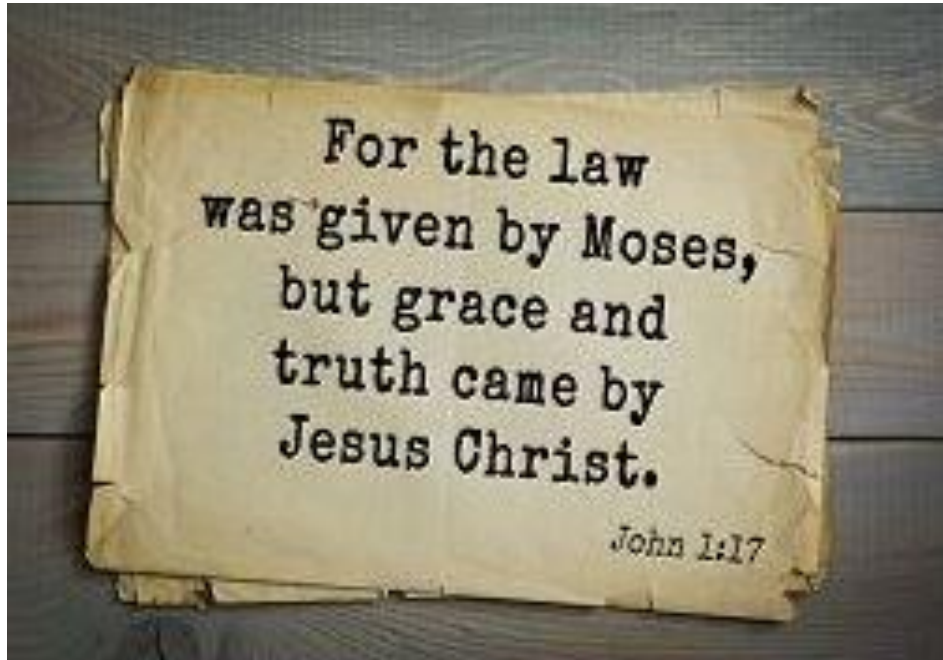


Basic Training Bible Ministries

presents

The Gospel According to Moses



Shenandoah Valley Conference

April 21–23, 2017



The Gospel According to Moses

This study owes much of its content to a study by Rev. James B. Walker, contained in his book, *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, 1855.

Introduction

This series is intended to demonstrate that the Gospel message, focusing on the Person and work of Jesus Christ, is the central message of the entire Bible. The coming of the Messiah and His saving work of redemption is presented throughout the Old Testament through direct prophetic statements, as well as using types and shadows. New Testament authors repeatedly refer to Old Testament expectations of the coming of the Savior—the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Man Moses

If the Bible were a wheel, the Gospel is the hub. The spokes are all the doctrines.

The role of Moses in the Bible cannot be over-emphasized for the important role he played in the plan of God and especially in laying down the foundations for the Word of God. Moses is the first author of inspired Scripture. He is rightly honored as the one used by God to write the Torah—the first five books of the Bible—later known to us as the Pentateuch.

In this body of Scripture, God is first revealed to man through His written Word, and speaks authoritatively and universally to the entire human race. In these books, the groundwork of all later revelation is firmly established. The Jewish people rightly understood that anything that did not agree with the “Law of Moses” could not be from the one true God.

The book of Genesis begins the history of the human race, and chronicles the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, the genealogies of the race leading up to the flood of Noah, the tower of Babel and the scattering of the nations, concluding with the call and history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

From the book of Exodus through the book of Deuteronomy, the story is centered on the nation of Israel and the life and labors of Moses, the great liberator and legislator. His equal is not found anywhere in history, regardless of all attempts by godless historians to obscure and disregard his colossal figure. The only man of history to surpass him is the Messiah to whom his whole life and work pointed.

The Expectation of the Messiah

Many Christians have a distorted perspective regarding the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments. Some go so far as to declare the Old Testament of no value whatever in Bible study, clinging only to the New. However, we need look no further than the Lord Jesus Himself, or to Paul, the great apostle, to find them pointing us back to the origins of the Gospel story.

“Philip found Nathaniel and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth ...’” Joh 1:45

“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” Joh 5:39

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Luk 24:27

“Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And he opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” Luk 24:44–45

“But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.” 2Co 3:14

This last passage is usually misunderstood, as indicating a need to turn away from the Old Testament and to get into the New Testament. Actually, Paul’s point is that, just as the Hebrews of Moses’ day were blinded to the Christ-centered content of his writings, even so were the people of Paul’s day. How tragic that even now, two thousand years after the coming of the Savior, Christians still remain blind to the Gospel-content of the Old Testament.

The Message of Moses

The story of Moses, beginning with Israel’s bondage in Egypt, leading through the plagues to the Exodus, then on to the failure at Kadesh-Barnea, the wilderness wanderings, and up to the Promised Land, is like a picture-book for children of the promise and the hope of the Gospel message. The story is the Bible in miniature, including the elements of progressive revelation, systematic theological development, and categorical doctrinal themes. Consider the following brief overview of this study.

In the bondage of Israel in Egypt, we are presented with **the problem of sin and its curse**. This creates within the fledgling nation **the longing for a promised deliverer**. In the birth, preparation, and appearance of Moses, we see **a preview of Messiah, coming with revelation from God and miraculous power**. In the ten plagues, we see **God’s righteous judgment on sin** by which **the way of salvation** is made known. This is logically and spiritually followed by **a new way of life for those who believe**, as summarized in the Ten Commandments. Due to fallen human nature, this high standard of holiness requires **provision for spirituality**, including forgiveness and cleansing, which are portrayed in the Tabernacle and the sacrifices. The central role of the high priest in every act of worship is a reminder that man needs **a mediator with God**. The story culminates with the entrance into the Promised Land, reminding us that, in this world, we are called to **the spiritual battle**, having penalties for disobedience and great blessings for faithfulness (see also Deuteronomy 27 and 28).

These themes continue to be developed throughout the span of the Old Testament, concluding with the book of Malachi. These Scriptures, being the revelation of God to mankind, were disseminated and studied throughout the ancient world. Finally, they were translated into Greek, the common language of the world, in 250 B.C. in what we call the Septuagint, meaning “the translation of the seventy,” in honor of the Jewish scholars who did the work. As a result of the rapid spread and interest in these Scriptures, the whole world—from Rome to Africa and even as far away as China—was anticipating the coming of the Savior of the world, at the very time of His advent.

From the passages and principles cited above, we can draw several conclusions regarding the idea of *The Gospel According to Moses*:

1. The common people of Jesus’ time knew that Moses wrote about the coming and the identity of the Messiah.
2. Jesus, Himself, declared that He was the central focus of all Old Testament Scriptures.
3. The Jews divided the entire Old Testament into “*the Law and the Prophets*” (Mat 5:17; Mat 22:40). Jesus instructed the disciples about Himself “*beginning at Moses and all the Prophets.*” Thus, the entire Old Testament speaks about Him.
4. In the final reference, Jesus includes Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. We must conclude that “the Gospel” was fully anticipated throughout the Old Testament.

Christ-Centered Revelation

The fundamental principle, which runs all through this study, is that **knowledge is gained progressively**, and must begin at the most basic level, each new increment being added and built upon previous facts. In God’s dealings with mankind, this knowledge can come **only by means of revelation**, for man has no capacity to know divine or spiritual things apart from God revealing them to him. In the history of Israel, we have a “**picture-book**” of the **plan of redemption**, by which both the need for and the means of salvation are revealed.

In this study and the history of Moses and Israel, we will see the Gospel message clearly portrayed, often by direct statements and also by object lessons which form a picture-book of events and institutions presenting the Gospel message, centered in **the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ**.

In the preparation of this study and these brief notes, my prayer is that each of you—as faithful Bible students—will find the Old Testament Scriptures clothed in fresh and exciting new wonder and meaning, creating in your souls a deeper reverence for our God and Father, and an intensified hunger to love and live for our precious Lord Jesus Christ—our Savior, Shepherd, and King.

Study One: The Bondage of Israel in Egypt **The Revelation of Sin and Its Penalty**

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law).” Rom 5:12–13

One of the first truths all mankind must be confronted with is that we are all sinners. As it is often said, we need to know the bad news before we will value the good news. Because we are incapable of any way of escape from the curse of sin, we see the need for a personal Savior. Thus, knowing the bad news prepares the soul for the good news.

In the following studies, we will see a theological “basics book,” which instructed ancient Israel in the fundamental doctrines later spelled out in Scripture. First, God used the bondage of Israel to instruct them regarding the holiness of God and the sinfulness of mankind.

A Covenant, a Prophecy, and a Destiny—Exo 1:1–7

The book begins with the phrase, “*Now these are the names ...*” In Hebrew, the title of the book is *Shamot* (Names). Counting Joseph, we have the twelve sons of Jacob, from which come the twelve tribes of Israel. Exodus is the history of the beginning of the Nation. This humble beginning was made with 70 persons. Why is this significant? We have a people (Israel), a place (Egypt) and a number (seventy). These opening verses are filled with biblical and historical significance.

The Covenant of Abraham

In Genesis 12:1–3, God promised Abraham three things: Land (Canaan), Seed (Messiah), and Blessing (unique relationship with God). This all required a son, and Isaac was one of three miraculous births accompanied by prophecy (excluding Christ):

1. Isaac, Gen 18:10–11,
2. Samson, Judges 13, and
3. John the Baptist, Luk 1:5–25, Luk 1:57–58.

Each one of these is filled with typical references to the coming Messiah, too many for us to cover here.

Egypt became the symbol of the world, in which the Son would suffer, and out of which He would lead His people (Hos 11:1).

The Prophecy

As a part of the Abrahamic Covenant, it was foretold that the Nation would be born in slavery (Gen 15:13–16) just as every person is born into the slavery of sin. But the curse of sin is accompanied by the promise of both deliverance and inheritance. Those Hebrews who lived by faith, even in the bondage of Egypt, would have known the promise and would have lived and

died in hope, as did Joseph (Gen 50:22–26). The Egyptian bondage illustrates the truth that all who are associated with the Savior must share His sufferings (2Ti 3:12; 1Pe 4:13–14).

