

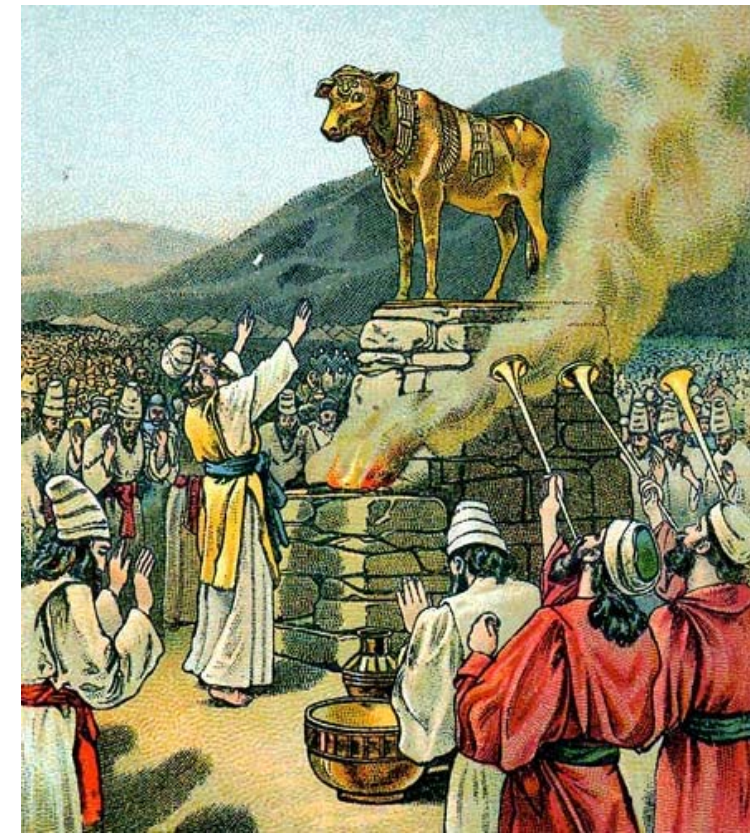
# Lesson 14: “Ye Shall Be a Peculiar Treasure unto Me”

**Purpose:** To 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](#)).

Exodus 15 - 40

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**

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.

Would someone share their thoughts during the week about turning things in your life over to the Lord while trusting and obeying Him.

