

From Slavery to Nationhood



FROM SLAVERY TO NATIONHOOD
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crowd is following God, and obeying God, then it is right to follow them.

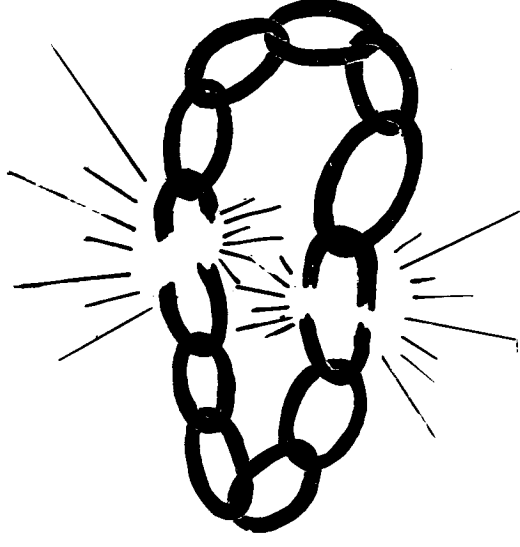
As we have studied the history of the Hebrew nation, we have learned of their broken promises. We have learned of the responsibilities that we have as people of God. We should seek Christian leaders, who obey Christ, to serve as government leaders. We must pray for the leaders of our government, for we have learned that poor leaders always bring a nation to ruin. Let us be obedient to God. Let us pray for our leaders to be filled with God's wisdom and knowledge.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

God wants to rule and guide in every part of your life. He gives you the right to choose what you will do. Christ is a Christian's king, yet, He is also his friend.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God called Samuel as a leader of Israel. We need to seek God's help in choosing leaders.
2. The Israelites wanted a king like other nations. What others are doing is not always right.



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They would have to give their money to pay for the government.

SAUL WAS CHOSEN AS KING

God led Samuel to choose Saul as king. (1 Samuel 9). God brought Saul and Samuel together.

Saul anointed as king (1 Samuel 10:1). "Anoint" means that he was set aside for the place and for the task. God blessed Saul. Samuel told Saul that he was to do God's will.

At first, Saul was able to defeat Israel's enemies (1 Samuel 13-14). But Saul soon forgot his need of God.

LESSONS FOR OUR LIVES

God does not force anyone to obey him. We are free to choose what we will do with our lives. If we do not obey God, we will suffer. The Israelites always suffered when they did not obey God. Real freedom comes to one who serves God.

"Everyone else is doing it" is an attitude we find everywhere today, among children, young people and adults. Just because everyone else is doing something does not make it right. Israel wanted a king because other nations had kings. Many times "following the crowd" is wrong. Sometimes it is right. Sex outside of marriage is wrong. Just because others do it does not make it right. Many people drink intoxicating liquor, but that does not make it right. A Christian must obey God. If the

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SAMUEL CHOSE HIS SONS

Verse 1 says that Samuel "made" his sons to be judges. God did not choose them.

Samuel's sons were not like their father. They did not obey God. They were evil. Joel and Abijah tried to use their office as judge to get rich. They accepted bribes (pay for doing something wrong). They charged people for judging in favour of them.

The people of Israel were upset. The elders went to Samuel. They knew Samuel would treat them fairly.

THE ELDERS ASKED FOR A KING

They gave two reasons for wanting a king. (1) Samuel's sons were evil. (2) All the other nations had kings.

Samuel did not want a king. He knew that God was the King of Israel. God wanted to lead the people through prophets, priests, and judges. The people of Israel were not faithful to God, Samuel was not pleased with the Israelites.

God spoke to Samuel (1 Samuel 8:7-8. He told Samuel that the people did not reject him. They rejected God. They wanted to be like other nations.

God told Samuel to let Israel have a king. Samuel warned the people about what a king would make them do. They would have to serve the king. Their sons would be his soldiers.

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life as a boy. His parents gave him to God. They took him to the tabernacle to live with Eli, the Priest. He slept each night near the ark of the covenant.

One night, Samuel heard a voice calling his name. God told him that Eli's sons would be judged for their sins. Eli realized that God was calling Samuel to serve him. He taught Samuel to be a priest.

God called Samuel to be a prophet. A prophet gave God's message to the people. He also spoke to God for the people (1 Samuel 3:20-21).

The Philistines ruled over the Israelites at this time. They defeated Israel in a great battle, killing four thousand men. Then they stole the ark of the covenant. The great priest, Eli died when he heard the ark was stolen (1 Samuel 4:17-18).

Samuel became the new leader of Israel. He knew that Israel must be freed from the Philistines. Only God could set them free. Samuel called for the people to be loyal to God. He told them to quit worshipping Baal and Asheroth. He told the Israelites that God would give them freedom and victory. But God demanded that they be faithful to him.

Samuel led Israel many years. Then he grew old. A leader had to be named to take his place.

(Read 1 Samuel 8:1-9; 10:1)

LESSON 13

GIVE US A KING

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Judges 21:25;

1 Samuel 8 -10

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: 1 Samuel 8:1-9;
10:1

MEMORY VERSE: "The people of Israel said to Samuel,
"Do not cease to cry to the Lord our
God for us, that he may save us from
the hand of the Philistines."

1 Samuel 7:8

Many African countries have decided against having a king. Perhaps because kingship reminds one of total authority and lack of freedom.

The Israelites, however, continued to murmur for a king. Do you remember in an earlier lesson how the Israelites wanted Gideon to be their king? Gideon refused. He wanted God to be their king. He knew what the people would have to do under a king.

As the tribes of Israel grew into a nation, they needed leaders. Each tribe ruled itself. God called judges to rule the tribe as needs arose. Gideon was a great military leader. Samson led by his power. Every man was doing what he thought was right (Judges 21:25).

GOD CALLED A NEW LEADER

In 1 Samuel 1:1 to 4:21, we read of Samuel's early life. Samuel had an interesting

LESSON 1

PEOPLE IN SLAVERY

SCRIPTURE TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 1-2

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 1:7-14
2:11-15.

MEMORY VERSE: "Out of the depth I cry to thee, O
Lord! Let thy ears be attentive to
the voice of my supplications!"
Psalm 130:1-2

On the small Island of Zanzibar there is a huge cave by the sea. Over a hundred years ago this cave was used to keep over 500 men and women that were to be sold in slavery. Today the cave reminds us of how Africa once suffered from the evil practice of slavery. Slavery was a terrible thing. It separated children and parents. It took people away from their tribes. It forced people to work in bondage.

This lesson tells us how God helped the Hebrews that were in slavery. The Hebrews were God's chosen people. God wanted to bless the world through them.