A Destiny

The number “*seventy*” is of great significance here (see also Gen 46:27). God had told Abraham that the blessing part of the Covenant—that Israel would be given a unique relationship with God—was intended to be a blessing to all the families and nations of the earth (Gen 12:3; Gen 22:14–18). God had divided these nations—according to His wisdom, at the tower of Babel—into seventy nations (see Genesis 10). This number was designed to agree with the number of the children of Israel who went down to Egypt (Deu 32:7–12). In other words, Israel was to be a type of what God would do for all the nations of the world. Through the nation of Israel, God would bring forth the Savior of mankind, by whom every family and nation would be blessed.

To finish the picture, one more critical truth must be seen. In the phrase “*all the families [nations] of the earth shall be blessed*” (Gen 12:3; Gen 18:18; Gen 28:14), the word “*blessed*” is in the *Niphal* stem in the Hebrew. Though this is normally taken as a passive, in Covenant formula, it carries a reflexive sense: “shall bless themselves.” This view is strengthened by the fact that the same phrase found in Gen 22:18 is in the *Hitpael* stem, a definite reflexive meaning. Why is this important? Because the implication is that the only way for the families/nations of the earth to be blessed by God spiritually is to “bless themselves” through faith in Jesus Christ, “the Seed of Abraham.”

This is why, at the Feast of Tabernacles, Israel, as the “Priest Nation” offered up seventy bulls, one for each of the nations of the earth. At this time, they were interceding for the nations to come to the true God. Remember that it was during this Feast that Jesus cried out, “*If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water*” (Joh 7:37–38).

Recommend *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Alfred Edersheim

Blessing Turned into Cursing—Exo 1:8–14

The bitter slavery of Israel in Egypt was not a horrible accident of history. Not only did it have a purpose in the divine plan, but Israel was a participant in bringing it about. Remember that God sent Joseph, through many sufferings, into Egypt to prepare a way of deliverance for the nation (Gen 50:20). When the fledgling nation of Israel went down into Egypt, it was so that they might also be a light and a blessing to that nation (Gen 12:3; Gen 18:18; Gen 22:18). But we find that Israel took the blessings of God for granted and began to worship the gods of Egypt (read Deu 32:13–21).

“*Jeshurun*” means “upright one,” and is a term of affection demonstrating the loyal love of God to a wayward and disobedient people. Because they provoked God with idols, God foretold that Israel would one day be provoked “*by those who are not a nation.*” This is a prophecy of the Church made up of believers from every nation, a fulfillment of the blessing promised through

Abraham (Rom 10:17–21). Israel’s slavery in Egypt was the beginning of a long history of divine discipline for idolatry that continues to this day.

When Moses spoke his last messages to Israel, he warned them that the revelation of God they had been given had the potential for both blessing and cursing (Deu 11:26). This point was so important that Deuteronomy 27–28 were dedicated to it. Obedience to God’s Word brings blessings, but disobedience results in lost blessing and intensifying discipline. The same holds true for us as believers today.

The downward progress of Israel, or of any nation (so true of America today), is outlined by the Apostle Paul in Rom 1:18–32. Each point of turning away from God is matched by His turning us over to the consequences of our own decisions. Good decisions bring blessed results, while bad decisions result in self-induced cursing (Pro 16:9, Pro 16:33). Jesus said that those who serve sin become the slave of sin (Joh 8:34).

The Light of Faith in the Darkest Hour—Exo 1:15–22

Pharaoh, not content to enslave the Hebrews, enacts a death sentence on all male children. The stage is set for God to bring forth His deliverer, Moses. As we will see, in order to demonstrate his divine credentials, Moses must be a unique man with evidences of supernatural providence and power.

The whole setting reminds us that the only hope for the soul enslaved to sin is in the power of God to deliver. The midwives show that, in spite of the general apostasy of the nation, there were still faithful believers willing to trust God in spite of the threats. Faith comes to the forefront in the story—as it does throughout the entire Old Testament—as the only means of salvation. The Bible is consistent throughout, “*The just shall live by faith*” (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38).

Summary

1. The conviction of sin is essential to bring anyone to Christ (Joh 16:7–11).
2. The conviction of sin also convinces the sinner that he cannot save himself.
3. The only hope of a sinner is that Someone who is free from sin and its penalty might save him (Rom 7:24).
4. The only connection between the sinner and the Savior is faith. Faith is, by its nature, a declaration of our own helplessness and trust in the power of the Savior, Jesus Christ, to save us (2Ti 1:12).

The Doctrine of Sin

1. Sin is defined as a violation of God’s holiness (Rom 3:23).
2. Sin began as an act of disobedience to God’s command (Gen 3:6; 1Ti 2:14).
3. Sin spread to the whole human race as part of the curse, passing on to each of us the sinful nature of fallen Adam (Rom 5:12):
 - a. Imputed sin is the curse of spiritual death on all mankind (Rom 5:12–19).

- b. Inherent sin is the nature of sin passed to us genetically (Gen 5:1–3).
- c. Personal sin in thought, word, and deed proves the first two (Rom 3:23).
- 4. The curse primarily consists of spiritual death (Gen 2:16–17)—that is, separation from God.
- 5. Indwelling sin makes every man a slave of Satan from birth (2Ti 2:26; Heb 2:14–15).
- 6. Faith in the work of Christ on the cross breaks the power of sin, and destroys the work of the devil (Rom 5:20–21; 2Co 5:21; 1Jo 3:8).
- 7. Redemption through the cross of Christ, resulting in regeneration (new birth), is the one and only solution to the problem of sin (Joh 3:14–21).
- 8. Once we are born again (from above), the goal is to grow spiritually so as to become fruitful and fulfill the plan of God for our lives—glorifying Jesus Christ (Rom 12:1–2; Phi 3:8–9; 1Co 6:20).

The Doctrine of the Nation

- 1. In the development of Israel, we see the divine keys to building a nation.
- 2. First, there must be a common lineage and heritage (Gen 12:1–3; Exo 3:6).
- 3. To this is added a covenant of common goal/purpose (Genesis 15 and 17).
- 4. This national uniqueness is further cemented by common language.
- 5. Israel is then strengthened by the bond of common suffering (Exodus 1).
- 6. The nation is given a common faith and hope—the Redeemer (Gen 15:6).
- 7. Jesus made it clear that *“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to destruction”* (Mat 12:25). Multi-culturalism never has and never will work.
- 8. Once we receive Jesus Christ through faith, we are born into a “new nation” made up of redeemed people having a common source and lineage (Jesus Christ), a common heritage (faith), and common purpose (see Eph 4:3–5; 1Pe 2:6–10).

The Doctrine of Idolatry

- 1. It is in the nature of man, as a spiritual being, to worship.
- 2. Furthermore, the nature of man will assimilate to that which he worships.
- 3. In Rom 1:18–32, Paul reveals the downward process of idolatry.
- 4. Not only does the soul of man conform to what he worships, but God judicially delivers man over to the consequences of his decisions (Rom 1:24–28).
- 5. Man freely chooses to worship, but then becomes a slave to whatever he worships (Joh 8:34; Rom 6:15–16).
- 6. Mankind, enslaved to sin, cannot free himself. There can only be deliverance from Someone outside the slavery, who is free.
- 7. This is why the New Testament language of redemption is couched in terms of the slave market. The two primary words used for redemption are *exagorazo*, “to buy out of the slave-market,” and *lutroo*, “to set free on the basis of ransom payment.” These were fulfilled through the death of Christ.

Note: The extensive nature of this introduction and first study is necessary in laying the foundation for what is to come. From this point on, our studies can be more brief and to the point. Much supplementary material will be supplied in the doctrines added.

Study Two: The Birth of Moses **The Need of a Deliverer/Anticipation of Christ**

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command.” Heb 11:23

“At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God ...” Act 7:20

Read Act 7:17–29.

Terminal Generations

Terminal generations are those that have prophetic warning joined to a specific time limit. To Noah’s generation, the flood would come in 120 years (Gen 6:3). The Exile generation would be in Babylon for 70 years (Jer 25:11; Jer 29:10; Dan 9:2, etc).

1. Flood Generation—Gen 5:25, Gen 5:29
2. Exodus Generation—Gen 15:13–16; Exo 2:2; Act 7:23; Heb 11:23
3. Generation of the Babylonian Captivity—Jer 25:5–11; Jer 29:10
4. Generation that Returned from Exile—Eze 1:1; Dan 9:1–2; 2Ch 36:21; Jer 29:10–14
5. Generation of First Coming of the Messiah—Mic 5:2; Dan 9:24:26; Mat 16:3; Luk 19:44
6. Generation of Destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.)—Mat 23:36
7. Generation of the Second Advent—Mat 24:34; Dan 9:25–27

As soon as God reveals the problem of sin, He also reveals the provision of a savior. Moses becomes a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, a child born under threat of death, who would be protected by God so as to deliver His people. Take note of the parallels between Moses and Christ seen here.

His Deliverance as an Infant—Exo 2:1–4

Pharaoh put a death sentence on all male children. Moses’ parents defied this order because of their faith. When Jesus was born, Herod ordered the murder of all male children in the region (Mat 2:13–18). Moses would deliver Israel out of Egypt, but Jesus was carried from Israel into Egypt. Both Israel and Jesus fulfilled Hos 11:1, *“Out of Egypt I called My son.”*

His Development as a Man—Exo 2:5–10

We learn from Act 7:22 that *“Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.”* At this time, Egypt was the academic center of the world. Of Jesus we read, *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men”* (Luk 2:52). Both were uniquely prepared for the work of deliverance. For Moses it was physical deliverance; for Jesus it was spiritual and eternal deliverance. Moses’ name means “drawn out” (Exo 2:10) because he was “delivered” out of water. Jesus means “Salvation of God.” Moses was “delivered,” but Jesus was “Deliverer.” What a contrast!

His Dedication to His Mission—Exo 2:11–15

Moses chose to identify with God’s people. Though he sought to deliver Israel by his own power, God was working to separate him from Egypt. God often uses even our feeble attempt to accomplish His plan. Moses, however, had to spend the next 40 years learning not to rely on his own strength (Zec 4:6). In due time, Moses became the most humble man on the Earth (Num 12:3). In God’s plan, humility with faith equals great power.

The Flight of Moses into Midian, and His Marriage—Exo 2:16–25

In this section, we are introduced to Moses’ future father-in-law Reuel (or “*Jethro*,” Exo 3:1), who was a priest. Moses meets and marries Reuel’s daughter, Zipporah, and has a son, Gershom. This name is related to two verbs in Hebrew: *garash* means “to drive away,” and *gur* means “to sojourn, dwell as an alien.” Moses is learning that to identify with Christ means to “*go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach*” (Heb 13:13). Likewise, we are “*sojourners and pilgrims*” in this world (1Pe 2:11). Both Jethro and Zipporah will play significant roles in the life of Moses as the story unfolds.

