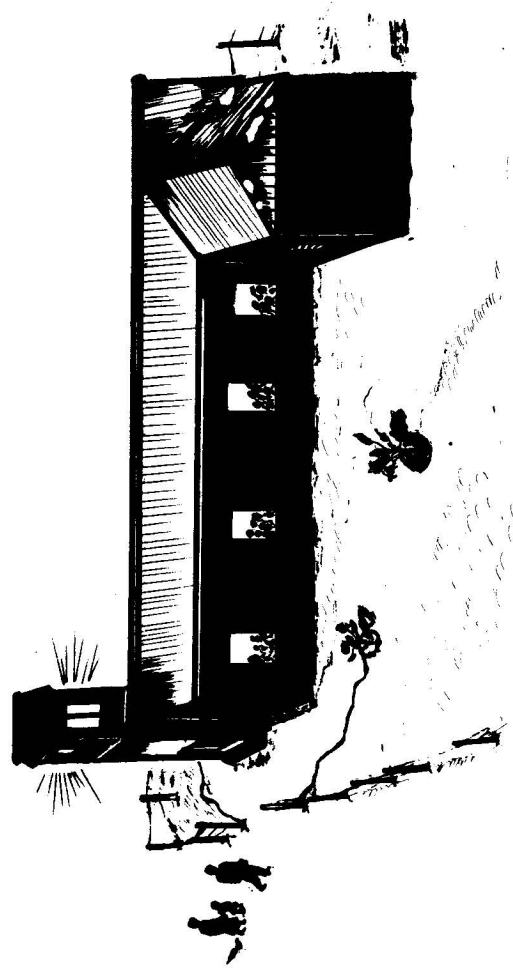


THE LIVING GOD AND HIS PEOPLE



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WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. If there is to be a revival, people must truly worship God.
2. Revival cannot be forced upon anyone.
3. God speaks to people through reading God's word and through prayer.

was taken from the temple. In fact, Josiah was the only king who did so much to get the people to worship God.

Josiah did one more thing to bring revival to his land. He brought back the observance of the Passover Feast. Josiah had it observed in a very meaningful way. This feast is the most important of all Jewish feasts even today.

THE REVIVAL FAILED

But the revival failed. Why did not Josiah bring back to Judah the worship of God? Why did God not spare his people? God could not forgive what Josiah's grandfather Manasseh did. Josiah's effort at revival put off the time when God punished Israel.

The revival failed because Josiah tried "to make" his people get revived. The hearts of the people did not change. They took the idols out of the temple, but did not let God into their hearts. The people heard the Book of the Law, but they did not obey it. They were proud of their beautiful temple, but they did not worship God in it.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

A real revival changes people. God can use you to begin a revival in your church. Read the Bible regularly. Pray for God to lead you. Ask him to change your life according to his will. Ask God to send a revival to your heart. Listen for him to answer. Then share your spirit of revival with other Christians.

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Hilkiah became very happy when he found the Book. He liked what he read. At once he told King Josiah. Josiah asked Shaphan to read the Book to him. Josiah became upset when he heard the Book. He knew his people did not obey God. What could he do?

The King wondered about the Book. He sent messengers to a prophetess in Jerusalem. Huldah, the woman prophet, told them that God would do what he promised. God became angry when his people worshipped idols, she said. But he promised to spare them if they repented of their sins.

Josiah wanted Judah to hear God's law. Read this scripture to find what he did.

(Read 2 Kings 23:1-5,21 to the class)

THE LAWS OF GOD READ

The king invited God's people to Jerusalem. He read the Book of the Law to them. The people listened. After reading the Book to the people, Josiah made a covenant with God. Read verse 3 again. Josiah led the people in promising that they would obey God. They said they would do everything the Book told them to do.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REVIVAL

Josiah destroyed all the idols and altars for worshipping false gods. Then he burned everything used in worshipping Baal, Ashtaroth, and other false gods. He even had the heathen priests killed. The shameful idol of Ashroth

revival. People had to be willing to commit themselves completely to God.

This lesson would help William and Joseph. It is about a king who wanted revival. King Josiah committed himself to lead his country back to God.

THE NEED FOR REVIVAL

In 722 B.C. Israel, the northern kingdom, was conquered. It never came to power again. Judah, the southern kingdom, did not learn from Israel's fall.

Judah also wandered from God. Josiah's grandfather, King Manasseh, built idols in the temple. Josiah's father, King Amon, followed Manasseh's evil ways. The Temple was no longer used to worship God.

So Josiah asked the people for money to repair the temple. They brought enough to hire workmen. The work was started. Josiah hoped Judah would turn back to God when the temple was repaired.

While repairing the temple, Hilkiah found the book of the law.

(Read 2 Kings 22:8-11 to the class)

THE LAWS OF GOD FOUND

The Book of the Law was lost because Judah did not use it. When people today stop reading God's word, they lose it. God's people stopped worshipping God many years earlier.

LESSON 1

DAYS OF BEGINNING

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Matthew 16:18
Luke 1:1-4
Acts 1-2

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Acts 1:1-2;
2:22-32

MEMORY VERSE: *"And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it."*

Matthew 16:18

The Bible is God's Word. It tells how the church began. The word "church" means a gathering of people. The church was made up of special people. God saved them. They were baptized to show the world that they believed in Jesus.

(Read Acts 1:1-2 to the class)

CONTINUING THE WORK OF JESUS

Luke, a Gentile believer, wrote both the gospel of Luke and Acts. He wrote them to his friend Theophilus. Luke wanted Theophilus to know Jesus too.

In verse 1 Luke reminded Theophilus about the first book he had written. It was about Jesus. Jesus told his disciples to stay in Jerusalem until they received the "promise of

the Father" (Acts 1:4). Jesus also said that the Holy Spirit would come upon the disciples and give them power to do his work. (Read Acts 1:8 from your own Bible.)

The disciples stayed in Jerusalem after the Passover feast as Jesus told them to do. They prayed for fifty days.

On the fiftieth day, the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came in full power. The Holy Spirit made it possible for the apostles to speak many languages. They spoke to all people who were in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.

The disciples had no clear leader before Pentecost. After the Holy Spirit came in full power on the disciples, Peter spoke out. He became the leader of the church. Read this scripture, which is a part of Peter's sermon.

(Read Acts 2:22-32 to the class)

"YOU CRUCIFIED JESUS"

Peter preached to Jewish men. No doubt many of his hearers knew about Jesus. They knew of his great and mighty works. Jesus healed the sick. He made the blind to see. He made the lame walk. He cast out demons and raised the dead.

Peter told these men that they killed Jesus. They nailed him on a cross. Yet they could do those things only because God let them.

4. God welcomes everyone who returns to him.

LESSON 13

AN ATTEMPT AT REVIVAL

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: 2 Kings 22:1-23:30

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: 2 Kings 22:8-11
2 Kings 23:1,5,21

MEMORY VERSE:

"And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul..."
2 Kings 23:3

William and Joseph met one day in the market place. They were both members of Baptist churches in nearby villages.

William's church had a revival. Many people were saved. Joseph's church also had a revival, but the church did not change. "It was just another meeting," he said. "Nothing happened."

