

Lesson 13 - Bondage, Passover, and Exodus

Purpose: To (1) trust the Lord to fulfill his promises, (2) increase their appreciation for the Savior's atoning sacrifice, and (3) make the sacrament more meaningful in their lives.

Exodus 1 - 14



My lessons take a different path than the Gospel Doctrine lesson manual. The lesson outline looks closer at the doctrinal topics included in the lesson purpose and scripture block. The lessons are designed to challenge mature, active Latter-Day Saints who have a solid Gospel foundation and are looking for insights into the scriptures that will broaden their faith and understanding.

If you are interested in downloading the Powerpoint file, links to source material or reading posts about improving Gospel Doctrine class preparation, delivery and engagement, you can join my Facebook Group and have full access to the content posted there. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188904648521022/>

Last Week's Lesson Challenge

The lesson focused on -

- Joseph's faith in Jehovah to help him regardless of the adversity placed before him,
- What should we learn about our dreams and if they are prophetic,
- How Joseph forgave his brothers and
- How Joseph is in the similitude of Jesus Christ.

Would someone share their thoughts during the week about the concluding story of Joseph of Egypt?

The Old Testament Books of Moses

Today's is the first of five lessons covering four of the "Books of Moses" – Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These are stories of the Israelites in bondage to Egypt, escaping with Jehovah's help, the scene at the Red Sea, the initial encampment at Mount Sinai, the wandering in the desert for 40 years and finally, their entry into the Promised Land.

Exodus: The word exodus means “exit” or “departure.” The Book of Exodus provides an account of Israel’s departure from bondage in Egypt and their preparation to inherit the promised land as the Lord’s covenant people. Israel’s departure from bondage and journey through the wilderness can symbolize our journey through a fallen world and back to the presence of God.

- The Book of Exodus provides details about Moses’s upbringing and calling as a prophet,
- the institution of the Passover, and
- the Lord’s covenant with Israel at Sinai—including His declaration of the Ten Commandments.

The events recorded in Exodus became an important part of Israel’s historical identity and have been cited by Jesus Christ and His prophets to teach a variety of gospel principles.

Leviticus: The word Leviticus is a Latin word that has reference to the Levites—one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Levites held the lesser priesthood and were given the responsibility to officiate in the tabernacle and later at the temple in Jerusalem. The Book of Leviticus contains instructions on performing priesthood duties, such as animal sacrifice and other rituals that would help teach the children of Israel about Jesus Christ and His Atonement. The Lord revealed a primary purpose for the instructions He gave in the Book of Leviticus: “Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy” (Leviticus 19:2).

The Book of Leviticus has been described as a priesthood handbook for Aaron and his sons (who served as priests) and for the Levites generally. However, throughout the book the Lord’s instructions to the Levites alternate with those He gave to all of Israel. Through these instructions, we learn about the laws, rituals, ceremonies, and festivals that would teach Israel how to be clean, holy, and different from the world. For example, one such law includes the Lord’s instructions concerning which foods were clean (acceptable for consumption) and which foods were unclean (to be avoided).

Central to the book of Leviticus is the concept of atonement; the word atonement occurs more frequently in this book than in any other book of scripture. Leviticus describes in detail the system of animal sacrifices that served to remind Israel that “it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11). Thus, these sacrifices symbolically pointed Israel forward to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who would shed His blood to atone for the sins of mankind.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-seminary-teacher-manual/introduction-to-the-book-of-exodus?lang=eng>

Numbers: The Book of Numbers is named for the Lord’s instruction to Moses to number, or count, all the Israelite males “from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war” (Numbers 1:3). Moses counted the Israelite males twice, once at Mount Sinai and later in the plains of Moab near Jericho (see Numbers 26). This book also records the Israelites’ faithful experiences and rebellions as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years.

The Book of Numbers provides census information that helps us understand the size of the population of Israel at the beginning and near the end of their wanderings in the wilderness. It also outlines the organization of the camp of Israel, discusses the responsibilities of the Levites, and explains the purposes and conditions of the Nazarite vow.