Note the summary of these events in Act 7:22–37, highlighting Moses’ training, age, assumptions, and character. The thrust of Stephen’s message is that like Moses, Jesus was rejected, yet would be the “*ruler and ... deliverer*” of Israel, the “*Prophet*” to whom all must listen.

How is Moses’ marriage a parallel of Christ? Having been rejected by His own people, the Jews (Joh 1:11), Jesus took for Himself a Gentile bride—the Church (Eph 5:25–27; 2Co 11:2).

This section ends with the assurance that God had not forgotten or overlooked His people (Exo 2:25).

Summary

1. Like Jesus, Moses was born under a sentence of death from the king.
2. Just as Moses was raised by one who was not his mother, so Jesus was raised by one who was not His Father.
3. Moses needed the training of Egypt to deliver Israel. Jesus needed training among men to deliver mankind (Phi 2:5–9; Heb 2:18; Heb 4:15; Heb 5:8).
4. As Moses was prepared for forty years in the wilderness (Act 7:30), so Jesus was tempted for forty days in the wilderness (Mat 4:2; Mar 1:13; Luk 4:2).
5. As Moses was rejected by his own people (Act 7:25, Act 7:35) and took a Gentile bride, so also with Christ.
6. In Deu 18:18, God told Israel through Moses, “*I will raise up for them a Prophet like [Moses] from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.*” Later, John said of Jesus, “*For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure [to Him]*” (Joh 3:34).

Seven Decisions that Changed History—Heb 11:23–29

1. The decision to obey God rather than men, Heb 11:23 (Act 4:19; Act 5:29)
2. The decision to separate from the world, Heb 11:24 (2Co 6:17; 1Jo 2:15–17)
3. The decision to suffer for righteousness, Heb 11:25 (2Ti 3:12; 1Pe 4:13–14)
4. The decision to lay up treasures in Heaven, Heb 11:26 (Mat 6:19–20; Heb 10:35)
5. The decision to endure hardship for Christ’s sake, Heb 11:27 (2Ti 2:3; 1Pe 3:14)
6. The decision to be obedient to the Word of God, Heb 11:28 (Rom 1:5; 1Th 1:6–8)
7. The decision to become a pilgrim on the Earth, Heb 11:29 (Heb 11:13–14; 1Pe 2:11–12)

The Doctrine of the Deliverer

1. At the time of the Exodus, Israel had been given certain prophecies of the coming Messiah, passed down through Noah and Abraham:
 - a. He would be virgin-born, Gen 3:15.
 - b. He would come from the line of Abraham, Gen 12:3; Gen 18:18; Gen 22:18.
 - c. He would be from the tribe of Judah, Gen 49:10.
2. The prophecy of Isaiah declared that the Deliverer would come out of Zion (Jerusalem), who would take away the sins of Israel (Isa 59:20; Rom 11:26–27).
3. David often spoke of the Lord as his Deliverer (2Sa 22:2; Psa 18:2; Psa 40:17).
4. God used Moses to deliver Israel from the slavery of Egypt (Act 7:35), but only Jesus could deliver men from their sins (Mat 1:21).
5. In order to deliver Israel from Egypt, Moses has to be from outside Egypt. Even so, to deliver us from sin, Christ had to be free from sin (Heb 7:25–26).
6. Jesus came not only to deliver us from the **penalty** of sin (Hell), but also from the **power** of sin (Rom 6:9, Rom 6:14). In the resurrection, we will be delivered from the very **presence** of sin. These are the three phases of sanctification: positional, practical, and final.
7. Job spoke of his “*Redeemer*” and Deliverer two thousand years before Christ came (Job 19:25–26).
8. The finished work of Christ on the cross (Joh 19:30) is the only basis for the deliverance of the soul from the Lake of Fire (Joh 3:16–19; Rev 20:15).

Note: Moses called Him “*the Rock*,” Deu 32:4, Deu 32:15, Deu 32:18, Deu 32:30–31.

Study Three: The Burning Bush **The Revelation of God**

“And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai.” Act 7:30

The call of Moses to go and deliver Israel was the beginning of God’s revelation of Himself to Moses. This revelation continued until the writings of Moses became the foundation for Old Testament Scripture. This phase of Moses’ life emphasizes the importance of the Word of God in the redemption of mankind. It should be noted that every new revelation from God is always accompanied by miraculous signs.

The Burning Bush, the Holiness of God—Exo 3:1–6

From the very first, it was necessary that God reveal Himself as holy. Moses is told to remove his sandals, because he is standing on holy ground. Thus, not only is God holy in His essence, but His very presence imbues holiness to His surroundings. Holiness means not merely sinless, but that he is completely “other,” unique, and distinct from us. As such, He is unapproachable apart from mercy and redemption. The term “*the beauty of holiness*” (Psa 27:4; Psa 29:2) implies that He is all that we desire, but cannot attain. He alone is “*eternal, immortal, invisible ... wise ... dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power*” (1Ti 1:17, 1Ti 6:16). The concept of holiness encompasses all that is “healthy,” thus Paul’s use of “*sound doctrine*” (1Ti 1:10; 2Ti 4:3; Tit 1:9; Tit 2:1) or “*sound in the faith*” (Tit 1:13; Tit 2:2), which equates to spiritual health and holiness.

The Name Revealed, the Nature of God—Exo 3:7–15

The name given to Moses of the God of Abraham was “*I AM*.” Taken from the Hebrew verb “to be” (*hayah*), it is indicative not only of identity, but also of essence. It speaks of the eternally self-existent one, the unmade Maker of all things. The name “Jehovah” has multiple compounds in the Old Testament to define its meaning. In Exo 3:14, the form is *ehyeh* (“*I AM*”), but in Exo 3:15, it is *Yah-weh* (“He is”).

The Gift of Miracles, the Power of God—Exo 4:1–9

Miracles are essential as evidence that a message has come from God. To quote Dr. Walker, “*For, as it is natural for man to perform acts superior to the power and knowledge of the animals beneath him, so, reason affirms, that it is natural for God to develop His power by means, and in ways, above the skill and ability of mortals ... Every act of God’s immediate power would, to human capacity, be a miracle*” (*Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*, p. 50). In order to show that God—holy and mighty—was about to judge the gods of Egypt, it was necessary that His power over them be openly manifested.

The Incident at the Inn, Identification with God—Exo 4:24–26

The rather strange story of Moses at “the inn” (NET Bible and KJV) has confused many people. It was a source of great consternation to me, while a student in Bible school, until it was clearly explained to me by Pastor John Miller. In fact, it was his ability to expound the meaning to me, when my Bible professors could not, that was the beginning of my discipleship under his guidance and teaching.

As a Hebrew, Moses was under the Abrahamic Covenant. The “*sign*” of that Covenant was circumcision (Gen 17:9–14). It was to be a sign, a reminder that salvation comes by faith alone (Rom 4:9–12). Possibly because of his rejection by his own people, Moses had not circumcised his son, Gershom. He was in violation of the Covenant, and that violation merited death (Gen 17:14). A point of application is that we cannot minister to the people of God if we do not identify with them. It was to identify with us, though we are sinners, that Christ became a man and died for our sins (Phi 2:5–11).

Summary

In these experiences of Moses, we see that the revelation of God to him involved three things. First there was **History**, showing the continuity going back to the God of Abraham. Second, there was the **Identity**, which revealed His nature. Finally, there was **Ability**, which proved God’s presence and power over the gods of Egypt. These three facets of revelation are critically related to the omni-attributes of God:

1. Only if God is infinite and eternal (omnipresent) is He relevant to all ages of men.
2. Only if God is holy and wise (omniscient) can He rightfully judge sin.
3. Only if God is almighty (omnipotent) is He capable of executing His judgments.

In the story of the burning bush, we see seven critical aspects of revelation displayed (note 2Ti 3:16 17):

1. Vision, Exo 3:1–3
2. Authority, Exo 3:4
3. Holiness, Exo 3:5–6
4. Promise, Exo 3:7–8
5. Power, Exo 3:11–12; Exo 4:1–9
6. Identity, Exo 3:13–14
7. Commission, Exo 3:15–16; Exo 4:1–9

The Doctrine of “I AM”

1. Known as the Tetragrammaton (JHWH, *i.e.*, “four letters”), this is the highest name of God. It was so holy to the Jews that, in reading the Old Testament text, they would substitute “Adonai” (the Lord)—a title of authority and dignity.
2. This name signifies not only eternal self-existence, but also “presence.” He is “*a very present help in trouble*” (Psa 46:1), and “*He is not far from each one of us*” (Act 17:27).

3. To explain the meaning of this, we use the terms, “immanent and transcendent,” in the Person of Jesus Christ. The God who is far above us has drawn near to us in the incarnation of His Son.
4. There are **ten compound-names** of Jehovah in the Old Testament:
 - *Jehovah-Elohim* (LORD God), the Creator of all things (Gen 2:4)
 - *Jehovah-Jireh* (the LORD will provide), speaks of the providence of God (Gen 22:14)
 - *Jehovah-Rapha* (the LORD who heals); He heals our souls (Exo 15:26).
 - *Jehovah-Nissi* (the LORD is my banner); He gives victory (Exo 17:15).
 - *Jehovah-Mekaddishem* (the LORD who sanctifies us); He works to conform us to the image of Christ (Exo 31:13; Lev 20:8; Rom 8:28–29 1Th 5:23).
 - *Jehovah-Shalom* (the LORD is my peace); He is peace to those who come to Him through Christ (Jdg 6:24; Rom 5:1).
 - *Jehovah-Sabaoth* (the LORD of armies); He defends us (1Sa 1:3; Jam 5:4).
 - *Jehovah-Tsidkenu* (the LORD our righteousness); He gives His own righteousness to those who believe (Jer 23:6; 2Co 5:21).
 - *Jehovah-Shama* (the LORD is there); His dwelling place is now in those who trust Christ (Eze 48:35; 1Co 3:16; 1Co 6:19; Rev 21:22).
 - *Jehovah-Raah* (the LORD is my Shepherd), one of the most precious names of all! (Psa 23:1; Joh 10:11)
5. Jesus used the “*I AM*” formula **ten times** in the Gospel of John:
 - “*I ... am He*” (that is, “I am the Christ”) (Joh 4:26).
 - “*I am the bread of life*” (Joh 6:35, Joh 6:41, Joh 6:48, Joh 6:51).
 - “*I am the light of the world*” (Joh 8:12; Joh 9:5; Joh 12:46).
 - “*Before Abraham was I AM*” (Joh 8:58).
 - “*I am the door*” (Joh 10:7, Joh 10:9).
 - “*I am the good shepherd*” (Joh 10:11).
 - “*I am the Son of God*” (Joh 10:36).
 - “*I am the resurrection and the life*” (Joh 11:25).
 - “*You call Me teacher and Lord ... so I am*” (Joh 13:13).
 - “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*” (Joh 14:6).