William and Joseph talked about revivals. Why did one church have a life-changing revival and the other did not? They decided that God's spiritual power must lead to real

They chose God. They said, "The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God."

TODAY WE MUST CHOOSE

Today we are tempted by many false gods. We may worship money, when we have little or none of it. We may break the law when trying to get money without working for it. We may **want** to be famous or to be known by many **people**. We may want to be liked or loved so much that it becomes a god. Education may become our god. Power may be our god.

Christians must stop trying to worship God and something else. We must put God first in our lives. Our God will not take second place in anyone's life.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

What about you? Do you try to worship on Sunday and worship gods during the week? Commit your life to the Lord. Trust him to lead you.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God's people must not let others lead them away from God. Christians must not worship false gods.
2. False gods will fail us and they cannot meet the needs people have.
3. God calls men who are totally committed to him to show people the right way back to God.

Jesus did not stay in the grave. God raised Christ from the dead. God raised him to live again. Death could not hold God's Son.

Peter told these Jews about seeing Jesus many times after God raised him from death. But the Jews did not have to depend only on what the disciples saw. They had another way to find the truth.

SCRIPTURES TELL ABOUT JESUS

Peter quoted Psalm 16:8-11. He said David wrote the Psalm. In the Psalm, David said that one of his "sons" would be God's Messiah. Peter also said that David did not write about himself. David wrote about Jesus.

Peter used the words of Psalm 16 in his sermon. All Jews loved King David. Even though he was king, he died. He did not rise to live again, as Jesus Christ did.

David was a prophet - Acts 2:30 tells us this. God told him a truth and gave him a message. God said that someday one of David's sons would rule in his place. That was God's Son. David knew that God's Son would be killed. But God would raise him to live again.

Peter told the Jews that David spoke of Jesus. Old Jewish writing told that God would raise Jesus from the dead. Peter knew that Jesus was alive. He saw him and talked to him.

WE ARE JESUS' WITNESSES

Peter and the other Christians witnessed for Christ. On Pentecost, God enabled them to speak in different languages. They told people from many lands about Jesus Christ. They became members of the first church.

If you are a Christian, you, too, are a member of Christ's church. We must tell others about Jesus Christ. We must live so that others will know that Christ lives in us. We must be good witnesses.

Today, go and tell a friend that the Lord still lives. Tell this friend how Jesus saved you. Pray that he will let Christ save him. Pray that he, too, will tell someone about our Saviour.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Do we have power from God to be his witnesses? Why are we afraid to witness? Have we really been saved? Has the Holy Spirit filled us?

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. When Jesus lived on earth among men he did many miracles.
2. Jesus was killed on the cross and arose again.
3. When we believe in Jesus, we become members of His church. The church is like the body of Jesus. It takes care of the

the wood in order around the stones as if he would start the fire. Next, Elijah cut the bullock in piece and put the pieces on the wood. What was he doing?

Then Elijah did a strange thing. He called for some men to fill four barrels of water to pour on the altar. He asked the men to fill the barrels with water two more times. They poured twelve barrels of water over the altar, the meat and the wood, filling the trench. Everything was soaked with water. Surely nothing would burn now!

Verses 36-37 give Elijah's prayer. Read these verses again. First, Elijah let the people know who God was. He was the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel. Next, Elijah asked God to let Israel know who Elijah was. Elijah wanted the people to know that he was doing what God told him to do.

THE GOD WHO ANSWERED

Elijah begged God to hear him so the people would know two things. They needed to know that God was God. They needed to know that God forgave them again.

The fire of the Lord fell on the altar. It "consumed" or ate up the burnt offering. It ate the wood and the dust. It licked up the water in the trench!

THE CHOICE WAS MADE

The Israelites did what Elijah told them to do. They chose whom they would worship.

Elijah told Ahab to meet him on Mount Carmel. Ahab was to bring Baal's prophets and all the Israelites. Elijah was going to prove who the true and living God was before all the people.

All the people came to the top of Mount Carmel. Elijah spoke to them, "Today you must decide who you will worship, God or Baal." Baal was the heathen god being worshipped by pagan Jews. The prophet told them his plan.

The prophets of Baal who numbered 450 would kill a bullock and lay it on the altar with no fire under it. Elijah would do the same. He would kill a bullock and lay it on the altar with no fire under it. Both Elijah and Baal's prophets would try to get their god to send down fire. The God who sent down the fire would be Israel's God. The people said, "It is spoken." They agreed.

Elijah let the Baal prophets try first. They killed their bullock and put him on the altar. Then they began to pray to Baal. All four hundred and fifty prophets prayed to Baal. They prayed from early morning until time for the evening sacrifice. Read verse 27 to find out how Elijah made fun of Baal!

THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND ISRAEL

Then Elijah called God's people to come near him. He repaired the broken altar to God. He took twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. He built the altar with the stones. Then the prophet dug a trench or ditch around the altar. He put

members, teaching them, and encouraging them.

4. Christians are responsible for telling others how Jesus saved them and for helping others to believe in Jesus too.

LESSON 2

THE CHURCH ORGANIZES

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Acts 6:1-6;
Romans 16:1-6;

Ephesians 4:11-16;
1 Timothy 3:1-13

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: 1 Timothy
3:1-13

MEMORY VERSE: *"And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ."*

Ephesians 4:11-12

After the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Jesus, Peter preached a sermon filled with power. Over three thousand people were saved that day. In fact, God added to the church every day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:41,47) So many new believers came into the church that the disciples needed help.

They needed help so they could do their own work of praying, preaching and teaching.

What did the church do to help them? (Read Acts 6:1-6 from your own Bible.) The church chose seven men to do the work of ministering to the church. What kind of persons did the church need? Read this scripture to find out.

(Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13 to the class)

Paul wrote Timothy, his "own son in the faith." This means that Paul loved Timothy as his son and tried to teach him all the things that a father would teach his son, even though Timothy was not his real son. Timothy was led to believe in Jesus by Paul. He was his "spiritual son." He wanted to help Timothy in his work as a pastor.

THE OFFICE OF PASTOR

The pastor is the human leader of a church. God honours the man he calls to be a preacher and pastor. A pastor preaches, He teaches, and helps members of the church. He is a "Man of God."

A pastor must be a good man. No one should be able to say a bad thing about him. He should enjoy having people stay in his home for short periods. He should ask them to eat and sleep there. Hotels were very few in Paul's day and were dangerous places to stay.

Paul told Timothy that a pastor should be a good Bible teacher. In Paul's day, as

years old, I discovered an amazing thing. I found out I was not a Christian. I had not accepted Jesus as my Saviour. The day I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, I gave myself to Jesus. He wanted me to give myself completely to him.

Today many Christians do not give themselves to God. They are like the Israelites. They give God less than the best that they are. God wants to be first in our lives. He wanted to be first in the lives of the Israelites.

God's people were divided into two countries, Judah and Israel. Ahab was king of Israel. He married Jezebel, daughter of a heathen king. She worshipped Baal and led Ahab to worship the idol also.

God punished Israel by not sending rain. Elijah, God's prophet, told Ahab about the punishment. Ahab hated Elijah. He knew God was with Elijah.

God sent Elijah to Ahab again after three and one-half years. He gave God's message to Ahab. Read the scriptures below to find out what Elijah told Ahab.