(Now read Exodus 1:7-14)

CHANGE IN POLITICS

At first, the Egyptians wanted the Hebrews to live in their country. The Pharaoh had invited the Hebrews to stay because of Joseph. Joseph, himself, was a former slave. His

jealous brothers had sold him to a caravan going to Egypt.

In Egypt, God blessed Joseph and he became the Pharaoh's high government officer. Joseph had kept the Egyptians and Hebrews from starving during a great famine. Then Joseph died. The Pharaoh whom Joseph knew died also. A new king came into power. This was probably Ramses II. He did not know Joseph (verse 8).

Often when there is a change in rulers, people who were once favoured lose their positions. This happened to the Hebrews. The new king saw there were many Hebrews. He feared them (verses 9-10). He feared that the Hebrews might during time of war join the enemy and defeat Egypt.

What did the Egyptians decide to do to the Hebrews?

(Read Exodus 1:11-14 aloud)

THE HEBREWS BECAME SLAVES:

Pharaoh made slaves of the Hebrew people. He was a ruthless and ambitious leader. He demanded the labour of slaves to build his monuments and cities. The Egyptians made God's people work very hard. They built two cities, Pithom and Raamses (verses 11).

The Egyptians kept trying to make the Hebrews work harder and harder. They thought that severe work would ruin the health of the Hebrews. They thought this would keep the

They brought Samson out to make fun of him (verse 26). Samson prayed for God to give back to his strength. God gave Samson enough strength to pull down the pillars of the building. Three thousand Philistines died. Samson died too.

Samson can teach us important lessons. God gives us strength and power to serve him. But sin separates men from God. Samson lost his power when he sinned. Prayer is the way man talks to God. God answered Samson's prayer and gave back his strength.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Sin and broken vows destroyed Samson's power. Look at your life. Does sin keep God's power out of your life? God can help you overcome sin and live a powerful life. Why not confess your sins to God and seek his forgiveness. Promise God to use your life for serving him.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God gave Samson his strength. God gives us strength to do his work.
2. Sin ruined Samson's life. It robbed him of God's power. Sin can ruin our lives and rob us of God's power.
3. Samson prayed for God to return his strength. When we pray to God, He will hear us. He will give us his power - if we stay true to him.
4. God requires his people to be obedient to him at all times.

SAMSON MET DELILAH

Samson met a beautiful woman named Delilah. She was a Philistine. The Philistines paid her to find out about Samson's strength. Three times Samson lied to her. The Philistines waited. They wanted to destroy Samson. Then Delilah used an old trick on Samson. She told him that he did not love her. If he loved her, he would tell her what made him so strong. Delilah used her beauty and sex to do what the Philistine army could not do. She used "love" to trick Samson. Samson told her that he was a Nazarite. His hair was not cut before that time. She called the Philistine army. Samson went to sleep. Delilah had a man cut his hair.

Samson's strength was not in his hair. But his long hair was his last unbroken vow to God. When his hair was cut, the last tie between Samson and God was cut. One of the saddest verses in the Bible is Judges 16-20: "And he did not know that God had left him." It is always very sad when God leaves a person alone. Sin and disobedience causes this.

(Read Judges 16:23-30 aloud)

THE DEATH OF SAMSON

The Philistines celebrated their victory over Samson. They made a great sacrifice to Dagon, their god. Now the battle was not between Samson and the Philistines. It was between Dagon and God. The Philistines claimed victory for Dagon. They put out Samson's eyes so he could not see.

Hebrews from having so many children. But hard times did not destroy the Hebrews. They kept growing. This plan failed. Pharaoh made another plan to destroy the Hebrews.

Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill all the Hebrew boy babies. The girl babies could live. But the midwives feared God and did not obey. The mid-wives told Pharaoh the Hebrew women were vigorous and gave birth before they arrived. Pharaoh then ordered that all the baby boys be thrown into the Nile River (verse 17-22). It was a sad time for the Hebrews.

A DELIVERER IS BORN:

Chapter 2 tells how God defeated Pharaoh. God had a plan. Moses was a part of God's plan. A Hebrew woman gave birth to a baby boy. She hid him for three months at home from the Egyptians. After that she could not hide him safely at home. So she made a reed basket and laid the baby Moses in it. She put the basket in the tall reeds at the edge of the river. Miriam, Mose's sister, watched the basket.

One day the daughter of Pharaoh went to bathe at the river. She found the basket. She looked inside; and when she saw the baby, she had compassion on him. Miriam asked if the princess would like a nurse for the baby. She then went and brought Moses' own mother (verses 6-10).

Moses' mother took care of him for the princess until he was weaned. Then she took

him to the palace. Moses went to the best schools in the land. He grew up in Pharaoh's house and was treated as an Egyptian prince.

But, what happened when Moses was grown?

(Read Exodus 2:11-15 aloud)

FROM PRINCE TO FUGITIVE

One day after Moses was a grown man, he saw an Egyptian hitting a Hebrew. The Hebrew died, Moses remembered that he, too, was a Hebrew. He could not forget his mother's training. Moses looked around to see who was watching him. When he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

The next day Moses saw two Hebrews fighting. He tried to stop the fight. The Hebrew asked Moses if he would kill them like he did the Egyptian. Moses became afraid. Everyone must know that he killed the Egyptian! Moses had done wrong and now he was frightened.

Pharaoh found out that Moses had killed one of his men. He was angry and ordered Moses to be killed. Moses fled from Pharaoh's wrath. He went to the land of Midian in the wilderness. Thus, a prince with all the advantages of his position became a fugitive.

In a moment of human anger he had identified himself with the Hebrews and killed an Egyptian.

Moses stayed in Midian for 40 years. God was preparing him for future leadership.

or raisins. He could not cut his hair. A Nazarite was not to touch the dead.

Manoah and his wife prayed that God would make them wise parents (13:8). Samson grew quickly. He grew to be a man. God's Spirit was on Samson. (Judges 13:24-25). God gave Samson great strength.

THE LIFE OF SAMSON

God chose Samson to be a judge of Israel. He was a military leader. Samson was supposed to defeat the Philistines. They ruled over Israel for forty years (13:1).

Samson did not follow God. He depended on his own strength. He broke his Nazarite vows. He lived a very sinful life. He married a Philistine woman.

Samson's father-in-law gave his daughter, Samson's wife, to Samson's friend. Samson became very angry. He tied together three hundred foxes by two's. He put a firebrand (piece of burning wood) between the two tails. Then he turned them into the cornfields of the Philistines. The fields were burned up. (Read Judges 15:4-5).