The Doctrine of Revelation

1. Revelation is one of five works of the Holy Spirit in regard to God’s Word:
 - Revelation—the act by which God reveals Himself to man (2Ti 3:16)
 - Inspiration—the act by which God guides man to record the message (2Pe 1:20–21)
 - Preservation—the act of protecting His Word from human destruction (Mat 24:35)
 - Illumination—the act by which God enlightens the souls of men to His Word (Eph 1:15–20)
 - Enablement—the act by which God empowers those who believe to obey (Eph 3:14–19; Eph 5:17–18)
2. Apart from revelation, man could not know God (Mat 11:27; 1Co 2:6–14).
3. God uses three channels to reveal Himself to mankind:
 - Creation—Rom 1:18–21
 - Conscience—Ecc 3:11; Rom 2:11–16

- Scripture—2Ti 3:16–17
4. The smallest faith-response to any of these will ultimately lead to greater revelation (Joh 7:17).
 5. The ultimate revelation of God to men is in the incarnation of Jesus Christ—the Living Word (Joh 1:1–4, Joh 1:14).
 6. God works through His Word and by His Spirit to reveal Himself through those who believe in Him, as they are conformed to Christ (Rom 12:1–2; Gal 2:20; 1Th 1:5–10).
 7. The Word of God contains the power of God, made available to all those who, by faith, receive the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 1:14–17; 1Co 1:18; Eph 1:19–20).

The Eight Marks that Identify Sound Doctrine

These points are adapted from an article written by Daniel Phillips at teampyro.blogspot.com:

1. Sound doctrine spotlights the Person and work of Jesus Christ (Luk 24:27, Luk 24:44; Joh 16:14; Col 2:6–7, Col 2:10). He is the central focus of all Truth.
2. Sound doctrine is based on the saving work of Christ, conveyed to us in the Gospel (Romans 3–5; Ephesians 1–3; Eph 4:1–6:9).
3. Sound doctrine is really, really old (Heb 1:1–2; Heb 2:1–4). Jesus Christ is God’s final word to man, and the message of the apostles in the New Testament is His final written record.
4. Sound doctrine unifies God’s children around God’s Son as revealed fully in God’s Word (2Ti 3:15–4:4; Heb 1:1–2; Heb 2:1–4; 1Jo 1:1–3). False teachers seek to isolate followers in order to dominate them (Gal 4:17).
5. Sound teachers can always answer the question, “What verse are we on?” Sound teaching sticks to the text of the Bible. We are commanded to preach His Word (2Ti 4:1–4), to glorify Christ (Joh 16:14), and not to preach of ourselves (2Co 4:5).
6. Sound teaching makes much of what God makes much of in His Word. Because sound teaching is Christ-centered and Scripture-centered, it focuses on what God has said, not on obscure questions (1Ti 1:3–7; 1Ti 4:7; Tit 1:14; 2Pe 1:16, 2Pe 1:21).
7. Sound teaching loves the light. There is no place in faithful teaching for tricks, gimmicks, or duplicity of any kind (Act 20:20; Act 26:26; 2Co 2:17; 2Co 4:1–3).
8. Sound teaching directs believers to local-church involvement. Jesus Christ died for the Church (Eph 2:13–22; Eph 4:1–16; Eph 5:25–27). Yes, we understand the concept of the spiritual Body of the Church being made up of every believer in Christ. But the local assembly of that Body is essential for personal growth, corporate witness, and faithful obedience (Heb 10:19–25).

Study Four: The Plagues and the Passover **The Plan of Redemption**

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” 1Jo 3:8

In the story of the ten plagues (Exo 7:14–11:10), we see the judgment of God on the gods of Egypt and the sin which accompanied the worship of them. It is inevitable in the very nature of God that He must judge all that is contrary to His holiness. He judged the sin in the Garden (Gen 3:9–19), the generation of Noah (Genesis 6), and the nations at Babel (Genesis 11). In the same way, it is a certainty that God will bring judgment on our own godless generation.

It is important, however, to recognize the fact that God always offers grace before judgment—a way of escape by faith before bringing calamity. Although Pharaoh will harden his own heart repeatedly, ultimately to be sealed in his hardness by God, many of the Egyptians came to faith in the true God (Exo 7:5). The purpose in the plagues is both evangelistic, as well as punitive.

The Ten Plagues, Judgments on the Gods of Egypt—Exodus 7–11

Revelation and Miracles

(rod, Exo 4:2; hand, Exo 4:7; water; Exo 4:7; word Exo 4:12)

Moses returns to Egypt in the power of the Lord, and demonstrates that power to them and to the people. Please note what their response was: *“So the people believed; and ... they bowed their heads and worshiped”* (Exo 4:31). All spiritual victories among men must begin with faith in the power of God. Remember that the plagues were initially experienced by both the Hebrews and the Egyptians together. Not until the fourth plague (Exo 8:22) did God establish a difference between the two nations.

In the confrontation with the magicians of Pharaoh, in which the two rods became serpents, several important precedents were set. These would continue throughout all ten of the plagues:

1. First, God said that Pharaoh would demand a miracle. It was considered that if a man comes representing God, he must validate his words by miracles.
2. The magicians of Pharaoh were able, by demonic powers, to imitate the work of turning their rods into serpents. This shows that supernatural powers are also available to men from the realm of Satan.
3. Aaron’s rod/serpent swallowed up all the other serpents. We assume there were at least two from the magicians, based on 2Ti 3:8. The serpent was an object of worship in Egypt. This showed that, not only was the power of God greater than that of the magicians, but it was also hostile to their power.
4. We can observe throughout biblical history that whenever God sends a new revelation to His people, that revelation is accompanied by miracles, which are designed to vindicate the truth. Once the revelation is finished, the miracles cease.

What follows in the ten plagues is an epic spiritual battle between the God of Heaven and the gods of Egypt. These were no mere figment of imagination, for as Paul tells us, behind every idol is a demon power (1Co 10:19–20). Following are the ten plagues and the gods they judged:

“Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.” Rom 1:22–23)

The Ten Plagues

1. The Nile River turned to blood, Exo 7:14–24
The Egyptians held this river to be sacred much as Hindus venerate the Ganges River. They also worshipped the fish of the river, which died and began to stink.
2. The plague of frogs, Exo 8:1–15
Frogs were also objects of worship, and now came up out of the river by the millions. That which the Egyptians worshipped had become a curse to them. Note that the best the magicians could do was to imitate the miracle, thus bringing further cursing upon the land (Exo 8:7).
3. The plague of lice, Exo 8:16–19
The Egyptians were extremely concerned with bodily cleanliness. The men shaved all hair from their bodies in order to avoid lice. Now the land is polluted with lice, created from the dust of the earth. The magicians could not perform nor imitate this creative act, and the priests cried out, *“This is the finger of God”* (Exo 8:19). This proves that they knew, deep in their souls, that there was one true God above all their deities.
4. The plague of flies, Exo 8:20–32
Again, the Egyptians worshipped Beelzebub, the fly-god. He was believed to be their protector from swarms of insects which sometimes devastated the land. Here again, their god was shown to be impotent against the God of Moses. Note that the flies did not affect the land of Goshen where the Hebrews were dwelling (Exo 8:22–23). As Peter tells us, *“The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment”* (2Pe 2:9). This is the first plague that Israel is untouched by (Exo 8:22) and is preparing the way for the Passover (Exo 11:7).
5. The plague upon livestock, Exo 9:1–7
The Egyptians worshipped cattle, sheep, goats, and other animals. This plague not only judged the worship of these creatures, but also devastated the land beyond repair. Again, God spared all the livestock of the Hebrews, showing His power to deliver His own.
6. The plague of boils, Exo 9:8–1
This plague was especially fitting, as it was custom in Egypt to commit human sacrifices and to burn the bodies, after which the priests would scatter their ashes into the air as an offering to Typhon (the god of evil) so that he would keep evil from the land. These bloody rites were now mocked by Moses, who brought down painful boils on all the Egyptians, so that the magicians were forced to flee from Moses. This is the first point where God hardened Pharaoh’s heart (Exo 9:11).

7. The plague of hail, Exo 9:13–35

With most of the livestock destroyed, all that was left for food in Egypt were the crops. What livestock remained would be destroyed along with the crops. But now we see that some of the Egyptians are believing the Word of the Lord, as they gathered in their remaining stock (Exo 9:20–21).

(It is worth noting that it is at this point God makes the famous statement to Pharaoh, Exo 9:16, which is quoted by Paul in Rom 9:17. It should also be noted that by this time some of the Egyptians are beginning to believe (Exo 9:20). We will look at the hardening of Pharaoh's heart after we finish the plagues.

8. The plague of locusts, Exo 10:1–20

One of the gods of Egypt was Serapis, whose special power was supposed to deliver Egypt from the hosts of locusts which occasionally came upon the land. In this way, God showed the foolishness of looking to anyone but Him for protection. It was during this plague that the servants of Pharaoh said to him, “*Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?*” (Exo 10:7).

9. The plague of darkness, Exo 10:21–29

The chief deities of Egypt, held above all others, were Isis and Osiris, representing the sun and moon. The worship of these heavenly bodies prevailed in all ancient cultures. Not only was there darkness over the land for three days, but it was darkness that was painful. Meanwhile there was light in the land of Goshen, “*in their dwellings*”!

10. The death of the firstborn, Exodus 11

The final plague coincides with the Passover. The death of the firstborn of all the households of Egypt was the final straw, and Pharaoh literally drove them out (Exo 12:30–32). Also, the Hebrews asked for their neighbors' gold and silver, which was given (Exo 11:1–3). This treasure would later be used to build the articles of the Tabernacle (not to mention, the golden calf).