(Read 1 Kings 18:1-21, 26, 36-39 to the class)

WHO WILL YOU WORSHIP

When Ahab saw Elijah, he said, "You are the one who troubles Israel!" Elijah told the King that he did not trouble Israel, but that he the King did. He had led the people to worship Baal and to forsake God.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. Today, Christians are often tempted to wander away from God.
2. The gods, idols people serve and obey, are closely associated with their daily living.
3. God still listens for us to ask him for help - when we repent and turn to him.
4. God will send spiritual leaders to lead people back to him.

LESSON 12

THE CALL TO TOTAL COMMITMENT

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: 1 Kings 18

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: 1 Kings 18:17-21,26
1 Kings 18:36-39

MEMORY VERSE: *"How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him."*
1 Kings 18:21

All of my life, I went to church. My father was a deacon. My mother taught Sunday School classes for children. If I was asked, "Are you a Christian?", I would answer, "Of course I am. My parents are Christians. So I am a Christian." One day, when I was 18

well as today, a pastor should be a good preacher and a good teacher. A pastor can teach best by living a Christian life, which is a good example before others.

A pastor must have only one wife. He must be faithful to her. In that day, as now, many non-Christians had more than one wife.

A pastor must rule his home well. His children should be quick to obey him. If he could not make his family behave, how could he help the church? If a man cannot teach his children to obey him, he cannot lead his church to obey Christ.

A pastor must work hard. He must not leave all work to others. He must be thoughtful, orderly, honest and ready to help those in need. He must not drink or quarrel. He should try never to hurt anyone, not even with unkind words. A pastor must always be kind and loving. He must not love money more than Jesus. However, the church should pay him a living wage for his work. Then he can give all of his time to the work of the church.

A new Christian should not be chosen as a pastor. He needs time to grow more like Christ. He needs time to study. He should know more than the other church members. He needs to be taught God's word.

Non-Christians should be able to speak well of the pastor. If they can and do, he will be a better pastor.

THE OFFICE OF DEACON

The deacon may be called the pastor's helper. He needs to be the same kind of person as the pastor. Both offices need the best men possible. (Compare verse 3 and 8).

Deacons should have deep Christian faith. They should show by the way they live that they are Christians.

Deacons must be honest. They should not say one thing to one person and something else to another (be double-tongued). They must not drink beer nor alcohol, nor love money more than Jesus.

Deacons should hold "the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience" (verse 9). They should hold to the truth of God's word. Then they will be faithful to the word. Their consciences will be clear. They will not be ashamed of what they believe.

A man should have another church job before he becomes a deacon. If he does that job well, he may be made a deacon. He needs to prove his faithfulness to Jesus.

THE WIVES OF PASTORS AND DEACONS

A deacon should have only one wife. She must be a good woman and faithful in all that she does. She should speak the truth always. She should be kind and helpful to others.

A deacon's family should obey him. Then he will have the respect of others.

God's people did not learn when God punished them. They kept on sinning against God. Then God punished them by letting the enemies attack. Again the Israelites called upon God when they were defeated. God would send a judge to deliver them, hoping they would return to him. Still Israel wandered from God.

(Read 1 Kings 11:1-4 to the class)

A KING WHO WANDERED

Even their kings wandered. Our scripture in 1 Kings 11:1-4 tells about a king who let other gods lead him astray.

Solomon had many wives from other nations. He even married one from Egypt. His wives worshipped idols. They brought their gods with them when they came to Jerusalem.

God warned Solomon against marrying those women. God knew Solomon would wander away from God. Solomon began to worship the gods of his wives. He even built temples for their gods. His heart turned after other gods instead of the Lord God. Even a king wandered away from God.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Think about yourself. Do you wander away from God? Make a habit of reading the Bible and praying every day. Worship regularly with other Christians. You will stay close to God if you worship him regularly.

Israel wandered from God first by not worshipping him. God expected his people to worship and to praise him. Hebrews 10:25 says "not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

Israel forgot God. They turned their backs on him. They quit teaching their children about God. They quit trusting him.

The Israelites began to worship Baal and Ashtaroath, Canaanite gods. The Canaanites offered gifts of grain and did immoral sex acts to please Baal. Ashtaroath, a goddess, also promised the Canaanites big crops. They forgot the God who promised to care for them.

The Israelites knew little about farming. They worshipped the Canaanite gods because they wanted to be good farmers. They wanted to please the Canaanites.

Israel's worship of Baal made the Lord angry. God warned them about worshipping other gods. So God punished the Israelites. He permitted enemy nations to destroy their crops. The once powerful Israelites feared their enemies.

When Israel's enemies won over them, they cried for help. God had pity on them. He sent judges to save them from their enemies. Judges were men called by God to deliver his troubled people. The Israelites looked to the judges as spiritual leaders.

These things that make good church officers are not just for pastors, deacons and their wives. They are for all Christians. They are for you and for me.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

God gave you certain talents and abilities. He wants you to use these abilities to glorify him. Do you let God work through you, doing some of his work through the church? If you do not, pray that God will use you. Then offer your services to your church.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God gives each person different abilities and talents. As Christians, we should use them to glorify God.
2. Only God can truly call men to be pastors of churches.
3. The pastor is the leader of the church. He should be like Christ in every part of his life. He should be an example to others.
4. God also calls men to be deacons, teachers and to do other work in the church.
5. God also calls women to do different tasks in the church. The church needs good Christian women. Those who marry pastors, deacons, and other church workers should be good, faithful Christians.

STRUGGLE AND GROWTH

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Acts 11:11-18;

15:1-35;

19:23-27;

Galatians 2:11-16

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Acts 10:9-16;

11:11-18;

MEMORY VERSE: "*Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life.*"

Acts 11:18

The Christians in Jerusalem were greatly persecuted. They lost their jobs. Many times their families would not speak to them. Their neighbours would not even look at them. They were often beaten and had to hide to stay alive. All Christians except the apostles left Jerusalem because of the persecution.

Peter started visiting churches which were started after the persecution. He went to Lydda (Acts 9:32-35); then he went to Joppa. Peter raised Dorcas from death (Acts 9:36-43), and stayed with Simon the Tanner. God had something special for Peter to learn in Joppa.

The Roman governor lived in Caesarea, north of Joppa. Cornelius, a Roman army officer in Caesarea, was a convert to Judaism. One day he had a vision from God. In Cornelius' vision, an angel told him to send to Joppa

God used Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, and Joshua to lead Israel into Canaan. In Judges 2:1-6, God spoke to his people. God reminded Israel that he told them not to make a covenant with Canaan. Israel did not obey God. So God told them he would not drive out the Canaanites. They would be Israel's enemy to cause trouble for them.

Joshua set a good example for God's people. "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel" (Judges 2:7).

After Joshua died, and the elders died, a new generation grew up who did not follow the covenant that had been made with God. They turned away from God and worshipped idols.

(Read Judges 2:10-16 to the class)

THE SIN OF ISRAEL

The Israelites sinned against God. After Joshua died, they wandered away from God. The new leaders did not worship God. The Israelites did not tell their children about God's mighty works.

The Israelites found it easy to worship Canaanite gods. They turned from their fathers' religion. They forgot Joshua's call to serve God. They also forgot their promise to stay true to God.