The Philistines became very angry. They wanted to hurt Samson. They killed his unfaithful wife and her father (15:6)

Samson kept on living a sinful life. He used his power to destroy the Philistines. He killed a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey (15:15-16).

LESSON 12

STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPOSITION

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Judges 13-16

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Judges 13:1;
16:23-30

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord is my light and salvation;
whom shall I fear? The Lord is the
strength of my life; of whom shall I
be afraid?"

Psalms 27:1

Several years ago, Filbert Bayi, a
Tanzania, accomplished a great physical achieve-
ment. He broke the 1,500 metres world record.

This lesson is about a man who had great
physical strength. His name is Samson. The
story of Samson is in Judges 13-16.

(Read Judges 13:1; 16:23-30 aloud)

THE BIRTH OF SAMSON

Manoah and his wife had no children. One
day an angel came with a message from God. God
would give them a son.

Manoah and his wife wanted the child very
much. The angel told them their child would
be different. He was to be a Nazarite. A
Nazarite was a person set apart and dedicated
to God. He had to take the Nazarite vow.
(See Numbers 6). A Nazarite could not drink
wine or strong drink. He could not eat grapes

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

All people have hard times. God wants to
give his people strength for hard times. God
loves his people and hurts with them when
they suffer.

When you have hard times, God cares. He
will make a way out for you. He will answer
your prayers like he answered the prayers of
the Hebrews. Remember to pray for God to lead
you each day.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. The Egyptian made slaves of the Hebrews.
Today people are slaves to sin. People
are slaves to money, school, clothes
and other things.
2. God wants to set people free. He cares
when we suffer.
3. When we pray to God, he will help us
become free from our sins.

LESSON 2

A LEADER CALLED

SCRIPTURE TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 3 - 4

SCRIPTURE FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 3:1-12

MEMORY VERSE: "Then the Lord said, 'I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings.'"

Exodus 3:7

Leaders are very important people. They help shape the fate of their countries. Good leaders try to do what is best for the whole country. But had leaders often abuse and persecute their countrymen. Idi Amin was a bad leader. He killed many people and ruled his country of Uganda with fear and terror.

People need leaders. Chaos and confusion occur if people lack leadership. When the Hebrews lived in Egypt they had no leader because they were slaves. But, God knew they would need a leader after they were free. How did God get a leader for the Hebrews?

(Read Exodus 3:1-12 aloud)

GOD SPEAKS TO MOSES

Moses fled from Egypt because Pharaoh wanted to kill him. He went to Midian east of Egypt. Moses lived in Midian for forty years. He became a sheep herder of the Midian priest

back to Baal (Judges 8:33).

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Are you a modern day Gideon showing courage in your faith? God will give us courage to do his work. Ask God to help you have more courage to speak out for him.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. You can be a courageous leader for God, just as Gideon was for the Israelites.
2. We need to follow God's plan for our lives to be a courageous leader. God has a plan for each person.
3. Trouble comes when we forget God.

GOD GAVE THE VICTORY

Gideon's army of three hundred surrounded the Midianite camp. Their only weapons were clay pots and trumpets. (Verse 20). The Hebrew soldiers fought by holding burning torches, blowing trumpets, and breaking clay pots! The midianites were frightened and they ran away! They did not try to defend the city. They ran away!

God can do all things. The Israelites won a victory without weapons. The Midianite army was much larger than Israel's, but God gave Israel the victory. The victory cannot be explained, except to say it was from God's power.

The people were happy (Judges 8). What did they want to do?

GIDEON WOULD NOT BE KING

The Israelites wanted to make Gideon their king. Gideon said no. Read the memory verse again. Gideon said that neither he nor his sons would become king. God was the only king that Israel needed.

Gideon asked the people to bring gold to make an ephod. An ephod was a sacrificial robe. Gideon built the ephod to remind the people of the victory God gave them. But it soon became an idol. The people forgot God and began worshipping the ephod (Judges 8:27).

Gideon was a great leader. However, the influence he had on the Israelites was not lasting. When Gideon died, the people turned

Jethro. He married Zipporah, one of Jethro's daughters, and lived happily in Midian for forty years. Then one day his peaceful shepherd's life came to an end. God spoke to Moses. He called him to be the leader of the Hebrew people.

God spoke to Moses through a burning bush. Moses saw the bush burning and burning, but it did not burn up. As Moses stopped to watch such an amazing event, God said, "Moses, Moses" (verse 4). And Moses answered "Yes, here I am" (verse 4).

Moses was standing on holy ground, in the very presence of God himself. Therefore, Moses took off his shoes, out of respect and reverence for God. We, too, must stand in awe and bow in reverence before his presence.

Now Moses did not know God well. So God revealed himself to Moses. He was the God of Moses' ancestors, the God of Abraham; Isaac and Jacob. Then Moses realized who God was. He was afraid and hid his face. He was afraid to look upon God (verse 6).

God let Moses know that he cared for his people. God had a job for Moses to do.

GOD CARED FOR HIS PEOPLE

God told Moses that he knew the Hebrews were suffering and that he would bring the Hebrews to a land "flowing with milk and honey" (verse 8).

This promised land was rich. It had plenty

of food. Even though many other people lived in the promised land at that time, God wanted to make it the land of the Hebrews.

GOD GIVES MOSES A JOB TO DO

God said to Moses, "Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of his country" (verse 10).

Can you imagine Moses' reaction to this statement? Moses had fled from Pharaoh because he wanted to kill him. Now God was wanting him to return to Egypt and to lead his people out of bondage.

Moses was very doubtful of his ability. In verse eleven, Moses asked God, "who am I that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" How could a nobody lead God's people out of slavery? Moses probably felt that Hebrews would not listen to him. He knew that Pharaoh would not listen to him. But, surely God knew all about Moses and his limitations, yet God had said that he wanted Moses to go to Egypt. God was not sending Moses by himself. God offered to help Moses.

GOD OFFERS TO HELP MOSES

God told Moses that he would not be alone. God promised to bring the Hebrews out of Egypt unto "this mountain." This mountain was Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai. God spoke to Moses the first time on this mountain and he later gave Moses the Law there.

It did not matter to God who Moses was.

Joash, Gideon's father, defended Gideon.

Gideon wanted to know that God would be with him, if he fought Midian. He asked God for a sign.

(Read Judges 7:2-8, 20-21 aloud)

GIDEON CHOSE AN ARMY

Gideon called the people to battle (Judges 6:34). Thirty-two thousand men answered Gideon's call (Judges 7:3). What did Gideon do to get the men ready for battle?