The Passover, Deliverance through Sacrifice and Faith—Exodus 12–14

The Feast of Unleavened Bread (spiritual growth following redemption)

While the firstborn of Egypt were dying, the Israelites were under “the blood of the lamb.” The Passover became the first and greatest of all the feasts of Israel. This anticipated “*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (Joh 1:29). The blood of the lamb was “struck” across the doorposts and the lintel, thus forming a cross of blood over the door (Exo 12:7, Exo 12:22).

With the death of all the firstborn, Pharaoh urged Moses to take the people and go out of Egypt, literally “[driving] *them out*,” as God had said (Exo 6:1) and many Egyptians, who had believed, went out with them (Exo 12:37). The Apostle Paul reminds us of the fulfillment of this amazing prophetic event, over 1,400 years later, and of how it should affect our lives:

“For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1Co 5:7–8)

This “*unleavened bread*” refers to the Word of God, working in us through the Spirit.

Grace before Law

The timing of God (430 years) is noted in Exo 12:40–41, and is highlighted by Paul in Gal 3:17. The point is that the Abrahamic Covenant, which was “by grace through faith,” held precedence over the Law of Moses, which came 430 years later. The main point—too often overlooked—is that the Law was, at this time, for those who had already believed, and was given as an expression of spirituality and worship.

This principle applies, even to the Passover, which was given before the Law. All other feasts were given as an extension of the Law, but the Passover celebrated the cross of Jesus Christ in anticipation, 1,400 years before the event. Paul expounds these principles extensively in the book of Galatians. In Gal 3:1–9, he demonstrates the precedence of the Abrahamic Covenant, and of salvation by faith, prior to the giving of the Law. Paul lays down—as the fundamental rule-for-all-time—the principle, “*the just shall live by faith*” (Gal 3:11). That is to say, **both salvation and spirituality come by faith alone**. The spiritual life is not found by trying, but through trusting!

He then develops the idea further in Gal 3:15–18 to show the irrevocable nature of the promise of eternal life, by faith, as being independent of the Law. He then concludes the chapter by showing that the true purpose of the Law, for later generations (as opposed to the Exodus generation), was to demonstrate man’s sinfulness, so as to point to the need for a Savior and to the promise of justification by faith, **which had been established in Abraham!** (see Gal 3:22–25). Keep in mind that for the Exodus generation, faith preceded the giving of the Law (see Exo 4:31; Exo 14:31).

The law today fulfills the same function, for which reason Paul says it is not for the just, but for the unjustified (1Ti 1:8–9). **What God taught Israel by the Egyptian bondage (that the wages of sin is slavery and death), is now made clear to the lost by being confronted with the holy demands of the Law of Moses.** For those who are saved, the law is not something we try to keep—either for salvation or spirituality—but rather something we demonstrate in daily life by faith, through the filling of the Spirit and the love of Christ (Rom 13:8–10; Gal 5:22–23). Jesus Christ is the “*end [fulfillment] of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes*” (Rom 10:4)

Summary: The Hardening of Pharaoh’s Heart

There is much confusion regarding the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. Those of strong Calvinist leaning love to quote Rom 9:17 to “prove” that Pharaoh had no choice in the matter, because God had already sovereignly chosen him to go to Hell. This is a very poor job of biblical interpretation.

Simply letting Scripture speak for itself, we see that God did indeed harden the heart of Pharaoh, after he had hardened his own heart six times (Exo 5:2; Exo 6:13; Exo 7:22; Exo 8:19, Exo 8:32; Exo 9:7). After this, in Exo 9:12, we see the first instance of God hardening Pharaoh’s heart. Read Exo 9:27 and 34. It is obvious that Pharaoh’s rebellion was willful and conscious.

Certainly, God had foretold this would happen (Exo 4:21; Exo 7:22). God’s declaration—based on His foreknowledge/omniscience—did not force Pharaoh to harden his own heart. What we see here is precisely what Paul lays out at the beginning of the book of Romans: how God deals with sinful man, by judicially enforcing upon him the consequences of his decisions (see Rom 1:18–32, and refer back to Study #1).

The Doctrine of Redemption

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith ...” Rom 3:24–25

1. The word “*redemption*” means to set free through the payment of a ransom.
2. Among the heathen, the act of redemption spoke of buying a slave out of the market place, or of the redemption of a captured soldier through ransom.
3. To the Hebrews, the concept was introduced by the Kinsman-redeemer, as presented in Lev 25:25–55, and illustrated by Boaz in the book of Ruth.
4. Under the Kinsman-redeemer type, three requirements must be met:
 - a. The redeemer must be a kinsman (Lev 25:48–49; Rut 3:12–13).
 - b. The redeemer must be both able and willing to redeem (Rut 4:4–6; Jer 50:34).
 - c. Redemption is accomplished by the payment of a ransom price (Lev 25:27; Rut 4:9–10).
5. The concept of redemption includes the idea of substitution, as when Isaac was replaced by the ram as a sacrifice (Gen 22:11–14).
6. The redemption of Israel out of Egypt was by “the blood of the lamb” (Exo 12:7, Exo 12:22).
7. Jesus Christ fulfilled these Old Testament types fully, becoming our Kinsman-Redeemer through His incarnation into human flesh (Phi 2:5–9), being willing to pay the divine price for sin (Joh 9:29; Joh 10:11–15), and dying on the cross for all mankind (2Co 5:19, 2Co 5:21).
8. The effects of His ransom are universal, covering all mankind (1Ti 2:5–6; 1Jo 2:2), but the benefit—eternal salvation—must be received individually by faith in Him (Joh 3:14–16; Act 16:31).

The Doctrine of Sanctification

“But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” 1Pe 1:15–16

1. The essence of the word “sanctify” (Hebrew *qadosh*, Greek *hagiazō*) means “to set apart to God from the world.” It implies a transfer of possession.
2. To become “sanctified” spiritually indicates a transfer from one realm to another (1Co 15:22), from the realm of death to that of life.
3. Sanctification begins at the moment of regeneration (new birth), but is a process that continues throughout life until eternal glorification:
 - a. Phase 1. Regeneration through faith (Joh 3:3, Joh 3:7; Rom 4:3)
 - b. Phase 2. Transformation into Christ-likeness (Rom 12:1–2; 2Co 3:18)

- c. Phase 3. Glorification with Christ (1Co 15:51; 1Jo 3:2)
4. Once we have trusted Christ (positional sanctification), the focus of life is that of practical sanctification, again, “*by faith*” (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). “*The just [justified believer] shall live by faith.*” This is accomplished as we grow in grace and truth (2Pe 3:18) and fruitfulness (Gal 5:22–23), as we are being conformed to the image of Christ (2Co 3:17–18; Gal 2:20).
 5. Ultimate sanctification will see all who believe glorified in the likeness of Christ’s resurrection. Faith in Christ will be shown by us bearing His likeness, but faithfulness in life will show distinction between believers. Some will have greater authority (Mat 25:21, Mat 25:23), some will have crowns (2Ti 4:7–8; Jam 1:12), some will lose potential rewards (1Co 3:10–15).
 6. We see the tremendous power of decisions here, for every decision we make as believers is either for or against further sanctification, and will have eternal consequences (Mat 12:36; Heb 4:12–13).
 7. Every day, we have the opportunity to gain eternal reward and lay up treasures in Heaven, by choosing to live according to God’s Word (Jos 24:15; Mat 6:20; 2Co 6:1–2).

The Doctrine of Faith

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ... For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” Rom 1:16–17

1. Faith is contrary to human reason and logic (Rom 4:18; Mat 11:25).
2. Faith does not depend on sight (Rom 4:18; 3Co 4:18; Heb 11:9).
3. Faith simply trusts God’s Word (Rom 4:18; Gal 3:16; Rom 10:17).
4. Faith finds its power in the faithfulness of God (Heb 11:11; 2Ti 2:13).
5. The focus of faith is the finished work of Christ (Joh 19:30; 2Co 1:9).
6. Faith does not waver in the face of the impossible (Rom 4:20; Heb 11:7).
7. Faith is conviction, not empty profession (Rom 4:21–22; 1Co 4:19–20).
8. Faith is able to see beyond the visible realm (2Ki 6:16–17; Heb 11:1).

Study Five: Sinai, the Worship of Jehovah **The Standard for Spirituality**

“So He said, ‘I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you [abad, two persons, plural] shall serve God on this mountain.’” Exo 3:12

God made it clear to Moses that, following the Exodus from Egypt, he was to lead the nation to Sinai, where they, as a nation, would begin to serve God. When we speak of serving God, we are dealing with the topic of spirituality. At Sinai, God would begin to unfold to the nation of Israel the standard of spirituality for Old Testament saints. As always, spirituality is not the result of doing certain things, rather, those things are spiritual due to the condition of the heart. Jesus, in His first recorded major message—the Sermon on the Mount—focused on this very issue (see Mat 5:21–48 regarding the negative commands and Mat 6:1–18 regarding positive actions).

In simple terms, we are not spiritual because we don’t do certain things, nor because we do good things. Rather, when we are spiritual, trusting the enabling power of the indwelling Spirit, these things can be done—not in our power—but in the power of God. It is not just the action God wants, but the proper motive and intent (2Ch 16:9; Heb 4:12–13).

The Law—Exo 20:1–17 **Holiness is the Divine Standard**

What we call the Ten Commandments is in fact the preamble to the whole law. Also known as the Decalogue (ten words), all the following commandments are contained in seed-form in these ten.

The Ten Commandments can be divided into two sets: the first five having to do with man’s relationship to God, and the last five dealing with relationship of man-to-man. This is why Jesus repeatedly identified the two greatest commandments—not from the Ten—but from later commands that covered these two realms of relationships (See Deu 6:5; Lev 19:18).

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Mat 22:37–40

In this succinct statement, Jesus summarizes spirituality both for Old Testament believers and for the Church (Rom 13:8–10). The Ten Commandments reveal the holiness of God, and the sinfulness of mankind. These commands can be followed only by faith in a regenerate believer, by the power of the Spirit.

In His declaration of the Law, God revealed to Israel, at one and the same time, His holiness, His justice, and His mercy. All areas of the divine essence are contained and comprehended in these three.

