

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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Lesson 14: "Ye Shall Be a Peculiar Treasure unto Me", Exodus 15–20; 32–34

Introduction



Imagine that you must journey into a wilderness where you have never been and that has not been mapped. What would your preparation include? One vital preparation would be to secure a guide to lead you. Think about the qualifications you'd want in such a guide. You'd want he/she to know the area well and be completely trustworthy. After fleeing Egypt, Moses and the children of Israel had the Lord as a guide. Today we will review some of their experiences while in the wilderness to see what we can learn about our journey through mortality. The first lesson we should learn is to choose God as our guide through "the mists of darkness" in this telestial wilderness.

The Lord provides water, manna, and quail for the children of Israel.

After passing through the Red Sea to safety, Moses was to lead them to the Promised Land. The Lord, however, wanted to test their faithfulness before giving them an inheritance. Unfortunately, many of them lacked faith and chose to complain to the Lord rather than seeking his counsel. In spite of their faithlessness, the Lord provided water for their thirst and manna and quail for food.

- **Exodus 15:22-24; 17:1-7** records the first challenge—lack of water. In response, the people blamed Moses and he feared they would stone

him. He turned to the Lord and received help.

- **1 Corinthians 10:4** - The Lord provided physical and spiritual water for the children of Israel—physical water from a rock Moses smote and "spiritual water" from the "spiritual Rock", which is Christ.
- **1 Nephi 11:25** teaches that the water represents the love of God.
- **John 4:14** teaches that we will never thirst if we drink of that water.
- **Exodus 16:2-4, 11-15** shows the second problem and its divine

solution. In addition to satisfying their hunger, other purposes of the manna included **a)** Giving the Lord an opportunity to see if his people would obey him (Exodus 16:4, 16-31), **b)** The people would have a daily reminder of the Lord's power and love (Exodus 16:12), **c)** The people would be taught that they do not live "by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3), **d)** The people would be humbled and be helped to receive salvation (Deuteronomy 8:16).

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Lesson Highlights

- The Lord provides water, manna, and quail for the children of Israel.
- Aaron and Hur hold up Moses' hands so Israel prevails in battle against Amalek. Moses follows Jethro's counsel to appoint judges and delegate authority to them.
- The Lord meets with Moses on Mount Sinai and gives Israel the Ten Commandments.
- The Lord introduces the law of Moses.

A study of this lesson will encourage us to partake of the Lord's spiritual water and bread, sustain his chosen leaders, and obey his commandments so he can make of them a "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6).

Next Week

#15—"Look to God and Live," (Numbers 11-14; 21:1-9)



Victory O Lord!
John Emmett Millais—1871

• **John 6:35, 48-51** - the manna is a representation of Christ, the “bread of life”. But if we make Christ a part of us, we will never hunger and will have everlasting life.

Just as the Israelites needed to gather manna daily for physical strength, we cannot expect to have the necessary spiritual strength unless we

pray sincerely daily, not just occasionally or in an hour of tribulation.

• **Exodus 16:19-20, 22-25** shows that stored manna became wormy, but when it was saved for the Sabbath, as the Lord directed, it was wholesome and pure. We too should prepare for the Sabbath such that the

homemaker is not required to spend the day in the kitchen preparing large, elaborate meals.

The Israelites would have been completely lost in the wilderness without their guide, the Lord. There are obvious parallels in our journey through mortality—we will be lost without the Lord.

Aaron and Hur hold up Moses’ hands so Israel prevails in battle against Amalek. Moses follows Jethro’s counsel to appoint judges and delegate authority to them.

The Amalekites warred against the Israelites for many years. In **Exodus 17:8-13**, the Israelites were victorious as Aaron and Hur sustained Moses by supporting his arms. In our battles against sin, we too need the support of the prophet to prevail.

Pres. Ezra Taft Benson: “*I am reminded how Moses up on the hill raised his arms for the victory of the armies of Israel. As long as his arms were raised, Israel prevailed, but when they dropped from weariness, then the enemy prevailed. And so Aaron and Hur ‘stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side,’ and Israel*

was victorious (Exodus 17:12). So will we be victorious as we hold up the arms of the Lord’s anointed servants” (Ensign, May 1986, 77).

We can hold up the hands of our prophet and ease the burdens of the general authorities and local leaders by speaking well of them, serving diligently in our callings, and being committed home and visiting teachers.

Moses followed Jethro’s counsel to appoint judges and delegate authority to them

Exodus 18:13-23 tells us of Jethro’s concerns as he saw the people seek out Moses

daily. His counsel helped Moses deal with the daily responsibility for the people.

Exodus 18:16-20 mentions some responsibilities of a prophet: - Be a judge for the people (16), Represent the people before God (19), “*Teach them ordinances and laws*” (20), “[*Show*] them the way wherein they must walk” (20), and “[*Show*]



Exodus 19:16 Israel at Mount Sinai
By Ted Larson

The Lord meets with Moses on Mount Sinai and gives Israel the Ten Commandments.

Within the first 90 days of Israel’s freedom, the Lord wanted to establish a covenant with them. The Ten Commandments were revealed as part of this covenant.