God told Gideon that he had too many soldiers! The Israelites would think they had won the battle because they had such a large army! So God told Gideon to send home all who were afraid! When he followed God's plan, he had only three hundred soldiers left!

Sometimes we think that strength is in numbers. Thus we may think a "great church" means a church with many members. The Bible does not agree with that statement. "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zachariah 4:6).

God wanted the Israelites to know that He gave victory to them. When we reach a goal or win a victory, God helps us. We do not win by our own power.

Gideon got the army ready for battle with God's help.

(Read Judges 7:20-21 aloud)

LESSON 11

GIDEON: GOD'S COURAGEOUS MAN

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Judges 6-8

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Judges 7:2-8,
20 - 21

MEMORY VERSE: "Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule you; the Lord will rule over you."
Judges 8:23

In Africa certain tribes have rites that are used to prove manhood. Formerly, the Masaal tribe had to kill a lion to prove that they were ready for manhood. These rites measured a person's courage.

The lesson today is about one of Israel's judges. His name was Gideon. He was known for his courage. God spoke to Gideon and called him to lead the Israelites. Read how Gideon courageously spoke out for God and entered true manhood.

(Read Judges 6:11-24 aloud)

GOD GAVE THE ISRAELITES A LEADER

An "angel" spoke to Gideon. God called Gideon to lead the people to fight Midian. God told Gideon to destroy the altar to Baal built by Gideon's father.

The people became angry. They wanted to kill Gideon because he destroyed the altar.

He did not care that Moses was an Israelite trained as an Egyptian. He did not care that he was a Midianite shepherd trained by a priest. Man emphasized education and experience, but God only said, "I will be with you," (verse 12).

GOD CALLS PEOPLE TODAY

God knows about our sufferings and heart-aches. He understands our problems. God does not forget his people. He will help us today as he helped the Hebrews.

God calls people in many ways. He might use a burning bush, a visitor or other means. There is always an element of divine mystery involved in calling a leader. Yet, God uses ordinary people who respond to his call to do great things. Is God calling you to do something? Surely he has a job for you and me, too. And we can be assured of his presence and 'help.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

There is much suffering in today's world. If one looks at a newspaper, one can read about floods, famine, wrecks and other terrible things. A Christian should view these events as opportunities for helping people in need.

Let us look on people with "helping" eyes. Pray that God will lead you into situations where you can help someone else.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God always care for his people. He sends people like Moses to help them.
2. God calls men to lead his people. Man is not worthy nor capable of doing the job alone.
3. God has promised to help us in every job he gives us to do. With God's help, we can succeed.

LESSON 3

LET MY PEOPLE GO

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 5-14

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 5:1, 11-13

MEMORY VERSE: "And Moses said unto the people, 'fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today.'"

Exodus 14:13

For many years the people of Zimbabwe cried for political independence. At midnight on April 17, 1980, this became a reality. The British Union Jack Flag was lowered and everyone shouted happily as the Zimbabwe flag was raised. Zimbabwe was free.

covenant there will Israel. The great stone would remind the people of the covenant. It would call them to be faithful to the God of their fathers.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Think about your own life. Does sin keep you from serving God? Do you need to renew your commitment to God? Ask God to help you in your daily service for him.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. The Israelites were unfaithful to God. God used Joshua to call them to a new commitment to God. God has used men throughout history to remind his people of their commitment to him.
2. Christians often are not faithful. We forget about our Christian responsibilities. We let sin destroy our relationship to God.
3. The Israelites made a new commitment to God at Shechem. We must commit our lives to God again like the Israelites did at Shechem.
4. God wants his people to be faithful to him.

When a leader takes a stand for right, most of the people will follow. We need leaders like Joshua. We need leaders who will call us back to God.

THE ISRAELITES COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO GOD

The people of God said they would follow Joshua's example. They promised to serve God. They promised to put all false gods out of their lives. They recalled all the wonderful blessings God gave them.

We need to renew our commitment to God many times. We need revival like the Israelites. We forget that we need God. Many times we need revival in our lives. We need revival when we stop praying and reading God's word. We need revival when worship of God is not important to us. The Israelites made their new covenant at Shechem.

THE PEOPLE MADE A COVENANT AT SHECHEM

The people promised to serve God. Joshua told them they would find it hard (verse 19). The people promised to stay faithful to God.

Joshua wrote the covenant. It was almost like a treaty between two nations. Joshua told the people God would punish them if they were not faithful to him. All other gods must be put away.

A great stone placed at Shechem reminded the people of the covenant with God. Shechem was an important place. God promised the Promised Land to Abraham at Shechem. Joseph's body was buried there. Now God made a new

All men went to be free from oppression. But often the struggle for freedom is long and dangerous. The Hebrew liberation was not simple. In the last lesson we saw how God commissioned Moses for the liberation task. Moses made the perilous journey from Midian to Egypt. Aaron, Moses' brother, went with him as the spokesman. When Moses arrived in Egypt, he assembled the elders of Israel to present his credentials and plans.

PROVING HIS LEADERSHIP

It was not easy for Moses to convince the Israelites of his leadership. He was a stranger to them. Yet, he knew he needed the confidence of these slaves if he was to lead them to freedom. Oppressed people are suspicious of outsiders. Moses had to prove himself to them and persuade them to follow him. In Exodus 4:31, we learn that he succeeded for "the people believed...then they bowed their heads and worshipped." Pharaoh was Moses' next step.

MOSES CONFRONTS PHARAOH

Moses and Aaron went to see Pharaoh. They told him that God said, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness" (Exodus 5:1).

Pharaoh asked Moses "Who is the Lord?" "...Why should I listen to him and let Israel go?" (Exodus 5:2). Pharaoh became angry and told the soldiers to make the Hebrews work harder.

Moses and Aaron again went to Pharaoh and told him that God said, "Let my people go" (Exodus 6:11). God says that He would punish the Egyptians if Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews go.

God punished the Egyptians by sending nine plagues on them. Exodus 7:17 - 10:29) During each plague Pharaoh promised to set the Hebrews free. God stopped the plagues but Pharaoh would not keep his promises.

(Read Exodus 11:1-6; 13:17-22 aloud)

THE PLAGUE OF DEATH

Moses told Pharaoh about the death plague but Pharaoh would not let the Hebrews go. God told Moses how to save the Hebrews from death. Exodus 12 in your Bible tells about this. This was the start of the Passover feast. It was the first of the great Jewish holy days.

Every Hebrew family must sacrifice a lamb and put the blood of the sacrificed lamb on the doorpost. God would save the first born of every home if the blood was on the doorposts. The Hebrews put blood on their doorposts. God saved their children as he promised.