## Chapter Summaries

- Chapter 15 - The children of Israel sing the song of Moses—They extol the Lord as a man of war and rejoice in their deliverance from Egypt—The waters of Marah are healed—The Lord promises to free Israel from the diseases of Egypt.
- Chapter 16 - Israel murmurs for want of bread and lusts for the fleshpots of Egypt—The Lord rains bread from heaven and sends quail for meat—Israel is given manna each day, except the Sabbath, for forty years.
- Chapter 17 - Israel murmurs for want of water—Moses smites a rock in Horeb, and water gushes forth—Aaron and Hur uphold Moses' hands so that Joshua prevails against Amalek.
- Chapter 18 - Jethro comes to Moses bringing Moses' wife and sons and offers sacrifices to the Lord—Moses sits in the judgment seat and hears all cases—Jethro counsels Moses to teach the law, to appoint lesser judges, and to delegate power to them.
- Chapter 19 - The Lord covenants to make Israel a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation—The people sanctify themselves—The Lord appears on Sinai amid fire, smoke, and earthquakes.
- Chapter 20 - The Lord reveals the Ten Commandments—Israel is to bear witness that the Lord has spoken from heaven—The children of Israel are forbidden to make gods of silver or gold—They are to make altars of unhewn stones and sacrifice to the Lord thereon.
- Chapter 21 - The Lord reveals His laws pertaining to servants, marriage, the death penalty for various offenses, the giving of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and the damage done by oxen.
- Chapter 22 - The Lord reveals His laws pertaining to stealing, destructions by fire, care of the property of others, borrowing, lascivious acts, sacrifices to false gods, afflicting widows, usury, reviling God, and the firstborn of men and of animals—The men of Israel are commanded to be holy.
- Chapter 23 - The Lord reveals His laws pertaining to integrity and godly conduct—The land is to rest during a sabbatical year—The children of Israel are to keep three annual feasts—An angel, bearing the Lord's name, will guide them—Sickness will be removed—The nations of Canaan will be driven out gradually.
- Chapter 24 - Israel accepts the word of the Lord by covenant—Moses sprinkles the blood of the covenant—He, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel see God—The Lord calls Moses on to the mount to receive the tables of stone and commandments.
- Chapter 25 - Israel is commanded to donate property and build a tabernacle, the ark of testimony (with the mercy seat and cherubims), a table (for the shewbread), and the candlestick, all according to patterns shown to Moses on the mount.
- Chapter 26 - The tabernacle is to be built with ten curtains and with boards—A veil is to separate the holy place from the most holy place—The ark of testimony (with the mercy seat) is to be put in the most holy place.
- Chapter 27 - The tabernacle is to contain an altar for burnt offerings and a court surrounded by pillars—A light is to burn always in the tabernacle of the congregation.
- Chapter 28 - Aaron and his sons are to be consecrated and anointed to minister in the priest's office—Aaron's garments are to include a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a coat, a miter, and a girdle—The breastplate of judgment is to contain twelve precious stones with the names of the tribes of Israel thereon—The Urim and Thummim are to be carried in the breastplate.
- Chapter 29 - Aaron and his sons are to be washed, anointed, and consecrated—Various sacrificial rites are to be performed—Atonement is to be made for the sins of the people—The Lord promises to dwell among them.
- Chapter 30 - An altar of incense is to be placed before the veil—Atonement is to be made with the blood of the sin offering—Atonement money is to be paid to ransom each male—Priests are to use holy anointing oil and perfume.
- Chapter 31 - Artisans are inspired in building and furnishing the tabernacle—Israel is commanded to keep the Lord's Sabbaths—The death penalty is decreed for Sabbath desecration—Moses receives the stone tablets.
- Chapter 32 - Aaron makes a golden calf, which Israel worships—Moses serves as a mediator between God and rebellious Israel—Moses breaks the tablets of stone—The Levites slay about 3,000 rebels—Moses pleads and intercedes for the people.
- Chapter 33 - The Lord promises to be with Israel and drive out the people of the land—The tabernacle of the congregation is moved away from the camp—The Lord speaks to Moses face to face in the tabernacle—Later, Moses sees the glory of God but not His face.
- Chapter 34 - Moses hews new tables of stone—He goes up into Mount Sinai for forty days—The Lord proclaims His name and attributes and reveals His law—He makes another covenant with Israel—The skin of Moses' face shines, and he wears a veil.
- Chapter 35 - Israel is admonished to observe the Sabbath—Free gifts are offered for the tabernacle—The calls and inspiration of certain artisans are confirmed.
- Chapter 36 - Wise-hearted men are chosen to work on the tabernacle—Moses restrains the people from donating any more material.
- Chapter 37 - Bezaleel makes the ark, the mercy seat, and the cherubims—He makes the table, the vessels, the candlestick, the incense altar, the holy anointing oil, and the sweet incense.
- Chapter 38 - Bezaleel and others make the altar of burnt offerings and all things pertaining to the tabernacle—Offerings are made by 603,550 men.
- Chapter 39 - Holy garments are made for Aaron and the priests—The breastplate is made—The tabernacle of the congregation is finished—Moses blesses the people.
- Chapter 40 - The tabernacle is reared—Aaron and his sons are washed and anointed and given an everlasting priesthood—The glory of the Lord fills the tabernacle—A cloud covers the tabernacle by day, and fire rests on it by night.

### Israel Sings the Song of Moses - [Exodus 15:1-19](#)

- 1 Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
- 2 The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.
- 3 The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name.
- 4 Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.
- 5 The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.
- 6 Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.
- 7 And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.
- 8 And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.
- 9 The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.
- 10 Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.
- 11 Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?
- 12 Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.
- 13 Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.
- 14 The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina.
- 15 Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.
- 16 Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased.
- 17 Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.
- 18 The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.
- 19 For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.

