

May/June 2006

The Herald

Of Christ's Kingdom



Exodus

120 Years • Seven Ascents • Descending in Glory

The Faces of God • Israel's Guiding Light

The Book of Exodus

The Herald

of Christ's Kingdom

This journal brings you 192 pages of spiritual reading material each year on a variety of biblical subjects. Each issue also lists many Bible conventions and conferences where you will find Christian fellowship. Included in every issue is News & Views, four pages of current events, letters to the editor, and information on the operation of the Pastoral Bible Institute. It is published bi-monthly by:

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Editorial Committee

This journal is supervised by an editorial committee of five, at least three of whom have approved for publication each article appearing in these columns. While responsible for articles published, the committee does not endorse every expression herein. The present editors are: Carl Hagensick, Homer Montague, Michael Nekora, James Parkinson, and David Rice.

The committee and the directors agree that the journal's value to its readers is dependent upon contributors being free to present their thoughts, provided such are generally in harmony with our chartered character and purpose for the dissemination of Bible truths. Annual subscription price is \$5.00. This journal will be supplied free upon written request.

This Journal and Its Mission

Chartered in 1918, the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc. was formed for the promotion of Christian knowledge. Its journal, The Herald of Christ's Kingdom, stands firmly for the defense of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope now being so generally repudiated—redemption through the precious blood (1 Peter 1:19) of “the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all” (1 Timothy 2:6). Building upon this sure foundation the gold, silver, and precious stones of the Word of God (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Peter 1:5-11), its further mission is “to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which ... has been hid in God ... to the intent that now ... might be [made] known by the church the manifold wisdom of God”—“which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed” (Ephesians 3:5-10).

It stands free from all parties, sects, and creeds of men, while it seeks more and more to bring its every utterance into fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the holy Scriptures. It is thus free to declare boldly whatsoever the Lord hath spoken—according to the Divine wisdom granted unto us to understand. Its attitude is not dogmatic, but confident; for we know whereof we affirm, treading with implicit faith upon the sure promises of God. It is held as a trust to be used in his service; hence our decisions relative to what may or may not appear in its columns must be according to our judgment of his good pleasure, the teaching of his Word, for the upbuilding of his people in grace and knowledge. We not only invite, we urge our readers to prove all its utterances by the infallible Word, to which reference is constantly made to facilitate such testing.

To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach

- ◆ That the Church is the “temple of the living God”—peculiarly “his workmanship”; that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel age—ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God's blessings shall come “to all people” and they find access to him (1 Corinthians 3:16,17; Ephesians 2:20-22; Genesis 28:14; Galatians 3:29).
- ◆ That meantime the chiseling, shaping, and polishing of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin progresses and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium (1 Peter 2:4-9; Revelation 15:5-8).
- ◆ That the basis of hope for the Church and the world lies in the fact that “Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” “in due time” (Hebrews 2:9; John 1:9; 1 Timothy 2:5,6).
- ◆ That the hope of the Church is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be “a partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir (1 John 3:2; John 17:24; Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4).
- ◆ That the present mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be kings and priests in the next age (Ephesians 4:12; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 1:6, 20:6).
- ◆ That the hope for the world lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ's millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed (Acts 3:19-23; Isaiah 35).

In the Beginning



Exodus

Israel's status as a covenant people of God can be traced to the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But following the death of Jacob nearly two centuries passed before God appeared to Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt. Thereafter the Israelites would meet God at Mount Sinai and receive their divinely-given law. This would guide them through the centuries until the appearance of Jesus, their Messiah, a millennium and a half from the days of Moses. This momentous turning point in the history of Israel is the subject of the Book of Exodus.

Throughout this book the experiences of Moses, God's chosen leader for Israel, are at the center of attention. In this we see a foregleam of our greater deliverer, Jesus of Nazareth, God's chosen leader to deliver the saints during this Gospel age, and the world during the approaching kingdom.

The opening article, *120 Years*, considers the life of Israel's deliverer, Moses, noting that his one hundred twenty years breaks into three distinct periods of forty years, each with a different purpose and a different meaning. The article also considers the character of Moses, and notes similar features which we are called to develop as followers of the "greater than Moses."

Seven Ascents is a detailed look at the seven times Moses ascended Mount Sinai on the occasion of the giving of the Law. This helps us grasp the flow of events during this many-week episode, which included wonderful, awe-inspiring scenes that induced Israel's reverent worship, followed by a brief period of apostasy and judgment, then repentance.

Descending in Glory considers the last momentous descent of Moses with his face beaming with glory, giving to Israel the second set of tablets of the law, and the various spiritual lessons which are therein contained. *The Faces of God* explains the interaction of God with Moses and Israel through their experiences at the holy mount.

Israel's Guiding Light discusses the cloud by which God's presence was manifest to the Isra-

elites, from early in their flight from Pharaoh, through their years of following the leading of God.

Finally, *The Book of Exodus* summarizes the narratives in this important book, extracting a variety of lessons useful for us as spiritual Israel, following the leading and instruction of Jehovah. May the lessons of this second book of Moses prove instructive, helpful, and encouraging in our Christian walk.

May/June 2006	
Volume 88	Number 3
In the Beginning (Exodus)	3
120 Years	4
First came great blessings, then isolation, finally success: such was Moses' life.	
Seven Ascents	8
Moses ascended Sinai many times as he worked on behalf of his people.	
Descending in Glory	11
The glory of Moses' face pictures a kind of glory all who commune with God should express.	
The Faces of God	15
Moses dared to argue with God and thereby changed the course of history.	
News and Views	17
Israel's Guiding Light	23
The miraculous cloud both led the nation and protected the people from the harshness of nature.	
The Book of Exodus	27
Unlike the long span of history described in Genesis, the events in the Bible's second book took place within a single year.	
Poems and Short Features:	
Fruit Bearing , p. 7	
I Will Be With Thee , p. 10	
Israel's Call , p. 14	
Onward to the Promised Land , p. 26	



Exodus

Three Stages, Three Lessons

120 Years

Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone.—Deuteronomy 34:7, NIV

Brad Bach

Some may wince when they read that Moses lived to be one hundred twenty years of age, and find even more incredible the ages of those whose lives are recorded as much longer spans, such as Adam at 930 years or Methuselah, the longest earthly life recorded at an amazing 969 years. The Bible, however, speaks of man being formed by God in a state of perfect stature physically, from which he has gradually slipped, leading to the shortened life span of subsequent generations. This conflicts with the Darwinian theory that man is on an ever upward ascent from a lower organism to a higher.

Moses' life of one hundred twenty years is divided into three forty-year periods. These are mentioned in Acts 7:22-23, 29-30, and 34-36.

The Broad Lesson

A wonderful lesson can be observed that aligns with the forty-year reigns of kings Saul, David, and Solomon. These three forty-year reigns, like Moses' three forties, typified three time periods: the Jewish age, the Gospel age, and the Millennial age.

In the first age, the Jews as slaves in Egypt were a picture of fleshly Israel in bondage under the taskmaster of the Law (Galatians 4:21-25). When Moses appeared on the scene to act as their deliverer, he was rejected. Moses here is clearly a type of Jesus at his first advent when he appeared as the Jewish messiah, deliverer, and was rejected and put upon the cross (Luke 9:22), bringing the Jewish age to a close.

The second forty found Moses in Midian as a type of Christ during the Gospel age, tending his flock (the church) and raising his two sons, symbolic of the faithful church and the great company. At the end of this period, representing the end of the Gospel age when the church is complete, God directed Moses to return to

Egypt to deliver his brethren. God's word tells us that Jesus as an antitype will reveal himself a second time to natural Israel (Zechariah 14:1-3), and this time the Jews indeed will receive him as described in Zechariah 12:10.