But death came to the Egyptian homes at midnight. The first-born of all Egyptian families was killed. Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron. He told them to get the Hebrews out of Egypt as fast as they could.

to serve him.

The Israelites would serve God for awhile and then turn away. Joshua tried to call the people back to God. He was a very old man. Joshua reminded the people of God's blessings to them.

In Joshua 24:1-13, we find the story of how God had led and blessed the Israelites. Then he called for the people to repent and make a new commitment to the one true God.

(Read Joshua 24:14-15, 19-28 aloud)

JOSHUA CALLED FOR A NEW COMMITMENT

Joshua said the Israelites were to "fear the Lord" (verse 14). He did not mean for them to be afraid. He meant for them to revere God. They should realize God's power and might. Joshua knew that some Israelites worshipped other gods. He told them to "put away" (verse 14) these false gods. God will not share us with other gods.

Joshua called on the people to decide. "Choose this day whom you will serve." (Verse 15). They could choose false gods or they could choose God. They could not worship both.

We do not have false gods like Baal. However, many "gods" keep us from serving God. Some people make a god of pleasure or work or other things.

Joshua set the example for the Israelites to follow. He said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Verse 15).

LESSON 10

RENEWING THE COVENANT

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Deuteronomy 26;
Joshua 24

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Joshua 24:14-
15, 19-28

MEMORY VERSE: "And if you be unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the rivers, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua 24:15

In the last lesson we studied about the difficulty the Israelites had in keeping their covenant with God. The Israelites yielded to the temptation to worship other gods. God continually tried to call them back to him. Today's lesson tells how God used a man to renew the covenant. He used Joshua to call the people back to him.

The lesson of renewal, or revival, is a timeless one for all generations. Do you ever pause in your daily life and re-commit your life to God? Do you ever, like the apostle Paul, feel like saying, "I do not do the good I want to do; instead, I do the evil that I do not want to do!"

We need to be reminded of our responsibility to God. We need to make a new commitment to serve him.

GOD LEADS THE HEBREWS OUT OF EGYPT

Exodus 13:17-22 tells how God led his people out of Egypt. The shortest way to the promised land was up the coast. The Philistines lived along the coast, and most people travelled that way.

The Hebrew people were not trained to fight. So God led them another way. God led about six hundred thousand men, plus women and children, through the wilderness. The Israelites had lived in Egypt for 430 years. God was ready for his people to go back to Canaan. So God led them "by day in a pillar of cloud... and by night in a pillar of fire" (Exodus 13:21).

Joseph had told the Israelites that they would leave Egypt. He asked them to take his bones back to his old home (Genesis 50:24-25). Moses did as Joseph wanted.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

God always cares for his people. He wants men today to be free of sin's penalty. The Egyptians would not listen to God and they suffered punishment. The Israelites obeyed God and he delivered them from bondage. Jesus wants you to help others become free of sin.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God is able to overcome the powers of evil and oppression. He overcame Pharaoh and he overcomes evil today. The future is in his hands.

2. God uses persons in delivering the oppressed. He used Moses to help the Israelites. Each of us has a part in God's redemptive plan.
3. God will punish people who do not obey him, just as he punished the Egyptians.
4. God will set us free from the penalty of sin, if we trust Jesus to save us.

LESSON 4

CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 14-15

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 14:21-25, 30-31; 15:1-3, 20-21

MEMORY VERSE: "Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, majestic in holiness, terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders?"

Exodus 15:11

Each year African countries celebrate their independence on their respective days. At this celebration there is music, dancing and many speakers. It is a holiday of fun and celebration. God's people also, had a special time for celebrating their freedom from Egypt. What happened to the Israelites after they marched out of Egypt?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Think of false gods in our world. Are you guilty of serving a false god? When things become so important that nothing else matters, then that thing is a god. God can help you put false gods out of your life.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. The Israelites soon forgot the God of their fathers, who had given them the Promised Land. They started to worship the false gods of their neighbours.
2. We have false gods in our world today. A false god is anything that keeps us from serving god.
3. Without God, the Israelites were unprotected from their enemies. God protects us from the evils of our world.
4. God is not pleased when we are not faithful to him.

tolerate sin. He knows when people sins. God became angry with his people.

The Israelites left God. God also left them. Enemies began to defeat them. They were losing the Promised Land that God gave them (verse 15). God was angry, but he always wants to save people. Read verse 17 to learn of God's plan.

(Read Judges 2:17 aloud)

GOD RAISED UP JUDGES

God judged the people for their sin. He gave the Israelites judges. The men were soldiers. They led the Israelites back to victory. They led the government.

The judges guided the people. The Israelites followed them for a while. But they "turned quickly" (verse 17) back to false gods. Each generation grew and more sinful (verse 19).

So God became angry. He told the people he would not help the Israelites get rid of their enemies. The people were not truly repentent.

We do not have gods like Baal or Asheroth. But if we put anything in place of God, that thing in place of God, that thing is a god to us. Money, alcohol, pleasure, and business can be gods. When we serve false gods like these, we always lose. We miss out on the blessings God wants to give us. Sin destroys us. We must put God first in our lives.

(Read Exodus 14:1-20 aloud)

EGYPTIANS COME AFTER THE HEBREWS

As soon as the Hebrews started marching toward the wilderness, Pharaoh again changed his mind. He must have realized that he had lost his slaves. Who would do all the hard work? So he called his best soldiers to go after the Hebrews. They took their armour and chariots and caught up with the Hebrews at the Red Sea. The Hebrews were really afraid. They wished they were still in Egypt (verse 10-12).

Moses had faith. He knew that God would not forsake them. God told Moses to tell his people to move forward. The Red Sea was in front of the Hebrews, and the Egyptian army was behind them! God promised Moses victory over the Egyptians. But how? Read Exodus 14:21-25, 30-31. What miracle did God do?

THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

Notice that God did the miracle. The Hebrews were terrified and had no safe place to go. Then the wind came and the water was divided. Walls of water protected the Hebrews as they walked across the Red Sea to safety. But the Egyptians were still following them.

God told Moses what to do. When all the Hebrews were across the sea, Moses held out his hand. The waters came together. The Egyptians, men, horses and chariots, sank into the water. They all died. The Lord was victorious over the Egyptians.

(Read Exodus 14:30-31; 15:1-3,20-21 aloud)

SALVATION AND SINGING

The Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians. The Hebrews saw the dead Egyptians lying on the seashore. The victory gave them new faith in God. They had seen his great miracle.