In addition, this book records many incidents in which the children of Israel rebelled against the Lord and Moses and brought adverse consequences upon themselves. Besides illustrating the effects of divine justice, the book testifies of Jehovah’s merciful and long-suffering nature. For example, in commanding Moses to raise a brass serpent upon a pole, the Lord prepared a way for His people to overcome the effects of their rebellion. This experience became an important means of teaching the Israelites about the redemptive mission and Atonement of Jesus Christ.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-seminary-teacher-manual/introduction-to-the-book-of-exodus?lang=eng>

Deuteronomy: The Book of Deuteronomy contains Moses’s final words to the children of Israel before they entered the land of Canaan with Joshua as their leader. The book’s title means “second law” or “repetition of the law”, for in these final sermons, Moses repeated to the Israelites many of the laws and commandments that were part of their covenant with the Lord. Moses also exhorted the Israelites to remember and keep their covenant as he taught them the consequences of either obeying or disobeying the Lord’s laws and commandments.

The Book of Deuteronomy contains Moses’s three great final sermons to the children of Israel. “The first discourse is found in Deut. 1–4 and is introductory. The second discourse (Deut. 5–26) consists of two parts: (1) 5–11, the Ten Commandments and a practical exposition of them, (2) 12–26, a code of laws, which forms the nucleus of the whole book. ... The third discourse (Deut. 27–30) contains a solemn renewal of the covenant [between God and Israel] and an announcement of the blessings of obedience and the curses upon disobedience”. These sermons contain Moses’s heartfelt pleas for the Israelites to remember the Lord and live His laws in the promised land. The instructions recorded in Deuteronomy were specifically directed to a new generation whose parents had died in the wilderness following their rebellion.

One of the most notable features of the Book of Deuteronomy is the frequency with which it is quoted in other scripture. Of the five books of Moses, Deuteronomy is the one most often quoted by the Old Testament prophets. It is also quoted or alluded to almost 100 times in the New Testament. Jesus used verses from Deuteronomy to dismiss the temptations of Satan and to explain which commandment was greatest in the law.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-seminary-teacher-manual/introduction-to-the-book-of-exodus?lang=eng>

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1: The children of Israel multiply—They are placed in bondage by the Egyptians—Pharaoh seeks to destroy the sons born to Hebrew women.

Chapter 2: Moses is born to Levite parents, is raised by Pharaoh's daughter, slays an Egyptian in defense of an Israelite, flees to Midian, and marries Zipporah—Israel in bondage cries to the Lord.

Chapter 3: The Lord appears to Moses at the burning bush—Moses is called to deliver Israel from bondage—The Lord identifies Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and as the Great I Am—He promises to smite Egypt and bring His people out with great wealth.

Chapter 4: The Lord gives signs to Moses—Aaron is chosen as a spokesman—Israel is the Lord's firstborn and must be released to serve Him—Moses' son is circumcised—Moses and Aaron lead Israel in worship.

Chapter 5: Moses and Aaron ask Pharaoh to free Israel—Pharaoh responds, Who is the Lord?—He places greater burdens upon the children of Israel.

Chapter 6: The Lord identifies Himself as Jehovah—The genealogies of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi are listed.

Chapter 7: Moses is appointed to give the word of the Lord to Pharaoh—The Lord will multiply signs and wonders in Egypt—Aaron's rod becomes a serpent—The river is turned into blood—The magicians imitate the miracles of Moses and Aaron.

Chapter 8: The Lord sends plagues of frogs, lice, and flies upon Egypt—Pharaoh hardens his heart.

Chapter 9: The Lord destroys the cattle of the Egyptians, but not of the Israelites—Boils and blains are sent upon the Egyptians—The Lord sends hail and fire upon the people of Pharaoh, but not upon the people of Israel.

Chapter 10: The Lord sends a plague of locusts—This is followed by thick darkness in all Egypt for three days—Moses is cast out from the presence of Pharaoh.