In the third forty we find Moses in the wilderness of Sinai acting as a mediator between God and Israel. What a wonderful illustration of the Millennial age work of The Christ standing as a mediator between God and natural Israel, and by extension all mankind. At the close of that period of forty years Moses died at the age of one hundred twenty years, picturing the end of the work of Christ as mediator at the end of the Millennial age. Christ will then step aside, allowing devoted mankind to enter into a direct covenant relationship with God (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). Moses never crossed the Jordan with Israel; likewise the greater-than-Moses deliverer, The Christ head and body, will watch from on high as the human family crosses their "Jordan" without a mediator, passing the test of the little season. By their own righteous works they will attain everlasting life in the land of promise (Jeremiah 31:29,30; Revelation 20:13).

The duration of three equal forty-year periods is striking and should pique our interest. Those familiar with the Bible recognize that numbers often carry significance. In the case of the number forty there is good evidence that it signifies a period of development, testing, or trial. And so it is fitting that each forty-year period of Moses' life presented him with specific experiences concluding with a trial.

Favored Forty Years—Taking God's Perspective

When the infant Moses was placed in the river, his sister Miriam waited nearby, eager to assist God's work, and offered the daughter of Pharaoh the service of a Hebrew nurse (Exodus 2:7). Thus the baby could be cared for

until he was grown, probably to the age of seven years before he finally left the care of his natural parents. During this stage of life Moses was loved, nurtured, and instructed in his mother's faith concerning the promises that God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But there was another that claimed Moses as her son. Some translate the name Moses to mean "born from the water," supposing that the princess meant to signify that she had mystically born Moses as her son, born him from the water. She would have provided Moses all that this world could offer and would have thoroughly educated him in Egyptian thought. It is most telling that Moses could pass through those many years of life in Pharaoh's palace with its allurements and philosophies, and yet maintain an uncompromising faith in the promise that God had made to his fathers.

The First Great Test

At forty years Moses realized that he had to make a choice. He knew who he was and where he came from. Would he quench the spirit of the Lord that lived in him from his youth? Would he silence the inner voice that spoke to him of higher, eternal longings, and try to satisfy himself with the distractions of worldly advantage?

Had Moses been a man of lesser character he might well have simply advanced his own interests in whatever Egypt could offer, the best of life under his highly favored circumstances. But this was not to be: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Hebrews 11:24-26).¹

Thus the first forty years of life brought Moses many experiences and many choices, and then the test. Had Moses been unable to deny himself the temptations open before him of satisfying his own fleshly nature, then he

surely would have lost the opportunity to be a servant of God in any meaningful capacity. Moses properly weighed the temporal nature of this life and the eternal prospects that were promised by God to his forefathers. He was a man possessed of the kind of faith that enabled him to look out beyond the boundaries of this life. Moses did make the higher choice, casting his lot with the people of his God. However, in his relative youth he acted rashly, stepping out on his own impulses, which resulted in having to flee for his life instead of delivering his people.

Comparative Lessons for Us

We, as disciples of Christ, must live by this same standard of faith, looking beyond the brevity of this life. Like Moses we must be able to deny self and sever attachments that may lead to present earthly gain for the privilege of future service to God. Someone once wrote, "You will not be in heaven two seconds before you cry out, 'Why did I place so much importance on things that were so temporary? What was I thinking.'" In other words we must be able to **think long term**.

Moses was of a favored class of people, hand-selected for God's service. He was born a slave in Egypt, condemned to death by the Pharaoh along with the other firstborn males, snatched out of the Nile where by faith he was laid by the hand of his mother, drawn out of a certain grave to rise not only to the courts of Pharaoh, but into the presence of the I AM, the creator of all that exists in the universe. In like manner the young shepherd David was elevated to become a king, the fishermen of Galilee became apostles, and Jesus the assumed son of a carpenter from Nazareth became the Anointed. All were raised up from the humblest of beginnings from the world's standpoint.

What then of us? Is it not God's election that brings any of his created beings to a place of special service? As Moses was in Egypt, we have been placed in a highly favored condition

Like Moses we must be able to deny self for the privilege of future service to God.

1. Consider the term Christ in verse 26, "Considering the reproach of **Christ** greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward" (NASB). We view this as suggestive of any one separated for God's service and not that this reference is specific to Jesus as "the Christ." *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* states: "Christos, 5547, 'anointed,' translates, in the Septuagint, the word 'Messiah,' a term applied to the priests who were anointed with the holy oil, particularly the high priest, e.g., Leviticus 4:3,5,16. The prophets are called *hoi christoi Theou*, 'the anointed of God,' Psalm 105:15. A king of Israel was described upon occasion as *christos tou Kuriou*, 'the anointed of the Lord,' 1 Samuel 2:10,35; 2 Samuel 1:14; Psalm 2:2; 18:50; Habakkuk 3:13; the term is used even of Cyrus, Isaiah 45:1. The title *ho Christos*, 'the Christ,' is not used of Christ in the Septuagint version of the inspired books of the OT."

to be instructed and receive a great education, observing the ways of this world, and at the same time learning of God's dealings with mankind. But like Moses, we must recognize that the favors we have been given are not for self-elevation and benefit. Rather, they are given to educate us, to prepare us to be members of the antitypical Moses, the Christ deliverer.

Just as Paul was a "chosen vessel," so Moses and all of the elect are retained to further God's plans, designed to bring all of his creation into perfect and age-lasting harmony with himself.

Oddly, at the crucial point of his first test when Moses decided on his own to free the Hebrew slaves from their Egyptian taskmasters, he spoke to the people directly and was even so bold as to slay one of the Egyptian guards. This hardly seems like the actions of one that would come to be known as "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3).

Forty Years Teaches Meekness and Patience

Of course "meek" does not mean "weak." Yet undoubtedly it was during the next phase of Moses' life, in the land of Midian, that he learned to be the meek man that he was later noted for being. Fairly little is recorded about this period of Moses' life as a shepherd, but we see that at its beginning Moses, the man of Egypt, "stood up" and "delivered" the daughters of Reuel that they might water their flocks. Are these the actions of one known as meek? It is not difficult to imagine, however, that a transformation took place during these next forty years as he lived the secluded life of a shepherd caring for his flock. Moses must have thought, during moments of solitude, that God is the shepherd of Israel, yet the people are in bondage. "Why is this, Lord?" he might wonder.

Meekness resulted from years of learning patience, waiting for God to direct the affairs of his people. We recall the results when Moses first decided to act on his own decision to lead Israel. In like manner many Christians, upon making the decision to give their life to serve God, have had this same enthusiastic response, yet most come to find that their novice efforts to convert others are met with rejection, just as with Moses. We remember

that Paul decided that an Arabian experience, a time for gaining his own footing, was well advised before he was prepared to serve as the Lord's apostle (Galatians 1:15-18).

The great lesson to be learned in meekness and patience is that God is the leader, the deliverer, not man. This is an imperative lesson. However long it takes, we must fully learn that God is aware of every circumstance and condition that we endure. He is the only head and we must always look to him, trust in him, and wait upon him, no matter what challenges life brings to us. This trusting obedience is a lesson that even our Lord Jesus needed to have to be fully prepared: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8,9).

The Final Forty—Serve and Hold Fast

"The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way" (Psalm 25:9). Meekness makes us teachable and in meekness Moses had learned that the great shepherd whose eye was ever watchful indeed had constant care over his flock. He did not need to take control for God; rather he needed to allow God to control him.

What a change forty years had wrought. The quality of meekness, now well inscribed in Moses, found him saying, "I am not eloquent ... I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exodus 4:10, ASV). Ah, now Moses had the right appreciation of the matter. This deliverance was not to be by man or because of a man, but by the Lord himself (Hebrews 5:4). Now he was prepared to be the servant that God could safely work through. Similarly these desirable qualities, meekness and humility, should be found in those most developed in Christian character.