In [Exodus 15](#), after the miracle at the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army, the Israelites praise Jehovah and Moses for delivering them. At the beginning of [Exodus 16](#), we read the following:

*1 And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.*

*2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:*

*3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*

We don't know how much time has passed, but it appears that the Israelites are quick to forget the glory of Jehovah's saving them at the Red Sea (just like they forgot the miracle of the Ten Plagues) and complain to Moses that their life in the desert is too much to bear and they would rather be back as Egyptian slaves.

Do we find ourselves  
complaining to God and after all  
he is done for us, we are still  
unhappy and want more?  
Do we murmur?

In an [October 1989 General Conference](#) address, Elder Neal A. Maxwell said the following:

Murmuring seems to come so naturally to the natural man. It crosses the scriptural spectrum of recorded complaints. We need bread. We need water. The needed military reinforcements did not arrive. “Why did we ever leave Egypt?” “Why did we ever leave Jerusalem?” Some, perhaps understandably, murmured over persecution by unbelievers, and others even murmured over what the name of Christ’s church should be. Most ironically, the coming forth of more scripture from God was to cause murmuring. In pondering these and various other examples of murmuring, several other things become obvious.

- First, the murmurer often lacks the courage to express openly his concerns. If the complaint concerns a peer, the murmurer seldom follows Jesus’ counsel, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” ([Matt. 18:15.](#))
- Second, murmurers make good conversational cloak holders. Though picking up no stones themselves, they provoke others to do so.
- Third, while a murmurer insists on venting his own feelings, he regards any response thereto as hostile. (See [2 Ne. 1:26.](#)) Furthermore, murmurers seldom take into account the bearing capacity of their audiences.
- Fourth, murmurers have short memories. Israel arrived in Sinai, then journeyed on to the Holy Land though they were sometimes hungry and thirsty. But the Lord rescued them, whether by the miraculous appearance by quail or by water struck from a rock. Strange, isn’t it, brothers and sisters, how those with the shortest memories have the longest lists of demands! However, with no remembrance of past blessings, there is no perspective about what is really going on.

In [Exodus 17](#) and [18](#), the Israelites encounter their first enemy, Amalek or the Amalekites. The Amalekites live in modern southern Israel and were threatened by this large nation of people who came out of Egypt into the Sinai. The Amalekites knew that they stood on the path between Sinai and the Promised Land. The Amalekites are descendants of Amalek, the grandson of Esau, Patriarch Jacob's twin brother.

In an [February 2002 Ensign article](#), Elder David W. Ferrel, an Area Authority Seventy, wrote the following:

The Amalekites soon came to battle against them, and the Israelites received further proof of Moses' crucial role in their lives. Bloodshed began with an attack by the Amalekites against those who were "feeble" and had fallen behind the main camp. This must have alarmed the people and resulted in another plea for divine help. Moses instructed Joshua to gather an army to fight the Amalekites. Then Moses stood atop a hill overlooking the battle with the rod of God in his hand. He raised his hands toward heaven, perhaps in prayerful supplication. As the Israelites began to prevail, Moses' arms grew tired and he lowered them. The Amalekites then began to win! Noticing this trend, Moses' brother, Aaron, and Hur, rushed forward to support Moses' hands so that they might remain raised until sunset and the winning of the battle.

Seeing Aaron and Hur upholding Moses' arms must have been particularly instructive for the Israelites who had been ready to stone Moses not long before. The Lord showed the children of Israel that He was among them primarily by revealing His power and His words through His servant Moses. The Lord is doing much the same today. The words of His prophets truly demonstrate that the Lord is among us.





## Exodus 19: 1 - 6

1 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

3 And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

What did Jehovah mean when he called Israel a “peculiar treasure”?