LESSON 11

TENDENCY TO WANDER

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Judges 2: 1 Kings
11;

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Judges 2:7,
10 - 16
1 Kings 11:1-4

MEMORY VERSE: *"Look carefully then how you
walk, not as unwise men but as
wise, making the most of the
time, because the days are evil.
Therefore, do not be foolish,
but understand what the will of
the Lord is."*
Ephesians 5:15-17

A pastor saw some new people move in
next door. He went to visit them. They said
they left their village to look for work.
They did not go to church in the big city.
They were very busy working. They lived in
the city for twenty years. They did not take
their children to church.

One day, the man and his wife realised
they had wandered like lost people in the
forest. They had left God out of their lives
and had failed to teach their children about
God. They returned to church and worshipping
God.

for Simon Peter. His men were to ask Simon
Peter to come to Caesarea with them.
Cornelius sent the men at once.

Next day in Joppa, Peter went up on the
roof to pray. It was about the sixth hour.
He became hungry but lunch was not ready.
Peter had a vision.

(Read Acts 10:9-16 to the class)

PETER'S VISION

He saw a sheet come down from heaven tied
at the corners. All kinds of animals, snakes,
and birds were on the sheet. A voice said to
Peter, "Get up, kill, and eat." Peter said
that he ate nothing the law of Moses did not
allow! The voice spoke again: "Don't call
any food unclean if God says it is clean."

The vision appeared to Peter three times.
Then it was taken back to heaven. While
Peter was thinking about the vision,
Cornelius' men arrived.

Acts 10:19-48 tells us that Peter went
with Cornelius' men to Caesarea. He took
with him six Christians as witnesses also.

When Peter left Caesarea, he went back
to Jerusalem. The church already knew that
he preached to Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts
11:1-10).

The Jewish Christians said to Peter, "You
were a guest in the home of uncircumcized
Gentiles, and you even ate with them!"

Peter told the church what happened. Now read this scripture passage. Did the Jewish Christians believe Peter?

(Read Acts 11:11-18 to the class)

THE SPIRIT SENT ME

Peter told the Jerusalem church what happened to him. Three men came to take him to Caesarea. The Holy Spirit told him to go with the men. Peter was not to worry that they were Gentiles. Six Jewish Christians went with him. When they arrived at Caesarea, they went to Cornelius' house. He told them that an angel told him to send for Simon Peter. Peter began to tell Cornelius and his family about Jesus Christ.

As Peter was preaching, the Spirit fell on all in the house. God gave the Gentiles the same gift he gave to the apostles. Peter told the Jerusalem church that he did not try to stop God. When the church heard Peter speak, they praised God for all he did.

(Read Acts 11:16-18; 15:5-11; 15:19-21 to the class)

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

Time passed. Paul had been saved. He had started a great missionary work. At first he preached only to Jews. When the Jews would not believe in Jesus Christ, Paul became a missionary to Gentiles.

The Hebrews promised God they would not be like their pagan neighbours. They promised to worship and obey God alone.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Do you know someone who is trying to hide their sins? No one can. Someone always knows. God always knows.

Do you know someone who has not left their old life of sin - their pagan way of living, living without God and his laws? As Christians, we are supposed to be good examples for others to follow. Are you?

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. There are many "idols" which tempt Christians today to worship them.
2. God wants his people today to live holy lives.
3. Strong Christian leaders help other Christians to live holy lives by being good examples themselves.
4. Each person must choose for himself who he is going to serve - God or Satan.

Joshua became Israel's leader when Moses died. He led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Many Canaanites still lived there. The Israelites lived among them.

Then the Israelites forgot God. Some brought their Egyptian gods and worshipped them. Others worshipped the old idols that their ancestors worshipped. The gods of the Amorites tempted them.

Joshua said the people disobeyed God. He said that they must decide whom they would obey.

THE CHOICE OF JOSHUA

The people had to choose. They could choose to serve God who delivered them, or they could choose their old gods. Joshua asked the people to serve the holy God. He set a good example for the people. Joshua said, "As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

A GOOD LEADER IS A GOOD EXAMPLE

A good leader can lead people to obey God's laws. A pastor should set an example of holy living before his people. Other leaders should inspire people to live like Christ. Paul asked the Roman Christians to offer themselves as a "living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him."

The people answered Joshua. They remembered God's goodness. They said, "We choose the Lord."

Some Jewish Christian began to have a bad problem. They had been strict followers of the Law of Moses before they became believers. After becoming Christians, they tried to make Christianity like Judaism, their old religion. They tried to make the Gentiles become Jews before becoming Christians. These Jews were called "JUDAIZERS" because of this. They were wrong in doing this. They were trying to make Christianity become legalistic and formal, like Judaism had become. Jesus knew this would happen and so he gave two parables in Matthew 9:16-17, warning against trying to force his teachings into the old religion of Judaism. Jesus said his new teachings would destroy the old religion because the followers of Judaism had become hard and unable to change their hypocritical practices. Some would change, but some would not be able to change. Jesus said that his church should be free to grow, expand, and reach out to all who would believe.

The Jerusalem Council met in Jerusalem. They asked Peter and Paul to come and testify before them. So both Peter and Paul spoke. After hearing their testimonies, the church told Paul to keep on preaching Christ to the Gentiles.

Paul continued going on missionary trips. He went through the area of Galatia three times. Later he heard that Judaizers were in the Galatian churches. Paul wrote a letter to all churches in Galatia. Read this scripture which is a part of Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia.

(Read Galatians 2:11-16 to the class)

BE TRUE TO YOUR FAITH

Paul heard that Judaizers were in Galatia. He wanted Galatian Christians to know his experiences with Judaizers.

Paul and Barnabas went back to Antioch. He found Jewish and Gentile Christians eating together. Jews did not eat often with Gentiles. But Peter ate with the Gentiles in Antioch.

Soon other Christians came from Jerusalem. James sent them. When they came, Peter stopped eating with Gentile Christians.

Paul spoke to Peter. He said, 'If you, a Jew, live like a Gentile, why make Gentiles live like Jews?' Paul helped Peter remember how a person is saved. A person cannot be saved by obeying laws. In fact, a person can be saved only when he puts his trust in God's Son, Jesus Christ.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Are we trying to fit Christianity into our old pagan ways? Are we trying to become "new creatures in Christ?" Are we trying to force others to do things which are not taught in the Bible? Are we making "laws" for our churches to follow thus taking away the freedom Jesus gave us?

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. Christianity is for all people.

They always failed.

God based all his laws on his holiness. He gave laws so that the people would know what he was like. If they believed in a God who was "high and lifted up," they would try to serve him because he was different. He had power and he was Holy.

"Holiness" meant more than just thinking about God. Holy people thought about others. The laws said God's people should treat one another like God treated them. Give special attention to these words: "You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. You shall not oppress your neighbour or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning." (Leviticus 19:11-13)

The Hebrews lived among people who did not know God or his laws. They could witness by living holy lives before their neighbours.

Should Christians try to live holy lives? God gave us his words to obey. We read in 1 Peter 1:15-16 - "but as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

WHO WILL YOU SERVE?

Israel did not remain holy. They forgot God. They made idols of Canaanite gods.

people need laws to help them to live holy lives, at peace with God and with men.