Through Moses God had wrought many wonders in Egypt and in the Sinai. Moses had faithfully served God and Israel in the exodus, in the giving of the Law, in judging the weighty matters among his brethren, and in establishing the tabernacle and the priesthood. And again, after the forty years in the wilderness of Sinai with the quality of meekness deeply inscribed, came the test. Miriam had just been buried which must have weighed heavily on his heart. We see Moses frustrated by his complaining

Meekness and humility should be found in those most developed in Christian character.

brethren, so much so that he responded with behavior that would cost him the prize of entering the promised land, for Moses **took to himself** the credit of bringing water out of the rock, saying: “Ye rebels, must **we** bring you water out of this rock?” (Numbers 20:10, *NIV*)—smiting the rock. “Must **WE**”—Moses and Aaron? God alone brings forth truth and gives life. Let this be a powerful reminder to all who find themselves in a position of leadership as did Moses, to guard carefully against the sin of pride, or arrogance, or superiority. This is the lesson of Moses’ test, and sobering it is. This man who reached greatness through a life of steadfast service was required, as are all, to hold fast to that Godly character of meekness and humility until the end.

We must never allow pride or self-conceit to control our minds. We must never take the position of headship over our fellow brethren as if we were anything of ourselves. The apostle warns leaders of the results, “lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil” (1 Timothy 3:6). Cultivate this humility of mind and its preservation; **never allow it to be lost.**

As we reflect upon this wonderful character and servant of God, let us appreciate his example of choosing rightly, taking the long-term view of learning in meekness to wait upon the Lord, and of serving faithfully in meekness and humility even unto the end of our days.

Fruit Bearing

Will the Master find fruit in my garden?
Am I ready for him today?
Is it there for my Lord to gather
When he comes along my way?

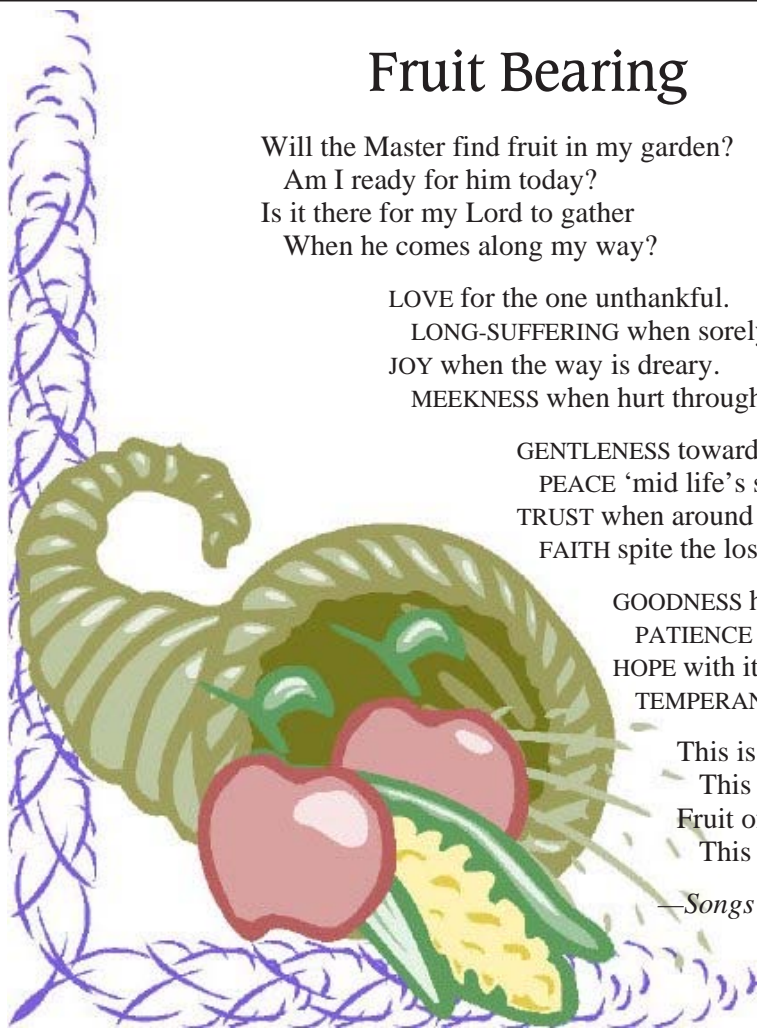
LOVE for the one unthankful.
LONG-SUFFERING when sorely tried.
JOY when the way is dreary.
MEEKNESS when hurt through pride.

GENTLENESS toward each other.
PEACE ‘mid life’s stress and strain.
TRUST when around is darkness.
FAITH spite the loss and pain.

GOODNESS his grace bestoweth.
PATIENCE in suffering.
HOPE with its rainbow radiance.
TEMPERANCE in everything.

This is the fruit he looks for,
This is what he desires,
Fruit of the holy spirit,
This is what he requires.

—*Songs of the Nightingale*, p. 98





Exodus

God Speaks with Moses

Seven Ascents

*And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain.—
Exodus 19:3*

Richard Gamble

Some suppose that Moses went up Mount Sinai twice, once to receive the Decalogue and a second time to replace the original tablets after the first set was broken when he found the Israelites worshipping the golden calf. Both ascents were specially notable, for on each occasion Moses remained in the mount for forty days.

However, the Scriptures provide a more extensive and complete account which shows these two occasions were supplemented by others. Moses actually ascended the mount several times, and the Scriptures describe each occasion.

First Ascent

“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 ... Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. 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 ... And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”—Exodus 19:3-6

This first ascent set the stage for the events to unfold in the following weeks. When Moses returned to the people and presented God’s proposition to them, they responded favorably. It was an incredible offer. It was more wonderful than they probably esteemed it at the time, even though they did appreciate it to some extent.

But that offer to Israel represents something even more wonderful to us, namely, the privilege of becoming God’s elect people of the heavenly salvation. The offer of God to Israel was applied by the apostle Peter to the heavenly calling we receive in Christ: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9).

Second Ascent

Moses evidently ascended the mount again to return the favorable answer of the people. On this occasion God explained to Moses how to prepare the people for the “third day” following, on which there would be stupendous manifestations of the Divine Presence. In view of such divine favors, the people were to sanctify themselves, wash their clothes, consider the mount sacred on pain of death for any who would approach too closely, and exercise abstinence as they put their minds and hearts in a proper reverential attitude (Exodus 19:8-15).

Third Ascent

On the morning of the third day following there were thunders, lightnings, and trembling of the mount, setting the stage for the awesome spectacle of God’s encounter with the nation which was to ensue. A thick cloud hung on the mountain, and “the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud” caused the people to tremble at the scene (Exodus 19:16, ASV). There was smoke and fire and “the whole mount quaked greatly” (verse 18).

The “voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder,” inducing Moses to speak, “and God answered him by a voice” (verse 19). The LORD called Moses to “the top of the mount; and Moses went up” (verse 20). God then charged Moses to ensure the people keep their distance lest they “break through ... to gaze, and many of them perish” (verse 21). Even the leaders who attended Moses by coming closer than the others had to specially sanctify themselves in some way “lest the LORD break forth upon them” (verse 22). Moses affirmed that bounds had been established so that the Israelites would not break through, as God had stipulated.

In verse 24 God then directed Moses to descend again, and come up again with Aaron.

Moses did descend the mount, and spoke to the people, evidently reporting the encounter with God and urging that no one break through. So closes chapter 19.

It was then that God began speaking from heaven so that all in the camp could hear his words audibly: “And God spake all these words, saying ...” (Exodus 20:1). The account then recites all of the ten commandments which are here given for the first time. Moses would later reascend the mount and receive these commandments on stone tablets, but on this occasion the voice from heaven gave sure testimony to all the Israelites that the commands being given were indeed divinely commanded, and were not of Moses but of God.

The day of this occurrence is commonly supposed to be the sixth day of the month, and this day (Sivan 6) is still commemorated by the Jews as the day of the giving of the Law.

Fourth Ascent

The recital of these commandments continues through verse 17. The people were in such fear of the occasion that they implored Moses to intercede and speak to God on their behalf. Thus he ascended the mount again: “Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. 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.” Supplementary instructions on proper ways to approach God with offerings then follow (Exodus 20:21-26).