The Tabernacle—Exodus 25–27

The Tabernacle was a gathering place—a place of unity. It was the central place of worship for Israel in the wilderness. This was a large tent, constructed according to divine revelation and instruction (Heb 8:1–5). This worship-tent was like a picture-book, revealing both the Person and the work of Jesus Christ which was to come. Consider the seven articles of the Tabernacle and their typical meaning regarding the work of Christ:

1. The Altar of Sacrifice—Christ the Lamb of God, Joh 1:29
2. The Laver of Cleansing—Christ our cleansing, Eph 5:25–26; 1Jo 1:9
3. The Lampstand—Christ the Light of the World, Joh 8:12
4. The Table of Bread—Christ the Bread of Life, Joh 6:35, Joh 6:48, Joh 6:51
5. The Altar of Incense—Christ our acceptance (sweet smelling savor), Eph 1:6; Eph 5:1–2
6. The Veil—Christ’s body, the veil of His glory, Heb 10:20
7. The Ark of the Covenant—Christ our Mercy Seat, Rom 3:23–24; Heb 9:4–5

The Priesthood—Leadership, Mediator, 1Ti 2:5

The primary lesson of the priesthood is that mankind needs a Mediator. The function of the priests was to represent God to men, and to approach God on behalf of men (Heb 5:1–6). Remember that even Job, who lived over four hundred years before Moses, expressed his longing for a Mediator who could represent him before God (Job 9:32–33; Job 19:25–26). Only the Lord Jesus Christ could ultimately fulfill this role (1Ti 2:3–6).

The word “*mediator*” means “one equal to both parties,” or as Job said, “[One] *Who may lay his hand on us both*” (Job 9:33). Jesus Christ, who is God, became our true Mediator by entering into the human race through the virgin birth. In this way, He was born without the sinful nature passed on by Adam (Gen 5:1–3). He was tempted in all ways like us (Heb 2:9–11, Heb 2:14–18; Heb 4:14–15; Heb 5:7–9), yet without sin. By His divine nature and human sinlessness, He was qualified as “*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (Joh 1:29). Thus, He is both High Priest and Sacrifice in the work of reconciling mankind to God (Heb 8:1; Heb 10:13–15). Only Jesus Christ can satisfy the righteous demands of God and meet the needs of mankind, without compromising the interests of either.

The Sacrifices, Offering for Cleansing/Forgiveness

The sacrificial system was a perpetual reminder of man’s sinfulness, sin’s penalty, and the need for a Substitute. For 1,400 years, Israel sacrificed lambs twice a day, at nine in the morning and at three in the afternoon. These were called the morning and evening sacrifices (Exo 29:38–39). Along with all the other sacrifices, this anticipated the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf. It was a reminder that, apart from the blood of Christ, there would be no hope of forgiveness or eternal life (Exo 12:13; Lev 17:11; Heb 9:19–22).

The sacrificial system presented a vivid picture of the price of sin, and was a continual reminder that the innocent died for the guilty. We have no capacity to fully comprehend the cost to Jesus Christ, as He hung on the cross, being imputed with the sins of the entire world (2Co 5:21).

When He cried out, “*It is finished!*” (Joh 19:30), the work of salvation was done. Salvation is infinitely simple for us (Joh 3:16; Act 16:31), but it was infinitely costly for our Savior. We can only stand in awe of His great love, and humbly demonstrate our gratitude for our “*so great ... salvation*” (Heb 2:3) by serving Him with all our soul through all our life!

The Doctrine of Spirituality

1. When we speak of spirituality, we are talking about practical sanctification.
2. Sanctification includes both worship and service (*cf.*, Gen 22:5; Exo 3:12).
3. The furniture of the Tabernacle illustrates the steps of practical and daily sanctification/spirituality:
 - a. The Altar. All spirituality is based on the cross of Jesus Christ and involves conscious submission to Him (Gal 2:20).
 - b. The Laver. Daily cleansing is provided through confession (1Jo 1:9).
 - c. The Lampstand. Illumination by the Spirit guides us (Eph 1:17–19).
 - d. The Bread. We must feed on God’s Word daily (Mat 4:4; Joh 6:35).
 - e. The Altar of Incense. The Spirit makes our prayers effective (Rom 8:26; Eph 6:18).
 - f. The Veil. Spirituality is entering into and living in the fellowship and communion of the Father (Psa 91:1; Psa 15:4–10; Heb 4:16).
 - g. The Ark of the Covenant. We are to dwell in the conscious presence of God (Psa 91:1; Joh 14:21–23; Col 3:1–3).
4. A summary term for New Testament spirituality is the filling by (not with) the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18, Eph 5:22–23). The emphasis on the use of the prepositions, “by ... not with,” is that the Spirit is the agent who does the filling, not the content of the filling. The content is the “*fruit of the Spirit*” (Gal 5:22–23), which is the character of Jesus Christ.
5. True spirituality is a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the Word of God (Joh 13:34–35; Joh 14:12–14).
6. To put it in the simplest of terms, biblical spirituality is the Spirit-controlled life (Rom 8:12–14; Gal 5:16–18).
7. Finally, there are four commands regarding the Spirit in the New Testament:
 - a. “*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit*” (Eph 4:30). The context shows that we do this by sins we commit (Eph 4:25–32).
 - b. “*Do not quench the Spirit*” (1Th 5:19). This context shows we do this by the omission of things we should be doing, sins of omission (1Th 5:16–22; see also Jam 4:17).
 - c. “*Walk by the Spirit*” (Gal 5:16, Gal 5:25, NASB). This means to live by faith in the power of the indwelling Spirit.
 - d. “*Be filled [by] the Spirit*” (Eph 5:18). The command implies control, and the passive voice indicates a voluntary submission to the Spirit of God.

*“If you know these things,
blessed are you if you do them.” Joh 10:17*

Study Six: Kadesh-Barnea **The Testing of Faith for Growth**

The central issue of history from the human perspective is that of volition, what is often called “free-will.” This is a misnomer, due to our enslavement to sin, but we do have—within the bounds God has given us—the power of self-determination (Act 17:36–38). As in the Garden of Eden, human volition must be tested. The first great impact of human volition was the choice to sin in the Garden. At the heart of this decision was the desire for self-exaltation and self-gratification (compare Gen 3:5–6 with 1Jo 2:15–17). The second decision impacting the whole human race was in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus Christ—the perfect Man—chose the Father’s plan to go to the cross. This was a decision of self-sacrifice and humiliation (Phi 2:5–9). All other decisions men make in some way relate to and reflect those two great decisions: one for the cursing of mankind, the other for our redemption. The power of decision is a part of the likeness of God (Gen 1:26) and is the greatest power God gave to mankind.

The Crossroads at Kadesh-Barnea—Numbers 13–14

At Kadesh-Barnea, the Nation was tested regarding their faith. Like the muscles of the body, faith must be stretched and stressed, if we are to build spiritual strength. Having experienced God’s mighty deliverance in the Exodus, it was now time to see if all the miracles they had observed would lead to consistent faith and spiritual growth.

An Everlasting Legacy

The twelve spies sent into the land are named (Num 13:1–16), and their response to the test will stand in God’s Word forever. This is a reminder to us that the record of our lives is also being kept. The decisions we make—for good or bad, in faith or unbelief—will not only affect us in time, but will have eternal impact as well.

What the spies found in the land, by their own admission, was precisely what God had promised (Num 13:23–27): a land flowing with milk and honey. They also found that there were giants in the land (Num 13:22, Num 13:26–29). God had promised them the land since the time of Abraham (Gen 15:18–21). However, as with all of God’s promises, there was need to claim the promise by faith. And faith requires a test. All of the promises of God are conditional; they are claimed by faith alone!

The Courage of Faith

Only Caleb and Joshua stood firm in faith (Num 13:30; Num 14:6–10). Take careful note of the points they made in attempting to convince the people to go in and claim the land:

1. Caleb declares that the Israelites were well able to claim the land (Num 13:30).
2. Joshua and Caleb remind them that the land is exactly as God described it, thus God’s Word is true and can be trusted (Num 14:7).
3. The only thing needed for victory is God’s favor, which depends on faith (Num 14:8).
4. Their fear was just an attack on faith, creating doubt that God would be with them (Num 14:9). Fear and faith cannot live in the same house (soul).

5. By example, they illustrate that those who walk by faith will win the reward of their faith (Num 14:24, Num 14:30).

The Consequences of Unbelief

The ten fearful spies, however, caused the faith of the people to fail (Num 14:1–5), and the consequence was that God condemned them to wander for forty years (Num 14:31–38). In fact, if not for the intercession of Moses, the Nation would have been destroyed (Num 14:11–19). Bear in mind that these are believers we are dealing with (Exo 14:30–31). They had been redeemed by the blood of the Passover lamb, and delivered by the mighty hand of God. Yet, at the time of testing, many who are believers fail through unbelief. Their loss is not the salvation they have received, but blessings in time, and rewards in eternity (1Co 3:10–15; 2Co 5:9–11).

The whole book of Hebrews is written as an exhortation to believers not to fail in the battle of life through unbelief (Heb 3:7–19; Heb 6:9–12; Heb 10:19–25; Heb 13:20–22). The negative examples throughout the book are the unbelieving believers of the Exodus generation (Heb 3:12, Heb 3:18–19; Heb 12:18–24).

Too often, entrance into the Promised Land is presented as a picture of Heaven. This is not accurate according to the Word of God. When we use Canaan as a figure of Heaven, we are, in fact, supporting the idea that those who have believed will lose their salvation if they later fail. **This is absolutely heretical.** Rather, we should use the land as a picture of victory and blessing through faith. The great truth regarding the life of the believer is that *“The just shall live by faith”* (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). The child of God who chooses to live by doubt and fear will experience their own “wilderness wandering,” forfeiting the blessings that come from a faith that is willing to do battle with the giants of life. There is good reason that the most-often repeated command of the Bible is *“Fear not!”* (see Gen 15:1; Deu 31:6–8; Isa 41:10; Isa 44:1–8).

Spiritual battles can be won only with spiritual strategy and weapons (Rom 13:11–14; 2Co 10:1–6; Eph 6:10–18). Be sure you get your strategies and tactics for living from God’s Word, and *“put on the whole armor of God”* every day.

The Line in the Sand

After Moses told the rebellious spies that they had forfeited the right to enter the land, they suddenly changed their minds. They came to Moses the next morning saying, in effect, “We repent, and now we will go into the land and fight” (see Num 14:39–45). Moses rebuked them again for thinking they could undo the damage that had been done by their unbelief. Against his orders, they entered the land and were defeated and driven out. Some decisions in life cannot be revoked, and the consequences cannot be avoided.

There are crucial times in life when decisions are made that affect us for the remainder of our lives. The consequences of evil, unbelieving choices cannot be undone, nor will repentance change their effects. So it was with the children of Israel. Even though they repented of their evil decision, once they heard the consequences declared, it was too late to change the outcome.