(Read Leviticus 19:1-4; 19:11-13; Joshua 24:14-21 to the class)

GOD IS HOLY

God expected his people to be holy because he was holy. What did the "holiness of God" mean to the people of Israel?

"Holiness" meant to be separated from or to be set apart from something or for some special purpose. "God's holiness" meant that he was lifted above men and common things. Israel had a divine God.

God's holiness included fairness. God dealt fairly with his people. This holy God showed mercy to his people when they sinned.

"God's holiness" meant that he remained truthful with Israel. He kept his promises. He gave them the land that he promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel's God did not like evil things. He could not allow people to sin without punishing that sin. Their God did not care for things that hurt people. God gave them laws so that they would not hurt one another.

God wanted his people to be like him. That was hard for the Hebrews. They worshipped many idols when they lived in Egypt. The Canaanite gods tempted them in the Promised Land. Everywhere they went they were tempted to worship according to the foreign cultures.

2. People still want to "do" something to save themselves. Some make laws. Some try to do good. But these things will not save anyone.

3. A person can be saved only when they believe in Jesus and trust him to save them.

4. Christians should be true to their faith in Jesus. Their witness should be true at all times.

LESSON 4

THE CHURCH AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Acts 5:21-19;
Romans 13:1-10

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Romans 13:1-10

MEMORY VERSE: *"But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.'"*

Acts 5:29

In some countries, people do not have the freedom to worship. They worship in secret. As citizens of our country we enjoy religious freedom. Our government lets us worship God as we please. What duties do we have toward our country? What can we learn from Paul's letter to the church at Rome about our duties to our country? We do have certain duties as citizens. What are they?

The Romans controlled most of the world in Paul's day. The Roman Government had many good points. It kept the Jews out of war. It built good roads. It gave all Romans a fair trial if arrested.

Yet, the Jews did not want to pay high Roman taxes. They did not want another country to rule over them. They wanted to rule themselves.

On his third missionary trip, Paul wrote to Christians who lived in Rome. We learn much about Christian teachings from Paul's letter to Christians. Christians in Rome knew about politics and authority. When they became Christians, they needed to know what the Christian teachings were about civil authority.

In Romans, we are studying about the Christian's responsibility to state government and to the church. The Christian is a member of both church and state. He has the duty to be faithful to both. Paul was a faithful Christian. He obeyed Roman law, also. Read this scripture passage. What did Paul say?

(Read Romans 13:1-10 to the class)

A CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO THE STATE

The Jews did not like to obey the Roman rulers. They said that God was their king. Paul wanted all Christians to obey the emperor of Rome and his helpers. He called such people "God's servant" (see verse 4).

A Christian should obey the servant of

culture to determine the kind of religion which is to be practised. This is not a new idea. Neither is it a new danger. This is a temptation that has been faced every century.

The people of God is the Old Testament were tempted to allow the beliefs and customs of others who were not worshippers of God to shape their own beliefs and way of living. The problem is ancient and yet it is still present today.

Covenant faith in God is continually being confronted by pagan culture, a godless way of living.

For the next four lessons we will be trying to show how to meet and have victory over this ancient problem: how to live as a Christian in the world of today without living like non-believers around us.

Christians do not find it easy to live like Christ. They are tempted to sin. They are tempted to try to hide their sins. But Christians should do those things pleasing to God. They should live obediently before God. Christians should not break God's laws.

God's people have always lived among those who did not know God. Their heathen neighbours tempted them to worship idols. They found living good lives to be hard. This is true today also.

God gave his people laws to live by. The book of Leviticus is the book of laws. God wanted the Hebrews to obey his laws. God knew

worship idols. Man worships power, position, material wealth, and sex sins. God is not pleased when man sins.

2. Man needs strong leaders who will speak out against sin.
3. God's forgiveness of our sins is man's only hope. Man must confess his sins and turn away from them. Man must obey God.

LESSON 10

A HOLY PEOPLE

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Leviticus 19;
Joshua 24

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Leviticus
19:1-4;
19:11-13
Joshua 24:14-21

MEMORY VERSE: "But as for me and my house, we
will serve the Lord."
Joshua 24:15

There is a strong feeling of returning to the "culture of our forefather." There is a cry all over the world for people to hold their culture of the past; not to lose their heritage. It is a good thing. Every nation should develop its own culture and heritage. Yet each nation is held accountable before God for how they protect and preserve their heritage their faith in God and their worship of God. Some people want to allow their

God. God gave the leaders of the state their power. God gave them the job or place of service. If a person does not obey the state, he is working against God's orders. He will bring judgement upon himself.

Officers of the law should not be feared by those who obey the law. Law officers will praise those who obey the law. They are God's servants. They are working for our good. But if a person does evil things, he should fear law officers. They can and will punish him.

We should obey law officers for two reasons. God will be angry with us if we do not obey them. And we will have a clear conscience if we do.

We should pay our taxes for the same reason. When government leaders charge us for certain taxes, we must pay them. These officers are working for God.

Paul said Christians should pay the state what we owe it. We should also show respect to the officers of the law.

A CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO OTHER PERSONS

We should pay any debts we owe to others as soon as possible. We should not owe anyone anything. Paul said that the love of Christians for others should be our only debt. Every Christian who loves others obeys God's law.

Paul wrote more about God's laws. He

listed five of the Ten Commandments. These five commandments deal with man's sin against another man. A Christian should not commit adultery. He should not kill or steal. A Christian should not tell lies about another person or want what he has.

Read the end of verse 9 again. How can a Christian be sure he does not do those terrible sins to another person? If he loves others as he loves himself, he will obey all laws.

A Christian will not sin against anyone whom he loves. Love takes the place of all other laws. If we love others, we will do nothing to hurt them. So if we love others, we obey all the law.

Our first loyalty belongs to God. He should come first in our lives. As we learn about God and what he expects of us, we find other responsibilities for our lives.

God wants us to obey the laws of our country. He allows our government to have the power or right to rule the country.

God also expects us to love others. If we do, we will not hurt them or take away their rights.

Are you living up to what God expects of us?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Are we obeying the laws of our country?

(Read Exodus 32:35)

GOD'S GREAT MERCY

Moses wanted to know if God still loved his people. He begged God to forgive them. Then Moses became angry because the people made the calf. He broke the stone tablets when he saw them worshipping the calf. God called Moses back up on Mount Sinai. He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses again.

God made his presence known in a pillar of cloud. What did God say to Moses in 34:6-7? (Read it again to the class).

God is still faithful and merciful to his people. He forgives us when we confess our sins. Read I John 1:9 to learn how God will forgive us. God loves us. He gives us freedom. When we sin against God, we can confess our sins. He will forgive us.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Do you sometimes worship idols? Remember that God calls each person to answer for his own sins. God is merciful. He will forgive us. He pours blessings on us when we turn to him. Seek God's blessings today by confessing your sins. Do you still hold on to sins that came from your ancestors? Why should you? God will punish you. It is better to be forgiven and have God's blessings.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. Man is tempted to turn away from God and

THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE

The Hebrews praised the calf saying, "O Israel, this is the god that brought you out of Egypt!" Israel sinned against God when they worshipped the calf. Read the commandment they broke in Exodus 20:4-6.