God continued in chapters 21 through 23 to give Moses all the details of the Law. It is possible that Aaron was with Moses on this occasion for in Exodus 19:24 God had said “thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee,” but warned that others should not break through. If Aaron was with Moses when these four chapters of detail were communicated, perhaps he was of service to Moses as a scribe—though Exodus 24:4 may suggest the first writing was done later.

In chapter 24 God tells Moses to bring others with him, which would necessitate Moses descending the mount to call them. This included seventy of the elders of Israel (Exodus 24:1). When Moses descended, “Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the

words which the LORD hath said will we do” (Exodus 24:3).

Early the following morning Moses constructed twelve pillars on behalf of the twelve tribes of Israel, and subsequently ratified the covenant between God and the people through the blood offerings of many “burnt offerings, and ... peace offerings” (Exodus 24:5). The blood was gathered in bowls, half was sprinkled on the altar, the book of the covenant was read to all the people for clarity as to the covenant they were entering, and the remaining blood was sprinkled on the people with the solemn words, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words” (Exodus 24:8). Thus we read of the “blood of sprinkling” in Hebrews 12:24.

Fifth Ascent

Exodus 24:9 begins the record of the next ascent of Moses into the mount. This account is the most lengthy of them all. Moses was joined by Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Joshua, and seventy elders of Israel. This group evidently represented Israel in the covenant being ratified. They were given a special vision of God high above a pavement as of clear sapphire, “and upon [these] nobles of the children of Israel [God] laid not his hand,” that is, they were spared, for they had been invited to the occasion (Exodus 24:10,11).

They dined there, in the presence of God, presumably because eating of the offerings of a covenant was part of the ratifying process and by this means the Israelites further showed their commitment and obligation to this remarkable covenant with God: “They saw God, and did eat and drink” (Exodus 24:11).

Moses went up further, attended by Joshua, with instructions to the others to wait for him. Evidently Moses himself proceeded further and continued in the mount “forty days and forty nights” (Exodus 24:18). On this occasion God gave Moses all the instructions for building the tabernacle, its furnishings and appointments, and the priestly functions to observe therein. This continues from chapter 25 through 31 inclusive, ending with God giving to Moses two stone tablets with the decalogue “written with the finger of God” (Exodus 31:18).

In the meantime the people became impatient with the apparent delay and fell into

The fifth ascent was the most lengthy of them all.

*God proclaimed
his character
as merciful,
forgiving,
and just.*

apostasy. Aaron himself succumbed to their demands by providing the golden calf, in direct violation of the second commandment. At this, God commanded Moses to descend the mount, explaining to him the trespass of Israel. God was ready to destroy the nation, proposing to make another from Moses. But Moses deferred the honor, thinking more of his people and the faithful patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, than of himself. He descended the mount with Joshua, and in righteous indignation cast down the tablets and broke them.

Sixth Ascent

Exodus 32:30-33 describes the next ascent. The following morning Moses addressed the people emphasizing their sin, and returned to the mount to make intercession for them. He offered to have his name deleted from God's book. God refused, but he accepted Moses' pleas for Israel, albeit he plagued the people as chastisement (Exodus 32:35).

God rebuked the people through Moses. He commanded them to strip off the ornaments they had used for adornment in their festal rebellion and Moses moved his tent away from the people in protest of their sin. The cloud showing the divine presence accompa-

nied Moses, and this sign further impressed the people who "worshipped" in reverence as they beheld it (Exodus 33:10).

Seventh Ascent

The seventh and last ascent is described in Exodus 34. This occasion also took forty days, as though to test Israel again where they had previously failed. On this occasion Moses brought two hewn tablets like the first. He was also told "no man shall come up with thee" (verse 3). God fulfilled a previous request by Moses by showing his "back parts" (Exodus 33:23). God also proclaimed his character to Moses: merciful, forgiving, and just (Exodus 34:6,7). When Moses descended again, his face shone from his encounter with God. He was at first unaware of this, but after the people showed their fear, Moses donned a covering veil (Exodus 34:29-33).

In these various ascents of Moses into the sacred mount we see how God used him to secure His covenant with Israel. In this Moses was a picture of our Lord Jesus who secures the blessings of God for us. A thoughtful discernment of the seven ascents of Moses may be of use to the brethren as they consider the various details with a view to their meaning in antitype.

I Will Be With Thee

To the humble ones now, as to Moses of old, God declares: "I will be with thee; I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say" [Exodus 4:12]. As one lesson is to have no confidence in ourselves or in our own judgment or strength, another important lesson is that we should have every confidence, absolute confidence, in God. Not until this lesson is learned will any be really fit to be God's mouthpieces ... Everything in the Scriptures points us to the fact that humility is a quality most essential to all of the Lord's people who would be used of the Lord in any important or special work for Him. If the followers of the Lord could continually keep this in memory, and would persistently shape their course accordingly, how much they would be used, we may be sure.

—Reprints, p. 5262

Descending in Glory

And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand ... that Moses wist [knew] not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.—Exodus 34:29



Exodus

Robert Kinney

One of the most memorable incidents recorded in the Bible is when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the second set of tablets written with the ten commandments, and with his face radiant from his contact with God.

Supernatural brightness, such as Moses saw and radiated, is associated with the spirit nature. For example, we read of the light connected with the apostle Paul's conversion: "About noon [it was already full light], suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. ... And they that were with me saw indeed the light," etc. (Acts 22:6,9). So bright was this light that Paul was blinded by the experience (Acts 22:11).

In Exodus, when Moses asked Jehovah to show him his glory, a similar phenomenon was avoided by God hiding Moses in a cleft of the rock: "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy ... [but] Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33:19,20).

Saul was required to see Jesus in connection with his apostolic calling. In both these cases, just enough of the manifestation of the spirit was used to accomplish the transforming results; too much would result in death.

Jesus' voice, out of the blinding brightness, told Saul: "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest" (Acts 22:8). Saul was persecuting Jesus in that he was persecuting Jesus' followers, his body members (and therefore him) to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prison. Obviously, Jesus was already clothed with his divine spirit body so

Saul could not persecute him in the flesh as had the scribes and Pharisees.

This power and brightness of the divine nature is alluded to in the book of Daniel also: "And they that be wise [the wise virgin class] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament [the sun]" (Daniel 12:3).

Another familiar example is recorded in Matthew 17:2 where Jesus was transfigured, his face shone like the sun, and his garments became as white as light. A "bright cloud" overshadowed the scene, and a voice was heard out of the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5).

Matthew 17:9 reports that this transfiguration scene was a "vision" (Strong's #3705, "a spectacle, especially supernatural, to be gazed at"). This is affirmed further by the content of the vision because two of the ancient worthies, Moses and Elijah, appeared in this vision. Yet both Moses and Elijah died centuries earlier and the time of their resurrection had still not arrived. Jesus was the firstborn from the dead, so none preceded him (cf. John 3:13). God has graciously provided some better thing for us, the Christian Church, that they, the ancient worthies, should not be made perfect without us who are still being developed (Hebrews 11:37-40).

The Glory of Moses' Shining Face

Our hope is greater than theirs. We have a spiritual ministry and the privilege of offering redemption to the world: "Seeing then that we have such hope [the ministry of righteousness], we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished" (2 Corinthians 3:12,13).

Later Paul connects the glory that is our privilege with the glory reflected by Moses, by stating, “Whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory [*Amplified*: in ever increasing splendor], just as from the Lord, the Spirit [*pneuma*, an invisible, powerful spirit being]” (2 Corinthians 3:16-18, *NASB*).

If what was fading came with glory (the glory of the Law), how much greater is the glory of that which lasts (the glory of the Gospel) (see 2 Corinthians 3:9). Those of us called to come in contact with the true light must be changed or transformed inwardly as Moses was changed: “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ... though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:6,16).