## What did Jehovah mean when he called Israel a “peculiar treasure”?

In an [April 1995 General Conference](#) address, President Russell M. Nelson said the following:

Throughout the world, however, strident voices are engaged in divisive disputation and name-calling. Often demeaning nicknames are added to—or even substituted for—given names. Unfortunately, terms of derision obscure the true identity of children of the covenant.

In contrast, God employs names that unify and sanctify. When we embrace the gospel and are baptized, we are born again and take upon ourselves the sacred name of Jesus Christ. We are adopted as his sons and daughters and are known as brothers and sisters. He is the Father of our new life. We become joint heirs to promises given by the Lord to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their posterity.

Peter used uplifting terms in a prophecy regarding our day. He identified members of the Church as “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” The adjectives chosen, royal, and holy we recognize as elevating. But what about peculiar? A modern dictionary defines peculiar as “unusual,” “eccentric,” or “strange.” What kind of compliment is that?

But the term peculiar as used in the scriptures is quite different. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew term from which peculiar was translated is segullah, which means “valued property,” or “treasure.” In the New Testament, the Greek term from which peculiar was translated is peripoiesis, which means “possession,” or “an obtaining.”

Thus, we see that the scriptural term peculiar signifies “valued treasure,” “made” or “selected by God.” For us to be identified by servants of the Lord as his peculiar people is a compliment of the highest order.

<https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1995/04/children-of-the-covenant?lang=eng>

In [Exodus 20](#), Jehovah gives Moses the Ten Commandments. The commandments are listed as verses 3 – 17.

1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

The Ten Commandments are eternal gospel principles that are necessary for our exaltation. The Lord revealed them to Moses in ancient times (see [Exodus 20:1–17](#)), and they are also referenced in whole or in part in other books of scripture (see [Matthew 19:18–19](#); [Romans 13:9](#); [Mosiah 12:33–36](#); [13:13–24](#); [D&C 42:18–29](#); [59:5–13](#); [63:61–62](#)). The Ten Commandments are a vital part of the gospel. Obedience to these commandments paves the way for obedience to other gospel principles.

Although most of the Ten Commandments list things we should not do, they also represent things we should do. The Savior summarized the Ten Commandments in two principles—love for the Lord and love for our fellow men:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37–39).

As [Exodus 20](#) continues, we read that the Israelites were afraid of what, from a distance, they saw going on upon Mount Sinai.

18 ¶ And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

22 ¶ And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.

23 Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

24 ¶ An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

In Exodus Chapters 21 – 31, Jehovah gives Moses His law including the Ten Commandments and laws regarding religious service and everyday life. The law include subjects such as:

- Stealing, destructions by fire, care of the property of others, borrowing, lascivious acts, sacrifices to false gods, afflicting widows, usury, reviling God, and the firstborn of men and of animals.
- Integrity and godly conduct.
- Israel to donate property and build a tabernacle, the ark of testimony, a table for the shewbread and the candlestick, all according to patterns shown to Moses on the mount.
- The tabernacle is to be built to specifications given to Moses.
- Aaron and his sons are to be consecrated and anointed to minister in the priest's
- Atonement is to be made with the blood of the sin offering and atonement money is to be paid to ransom each male.
- Israel is commanded to keep the Lord's Sabbath with the death penalty is decreed for Sabbath desecration.

## Exodus 32:1 - 6

*1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.*

*2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.*

*3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.*

*4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

*5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the Lord.*

*6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.*



## Exodus 32: 7 - 14

7 ¶ And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

9 And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:

10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

11 And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?

12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this eland that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

14 And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

## Exodus 32: 15 - 24

15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.

16 And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.

18 And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.

19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

21 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?

22 And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.

23 For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

## Exodus 32: 25 - 35

*25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)*

*26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.*

*27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.*

*28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.*

*29 For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.*

*30 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.*

*31 And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.*

*32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.*

*33 And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*

*34 Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.*

*35 And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.*

“Moses sought out those who were ‘on the Lord’s side’ from those whom Aaron had made ‘naked.’ (The Hebrew word used here may mean either ‘bare, uncovered’ or ‘unruly, broken loose.’) ‘Naked’ can be understood in the same sense as when Adam was ashamed and hid himself from God because he was naked. The expression can also mean ‘exposed in guilt before God’s wrath.’ Compare the feeling of Alma as he described such exposure, in Alma [36:14–22](#). On the other hand, that Israel had ‘broken loose’ and become ‘unruly’ under Aaron’s lead was obviously true. Both conditions would be to the shame of a people who were supposed to be religious.” (Rasmussen, Introduction to the Old Testament, 1:93.)