Chapter 11: The departing Israelites are authorized to ask for jewels and gold from their neighbors—The Lord promises to slay the firstborn in every Egyptian home—He puts a difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites.

Chapter 12: The Lord institutes the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread—Lambs without blemish are slain—Israel is saved by their blood—The firstborn of all Egyptians are slain—Israel is thrust out of Egypt after 430 years—No bones of the paschal lambs are to be broken.

Chapter 13: The firstborn of man and of beasts are to be sanctified unto the Lord—The Feast of Unleavened Bread is to be kept in the land of Canaan—Moses takes Joseph's bones out of Egypt—The Lord attends Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

Chapter 14: Israel goes out of Egypt—Israel passes through the Red Sea on dry ground—The Lord overthrows the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

Exodus 5: 1 – 3

1 And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

3 And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

Jehovah answered Pharaoh's question (Verse 2) by performing miracles and sending plagues as a witness of His power. The plagues also showed the Israelites Jehovah's power and his desire to free them from Egypt.

The plagues are the first of many illustrations of Jehovah's love and power for Israel. Much of the Old Testament is a story of Jehovah asking the Israelites to trust Him, obey Him and let Him fight their battles just as He asks us to do the same today.

The Ten Plagues

There have been numerous attempts through the ages to explain the plagues described in Exodus. Some have tried to show that the various plagues were the result of some natural phenomenon such as passing meteorites or the explosion of a volcanic island in the Mediterranean Sea. While there is some degree of logical progression in the plagues (the river's pollution could have driven the frogs out of the marshes to die, and this situation would then have bred lice, flies, and disease), it is not possible at present to explain how the Lord brought about these miraculous events. The fact that the plagues were selective (that is, sent upon the Egyptians but not the Israelites) adds to their miraculous nature. God often works through natural means to bring about His purposes, but that fact does not lessen the miraculous nature of His work. In the plagues and eventual deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt is a record of remarkable and miraculous intervention by God in behalf of His children. How He actually intervened is not nearly so significant as that He did intervene.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-genesis-2-samuel/exodus-1-10-let-my-people-go?lang=eng>

What Is the Significance of the
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Elder Bruce R. McConkie noted the similarities between the smiting of disobedient and hard-hearted Egypt and the spiritual death of those who refuse to hearken to the Firstborn of God. There is, however, one additional comparison that could be made. In the typology of the Passover, the children of God (Israel) are in bondage to an evil power (Egypt). Similarly, all of God's children come into a world of sin and may find themselves in bondage to Satan and the powers of sin. Thus, the pharaoh could be thought of as a type or symbol of Satan. In light of this truth, it should be noted that what finally released the children of Israel from the bondage of the pharaoh (the symbol of Satan) was the death of the firstborn of Egypt. In like manner the atoning sacrifice of the Firstborn Son of God freed the children of God from death, a bondage to Satan.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-genesis-2-samuel/exodus-11-19-the-passover-and-the-exodus?lang=eng>

In What Way Is the Passover An
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The Feast of the Passover was fulfilled in that form in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Passover was a law given to Israel which was to continue until Christ, and was to remind the children of Israel of the coming of Christ who would become the sacrificial Lamb. After he was crucified the law was changed by the Savior himself, and from that time forth the law of the sacrament was instituted. We now observe the law of the sacrament instead of the Passover because the Passover was consummated in full by the death of Jesus Christ. It was a custom looking forward to the coming of Christ and his crucifixion and the lamb symbolized his death.

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Some modern scholars have argued that Moses did not take Israel directly to and then through the Red Sea proper (the Gulf of Suez branch of the Red Sea), but rather through the “Reed Sea,” since in Hebrew Yam Suph means “The Reed Sea.” These scholars believe the area crossed was a marshy lowland near the Bitter Lakes. They maintain that the chariots of the Egyptians bogged down in the mud and then the soldiers drowned when higher waters came in. But Latter-day Saints have information that the Exodus account is correct. Both the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants state directly that it was the Red Sea. Exodus 14:22, 29 says that “the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left,” certainly implying more than passing through a marshy area dried by a sudden wind.