Though our faces may not glow, others should discern a difference in our behavior because the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22, 23). This will have an effect on our countenance.

Even so, it will not keep us from trials. When Stephen stood before the Sanhedrin, “all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15). But this did not soften their hearts: “When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the holy [spirit], looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God” (Acts 7:54,55). Then he was stoned to death.

Written on Tablets

There were two writings of the ten commandments. The first set of tablets was provided and written by God (Exodus 32:16). But when Moses descended the mount and observed the golden calf Aaron had made in his absence, and the dancing, “Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and

brake them beneath the mount” (Exodus 32:19).

The breaking of the first set typified the failure of Israel respecting the old law covenant. Because it was the standard of a perfect man, the Israelites could not keep it perfectly. Sadly they did not keep even the spirit of it when they killed the Messiah, the “Greater than Moses,” predicted to come. The Millennial age in God’s plan has the noble purpose to rewrite this law, broken by sin, in the hearts of Israel, and in the hearts of the billions that “sleep,” waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

God was dealing exclusively with natural Israel during the whole Jewish age, giving the Israelites the written law through Moses. They had a higher standing with God than the world; however, they were only raised to a plane of typical justification rather than actual justification. This lasted from their agreement to keep the law at Mount Sinai until Jesus ended that exclusive arrangement by nailing it to his cross as a Jew. Its precepts were good, and were used as a “schoolmaster” to bring some of them to Christ (Galatians 3:24).

Moses, a Special Picture

In the book of Exodus God dealt with Moses in a special way, making of him a type of a greater mediator to come. The first four ascents of Mount Sinai were comparatively short periods of time (see *Seven Ascents*, p. 8). On those occasions ...

1. He received a proposal from God for Israel (Exodus 19:3-8);
2. He prepared Israel to meet with God in three days (Exodus 19:9-15);
3. God spoke the ten commandments **audibly** to all the people (Exodus 20:1-20), leading the people to ask Moses’ intervention for them;
4. Moses received many laws, ordinances and commandments (Exodus 20:21 through chapter 23).

On that fourth trip the time required would doubtless increase because of the sheer volume of information given, but we are not told how long it was. It was not until what appears to be Moses’ fifth ascent that he stayed in the mount forty days for the **first** time. On this

Others should discern a difference in our behavior because of the fruits of the spirit.

occasion he received detailed instructions about the building of the tabernacle with its furniture, the priesthood arrangement, and of course received the first set of tablets that were subsequently broken (Exodus 24:12 to 31:18).

Just prior to this fifth ascent the Israelites had ratified their covenant with God through blood sacrifices, agreeing, “All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Exodus 24:7). Then they fell away to riot and idolatry during Moses’ absence for forty days.

On the sixth ascent Moses made his famous pleading for Israel, as the typical mediator: “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Exodus 32:32).

This brings us to that seventh trip up the mount, which lasted **another** forty days without bread or water (Exodus 34:28). This reminds us of our Savior’s testing in the wilderness for a similar period, during which he studied the Scriptures available to him, of which the first five books of Moses would have been a significant part (Matthew 4:1-4; John 5:45-47).

During this second forty-day period Moses got a glimpse of God. Since he had been instructed to hew two tablets of stone like the first pair, he brought them with him (Exodus 34:1; Deuteronomy 10:1). Moses in this instance not only provided the tablets, but we suggest he did the writing on them as well, at the direction of God. This would represent a new law covenant, with The Christ in glory as its perfect and effective mediator who will intervene between mankind and God until the world is restored to perfection and able to obey perfectly (1 Timothy 2:4,5; Revelation 21:3,4).

There might be a difference of opinion whether God did the second writing as the text of Exodus 34:1 has it, or the mediator, Moses, did the writing as Exodus 34:27,28 suggests: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write **thou** these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel ... And he [Moses] wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.” Moses simply followed God’s leading, as did Jesus.

Repository for the Tablets

Exodus 25:10-22 gives the detailed instructions for making the ark of the testimony that became the repository for these tablets. Moses is credited with making the ark (Deuteronomy 10:1-3,5), whereas Bible critics could point to Exodus 37:1 where it says Bezaleel made the ark. There is no contradiction. In our day we might say God was the architect, Moses the general contractor, and Bezaleel one of the sub-contractors who worked in metals to carry out the instructions Moses received. Hence one can say Moses built it.

After the ark was constructed it subsequently held not only the two tables of the law, but also Aaron’s rod that budded, and the golden pot of manna that did not spoil (Hebrews 9:4). This ark, taken as a whole, represents The Christ, and there was a glory connected with it shown in the “shekinah light” glowing between the cherubim. All of this was part of the “mercy seat” representing God as the head of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3).

Of the items in the ark, two of them—the pot of manna and the rod—were not to be found when the ark was placed in the temple built by Solomon. That temple typified the church in glory and the stones of the temple represent the members of the body of Christ. When they were all in place, it represents the completion of the church in glory.

When that spiritual temple is complete, the opportunity to seek for immortality (Romans 2:7), represented by the incorruptible manna, will be over. The special “high calling” (Philippians 3:14; Hebrews 5:4), represented by Aaron’s rod that budded, will also be finished with the close of the present Gospel age (Matthew 25:10). This leaves only the “law,” the measure of a perfect human being, the standard as originally intended, operative in the ages to come.

Moses’ Vail

Moses’ vail (veil in most translations) is mentioned three times (Exodus 34:33-35). The Hebrew word is Strong’s #4533 and means “to cover.” It appears only in these three verses. (Other instances of “vail” come from different Hebrew words.) It was not a feminine covering such as the veil (Strong’s #4304) of Ruth 3:15. Perhaps it was more a flap of his

*Only the “law,”
the measure of a
perfect human
being, will be
operative in the
ages to come.*

coat or clothing ample enough to cover his head like a hood.

One thought we might apply from this covering is that the world as human beings will never be able to see the glory of the greater mediator. Of Jesus it was said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

Another thought is that the veil could represent the ancient worthies through whom the spiritual phase of the kingdom will communicate with the earthly, the spiritual glory being hidden.

The fading aspect shows it was not God's intention to let the old law covenant continue. Rather, a Melchizedek priesthood would be raised up to replace the Levitical priesthood, and a greater mediator would be raised up

instead of Moses. In both of these aspects the saints, as members of the body of Christ, will be together with the Lord in bringing blessings to the world in the kingdom.

The Jew to this day has not recognized this fundamental change. Though shrewd, intelligent, distinguished in commercial and professional life, nevertheless there remains upon today's Jews the same religious blindness of which Paul wrote so long ago. So the fading was also symbolic of the judicial blindness that fell upon Israel, obscuring the transient nature of its brightness and glory to those under it.

The veil is therefore both punitive and providential, only to be done away when one turns to the Lord Jesus on an individual basis. But soon all Israel will know her Messiah: "When it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (2 Corinthians 3:16).

Israel's Call

Not to the mount that might be touched,
Not to the flame that flared
Above its crest and o'er its breast,
While heaven's power was bared;
Not to the earth that, rended, quaked
O'er dark, tempestuous way;
But to the land that God hath planned
Move Zion's hosts today.

Not to the law that Moses wrote
On tabled stone of yore,
Giving each line of will divine
In moral code and lore;
But to prophetic time that now
Points to their rightful home,
From out the death-hued centuries
God's Israel has come.

Jerusalem awakes at length,
Her royal robe puts on,
And glories as of former strength
Shall clothe her as the sun;
And brighter shall her treasure grow,
And all the world shall see
That God hath brought her foes to naught
And sent her Jubilee.

Rich farming lands and orchards fair
Her wealth in store proclaim,
And men rejoice to hear the voice
That sounds abroad her name;
Each school in pride of learning stands,
Each home of beauty marks
Modern advancement in the land
Where dwelt the patriarchs.

God has his time to cause the morn
To spread its gold on high,
And for the diamonds of the night
To gem the vaulted sky;
So in the ages as they move
Past as on mighty wing,
The time is set for Harvest Home,
When Zion's hills shall sing.