They revered the Lord more, and had more faith in Moses, God's leader. They no longer murmured and complained. The people responded to the saving miracle by breaking out into songs of thanksgiving and praise. Faith in God is a singing faith.

There are two victory hymns in chapter 15 of Exodus. The song of Moses is found in verses 1-3; and you can almost hear the Hebrews singing joyously, "I will sing to the Lord... for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and the rider he has thrown into the sea (verse 1).

In verse two they praised God in a beautiful way. The song of joy came from their hearts.

"The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name." (Exodus 15:2-3)

Miriam, Moses' sister, led the women in another victory hymn in verses 21-22. The women sang and danced in joyful thanksgiving.

settled in one place and became farmers. They began living like the people around them. Many worshipped many false gods. So they began mixing the worship of God with idol worship.

The Israelites forgot the God of their parents. They forgot that God had delivered their parents from Egyptian bondage. They forgot that God had given them the Promised Land.

What happened to the Israelites' relationship to God? Who did they worship? How did God feel about their lack of faith?

(Read Judges 2:13-23 aloud)

THE ISRAELITES WORSHIPPED FALSE GODS

The Israelites turned away from God. They worshipped two of the Canaanite gods called Baal and Ashteroth. Baal meant "Lord of the land." The Canaanites thought Baal gave them good harvests. Baal was male and Asheroth was female. They believed the gods had sex. The Canaanites practised immoral sex acts as part of their Baal worship.

If there was rain and good crops, the Israelites would worship Baal. The Israelites' faith in God grew weaker and weaker. Their moral character became worse and worse. They followed false gods.

GOD BECAME ANGRY WITH THE ISRAELITES

God is Holy. Therefore, he cannot

LESSON 9

DIFFICULTY IN KEEPING THE COVENANT

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Judges 1-3

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Judges 2:13-23

MEMORY VERSE: "And the people of Israel did what
was evil in the sight of the Lord,
forgetting the Lord their God."
Judges 3:7

When I was a small child, I liked to run in the church. My feet made such a loud noise as I ran! My mother did not like for me to do this. So one Sunday evening, mother said, "Now promise me you will not run in the church any more. God does not like children to do this because it does not show respect for God's house, the church." So I promised very faithfully not to run in the church. So, after church I forgot my promise! I began running and slipped and fell! I hit my head and fell unconscious! When I woke up, I saw my mother. I remembered my broken promise, and I never ran in church again.

It is very easy to break promises. It is very difficult to keep promises. When we accept Jesus, we invite him into our lives. Accepting Jesus is a personal matter. No one else can accept Jesus for us. We must do this ourselves. Not even our parents can believe for ourselves.

The Israelites lived in Canaan now. They did not wander as their fathers had. They

They praised God for saving them.

We worship because we feel by a deep desire to give thanks to God. We are compelled to say thank you to God for life. Our worship is the acknowledgement of our dependence on God. St. Francis of Assisi knew the meaning of praise. He wrote: "All creatures of our God and King lift up your voice and with us sing - alleluia!"

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Do we praise and thank God for the victories he gives us? God's greatest gift to us is salvation through his Son Jesus Christ. Through Christ we are saved from sin's penalty. How can we thank God for his wonderful gift? Is worship a "thanks" or "praise" to God? Can we thank God in prayer and music? Remember to praise and thank God this week for victory over sin.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God wants us to be free from sin. The gift of freedom for salvation comes from God himself. We do not deserve this gift. But, he gives it because he loves us.
2. We should thank God for His gift of salvation and victory over sin. He helps us overcome sins in our lives.
3. Because of God's greatness to us, we should want to worship Him.

LESSON 5

GOD CREATES A COVENANT PEOPLE

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Deuteronomy 10-12; Exodus 19-20

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 19:2-9; Deuteronomy 11:8-9, 18-19

MEMORY VERSE: "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nations."

Exodus 19:5-6

Covenants are part of the daily routine of an African even today. When a young man and young woman wish to be married, they enter into a covenant with each other and often with each others family. Gifts, money and promises are often exchanged. The two people to be married and their families are entering into an agreement. Each side has conditions to meet it the agreement.

God made a contract or covenant with Israel. He had delivered the Hebrews from Egypt. They were no longer slaves. God gave them his laws including the Ten Commandments. He would be their God and they would be his people. God wanted the Israelites to bring salvation to the world. How did this happen? Where?

(Read Exodus 19:1-9 aloud)

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God led the Israelites into Canaan and helped them to conquer the land. God will lead us today if we listen to his directions, and obey him.
2. The Israelites celebrated the Passover as a reminder of their deliverance from Egypt. Christians celebrate the Lord's Supper. It reminds us of what Christ did for us.
3. When God is the leader, victory is assured.

(Read Joshua 6:1-5 aloud)

God told Joshua how to conquer Jericho. The Israelites marched around Jericho for seven days. On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times. Seven priests blew the trumpets and the wall fell. The Israelites took Jericho because they obeyed God's command. The victory belonged to God not to the Israelites. The Israelites were obeying God's instructions.

BUILDING A NATION

God continued to be with the Israelites. God led them to take over the whole land. (Joshua 11:23). God had given them the victory.

Finally, the battles were over. God had kept his promise and given them the Promised Land. Joshua had the hard work of building a nation.

Joshua divided the land between the twelve tribes. Throughout his life, Joshua worked hard to keep the Israelites faithful to God.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

The Lord's Supper is much like the Jewish Passover Feast. Christ died on the cross for our sins. The Lord's Supper reminds us of what Christ did. The Passover reminded the Israelites of what God did for them in Egypt. When you take the Lord's Supper again, remember what Christ did for you.

A COVENANT IS MADE

The Israelites had finally reached Mount Sinai. Their trip from the Red Sea had not been easy. But, they had witnessed the power, and concern of God for them. God had saved them from slavery, from death at the hands of the Egyptians, and from drowning. Also, He had kept them from starving and thirsting in the wilderness.

The people gathered around Mount Sinai. Then Moses went up the mountain. God had a message to Moses to take to the people. God called on Israel to obey him (verse 5). They were to keep the covenant and then they would be a special treasure to God. They would be a "Kingdom of priests" (verse 6). One of the duties of priests was to bring men into fellowship with God. Thus, the Israelites would have the responsibility of taking God's message to the world. God required his people to obey him. He expects us to obey him too.

How did Israel respond to God?

(Read verse 7-9 aloud again)

ISRAEL'S RESPONSE TO GOD

The people listened as Moses told them what God expected of them. God demanded that they obey him. They said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." (Verse 8). They were all ready to enter into covenant. God had made the covenant, and made his terms. If the people would obey his laws, He would be their God. He would protect them and bring them into possession of the land of Canaan. His

story revealed that the Israelites were unable to keep their part of the commitment. God, however, kept his part of the contract.