The Lord may have had at least two reasons for taking Israel through the Red Sea. First, the action displayed His awesome and great protective power. He was the only warrior in this battle against one of the most formidable armies in the world. Therefore, this event was the prelude and proof of His demand henceforth for trust and obedience. Second, when that battle was over, the power of the Egyptian army was destroyed. The time necessary for rebuilding Egypt’s power left Israel unmenaced until she became established in the promised land.

Paul taught that the passage through the Red Sea and the overshadowing of the cloud or pillar of fire were clearly types or symbols of the baptism of water and fire.

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How Did Jehovah Show the
Israelites His Love for Them and
Power Over All Things?

Moses exercised faith when he led the children of Israel out of bondage. The Lord instructed him what to do, and he had faith that it could be done. He gathered the Israelites and proceeded on the journey. You will remember that they were closely followed by the Egyptians, who wanted to prevent their leaving. They reached the Red Sea, and the Israelites felt there was no chance of escape. The sea lay before them and the Egyptians behind. Some said: "... it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." Moses told them: "Fear ye not. ... the Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace."

The Lord, speaking to Moses, said:

"... lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

"And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

"And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

"And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen." (Ex. 14:12–14, 16, 21–23.)

And then the Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand, and the water would come back and destroy the Egyptians. Moses again exercised his faith in God, and the Egyptians were destroyed.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-genesis-2-samuel/exodus-11-19-the-passover-and-the-exodus?lang=eng>

In the April 1994 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Virginia H. Pearce said the following.

“God loved Moses. He called him “my son”. He watched over him as a tiny baby wrapped in a blanket and placed in a basket in the bulrushes. As part of God’s plan for Moses, he miraculously came to be raised in the courts of the pharaoh. Then God led Moses to Jethro, who taught him the ways of righteousness. Moses kept the commandments of God. As God asked more and more difficult things of him, Moses obeyed. He even went to the pharaoh, despite his fears and feelings of inadequacy, repeatedly demanding that Pharaoh free the children of Israel from bondage—“Let my people go”.

The Lord showed forth miracles to the pharaoh, but he continued to refuse Moses’ request, until his own firstborn son was struck dead. Then in fear, Pharaoh “called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord. ... “Take your flocks and your herds, ... and be gone”. And so six hundred thousand Israelite men and about one-and-a-half million women and children left Egypt on foot. “The Lord went before them ... to lead ... the way”. But by the time they had reached the Red Sea, Pharaoh had changed his mind. He wanted his six hundred thousand slaves back, so with a host of chariots he pursued them. With the churning and impassable Red Sea in front and the thundering army coming from behind, the Israelites were paralyzed with fear. They forgot, in the terror of the moment, who was really in charge of their future. They forgot the miracles they had already seen. They forgot that God knew them. And they cried out to Moses: “It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

“And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still. ... “The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace”. And they remembered their faith. You know the next part of the story: “The Lord ... made the sea dry land. ... “And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left”. The Egyptians pursued them, “and the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and [of] all the host of Pharaoh ... there remained not ... one of them. Thus the Lord saved Israel. ...”

“And the people ... believed the Lord, and his servant Moses”. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ live, and they are in charge of this world. Heavenly Father knew the Israelites. Heavenly Father loved the Israelites. Heavenly Father had a plan for their future. Moses and his people obeyed the commandments, worked hard, and trusted in Heavenly Father’s plan. Sooner or later, everything was okay.”

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1994/04/faith-is-the-answer?lang=eng>

This Week's Lesson Challenge

One of the principle lessons of the Old Testament is the Lord's desire to have us trust and obey him. Part of this is having enough faith to allow the Lord to fight our battles for us, like he did for the Israelites.

This week consider what things that may be amiss in your life that you could turn over to the Lord while trusting and obeying Him.