 31:20-22? What will happen if they disobey? (Numbers 31:23)

**Questions: Numbers 25-Deuteronomy 34 (cont'd)**

9. What do we see Moses doing in Deuteronomy 1:5? Why?
  
10. What does Moses reveal to the people in Deuteronomy 18:15? Why? (18:16) What is this prophet going to do? (18:18) What will happen if the people don't listen to him? (18:19)
  
11. In Deuteronomy 18:20, what does Moses say about the presumptuous prophet? What reasonable question does he then bring up? (18:21) What answer does he give to that question? (18:22)
  
12. What prediction does God offer about Israel in Deuteronomy 31:16? What does God say He will do in response? (31:17) How does God expect the people to react to this?
  
13. To deal with this problem, what does God tell Moses to do in Deuteronomy 31:19? Why? What basic problem do the Israelites have that causes all of this? (31:21)
  
14. What important event happens in Deuteronomy 31:24? What does God tell Moses to do with the book? (31:26) Why?
  
15. In Deuteronomy 31:1, where does Moses go? What happens there? (34:1-3) Why? (34:4)
  
16. What happens to Moses then? (34:5) Where is he buried? (34:6) What concluding remarks does Deuteronomy offer about Moses? (34:10-12)

## Questions: Application

1. What does the story of Baal of Peor reveal to us about the danger of being seduced by the world around us? How can we counteract it?
2. What description is applied to Phinehas in Numbers 25:11? Is this a way we need to be today? If so, how?
3. Most of Deuteronomy is a description of historical events or a recountal of laws that have already been given. What does this tell us about the importance of repeating such things today?
4. What is the Messianic significance of the Deuteronomy 18 prophecies about a coming prophet?
5. What do the warnings of Deuteronomy tell us about the dangers of apostasy? What should we do about it?
6. God had Moses place the book of the law by the ark as a witness against the children of Israel when they disobeyed. Is there such a witness against us today if we disobey? If so, what should we do about it?
7. Did God love Moses? Did God allow Moses to enter the promised land because of that love? Why not? What should this teach us?
8. The last few verses of Deuteronomy are a fitting epitaph for Moses. If someone wrote an epitaph for us about our service for God, would it speak as well? How should this affect the way we live?



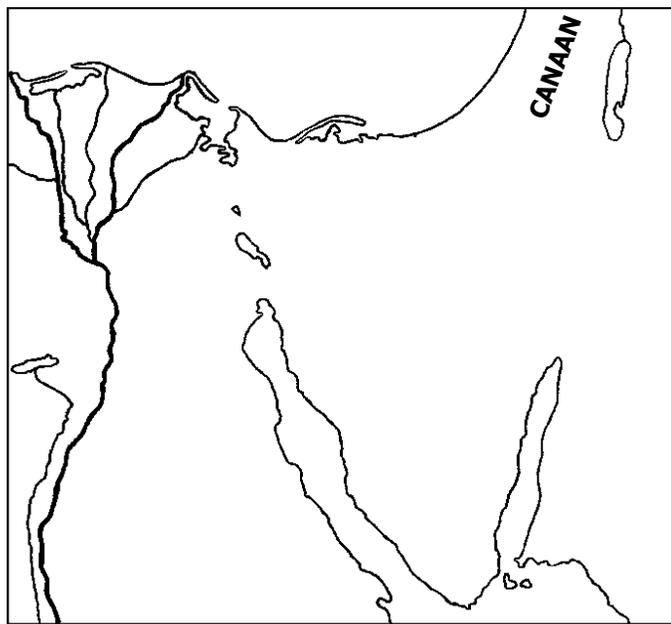
# Out of Egypt

## Lesson Thirteen: Review

### Introduction

If the story of Jesus is “The Greatest Story Ever Told,” the story of the Exodus is surely in the running for second-greatest story ever told. The power and sweep of the inspired narrative is breathtaking, as we see the might of God redeem an entire people from bondage and transfer them to the land He had promised.

It’s important for us, though, to focus on the details too. The nation of Israel makes it to Canaan, but almost none of the people who began the journey finished it. The story of the church is similarly triumphant. One day, God’s chosen people of today will pass into a heavenly Canaan, but there will also be many Christians who won’t finish that journey either. Will we be among them? Will we fall away, or will we by faith and patience inherit the promises made to us?



▲ CANAAN is the land promised to Abraham by God, and, starting with the book of Joshua, it is the land which the Israelites inhabit. 600,000 men began the journey from Egypt to Canaan. Two made it.

### Context: The Date of the Exodus

In 1 Kings 6:1 the text reveals that Solomon began to build the temple 480 years after the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt. Solomon reigned from about 971 to 931 B.C., so, according to the Biblical chronology, the Exodus began about 1450 B.C. In recent years, many archaeologists specializing in the Middle East have questioned this date. Palestine during the 15th century B.C. shows little evidence of invasion. In fact, the only nearby signs of conflict and resettlement, like signs of widespread burning, come from the 15th century, 200 years later.

However, this evidence should not cause us to question the Bible date for the Exodus. In Deuteronomy 6:10-11, God promises the Israelites that He will “give you great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant.” The Israelites were not just promised a ruined battlefield to dwell in; instead, God promised them a land filled with prosperity but emptied of people. The lack of destruction in the archaeological record does not contradict the word of God. It confirms it.

## Questions: Review

*Describe the main ideas of each of the following lessons. Then, outline their significance to us.*

1. Israel's Oppression.
2. The First Nine Plagues.
3. The Exodus.
4. Journeying to Sinai.
5. The Covenant.
6. The Heart of the Law.

**Questions: Review (continued)**

7. Details of the Law.

8. Spies and Rebellion.

9. The Levitical Priesthood.

10. Korah's Rebellion.

11. Meribah and Balaam.

12. The Death of Moses.