The world moves on from dark to light,
The Plan of God is sure,
And all the fortresses of might
'Gainst justice can't endure.
Have courage then, O Israel,
And bear this fact in store,
Earth's Golden Age, your heritage
Of life forever more.

—*Poems of the Way*, p. 177

The Faces of God

And he said, My presence [faces] shall go ~~with thee~~, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence [faces] go not ~~with me~~, carry us [Israel] not up hence.—Exodus 33:14,15



Exodus

Richard E. Evans

The King James Version of this text has added words not supported by the Hebrew manuscripts, words that distort the meaning of the text. But before addressing the text itself, it is first necessary to consider the context. Without an appreciation of the events that preceded this dialogue between God and Moses, it is difficult to grasp its significance.

The Context

God through Moses delivered the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. As they departed, a visible sign of God's guidance out of Egypt and through the dangers of the wilderness was a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Exodus 13:21). After a three-month march during which there were times of murmuring by the people and awe-inspiring works by God, they arrived at Mount Sinai. There God set forth his purpose for Israel as recorded in Exodus 19 and instructed Moses to bring the people to the foot of the mountain:

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 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: 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. ... And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. ... And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people

that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God [*'elohiym*, #430]; and they stood at the nether part of the mount" (Exodus 19:4-17).

God called Moses to the top of the mount and he was given vocally (no tablets at this time) a summary of the divine instruction. Moses returned to the people, put God's words in a book, and read it to all gathered there. They answered with one voice, "all the words which the LORD hath said will we do" (Exodus 24:3,7). Thus, the covenant between God and Israel was mediated by Moses (Galatians 3:19) and ratified by the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats (Exodus 24:8; Hebrews 9:16-20, *Emphatic Diaglott*).

Afterward, Moses returned to the mountain: "And all the people saw the thunders, 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. ... and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. 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. Ye shall not make with me gods [*'elohiym*, #430] of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods [*'elohiym*] of gold" (Exodus 20:18,21-23).

Therefore, at the onset of his relationship with the people of Israel, God made clear they were not to make physical entities to be worshipped as gods.

Later, while Moses was again on the mountain (receiving the tablets of law), the people became impatient with Moses' absence. In spite of God's recent instruction, they demanded Aaron form a calf of gold. What followed is recorded in Exodus 32.

"And when Aaron saw it [the golden calf], he built an altar before it; and Aaron made

Though God allowed Moses to dissuade him from casting off the people of Israel, there was a proviso.

proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they [the people of Israel] 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. 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: 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 [*‘elohiym*], O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath [countenance, *‘aph*, #639] may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I [God] will make of thee [Moses] a great nation.”—Exodus 32:5-10

God’s description of the people as “thy” and “stiffnecked” reflected the divine reaction to what occurred at the foot of the mountain. Though he threatened severe punishment, he conditioned it with “let me alone ... that I may consume them.” God left the door open for intercession by Moses. He would allow himself to be otherwise persuaded.

The personal promise to Moses to make of him a “great nation” picked up the identical words of God’s prior promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:2). Moses’ reaction to this proposed course of action provides wonderful insight into his character. He used it as his strongest argument for saving not “his,” but “God’s” people:

“And Moses besought the LORD his God [*‘elohiym*], and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath [countenance, *‘aph*, #639] wax hot against thy [not Moses’ but God’s] people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? 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 [countenance, *‘aph*, #639], and repent of this evil against thy people. 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 land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever [an age, *owlam*, #5769, “the age to come,” Mark 10:30]. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”—Exodus 32:11-14

Though God allowed Moses to dissuade him from casting off the people of Israel, there was a proviso. After going down the mountain and destroying the golden calf Moses returned to God to address that consequence: “And Moses ... said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods [*‘elohiym*] of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 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” (Exodus 32:31-34).

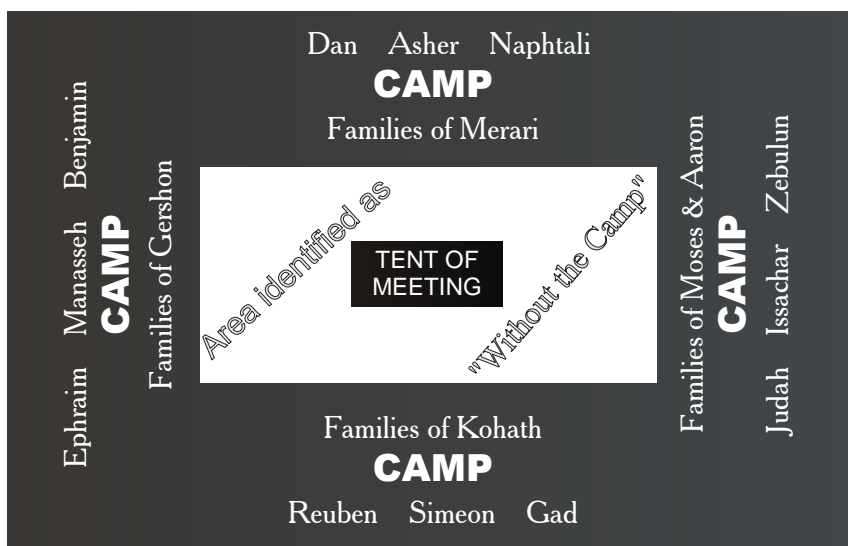
As recorded in Exodus 33, Moses and Israel were not happy with God’s concession: “And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned” (Exodus 33:1-4).

No longer would God be in their midst. Instead of the LORD going before (Exodus 13:21) an angel would be leading them.

Tent of Meeting

To provide a meeting place with God when they departed Mount Sinai, Moses set up a “Tent of Meeting” situated “without the camp.” This was a temporary arrangement, to be replaced by the tabernacle when completed. To understand the location “without the camp” it is necessary to have an appreciation of the Israelite camp layout (Numbers 2:1-34; 3:23-38).

Continued on page 21



Only with the Tent of Meeting in the center of the camp would it be possible for all of the Israelites to watch from their tent door:

“And Moses took the tabernacle [tent, *’ohel*, #168], and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle [tent] of the congregation [meeting, *mow’ed*, #4150; i.e., where God would meet with man]. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle [tent] of the congregation [meeting], which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle [tent], that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent [*’ohel*, #168] door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle [tent]. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle [tent], the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle [tent], and the LORD talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle [tent] door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face [*faces to faces*, *paniym*, #6440, plural], as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle [tent].”—Exodus 33:7-11

Unlike the tabernacle that was soon to be built, the Tent of Meeting did not have a priest-

hood to serve in it. Apparently it had only Joshua (Exodus 33:11).

The Text

In the Tent of Meeting Moses addressed the proviso by God that he would no longer be in the midst of Israel (Exodus 33:3).

“And Moses said unto the LORD, See [consider, *ra’ah*, #7200], thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider [*ra’ah*, #7200] that this nation is thy people” (Exodus 33:12,13).

The intensity of Moses’ plea is lost in the KJV by poor translation in verses 12 and 13, and by the addition of words not supported by the Hebrew in verses 14 and 15. Moses was not content with knowing only that an angel would be with them. Which angel? And what about God? Moses still harbored concern for the people of Israel and pressed God: “Consider this ... consider that.”

God’s response to Moses’ appeal was not the answer desired because it was focused on Moses personally: “And he [God] said, My presence [*faces*, *paniym*, #6440, plural] shall go with thee, and I will give thee [Moses] rest” (Exodus 33:14). Again, the response was

Apparently this “Tent of Meeting” had only Joshua to serve in it.

focused on Moses himself (the second person pronoun is masculine singular and refers to Moses). This friend of God (Exodus 33:11), however, was not to be denied. He pressed God to include the people:

“And he [Moses] said unto him [God], If thy presence [faces] go not with me, carry us [the people of Israel] not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.”—Exodus 33:15,16

Moses’ persistence was rewarded. He secured from God a promise for his continued favor and for Israel’s full restoration: “And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name” (Exodus 33:17). Listen carefully to those words! They say much about the open and dynamic relationship God has with his creation.