Some have wondered why Aaron, who played a key role in the golden calf episode, came out with no condemnation. Though it is not recorded in Exodus, Moses later indicated that Aaron also was nearly destroyed and was saved only through Moses’ intercession in his behalf (see Deuteronomy 9:20).

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-genesis-2-samuel/exodus-21-24-31-35-the-mosaic-law-a-preparatory-gospel?lang=eng>

We find in the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) that Jehovah took the fullness of the Gospel and the Melchizedek Priesthood from Israel after the Golden Calf. The JST states the following for Exodus [34: 1 – 2](#).

*1 And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two other tables of stone, like unto the first, and I will write upon them also, the words of the law, according as they were written at the first on the tables which thou brakest; but it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore my holy order, and the ordinances thereof, shall not go before them; for my presence shall not go up in their midst, lest I destroy them.*

*2 But I will give unto them the law as at the first, but it shall be after the law of a carnal commandment; for I have sworn in my wrath, that they shall not enter into my presence, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage. Therefore do as I have commanded thee, and be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me, in the top of the mount.*

In Moses' day, after he had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, the Lord offered the children of Israel the fulness of His gospel. They rejected it, however, so the Lord took away from them the Melchizedek Priesthood and the higher ordinances of the gospel. They were left with laws that were to direct the physical, or temporal, activities of the people. These laws were administered by the Aaronic Priesthood (named after Aaron, the brother of Moses). Most of these laws are found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. They were not meant to replace the fulness of the gospel, but were given as a way to prepare the children of Israel to live the gospel in its fulness at a later time.

Even though the Melchizedek Priesthood was taken from Israel as a nation, it was not permanently taken from the earth. Between the time of Moses and the coming of Jesus Christ, several prophets held the Melchizedek Priesthood. Some of these prophets were Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lehi, Daniel, and Ezekiel.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/duties-and-blessings-of-the-priesthood-basic-manual-for-priesthood-holders-part-a/history-and-organization-of-the-priesthood/lesson-2-the-priesthood-from-adam-to-the-restoration?lang=eng>

S. Kent Brown, a professor of ancient scripture and director of ancient studies at Brigham Young University, wrote the following about the Exodus.

*“Notwithstanding the enormous emphasis and wide thematic treatment of the Exodus in scripture as a foremost focus of faith, it should also be recognized that the book of Exodus itself reveals an effort made by God to engender within the Israelites an absolutely firm trust in Himself.*

*Part of the Lord’s program for the Israelites was to force them to come to trust and rely upon Him for all of their needs. This process took place over time, beginning with the first interview of Moses and Aaron with Pharaoh and ending several weeks after they had left Egypt. The point of the growing lesson was that the Lord could be trusted and, indeed, had to be trusted. In effect, He left the Israelites without any resource upon which to call except Himself. It is my own view that the Israelites had to be brought to this state of mind and heart to become fully free. Without being able to trust in the Egyptians and now having only the Lord to rely upon, whether in Egypt or in the desert, the Israelites had to bring themselves to trust God more than man. The book of Exodus carries the profound message, then, that the Lord can in fact be trusted; for He alone is perfectly reliable.”*

## **This Week's Lesson Challenge**

We can observe that the Israelites continuously stumbling and falling in the face of the challenges that the Exodus placed before them. Jehovah implored them to have faith in him, obey His commandments and let Him fight their battles for them.

Do we find ourselves today doing what the Israelites did, relying upon ourselves rather than turning to the Lord? This week, consider how often you choose to rely upon your own abilities rather than relying upon faith in Jesus Christ.