The Israelites were perhaps like many of us today. They recognized the right way, and were filled with a deep desire to do right. They really covenanted to worship only God. But, they failed. We recognize the right way through Christ today. But, do we not often fail to walk the right path? Do we always obey God? No, we fail many times. But God wants to forgive us. He is waiting for us to turn to him.

BEGINNINGS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Ten Commandments and other covenant laws were given by God to the people. But, He made provisions for a continuing relationship with the Israelites. He instructed the Israelites to teach their children about him.

Read Deuteronomy 11:18-19. God initiated religious education. The people were to teach their children about God and his covenant laws. They were to use different methods to help them remember God's laws. God told the people to bind the laws on their hand, wear them on their foreheads, and to speak often of them. God expected his people to be faithful and to obey him and teach their children to obey him too.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

What God expected of the Israelites, He also expects of us today. We have a new

waters. Joshua 3 tells us that as the priests stepped into the water carrying the ark, another miracle occurred. The waters were dammed up and the people hurried across on dry land Joshua 3:14-4:1.

This was a thrilling experience for the Hebrews. The ark preceded the people. It was symbolic of God's presence. The people knew God was going before them and their success was assured. How did they respond to this event?

(Read Joshua 4:4-7 aloud)

THE ISRAELITES BUILT A MEMORIAL ALTAR

Joshua chose a man from each tribe. Each man gathered a stone from the Jordan river bed. They built an altar of stones. The altar was a reminder of what had happened. Joshua told the people to tell their children about what had happened that day.

God told the people to observe the rites and feasts again. The passover reminded the Hebrews of God's deliverance from Egypt.

Read Joshua 5:10-12 to see how the Israelites celebrated the passover.

(Read Joshua 5:10-12 aloud)

THE ISRAELITES TAKE JERICHO

Jericho was one of the strongest Canaanite cities. It was surrounded by a huge wall. How could the Israelites take over such a protected city?

LESSON 8

CLAIMING THE PROMISED LAND

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Joshua 3-6; 14:1-5

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Joshua 4:4-7;
5:10-12; 6:1-5; 11:23

MEMORY VERSE: "Be strong and of a good courage; be not frightened neither be dismayed; for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9

The desire to own and hold a plot of land is rooted deep in the heart of man. The struggle for land has caused war and many arguments. The Hebrews must have really yearned for a plot of land that was their own. They must have wanted to plant their crops and build their homes. For forty years they had wandered in a barren wilderness. God had provided manna as their daily food.

Now they were on the eastern banks of the Jordan river. They were just outside of the Promised Land. Moses had died. Joshua was their new leader. The people were confident of God's leadership.

GOD'S ASSURANCE OF HIS PRESENCE

The Jordan River was swollen with rain water. In the dry season, the Israelites might have waded across. But, at this time of the year they could not even swim in the raging

covenant with God. God has established his covenant with us through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). Christ died for us. That was God's part of the new covenant. We are demanded to commit our lives to God and obey him completely. We, like the Israelites should impress our children with the fact that their relationship to God is the most important thing in our life. We need to share our faith in Christ with our children. God's laws and love should be discussed often in natural conversation. Are we, as people of a "new covenant" keeping our part of that covenant?

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God called a particular people into covenant with him. God calls us today into covenant with him. He loves us and wants to redeem mankind.
2. God promised the Israelites a prosperous land. He promised to take care of them. Today the "Kingdom of God" is not found in a geographical location, but in the hearts of people, who allow God to reign supreme in them.
3. The Israelites were expected to be faithful to God and to obey his commandments. Today we as Christians are expected to live as Christ commanded, and to obey him in every part of our lives.

LESSON 6

A WORSHIPPING PEOPLE

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 33:1-35
29; 40

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 33:9-16;
35:29

MEMORY VERSE: "And he said, "My presence will go
with you, and I will give you rest."
Exodus 33:14

Man is worshipping creature. He worships the God who made him or he makes a god to worship. Idols and images are the result of man's need to worship. The Israelites became impatient with Moses who stayed so long on the mountain, talking with God. They needed and wanted worship. So what did they do.

(Read Exodus 32:1 aloud)

AN IDOLATROUS PEOPLE

Moses was not there to lead the people in the worship of God. So, they decided to make their own gods like they had seen worshipped in Egypt. The people asked Aaron to make them a god. Aaron fashioned a golden calf out of the Israelites' jewelry. The Israelites worshipped the golden calf. The Israelites did this shortly after God had redeemed them out of Egypt. Does this tell us anything about human nature? Do we, today, forget about what God has done for us and turn to our own choosing (money, work, etc.)? Throughout its early history, Israel was tempted, and

Promised Land. They were Joshua and Caleb. God made the Israelites wander in the wilderness for 40 years until all the unfaithful died.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

How strong is your faith? Do you think that God does not hear your prayers? Will you pray, asking God to forgive you and to help you to believe? When you do, you will find victory through God's power.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. The Israelites lost faith in God's leading them. We often as Christians, lose faith in God's direction and leadership.
2. Our lack of faith will keep us from receiving the blessings God has for us.
3. If we ask God, he will forgive us. But we can except God to punish us if we do not trust him and obey Him.
4. Prayer has great power with God.

to appoint a leader to take them back to Egypt (Numbers 14:4). They would rather be slaves in Egypt than free under God!

The Israelites did not have enough faith. So God could not give them all the blessings He wanted for them. Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb tried to restore the faith of the people.

(Read Numbers 14:8-10 aloud)

THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT FOLLOW MOSES

The Israelites would not listen to Moses and the other leaders. They wanted to stone them. They did not believe that God would give them land.

This made God angry at the people. He told Moses he would kill the Israelites. Moses pleaded with God not to kill his people. Moses said the world would see God's power if he gave them the Promised Land.

Read the conversation between God and Moses in Numbers 14:18-23.

THE LORD HEARD AND FORGAVE

God heard the plea of Moses. He forgave the people because of Moses. Moses' prayer had great power with God. Our prayer for others can have power too

God forgave Israel and did not destroy them. But, God punished Israel because she did not have enough faith. Only two Israelites who came out of Egypt were allowed to enter the

often yielded to worship other gods according to the practices around them. But, God continually remained faithful to His covenant and forgave Israel for her unfaithfulness.

(Read Exodus 33:9-16 aloud)

GOD DWELT WITH ISRAEL

One of the sacred symbols of God's abiding presence during the wilderness period was "the tent of meeting." This "tent of meeting" was a movable tent in which God "tabernacled" (dwelt). He dwelt there with his people during their wilderness wanderings. Moses met there with God. God manifested his glory in the tent from time to time.