An Open God

God, who is love, respects the integrity of his intelligent creatures and relates dynamically with them in working out his purpose. As shown by his continued interaction with Israel, God not only acts but also reacts: “It may be that the house of Judah [the two tribe kingdom] will hear all the evil which I [God] purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin” (Jeremiah 36:3).

God not only influences events but is also willingly influenced by them: “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim [the ten tribe kingdom]?

how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man” (Hosea 11:8,9).

God not only plans, but is flexible enough to adapt to decisions made and to actions taken by his creation. That is the lesson of Moses’ dialogue with God in Exodus 33. God spoke of this dynamic relationship with his creation in a very direct way through the prophet Jeremiah:

“O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.” —Jeremiah 18:6-10

Above all, as the apostle John made manifest, God is love (1 John 4:8,16). Accordingly, he expresses his power through freedom. He does not control like a despot. The heart of the biblical message is not the existence of God, or his eternity, or his power. Its essence is that God is love and through that love he is open to his creation. Understanding this divine openness, Moses appealed to his God and changed the course of history!

*God expresses
his power
through free-
dom. He does
not control
like a despot.*

*God is love; and he that dwelleth in
love dwelleth in God, and God in
him.*

~ 1 John 4:16

Israel's Guiding Light

Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.—Nehemiah 9:12



Exodus

Carl Hagensick

The Sinai wilderness presented Israel with a daunting challenge. There was the scorching heat by day and the chills of the desert night air. The valleys and wadies were unmapped. There were perils of predatory animals and scorpions with their poisonous sting. Marauding nomads could not be anticipated. The Amalekites, who claimed the wilderness as their private ground for herding their sheep and their goats, were territorial and aggressive. Indeed, the challenge was daunting.

Israel's God and Guide

Almost immediately after leaving Egypt God miraculously guided the Israelites by creating a special cloudy and fiery pillar to move in the vanguard of the two-million-man march: "And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" (Exodus 13:21,22).

What a sight this was: an all-night fire with no fuel; a daytime cloud sitting still despite shifting winds; a moving cloud zigzagging through the wilderness in the face of contrary breezes! It was, truly, a daily and nightly reminder of God's guiding power. It was a phenomenon, never to be repeated, that existed only as long as needed, until the promised land was reached!

It was not only for the sake of Israel, but also as a witness to the surrounding nations that Israel's God was wise, powerful, and protective of his chosen people: "And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud,

and in a pillar of fire by night" (Numbers 14:14).

At the Red Sea

This cloud played a major role at the shores of the Red Sea. Trapped, with mountains looming on the right and the left, the waters of the Red Sea in front, and a formidable host of Egyptian troops rapidly advancing from the rear, it seemed as if the Israelites had no way out of their predicament.

It was then, in the dark of night, that their guiding pillar lifted and moved from the front to the rear of the Israelite horde, placing itself between the frightened encampment and its pursuers. The fiery column transformed itself into simultaneous light and darkness; the dark side hiding the fleeing horde from the Egyptian forces, while the bright light on the reverse side provided light for the Israelites to hastily prepare for the delivering miracle that lay ahead.

"And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. ... And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians."—Exodus 14:19,20,24

Hobab

Subsequently, as they apprehensively faced the intimidating challenges of an unfamiliar wasteland through which they would journey, Moses sought assistance. It was not as if an individual were traversing the wilds alone, or even a group of merchants traveling in caravan; but Moses was responsible for the safe journey of an entire nation of some two million people.

The valleys would need to be wide for the herds and flocks, the soil must not be too sandy lest it bog down wagons laden with household possessions, water must be available to prevent dehydration of man and animal. Difficult decisions must be made, for which wilderness intelligence would be needed.

For this reason Moses turned to a trusted relative who had made his living for a lifetime in this barren land, his brother-in-law (or father-in-law, see Judges 4:11), and asked him to be their guide. Moses responded to an initial refusal with a further plea: "And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee" (Numbers 10:31,32).

Hobab accepted. They had been at Mount Sinai for some time, and now the Israelites resumed their journey: "They departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. And the cloud of the LORD was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp" (Numbers 10:33,34).

Had Moses lost faith in the guiding providences of the cloud of the Lord, or was it a case of the cloud showing the general direction and destination and Hobab delineating the best route to get there? That is one of many unanswered questions in the sacred record.

The Door of the Tabernacle

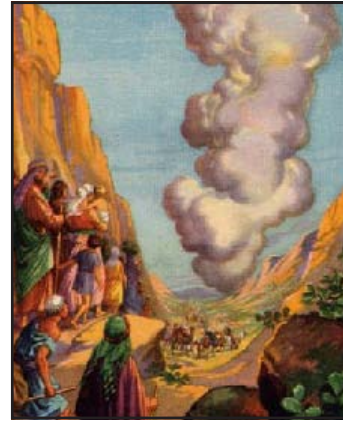
Apparently the usual resting place of the cloud was over the Most Holy of Israel's tabernacle. It is theorized by some that the Shekinah light, that shone between the two golden cherubim perched on the Ark of the Covenant, was caused by an interaction between the electrically-charged cloud and the Mercy Seat with its two carved angelic figures. If this conjecture is correct, it shows that divine wisdom, represented in the light, is a product of God, whose presence was indicated by the cloud, and the harmonious balance between the attributes of love and power, shown in the cherubim, and justice, represented by the Mercy Seat itself.

On occasion, however, when God wished to make a pronouncement to his chosen people,

the cloudy pillar moved and took up a position at the door of the tabernacle. It is likely this "door" was the entrance to the Holy of the tabernacle, though some believe it was the curtain leading into the outer court. Three such occasions are mentioned: Exodus 33:9,10; Numbers 12:5; Deuteronomy 31:15.

The Shape of the Cloud

There are two thoughts as to the shape of this miraculous cloud. Some view it as an upright plume as suggested by the word "pillar" as shown here:



Others envision it more as a canopy similar to the cloud in this picture:

A text in Isaiah may shed some light on this question: "Then the LORD will create over the



whole site of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory there will be a canopy and a pavilion. It will be for a shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain" (Isaiah 4:5,6, RSV).

This text describes the cloud as a "canopy" that provided both "shade by day from the heat" and as "a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain." This implies a huge cloud for the massive horde of two million people, about the population of Houston, Texas, which cov-

The Shekinah light may have been caused by the electrically-charged cloud and the Mercy Seat.

ers nearly six hundred square miles. Into this equation one must add space for the flocks and herds.

These expressions assign two functions: one was to provide shelter from the oppressive desert heat, the other was to provide shelter from the rain. This again demonstrates another special feature of this cloud. Usually clouds bring rain, not shelter from rain. Clouds are porous and thus incapable of keeping out rain. But this miraculous pillar prevented not only the nuisance of a downpour but also flash floods from rushing down the baked desert wadies. And it kept the ground from being saturated with water which would prevent the movement of the wagons.

A Bridal Canopy

The one Hebrew word translated “a pavilion and a canopy” (“defense” in the *KJV*) is *chuppah* (Strong’s #2646). It literally means “covering” or “canopy.” The word *chuppah* is still used today by the Jews to describe the embroidered canopy under which weddings are performed.



This Hebrew word is found in two other places in the Old Testament: Psalm 19:5 where it is translated “chamber” in the *KJV*, and Joel 2:16 where it is rendered “closet.” Its significance in the Jewish wedding ceremony had a slightly different significance in biblical times. Today it represents the new home the couple will make for themselves. In ancient times, however, the entrance into the *chuppah* marked the actual union of bride and groom; it also signified their trust in divine protection.