They also broke the seventh commandment when they "rose up to play." They did immoral sex acts as part of their worship.

God had been good to them. Why should they turn away from God to worship idols? How could they forget so quickly?

GOD BECAME ANGRY

God became angry. God knew his people had turned to idols. He told Moses to go down and see what they were doing. The Hebrews turned from God. They broke their promise to God. They were faithless.

We cannot please God when we worship idols. God must be first in our lives. Read what Jesus told a young man in Matthew 22:37-38.

God could not turn his back on the idol worship of the Hebrews. They had to be punished. God wanted to destroy them.

Moses begged God not to destroy his people. He asked God to remember his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Read Moses' prayer for the Hebrews in Exodus 32:11-13. God did punish his people for their sins.

Are we paying the taxes that are required?
Are we obeying the laws God has given us? Are we giving God a tithe of all our income? Are we loving other people as we love ourselves?

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God gives power to all government leaders. This power should help them to rule wisely and to carry out their duties justly. They are responsible to God for their actions.
2. God expects Christians to obey the laws of government, including paying taxes.
3. God expects us to keep his laws.
4. God expects us to respect the right of others.
5. God expects us to love one another as we love ourselves. If we love each other we will not want to hurt anyone. We will not try to take what belongs to someone else.

LESSON 5

MOSES MET WITH GOD

A CRY FOR FREEDOM

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 1-2

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 1:7-14,
22;

Exodus 2:23-25

MEMORY VERSE: "Come to me, all who labour,
and are heavy laden, and I will
give you rest. Take my yoke
upon you, and learn from me; for
I am gentle and lowly in heart,
and you will find rest for your
souls. For my yoke is easy and
my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

Every country wants to be free. They
want to be free to rule their own country,
make their own laws and elect their own
leaders.

One of the most important freedoms is the
freedom to worship God. God called Abraham to
start a new nation. He wanted his own people
to worship him. Abraham's son Isaac and
grandson Jacob lived in the new land. When
Jacob was old, a difficult time came. The
rains did not come and little or no food grew.
A great famine came upon all the land. Jacob
sent his sons to Egypt for food. They found
food and a place to live. Read what the
Bible says happened to them.

(Read Exodus 1:7-14;22 to the class)

Moses went up on Mount Sinai. He listened to God. God gave many laws for his people. He told Moses how to build the tabernacle. Moses stayed on the mountain forty days and nights.

The Hebrews became unhappy. Their faith weakened. They had been left too long. The Hebrews decided that Moses was not coming back. They wanted someone to tell them what to do. They needed guidance and help. Aaron was not their leader. Aaron was Moses' spokesman. He forgot God too.

The Hebrews wanted a god they could see to lead them. They asked Aaron to make them a god like the ones in Egypt.

AARON LOST FAITH: A WEAK LEADER

Aaron's courage failed. He was weak. He did not try to keep the people from serving other gods. He wanted to please them. He forgot God. He wanted the position and power of being their leader.

The Hebrews were tired of waiting for Moses. They wondered why God was keeping Moses so long. Some Hebrews remained firm in their faith. Many did not. They turned away from God.

Aaron asked the people to bring their golden earrings. He took the gold and melted it. He made a golden calf. At last they had a god they could see.

had a new nature in Jesus. He had been faithless; now he trusts God.

The Hebrews promised to obey God and his law, but they soon forgot. They became dissatisfied. They remembered the many Egyptian idols and gods. They decided to turn away from God. They began to show their faithlessness.

But God remained faithful!

He remained faithful to the Hebrews. He heard their cries while they were slaves in Egypt. He remembered his promises to Jacob and Joseph.

God called leaders to lead the Hebrews from Egypt. He gave Moses and Aaron courage to face Pharaoh.

The Egyptians tried to keep the Hebrews in Egypt. But God sent ten plagues. So Pharaoh let them go. The Hebrews crossed the Red Sea after God divided the water. They received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai. Later Israel became a nation under God.

God did so much for His people. Did they always love and serve Him? No. But God remained faithful to them. They did not stay faithful to God, but God loved them even when they sinned. Read this scripture about God's love.

(Read Exodus 32:1-6; 9-10; Exodus 34:1, 6-7 to the class)

A NEW PHARAOH

Jacob's family went to Egypt to live. The Pharaoh or king was kind to Jacob and his sons. After many years, Jacob and his sons died. Another pharaoh ruled over Egypt. This pharaoh was not kind to the Hebrews.

Pharaoh feared the Hebrews. God caused the Hebrews to increase in numbers. Pharaoh was afraid they would overthrow his government. Pharaoh thought that enemies from the northeast might attack Egypt. The Hebrews might help them fight the Egyptians. So Pharaoh thought about ways to hurt God's people. He thought of ways to decrease the Hebrew population.

PHARAOH INCREASED THEIR BURDENS

Pharaoh made slaves of the Hebrews. Taskmasters or bosses made the Hebrews carry heavy burdens.

Pharaoh used them to build 'treasure-cities' or 'store cities.' These cities had brick walls eighteen feet thick. The Hebrews worked hard to build the cities. But they kept on increasing in numbers in spite of their slavery.

Then the Egyptians made the Hebrews work even harder and longer. They carried bigger loads of brick and mud. Cruel bosses treated them mean and unfair. But the Hebrews still increased in numbers.

Verses 15-21 tells about another way Pharaoh punished the Hebrews. One day he commanded that all Hebrew boy babies be thrown into the Nile River. He thought this act would stop the growth of the Hebrews.

(Read Exodus 2:1-9 to the class)

GOD GAVE A LEADER TO HEBREWS

A baby boy was born to a Hebrew father and mother. They did not want to throw him into the Nile River. So they hid him at home for three months. When his mother could hide him no longer, she made a little basket. She covered it with bitumen and pitch so it would not leak. Then she put her son in the basket. She floated the basket near the river's edge among the reeds. The baby's mother had faith that God would deliver her son. His sister watched him.

Pharaoh's daughter found the baby. She felt sorry for him. Moses' sister told her that she would get a nurse for the baby. She got her mother. Moses' mother received money to care for her own son! She told Moses about God. She told him about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God used her to train her son to lead his own people.

Moses was educated in Pharaoh's court. But he still loved his own people. (Read Hebrews 11:24-25) One day Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. Moses killed the Egyptian and fled from the country because Pharaoh wanted to kill Moses.

LESSON 9

A FAITHLESS PEOPLE - A FAITHFUL GOD

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 32:1-34:9

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 32:1-6;
9-10

Exodus 34:1;6-7

MEMORY VERSE:

*"But the Lord said to Moses,
'Whoever has sinned against me,
him will I blot out of my
book... I will visit their sin
upon them.'"*

Exodus 32:33,34

No matter where a person goes or what training he receives, he never loses the influence of his past. Man inherits both good and bad actions from his ancestors. Because we are all descendants of Adam, we will continue to make mistakes. But God has given us a way to overcome these faults and bad actions we inherited. Through the blood and forgiveness of Jesus, we can have victory over sin and Satan in our lives.