This is the very point the author of Hebrews makes to his own generation (Heb 6:1–8). He is not doubting the salvation of his listeners, as is clear from Heb 5:12–14 and Heb 6:9–12. In fact, in Heb 6:4–5, he gives four qualifiers that could only be said of those who are regenerate believers:

1. They have been “*once enlightened*,” Heb 6:4. The word “*once*” is very strong, as is also seen in Heb 10:10 regarding the work of Christ, where “*we have been sanctified ... once for all*.”
2. They have “*tasted*” the heavenly gift, which is eternal life. This word “*tasted*” means “to fully ingest,” as is seen in Heb 2:9, where Jesus tasted death for every man.
3. They have become partakers of the Holy Spirit. The Greek construction here means to become a partner in the past, with permanent ongoing effects. Only believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom 6:9–11).
4. They have “*tasted*” the good Word of God and, by it, have experienced the powers of the age to come (*i.e.*, the Kingdom).

None of these things can possibly be said about the unbeliever. The author’s warning, based on the negative example of the Exodus generation (Heb 3:7–18), is that there are critical times in the Christian life when rejection of sound teaching (Heb 6:1–2), and a refusal to choose the path of faith and growth, cannot be reversed. The consequences of cursing and bitterness will remain throughout life (Heb 6:7–8). In the end, such failure can result in a “*root of bitterness*” (Heb 12:15), which troubles and defiles many.

The Hidden Line

Joseph A. Alexander

There is a time, we know not when
A place, we know not where
That marks the destiny of men
For glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path
The hidden boundary between
God’s patience and God’s wrath.

The potent warning of the Exodus generation, so clearly portrayed by the author of Hebrews, is that there are lines we can cross that can never be crossed out, and the painful results of wrong decisions will have to be carried through life.

Confusion Concerning Miracles

Take careful note that God’s judgment on the Exodus generation was in proportion to the mighty signs and miracles they had witnessed (Num 14:22–23).

There are three generations in history that have witnessed the majority of the miracles recorded. They were: (1) the Exodus generation, (2) the generation of Elijah/Elisha, and (3) the generation

of Jesus Christ. Even a casual reading of these times brings out an astonishing fact: the generations who witnessed the most miracles were also the hardest of heart! We can only conclude that miracles, by themselves, do not generate faith nor lead to spiritual growth. In fact, to the contrary, a people habituated to seeing miracles are interested only in seeing the next one. Think of the people of Jesus' day. After He had fed the five thousand (only counting the men), what did the people do? They came the next day expecting another miracle (Joh 6:22–27). When Jesus rebuked them for the shallowness of their faith, they said, "*What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You?*" (Joh 6:30). It was as if the miracle of the previous day had never happened.

In our own generation, there are many who run from coast-to-coast, from one "miracle worker" to another. Whereas the people of Athens in Paul's day "*spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing*" (Act 17:21), we have many in Christendom (God alone knows their hearts) who live for nothing more than to hear about or see some "miraculous" event. So eager are they to see a miracle that they claim one has occurred when, in fact, they are victims of charlatans, con-men, and money-grubbers.

This does not mean that God no longer works in miraculous fashion. God continues to work, in rare cases, by revealing Himself in amazing ways, through healing the sick and diseased, and many other means. The point on which we must be clear is that these are divine actions that are not in any way expected to be the norm, nor can we expect, in every case when we pray for the sick, that they will surely be healed. God has His own plan and purpose for every individual. Even Elisha, the greatest miracle-working prophet of the Old Testament, died from a disease (2Ki 13:14). We need to trust God to manifest Himself according to His perfect wisdom and plan. His Word is far more valuable than any miracle could ever be, for it brings that eternal healing of salvation to the soul (Isa 53:4–6).

The Doctrine of Testing, Growth, and Maturity

The Apostle Peter tells us that testing is essential for growth, and the fruit of it will bring everlasting glory (1Pe 1:6–9). James reminds us that those who endure the tests of life will receive the crown of life (Jam 1:12; see also Rev 2:10). Testing is a spiritual exercise, which strengthens faith and purifies our lives.

1. At the dawn of history, mankind was given a command, and a test (Gen 2:9, Gen 2:17). The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represent every decision available to the human race. To choose the first is to choose life through faith and obedience to the command of God. To choose the second is to choose death.
2. Good and evil remain the critical issue throughout the duration of life (Deu 30:14–15; Rom 12:21).
3. Once Adam and Eve had sinned, there was only one hope: to trust in God's promise to send a Redeemer (Gen 3:15). This begins the focus all throughout the Old Testament on the coming of the Messiah and Savior.
4. The decision to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior is a once-for-all decision that changes one's eternal destiny, transferring that soul out of the kingdom of Satan, and into the kingdom of Jesus Christ (1Co 15:22; Eph 1:13–14; Col 1:12–14; Tit 3:4–7).

5. However, testing does not cease just because we have chosen eternal life. The tests of faith are necessary for the growth and refining of that faith (1Pe 1:5–9). The goal of each believer is to “*press on to maturity*” (Heb 6:1, NASB)
6. The purpose of testing and the importance of our decisions are to teach us not to rely on our own strength or resources, but to depend on the grace, power, and Word of God (2Co 1:8–10; 1Th 1:3–10; 2Co 8:1–7).
7. As spiritual incentive to us, God has promised great blessings in time and rewards in eternity to those who face temptations and trials through faith (Mat 6:4, Mat 6:6, Mat 6:18, Mat 6:20–21; Jam 1:2–4, Jam 1:12; 1Pe 1:7; 1Pe 2:21; 1Pe 3:9; 1Pe 4:13–14; 1Pe 5:10).
8. The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of endurance of trials and of the great eternal benefits of making difficult, painful decisions (Phi 2:5–11; Heb 3:1–6; Heb 4:14–18; Heb 5:7–10; Heb 12:1–2).

Study Seven: Wilderness Wandering and the Promised Land **Spiritual Warfare**

“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God ... and the curse, if you do not obey ...” Deu 11:26–28 (see Deu 30:19–20)

The Curse of Self-Induced Misery

The Exodus generation, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb and all those under twenty years old (Num 14:29–30), would wander in the wilderness until they died. Their decision not to trust God and to go in and claim the land would have permanent results in their lives. This does not mean that God’s grace was no longer available to them. Repentance and faithful obedience could make even the wilderness an experience of growth and blessing. God continued to demonstrate His faithfulness throughout this time (Deu 29:5). He led them as a shepherd leads his flock, providing for their every need, and continuing to give them opportunities for faith and growth. Remember, also, that even Moses failed to enter the land due to his own unbelief (Num 20:7–13).

When the Bible speaks about cursing, generally what is intended is the idea of the consequences. In effect, God condemns us to suffer the adverse effects of our own decisions. Certainly, this can also be accompanied by additional disciplinary action from God. However, God is always able to turn cursing to blessing (2Sa 16:12; Jam 4:1–10). Sometimes, it is the very painful consequences of our decisions that bring us to our knees in humility, resulting in spiritual correction (Heb 12:12–15, Heb 12:25–29). If you are wrestling with the consequences of bad decisions in the past, stop living in the past! Every day, God’s grace and mercies are renewed to us (Lam 3:19–27, Lam 3:31–32). When we earnestly and honestly seek Him, He will meet us more than halfway. The principle lessons of the prodigal son story are outlined for us by James, as a promise of God’s ability to turn conditions of cursing into great blessings (Luk 15:11–24; Jam 4:7–10).

The Canaan Rest

Life in the Promised Land is repeatedly spoken of as “*rest*” (Deu 3:20; Deu 12:9–10). It is not by accident that the concept of rest begins with the Sabbath (Gen 2:1–3; Exo 31:15–17). The idea inherent in the Sabbath is that God rested because His works were finished. When we live by faith, we are living in the experience that God’s predetermined plan was finished before the foundation of the world (Heb 4:3). This very idea was declared by Jesus on the cross, when He said, “*It is finished!*” (Joh 19:30). His death on the cross had been ordained in eternity past and, in the mind of God, Christ was “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev 13:8). True rest of the soul is found only in His redemptive work (Mat 11:28–29). God’s intent was that the experience of Israel in the Promised Land would be a perpetual, day-by-day experience of seeing God finish what He had promised to do. It was the rest of faith and victory!

Unfortunately, Israel forfeited this experience of faith-rest (Psa 95:10–11). Although Israel had witnessed the mighty works of God, they did not understand His ways as Moses did (Psa 103:7).

The Canaan experience—the life of faith-rest—remains available to us today (Heb 4:1–16). Remember that it is not rest without labor, but rather resting in facing and defeating the giants of doubt and unbelief.

The Rock of our Salvation, Exodus 17; Numbers 20

“He is the Rock ...” Deu 32:4 (Deu 32:15, Deu 32:18, Deu 32:30–31)

“He only is my rock and my salvation ...” Psa 62:2, Psa 62:6

Review Numbers 13–14.

Where did David get the figure of his Savior being a Rock? Surely it came from the story of the Exodus (Moses’ name for the Messiah). During the wilderness wandering, two unusual incidents involving the Rock are mentioned.

The first is in Exodus 17, where God tested the people by leading them where there was no water. This was one of many water tests Israel faced. As usual, rather than trusting God, they grumbles and complained and accused Moses of leading them out into the wilderness so he could kill all of them with thirst!

Moses took the matter to the Lord, who instructed him to *“strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink”* (Exo 17:6). Though God continued to show His faithfulness to Israel, the name of that place was called *“Massah,”* meaning “tempted,” and *“Meribah,”* meaning “contention.” Israel failed their tests by complaining instead of trusting God.

What was the significance of Moses striking the rock: We really learn it through the second experience.

Toward the end of the wilderness years, we see the rock again. The same test was given—*“no water.”* Even after all the faithful provision of God throughout their wanderings, the children of Israel appeared to have learned nothing. Once again, they grumbled, complained against Moses, and in doing so, tested God (see Heb 3:7–11).

Once again, Moses went the Lord, and this time was instructed to *“Speak to the rock ... and it will yield its water”* (Num 20:8). However, Moses, in frustration (who wouldn’t have been frustrated with these people?), took the rod and again struck the rock! Put these two facts together: the rock needed to be struck initially to give forth its water. The second time, all that was necessary was to speak to the rock—to ask for the water.

Moses first identifies the Messiah as the Rock (Deu 32:4, Deu 32:15, Deu 32:18, Deu 32:30–31; Deu 34:9–12). Paul give us the interpretation of the identity of the Rock, and the significance of the two incidents (1Co 10:1–13).