Exodus 19:3-6 – While they were encamped at Mount Sinai, the Lord promised that if the Israelites were obedient, he would make them “*a peculiar treasure, ...a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*” These promises mean that Israel would become the Lord’s covenant people being favored above all others, chosen to bear the priesthood, and chosen to spread the gospel to all the world. In this context, the word “*peculiar*” means

special or treasured rather than “odd”.

Exodus 19:9, 11, 16-17; D&C 84:23 records that the Lord wanted to meet with and speak to his people, so he instructed Moses to sanctify them so that they would be ready for this opportunity. Just as Mount Sinai was a holy place at that time, we have holy places wherein we seek to communicate with the Lord and have spiritual experiences including feeling the presence of the Lord. Our temples give us this opportunity if we prepare ourselves for it.

Exodus 20:3-11 – The first four commandments teach

the proper relationship between us and our God. The commandment to worship God and have no other gods before him is still relevant today since some people choose to set up false gods that they worship (see **D&C 1:15-16**).

President Spencer W. Kimball said: “*Idolatry is among the most serious of sins... Modern idols or false gods can take such forms as clothes, homes, businesses, machines, automobiles, pleasure boats, and numerous other material deflectors from the path to godhood...Intangibles things make just as ready gods. Degrees and letters and titles can become idols...*



Exodus 32:15 Moses Descending Mount Sinai
By Ted Larson

Many people build and furnish a home and buy the automobile first—and then they ‘cannot afford’ to pay tithing. Whom do they worship? Certainly not the Lord of heaven and earth... Many worship the hunt, the fishing trip, the vacation, the weekend picnics and outings. Others have as their idols the games of sport, baseball, football, the bullfight, or golf... Still another image men worship is that of power and prestige... These gods of power, wealth, and influence are most demanding and are quite as real as the golden

calves of the children of Israel in the wilderness“ (The Miracle of Forgiveness [1969], 40–42).

The Golden Calf (Exodus 32)

Numerous principles can be drawn from the story of the building and worshipping of the golden calf. Two principles are:

1. **Old habits and patterns of belief are very hard to break.** While no longer resident in Israel, they were far from spiritually free from Egyptian influ-

ences and behavior. After hearing the voice of God proclaim the Ten Commandments from Sinai, they proceeded to immediately break the first two commandments.

2. **It is important to resist and overcome peer pressure.** Aaron gave in to the unrighteous desires of the newly-freed Israelites. As a leader, he should have said “no”, even though he might have offended those under his stewardship.

The Lord introduces the law of Moses. (Exodus 32-34)

When the Lord spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai, he revealed a law that included the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood (D&C 84:19–23). However, the Israelites’ idolatrous behavior showed that they were not ready to live the fulness of the gospel (Exodus 32:1–9; D&C 84:24). Because they forgot the Lord so quickly, he withdrew the Melchizedek Priesthood from them and revealed a lesser law—the law of Moses (Joseph Smith Translation, Exodus 34:1–2; D&C 84:25–27).

The law of Moses did not replace the commandments, covenants, or principles of the gospel. Rather, it provided “a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to

observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him” (Mosiah 13:30). The law of Moses taught people to confess their sins and make amends, to follow strict rules in offering animal sacrifices, to keep their bodies healthy, to give to support the Lord’s work, to give thanks, and to be reconciled to God.

Elder M. Russell Ballard taught:

“Although the law of Moses was fulfilled, the principles of the law of sacrifice continue to be a part of the doctrine of the Church.

“While the primary purpose of the law of sacrifice continued to be that of testing and assisting us to come unto Christ,

two adjustments were made after Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. First, the ordinance of the sacrament replaced the ordinance of [animal] sacrifice; and second, this change moved the focus of the sacrifice from a person’s animal to the person himself. In a sense, the sacrifice changed from the offering to the offerer. ...

“... After his mortal ministry, Christ elevated the law of sacrifice to a new level. ... Instead of the Lord requiring a person’s animal or grain, now the Lord wants us to give up all that is ungodly. This is a higher practice of the law of sacrifice; it reaches into the inner soul of a person” (The Law of Sacrifice [address delivered at the Church Educational System Symposium, 13 Aug. 1996], 5).

President George Albert Smith: *“There is a line of demarcation well defined between the Lord’s territory and the devil’s territory.... If you cross onto the devil’s side of the line, you are in his territory, and you are in his power, and he will work on you to get you just as far from that line as he possibly can, knowing that he can only succeed in destroying you by keeping you away from the place where there is safety.” (CR, Oct 1945, p118)*

“And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.” (Malachi 3:17)

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- Why do some people turn from God when they most need to turn toward him?
- How can we hold up the hands and ease the burdens of our prophet and apostles today?
- How have you been blessed as you have supported church leaders?

Conclusion

If we will partake of the Lord’s spiritual water and bread, sustain his chosen leaders, and obey his commandments, he will invite us to his holy mountain—the temple. There we can meet with him, receive his laws, behold his glory, and go forth inspired to be more like him.