Verse 7 states that the tent was away from the tents where the people lived. The Israelites felt God was so holy that people could not come near him. The pillar of cloud at the door of the tabernacle showed God's presence within. This same pillar of cloud had accompanied the Israelites from Egypt. It had enveloped the top of Mount Sinai when Moses had met people made a golden idol. The people had repented. And now the pillar of cloud was a sign that God was with his people again.

GOD'S PRESENCE LEADS TO WORSHIP

When the people recognize God's presence in the pillar of cloud, they fell down and worshipped. Worship means a meeting between God and man. It is a vital experience with God. The Israelites responded spontaneously in worship when they recognized God's presence. Moses spoke to God as a friend (verse 11).

Moses was a representative of his people to God. Today we can approach God directly through Christ. Every believer is a priest. We are priests before God and to one another. We are under obligation to function as priests on behalf of our fellowmen. Christ, too is our friend. John 15:15 states, "No longer do I can you servants; ... but I have called you friends; for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." One of life's mysteries is God's friendship and presence with common ordinary people such as we are.

GOD'S PROMISE TO MOSES

Moses knew the Israelites had sinned. He knew they had made a golden calf and worshipped it. Moses asked God to forgive the, (Exodus 32:12). Moses knew he needed God's help. He asked God to show him his way (Exodus 33:13).

God promised to be with the Israelites and to care for them (Exodus 33-14). This promise of God is good for God's people even today. When we worship God, He speaks to us. He will guide us and care for us.

Moses received the Ten Commandments a second time. When Moses saw the Israelites worshipping the golden calf, he became angry. He threw the stone tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were written and broke them (Exodus 32:19). Moses returned to Mount Sinai. Again God gave the Laws to Moses. God said again the people could have no other gods. All work must be done in six days. The seventh

But, the spies were divided on what they should do. Joshua and Caleb felt that Israel could conquer the land. They knew God was able to help them. Caleb said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it" (verse 30).

The other ten spies started complaining. They said the people of the land were strong and many. The ten spies said the men were like giants. "We felt like grasshoppers before them" (verse 33).

Everything the spies said about the land and the people was true. But they forgot one thing. God was going to give them the land.

What made the difference in the report of the two men and the report of the ten men? Perhaps, Joshua and Caleb had a different spirit. They had faith rather than fear. Faith overcomes fear. Faith is taking God at his word.

Who did the Israelites believe? What did they do?

(Read Numbers 14:1-3 aloud)

THE ISRAELITES COMPLAINED

The Israelites believed the ten spies not Joshua and Caleb. They became angry with Moses and Aaron. They wanted to go back to Egypt!

They thought they would die in this new land. They thought the giants would kill all their wives and children. They forgot how God protected and provided for them. They decided

We, also, fail at times because we do not have enough faith. When our faith is weak, we miss blessings that God wants to give us. The Israelites often lost their faith. Even though God had protected from their faith at times. Do you remember how they built a golden calf to worship? (Exodus 32). Today's lesson is about another time in the Hebrew history when they lost their faith. Out of all who left Egypt, only two of them went into the promised land of Canaan.

ARRIVAL AT THE PROMISED LAND

The Israelites had arrived at the Promised Land. God told them that he would give the land to them. The people were afraid. They wanted Moses to send people to spy out the land. The Lord spoke to Moses and let him send the spies. Moses sent a spy from each tribe.

The spies spent forty days in the Promised Land. They gathered fruit to take back to show the people. They said that many people lived in the land. What was the spies' report? What did Caleb and Joshua want to do?

(Read Numbers 13:30-33 aloud)

REPORT OF THE SPIES

The spies returned to make their reports. All agreed the land was good. There was fruit, abundant crops and water. The people lived in fortified cities and enjoyed a high standard of living.

was a day for worship and rest. Moses told the Israelites to make an offering to God. How willing were the Israelites to make an offering?

(Read Exodus 35:29 aloud)

THE ISRAELITES WORSHIPPED WITH GIFTS

Part of the Israelites act of worship involved giving. Moses told the people to make an offering to God. A permanent tabernacle was to be built. Moses gave detailed instructions for the presentation of gifts (Exodus 35:4-29). They gave freely and as their hearts led them to give. They gave willingly. The response of the Israelites was overwhelming and so great that Moses had to call a halt to the bringing of gifts. When God's people give willingly, the needs of God's work will be more than met.

Our feeling about giving is important. Someone has started that there are three ways of giving: reluctant giving, duty giving, and thanksgiving. Reluctant giving says, "I really don't want to give but I'm afraid not to." Duty giving says, "I ought to give because it is my duty." But, thanksgiving says, "I want to give." Thanksgiving is an open gate to God's love. We receive the greatest joy when we give because we love God. When we give gladly, we are worshipping God.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

All Christians need to worship. As you worship, expect to meet God. His presence

can be experienced through many worship experiences - praise, prayer, Bible readings, giving, sermon, etc. What are the things which really help you to worship? Today, we worship God in spirit. Jesus said in John 4:24, "God is spirit; and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." What does this mean? Are you worshipping God in your spirit? In your actions?

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. Man has a need to worship. Christians need to worship the living God daily.
2. In Worship, man meets God. God speaks to those who worship him.
3. The Israelites gave offerings as a part of their worship. Christians should give willingly as a part of worship.
4. God will guide us each day, just as he promised the Israelites. The Israelites were God's people in the Old Testament. Today, Christians are also God's people.
5. God's people should worship God in spirit and in truth.

LESSON 7

UNBELIEF DELAYS FULFILMENT OF COVENANT

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Numbers 13-14

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Numbers 13:30-33, 14:1-3, 6

MEMORY VERSE: "And the Lord said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me; inspite of all the signs which I have wrought among them?"

Numbers 14:11

A father was playing with his little two year old son. He would put him on the table and then pick him up quickly. The child laughed. Then the father stood the child on the table and said, "Now, my son, jump! Father will catch you!" But the boy would not jump. He liked his father, but he did not believe father would catch him. The father commanded him to jump, jump! Finally, the boy jumped and his father caught him. His disbelief caused him to delay obeying his father. But when he obeyed his father, and jumped, then his father fulfilled his promise. He caught him.

Jesus during his ministry said, "O men of little faith" (Matthew 8:26), to his disciples many times. Despite the miracles and many deeds which the disciples witnessed, they often did not have enough faith. Can you remember some of these times? (Matthew 8:23-27; Matthew 14:15-20, 28-33).