“And all [Israel] drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” 1Co 10:4

Jesus Christ revealed Himself to them in the form of a Rock, from which came life-giving water. Just think how this illuminates the words of Jesus, at the Feast of the Tabernacles, where he cried out:

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” Joh 7:37–38

From Heb 3:1–4:3, we understand the identity of the Rock and the significance of Moses striking it the second time, for which he lost the right to enter the land (Num 20:12). It is also the key to interpretation of a difficult passage in Hebrews:

“For it is impossible ... if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.” Heb 6:4–6

The author has been using the Exodus generation as a negative example throughout Hebrews chapters 3 and 4. Now he builds on the incident of even one so great as Moses to illustrate that in the spiritual life, there are choices and actions that have permanent consequences. To crucify the Son of God again is the equivalent of striking the Rock, when we should only speak to the Rock.

Christ crucified has provided for us a finished work for our salvation (Job 19:30). As the author of Hebrews points out later (Heb 10:10), the offering of Jesus Christ in His human body happened *“once for all.”* Once we have trusted Him for our salvation, no further offering is permitted (Heb 10:18, Heb 10:26). When Christians turn back from the spiritual reality we have in Christ, and begin to rely on a “works salvation” theology, in effect “keeping themselves saved” by good deeds, they offend the Savior, who is seated at God’s right hand. This refusal to *“speak to the Rock,”* that is to live in abiding fellowship and communion based on faith alone, is a costly mistake. Again, even Moses made such a mistake, but consider the cost! Far better to learn to live by faith, rely on His grace, and live in the power of the Spirit of God. It is only in this way that the fullness of God’s blessings can be received and enjoyed.

The Dynamic of Faith

In fact, contrary to inactivity, we are exhorted, *“Let us therefore be diligent [labor] to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the example [i.e., that of the Exodus generation] of disobedience [unbelief]”* (Heb 4:11). Three great truths regarding the spiritual life are contained in this exhortation:

1. Faith works! When there is trust in God and His Word, there will be faithful action that correlates with what we believe. Note 1Th 1:3, where Paul commends the Thessalonians for their *“work of faith.”* Faith is by nature energetic and productive. Though we are saved *“by grace ... through faith ... not of works”* (Eph 2:8), yet this same faith leads to *“good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”* (Eph 2:10).
2. The Exodus generation stands as an example for all the history of what happens when believers fail to *“walk by faith”* (2Co 5:7). This probably is the condition that most prevails throughout history and around the globe today. Satan loves to offer alternatives to the life of faith. Many believers get caught up in social action, or exciting “worship”

services, or political action, etc. None of these things are wrong in themselves. But the key is to let them be guided and dominated by faith. The rule is that any work not born of faith is a “dead work” (Heb 6:1; Heb 9:14). That is, it lacks the life-giving power of the Spirit of God.

3. The root of all failure in the Christian life is unbelief. The word translated “*disobedience*” is synonymous with unbelief. Note that in Heb 3:19 the author says, “*they [the Exodus generation] could not enter in because of unbelief.*” Then again in Heb 4:6, they “*did not enter because of disobedience.*” He first uses “*unbelief*” (Greek, *apistia*), then shifts to “*disobedience*” (Greek, *apeitheia*). As noted in the *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* on Heb 4:6, “[to be] *unpersuaded, disobedient. The active expression of unbelief is manifested in disobedience*” (p. 675, emphasis added).

These three concepts are beautifully united in the simple statement of James, “*Faith [without] works is dead*” (Jam 2:17). He is not saying that the person who was once a believer has somehow lost his or her salvation. He is making the very same point driven home, all through the book of Hebrews, that when believers cease to grow and live by faith, they cannot do other than be disobedient to the will and work of God. Their faith, once vibrant and alive, is now dead and unproductive. The prodigal son illustrates this, “*... my son was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found*” (Luk 15:24).

The Example of Caleb

At Kadesh-Barnea, it was Caleb who first stood firm in faith, eager to go into the land and take on the giants (Num 13:30). Later, God gave him the highest commendation, saying, “*But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully ...*” (Num 14:24).

Due to the failure of the other ten spies, and the nation who chose to follow them, Caleb was consigned to also wander for forty years in the wilderness. However, he continued to grow during that time, preparing for the fight to come. Finally, when they entered the land, Caleb’s time of triumph and blessing had come. In Joshua 14, we read the story of Caleb claiming his reward, the very mountain on which the greatest and fiercest of the giants lived (see Jos 14:6–15). The major city, which was named Kiriath-Arba (the city of Arba, the greatest of the giants), was then renamed to Hebron, which means “united” or “confederacy.” It is a testament to what happens when man and God are united by faith to accomplish what appears to be impossible. Caleb and Joshua were the only two members of the adult population who stood firm in their faith. They alone were willing to “*put on the ... armor of God*” (Eph 6:10–18). And they alone entered into the blessings of the land. How we need to consider and follow their victorious example!

To summarize, we can say that God has but one revealed way of salvation—and that is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, God has revealed only one way for those who believe to live: “*the just shall live by faith*” (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). Nothing—absolutely nothing—we do apart from faith is of eternal value. Paul makes this so very clear when he says, “*whatever is not from faith is sin*” (Rom 14:23b). It may be “good works” in the eyes of men, but it is “*filthy rags*” in the sight of God (Isa 64:6).

We will either build our lives on the firm foundation of faith, or we build on sinking sand (Mat 7:24–29). In eternity, our thoughts, words, and deeds will either add up to “*gold, silver, precious stones,*” or “*wood, hay, [and] straw [stubble]*” (1Co 3:11–15). It is my prayer that this study will challenge each of us to live life seriously, boldly, and effectively—by faith.

The Doctrine of the Faithfulness of God

1. In the wilderness, in spite of Israel’s unbelief, God demonstrated His faithfulness to them (Deu 29:5–6).
2. The only thing that makes faith valid is the faithfulness of God. Faith is always victorious (1Jo 5:4–5) because God is always faithful (Heb 13:5, Heb 13:6, Heb 13:8).
3. Because God is faithful, He will never lead us in any way other than the way of victory, through Jesus Christ (1Co 15:57).
4. The life of fellowship with God is dependent on His unfailing faithfulness—for if God ever ceases to be faithful, fellowship is impossible (1Co 1:9; Phi 2:1).
5. Our certainty of victory in every circumstance is to live by faith in the unshakeable veracity and immutability of God (Rom 8:28–39).
6. God remains faithful, even when we are unfaithful, because He cannot deny Himself (2Ti 2:13).
7. The faithfulness of God will be demonstrated at the Rapture of the Church, where both the spiritual (awake) and carnal (asleep) believers will be received into glory (1Th 5:8–11).
8. God’s faithfulness—not our conduct—is the only basis for our eternal security (1Th 5:24; Heb 10:23).
9. The faithfulness of God is based on two unchangeable things: the nature of God (Mal 3:6), and the finished work of Christ (Joh 19:30). Though we are often fickle, He always remains faithful (Heb 13:5–6, Heb 13:8).

The Doctrine of Victory and Reward, cf., Gen 14:18–20

1. To Caleb and Joshua, entering the Promised Land was a reward for the victory of their faith in the time of testing forty years before (Num 14:24, Num 14:30).
2. Another great warning here is that forgiveness for sin and failure does not restore the blessings and reward lost through failure to claim the victory (Num 14:19–23).
3. Even Moses was unable to enter the land due to unbelief on his part (Num 20:12; Heb 3:12–19). Since we have no doubt of the greatness of Moses (Mat 17:3; Heb 3:1–6), this should be an encouragement to us to rise up after falling down and continue the good fight of faith.
4. King David gives us an example of a man who failed many times, often disastrously, yet he never ceased to exploit even his disciplinary circumstances for further victory by faith. Consider his failure in fleeing to Gath, where he had to act insane in order to escape (1Sa 21:10–15). Yet out of this experience came Psalm 34, in which we find many keys to spiritual victory.
5. In Jesus’ first message to Israel, He spoke much about blessings in time and reward in eternity for those who live by faith (Mat 5:1–12; Mat 6:2–6, Mat 6:20–21).

6. While some eternal rewards are given for a momentary action (Mat 10:42; Mar 9:41; Rom 8:37), the greatest are reserved for a life of consistent faith, growth, and service (2Ti 4:7–8).
7. Among the highest rewards are the crowns, of which five are mentioned in Scripture:
 - a. The imperishable crown (1Co 9:24–27), which is given for spiritual self-discipline;
 - b. The crown of life (Jam 1:12; Rev 2:10), which is given for endurance in temptations and sufferings;
 - c. The crown of joy (Phi 4:1; 1Th 2:19), which is given for faithful witnessing, leading others to Christ;
 - d. The crown of righteousness (2Ti 4:7–8), which is given for living in the expectation of Christ’s return, and finishing one’s race; and
 - e. The crown of glory (1Pe 5:4), which is given for faithful ministry to others.

In Genesis 14:18–20, Melchizedek and Abraham shared bread and wine, which was a precursor to communion.

Conclusion

“... He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” Luk 9:28–31

At the transfiguration of Jesus, Moses and Elijah “*appeared in glory.*” Jesus had just told the disciples that some of them would see “*the kingdom of God*” before they died (Luk 9:27). Here was a glimpse of the kingdom: Jesus in glory, talking with Moses and Elijah.

In the Jewish mind, Moses represented “*the Law,*” while Elijah represented “*the Prophets.*” Take note that they were talking with Him about “*His decease,*” but the Greek word here is “the Exodus.” Jesus was about to make His exodus from Jerusalem, and Moses, who had looked forward 1,400 years to that event, appeared to talk with Him about it. The central event of history—the cross of Christ, which was pictured by the Passover lamb—was about to be accomplished. Not only this, but all the “Law of Moses” which he had written, was about to be fulfilled for every member of the human race, through the blood of Christ (Rom 10:4).

Elijah, representative of the prophets, was also present as a witness. It is a biblical principle, written by Moses, “*by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established*” (Deu 19:15). So the “Law and the Prophets” were, in these two, bearing witness to the coming crucifixion of the Savior.

And it was only shortly thereafter, as recorded in Luke, that Jesus called on these witnesses to verify His resurrection.

May the life of Moses be a challenge to each of us—to be so enraptured by the infinite glory of our Savior, that all our dark failures are driven away by the Light of His glory, greatness, and grace!