An African friend told how he used to live to cause trouble, to drink, and to fight. Everyday he would walk outside his house and look to see if anyone was arguing, so he could go argue with them. He loved to fight. One day, he came to know the love of Jesus. He received forgiveness for all the many wrongs he had done. He became a peace-loving man. He experienced God's saving grace. He said he deserved punishment, but God forgave him. He

Many of our nation's laws and freedoms come from the Bible. The Bible is the basis for the laws which govern many of the nations today. The laws help guide us and God blesses our country as we try to live by them.

Do you pray for your country and its leaders? If we obey God, we will become better people. We will obey his laws and the laws of our country.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

The Ten Commandments! God gave them to us also. Do we try to live by them? Do we try to live our lives in such a way as to please God?

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God uses men to form free nations.
2. God uses these same men to carry out his plan and his will for that new nation.
3. Men must have laws to live by. God's Word is meant to give guidance to people who belong to God.
4. God blesses a nation whose people obey him.

THEY CRIED FOR HELP

The Hebrews' burdens grew worse while Moses lived out of the country. Their burdens were almost too heavy to bear. Then they remembered their God. They cried for help.

God knew about his people. He remembered his promises to their fathers. He listened to their cries. God knew that the time had come for their rescue. God was ready to give his people freedom. The Hebrews were once again praying to God.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Do you feel that you carry heavy burdens? Are you losing your courage? God knows about your burdens. He made a way to free you from your burdens. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Don't stop praying for God to give you rest. God will give you strength for every day. Ask him for help.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. In the beginning, God made men free.
2. Men chose to turn away from God and to forget God.
3. Many are hurt because they are not free from sinful habits.
4. Many people are hurt because of heavy burdens they must bear because of the sinful habits and selfish desires of others.

5. God loves all people. He wants them to be free - free from sin and free from burdens.
6. God wants Christians to be ready to help people who are carrying heavy burdens.

LESSON 6

CALLED TO LEAD

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 3-4

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 3:3-15
Exodus 4:10-16

MEMORY VERSE: *"For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable."*
Romans 11:29

A young man was dissatisfied at home. He could not find work. He decided to leave home. He went to a distant city. He believed in Jesus while in that city. A little while later, he knew God called him to be a pastor. He returned to his home again. There was no place to pastor. He went home and led his brother to Christ. Then God opened a place for him to pastor. He pastored for six years. Then he went to the seminary. Seminary teachers tried to get him to study to be a chaplain. He said, "No. God called me to be a pastor." He was asked to do other things for Jesus - good things, but always he answered,

THE HEBREW'S REPLY

Read verse 19:8 again. The people promised to obey God. They made a good promise. They believed they could obey God. As the years passed by, did they do all they promised?

Do you ever make promises to God? Should you make promises if you cannot keep them?

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Read the Ten Commandments from your Bible - Exodus 20:1-17. Other laws that God gave the Hebrews are recorded in Exodus 21 and 22.

Moses told the people all the laws and regulations which the Lord gave him (Read Exodus 24:3). The people had God's laws to live by. These laws are eternal laws. They are always good. They are always right and just.

The Hebrews made a covenant with God. They would be God's people. They would obey him. Moses and the Hebrews gathered at Mount Sinai to accept the covenant.

MOSES BUILDS AN ALTAR

Moses used twelve stones in the altar, one for each tribe of Israel. The Hebrews worshipped God by sacrificing calves on the altar. The blood of the sacrifice helped them to remember their covenant with God. They were showing God their desire to be his people. They wanted to obey God.

God told Moses he carried Israel on eagles' wings. He delivered the Hebrews as if they rode on eagles' wings. He kept them safe when they crossed the Red Sea. He watched over them while they travelled to Sinai.

The Hebrews needed God's guidance. He brought them to Sinai so that they could receive his laws. He wanted his people to know his Presence.

GOD'S PROMISE

Moses listened to God on Mount Sinai. God gave the covenant to him. A covenant is an agreement between two or more people. Here it means an agreement between God and his people. What did God promise? Read Exodus 19:5-6 again.

The Hebrews would be a special people to God. If they would keep his covenant, they would be his special people.

God wanted them to be a kingdom of priests. He called them to be a holy nation. He separated them from other nations. God gave the Hebrews a special favour when he called them his own people.

God still works with nations. He wants them to do his will. God works through leaders in nations.

Moses came down from Sinai. He called the Hebrew leaders to meet with him and told them about God's promises.

"God called me to be a pastor." He is still a pastor and God is blessing this man's work because he obeyed God's call to be a pastor. He was willing to follow God's plan for his life. Truly God calls people to serve him.

The Hebrew peoples cries had reached God. God began to work out his plan for their delivery. It took 80 years for God to prepare Moses for the work he had for him to do.

Read how God called Moses to lead God's people out of Egypt.

(Read Exodus 3:3-12 to the class)

GOD CALLED A LEADER FOR HIS PEOPLE

Moses lived in Midian for many years. He took care of Jethro's sheep. He married Jethro's daughter. One day Moses took his sheep to Horeb "the Mountain of God."

Shepherds had time to think. Moses thought about his people in Egypt. He remembered how they suffered.

As Moses walked along on Mount Horeb, he saw a miracle! Moses saw a strange sight. He saw a bush burning - a bush that did not burn up! God called, "Moses, Moses." "Here am I," said Moses. God called Moses by name! God knows each of our names. God knows us personally.

Then God told Moses three things. "You are standing on holy ground. Take off your shoes." Moses was standing in God's presence. Next God said, "I am the God of your fathers

- the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses knew God was speaking. So he covered his face with his hands. God said that he knew that his people suffered. He would deliver them from Egypt. He would lead them back to the Promised Land.

Was Moses ready to be a leader? Read verses 10-11 to the class. But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?"

(Read Exodus 3:12-15 to the class)

UNWILLING TO GO

God planned to send Moses to Pharaoh. What a hard job. Moses remembered why he left Egypt. Could he go back and stay alive? Moses thought the job was too big for him. He said he couldn't speak. He gave some excuses to try to persuade God to choose someone else. Moses wanted to know the name of the God who called him. The Hebrews would want to know God's name. Every god in Egypt had a name.

People called their gods by name when they asked for help. God told Moses his name. God's name meant that he lives among his people. God promised to be with Moses as he was with his fathers. But Moses was still afraid to go back to Egypt.

Read these scriptures to find how God answered Moses.

(Read Exodus 4:10-16 to the class)

The Hebrews took a long time also to become a nation. They were happy when God delivered them from the Egyptians. Then many things happened that caused them to be unhappy. They thought they would starve. God gave them manna and quails to eat. They found no water. Moses struck a rock and water poured out. They had to fight Amalek. God helped them to win.

God helped the Hebrews in many ways. They still needed his help. They needed laws to live by. People need laws when they live together. Exodus 19-20 and 24 tell about God's laws. These laws helped the Hebrews become a nation. Find the law in these scriptures.

(Read Exodus 19:3-8; 24:3-8 to the class)

AT MOUNT SINAI

After the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea, Moses led them to Mount Sinai. They camped before the mountain while they waited for God to give the laws.

Moses climbed Mount Sinai to meet with God. He waited for God to speak to him.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE HEBREWS

God gave Moses a message for his people. He wanted them to remember what he did for them. God did those things in order to make a nation out of the Hebrews.

LESSON 8

A NATION WORSHIPPING GOD

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 19:20;24

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 19:3-8;
Exodus 24:3-8;

MEMORY VERSE: *"You shall have no other gods
before me. You shall not make
for yourself a graven image...
You shall not bow down to wor-
ship them or serve them."
Exodus 20:3-5*

When all of the Asians had to leave Uganda several years ago, one family went to America. They had some friends who were Christians and who were Baptists. Baptist people, in the city where they went helped them to find a place to live and find work. The Asian family began attending church. One day, they both accepted Jesus as their Saviour. They began witnessing to others. They said, "How could we have been so blind? Why did we worship those idols? It was so wrong! We are thankful God has forgiven us!"

God wants people to worship him. He wants nations to recognise him as God and recognise his power. He wants all people to worship him.

Many people in our world today do not have freedom to worship God. Sometimes it takes many years before a nation gives people this freedom.

GOD PROMISED TO HELP

God told Moses that he created mouths. He would help Moses speak. God would even teach Moses what to say. Moses still tried to get out of serving God.

God became angry at Moses. He did not like Moses' excuses. God called Moses to lead his people out of Egypt. Then Moses asked for a helper. God said, "Your brother Aaron is a good speaker. He is looking for you now. He will speak for you."

Now Moses had no excuses. God helped him answer each excuse he gave. Moses decided to obey God.

He talked to Jethro, his father-in-law, about going back to Egypt. He told Moses to go in peace.

Moses started back to Egypt with his wife and sons. Aaron met them before they arrived in Egypt. Moses and his brother Aaron were called to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt.

After God called Moses and Aaron, he promised to help them. He gave them power for service. When God calls someone, He equips them for his service.

David became a Christian. He didn't think he could do much for God. His pastor asked him to help clean the church one day. Later, he began teaching the children. Then he led the music for church services. David did not use excuses to keep from serving God and the church. He obeyed God. He used his talents

for God.

Anyone can find excuses. You can find an excuse every time God wants you to serve him. Think about some of the excuses that you use now and then. Don't use an excuse to keep from serving your church. Let God help you to do the church job. God helped Moses and he wants to help you.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

When God speaks to us, do we hear him? God speaks through Men of God, such as pastors, deacons, other Christians. Do we give weak excuses when they ask for help in God's work? Are those excuses acceptable to God? God calls leaders to serve him. Are you a leader God is calling?

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God wants to lift the burdens we carry, but we must let him.
2. God calls people to lead his people to greater spiritual growth. He calls people to lead others to God.
3. Many people give excuses to God to keep from doing God's work.
4. God will not call someone to serve him, without also providing the way for him to serve. If God calls, he also equips.
5. We must trust God completely, when he calls us. He will help us do the work he has called us to do. God is faithful.

WHAT THIS LESSON TEACHES US

1. God helps his people in times of suffering and in need.
2. God gives leaders to lead men and even nations to freedom - freedom from sin and freedom from oppression.
3. Satan will use anyone to try to prevent God's will from being done.
4. God will never be defeated. His purpose will be accomplished.
5. Pray that God will guide and help our leaders to be good leaders that our nation may be blessed and led by God to peace and prosperity.

Moses warned the Hebrews about the tenth plague. Hebrew families prepared to leave. They put blood on their doorposts. The death angel passed over their homes as God had told them.

The Egyptians did not put blood on their doorposts. The death angel stopped at their doors and every firstborn Egyptian son died. Also, the first born of all of their animals died. The Egyptian people wanted the Hebrews to go. The Egyptians feared God would kill all of them. (Read Exodus 12:30-33).

GOD DELIVERED THE HEBREWS

God set the Hebrews free from Egypt and slavery. He gave them leaders. He hurt the Egyptians. God's people did not forget their deliverance. Every year since that time, the Hebrews celebrate the Feast of the Passover, remembering how God delivered them.

There is a song that says: "Have faith in God, he watches over his own." The Hebrews had faith. Do you believe God helps us today? How can he help you? Ask God for more faith.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Do you have heavy burdens you are carrying? Do you need God to deliver you from them? Do you need God's help? The Hebrews had to obey God in order to be set free. Do you have faith in God?

LESSON 7

GOD, OUR HELP

SCRIPTURES TO STUDY AT HOME: Exodus 5 to 14

SCRIPTURES FOR TODAY'S LESSON: Exodus 5:1-8;
Exodus 12:29-34

MEMORY VERSE: *"For I, the Lord your God, hold
your right hand; it is I who
say to you, Fear not, I will
help you."
Isaiah 41:13*

Many men (soldiers) were prisoners during the war in Vietnam. Some of the prisoners were Christians. After being freed and returning home, some have told how God helped them while in captivity. One man, Robinson Risner, told how he had gone for three days without food or water. He had been chained in such a manner that he could not move. Then a loud speaker from a radio had been placed just outside the hut he was in. He prayed that God would make the radio stop working. Shortly, the radio broke. God answered his prayer. After being released from the chains, several days later, he tapped out the hymn "How Great Thou Art" in Morse code. Another prisoner heard it. When he finished it, the other prisoner tapped out "sing it again." This hymn was a way of expressing Risner's faith in God. His Testimony helped another man to have faith in God.

Today, we will be thinking about the

Hebrew people and how they needed God's help. It was not to be accomplished quickly, neither would it be easy. But God promised to help them and he kept His promise.

(Read Exodus 5:1-8,22 to the class)

IN PHARAOH'S COURT

After Moses committed himself to do God's will, he and his brother Aaron returned to Egypt.

They called a meeting of the Hebrew elders. Moses told them that God planned to deliver his people. The elders believed Moses.

Next Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh. God gave them courage to face Pharaoh. Moses told him what God said. God wanted his people to take a trip to the wilderness. They planned a religious feast to worship God.

Pharaoh laughed at the two men and asked: "Who is the Lord? Why should the Hebrews worship him? Couldn't Egyptian gods do everything?"

Pharaoh did not know the God of Moses and Aaron. He considered it foolish for people to worship an unknown God. He told Moses and Aaron, "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

Did Moses give up? Read Exodus 5:3-5 in your Bible again. Moses kept asking Pharaoh to let the people go. He wanted the Hebrews to worship God in the wilderness.

HEAVIER OPPRESSION

Pharaoh said Moses kept the Hebrews from their work. He told the overseers to make the Hebrews work harder. He commanded, "Don't give the people any more straw for making bricks." Bricks in Egypt were larger than our bricks. Now the Hebrews had to gather their own straw to make the same number of bricks. Bricks were made from the mud from the Nile River. Chopped straw kept them from cracking.

Pharaoh's plan worked. The Hebrews had more burdens. Overseers whipped them because they could not make enough bricks. The Hebrews leaders told Pharaoh about their problems. Pharaoh made them go back to work.

The Hebrew leaders turned against Moses and Aaron! They thought God would deliver them, but their burdens had only increased. Then God spoke to Moses. He said, "Now see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand he shall let them go."

TEN PLAGUES - ALL DISASTERS

God sent ten plagues to the Egyptians. Moses told about each plague before God sent it. Each was worse than the one before. The first nine plagues were worse than many bad things that happened every year. Pharaoh promised to free the people after each plague. Then he 'hardened his heart'; he went back on his promise. We can read about the plagues in Exodus 7-9.