It is in this latter signification that it is used in reference to the fiery pillar. The dangers of the harsh and foreboding Sinai wilderness were sufficient to make anyone apprehensive. But the sight of the column of fire by night and overhanging cloud by day was a constant assurance that the God who had delivered them

from the ruthless hands of their Egyptian taskmasters was surely able to protect them in the stark desert. Oh, if they only believed! How forceful this lesson should be to the Christian today: His wisdom will not lead us where his grace cannot keep us. Faith can firmly trust him, Come what may!

Inspiration for Future Generations

Over a thousand years after they arrived in the promised land, in the fresh zeal inspired by Nehemiah, the Israelites who had returned from Babylon observed the Feast of Tabernacles. This feast, also called Succoth, was to commemorate the protection God provided in the wilderness and it may have marked the cessation of the fiery pillar.

The whole population was divided into eight groups and each was led in the same or similar prayer by eight Levites whose names are given in Nehemiah 9:5. On two occasions in that prayer of thanksgiving for divine protection in their exodus from Babylon, the prayer refers to the guidance and protection provided by the pillar of fire and cloud: “Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. ... Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.” (Nehemiah 9:12,19).

The psalmist likewise draws inspiration from the guiding light: “Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them” (Psalm 99:6,7).

“Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide”

Though there is no literal pillar of fire or cloud to provide such protection and guidance in a Christian’s wilderness journey, he is not without his guiding light. All of the functions provided by this miraculous pillar are given through the holy spirit:

Guidance: “I will guide thee with mine eye” (Psalm 32:8).

His wisdom will not lead us where his grace cannot keep us.

Protection: “Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages” (Isaiah 49:8).

Instruction: “But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you” (John 14:26, ASV).

Shelter: “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler” (Psalm 91:4).

A Bridal Canopy: “So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy LORD; and worship thou him” (Psalm 45:11).

As the Levites of Nehemiah’s day thanked the Lord for the fiery pillar that led their forefathers safely to the promised land, let us ever sing our thanks for the guidance and protection we daily receive through the holy spirit.

Holy Spirit, faithful guide,
Ever near the Christian’s side,
Gently lead us by the hand,
Pilgrims in a desert land.

Weary souls, for aye rejoice,
While they hear that sweetest voice,
Whisp’ring softly, Traveler come!
Follow me, I’ll guide thee home.

Onward to the Promised Land

Through the night of doubt and sorrow
Onward goes the pilgrim band,
Singing songs of expectation,
Marching to the Promised Land.

Clear before us through the darkness
Gleams and burns the guiding light;
Brother clasps the hand of brother,
Stepping fearless through the night.

One the Lamb, so pure and spotless,
One the all-atoning blood,
Ent’ring in the veil most holy,
Opening up the way to God.

One the Light of God’s own Presence
O’er His ransomed people shed,
Chasing far the gloom and terror,
Brightening all the path we tread:

One the object of our journey,
One the faith which never tires,
One the earnest looking forward,
One the hope our God inspires:

One the strain that lips of brethren
Lift as from the heart of one;
One the conflict, one the peril,
One the march in God begun:

One the gladness of rejoicing
On the far eternal shore,
Where the One Almighty Father
Reigns in love for evermore.

—*The Bible Students’ Hymnal* [England], #409

The Book of Exodus

All the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.—Exodus 12:41



Exodus

David Rice

While the book of Genesis covers about 2,500 years of history, the book of Exodus which follows covers much less. After reviewing the oppression of Israel, and the plagues on Egypt which may have lasted eighteen months or so, the remainder of the book covers a single year.

But it was a momentous year. It was the year of Israel's exodus from Egypt, the giving of the law at Mount Sinai fifty days later, the construction of the tabernacle, and the inauguration of the priesthood to perform the various sacrifices prescribed under the law.

The Opening

The book opens with a brief restatement of items covered at the close of Genesis—namely the mention of seventy souls, posterity of Jacob, who came into Egypt with him, and the death of their benefactor Joseph. The last verses of Genesis tell us Joseph was 110 when he died. Because the Israelites were in Egypt for a total of 215 years, and Joseph was 39 at the time his family joined him in Egypt, this means from the death of Joseph until the exodus was 144 years.

The number naturally reminds us of the 144,000 of Revelation 14:1, which refers to the elect spiritual class elsewhere described as the “bride” of Christ. Joseph represents Christ, who inaugurated the Gospel age, and the exodus with its plagues and deliverance of the first-born represents the close of the Gospel age. Thus the 144 years between these episodes represents the span from the death of Christ to the deliverance of the church. It is a fitting number to call to mind the elect class developed during that time.

The Story of Moses

The story of Moses begins with Exodus 1:8. Some years after the death of Joseph a Pharaoh arose who looked with suspicion on these

Semitic residents of Goshen. It is oft debated when in the history of Egypt's many ancient dynasties this episode is situated. Our understanding is that this was during the lengthy and powerful twelfth dynasty of Egypt, which constituted the bulk of what is today termed the “Middle Kingdom” of Egypt.

At this period of history Egypt's artistic and cultural advances were at their peak. This would be consistent with the wealth which would have accumulated to the government during the seven years of famine, when the wealth of Egypt and the surrounding nations flowed to the Pharaoh.

The fear of the Pharaoh who subjected the Israelites to bondage was that these “Asiatic” residents (as the Egyptians considered them) within his domain might side with a possible invading “Asiatic” force in the future. Indeed, in the years after the fall of the twelfth dynasty there was an influx of such peoples into the delta area of Egypt, resulting in a takeover of the country by “Hyksos” kings, which term is now commonly understood to mean “rulers of foreign lands.”

However the politics may have seemed to Pharaoh, he misjudged the threat. He failed to reflect that the very strength of the empire he ruled was due largely to the beneficent relationship Egypt had had with the Israelites. The relationship had been close, not only during the early years of Joseph's power, but even later. 1 Chronicles 4:18, for example, records that Mered, a descendant of Judah, married Bithia, a daughter of Pharaoh.

When Israel was forced into bondage with “taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens” (Exodus 1:11), the affliction actually stimulated a burst of population growth among the Israelites (verse 12). Even today it is apparent that in those countries where living conditions are difficult, and the finer things of life are

unavailable, the birth rate and accompanying population expansion is large.

As a consequence Pharaoh next determined to deplete the number of potential enemy soldiers among the Israelites by having all the male children killed. When the midwives did not cooperate, “Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river” (Exodus 1:22)—a method of disposal sometimes attested of ancient Pharaohs.

Under these circumstances Moses was born. Moses would later deliver Israel, as Christ would deliver his people, and the threat to Moses’ life as an infant parallels the threat to Jesus’ life as an infant when Herod decreed the death of all males in Bethlehem under the age of two. In both cases the child destined for God’s special use was spared through His providence.

The story is well known. Jochebed, the mother of Moses, after hiding the newborn as long as she could, set him adrift in an ark made of reeds, to be found by a daughter of Pharaoh whose pity was moved and who took the young babe for her own. Moses’ elder sister Miriam watched from a distance, and at the right moment offered to find a Hebrew nurse for the young child. The offer was accepted and Jochebed, Moses’ own mother, was given the job of nursing the child, and given wages for the service.

What a lovely lesson is here brought to our attention of devoted trust in the providence of God. Jochebed’s child was under sentence of death. She could not retain him for long, so she committed him to the care of Jehovah and trusted His grace and protection of what she committed to Him. There is also over us a sentence of death, and whatever hopes we have for the future are all clouded by the death sentence upon our race. What can we do? We can do no better than what Jochebed did—commit the matter to God, yield to him freely all our hopes for the present and future, and yield to him our lives and hopes and beings through full consecration. And behold what the Lord does for us: he returns to us all of what we committed to him, with a charge to care for it and use it on his behalf. And he offers us wages for the service, “wages ... unto life eternal” (John 4:36).

*Like Jochebed we
should commit
our hopes for the
present and
future to God.*

Moses’ upbringing by his mother instilled in him a respect for the promises of God to his ancestors of faith: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses’ upbringing in the courts of Pharaoh educated him in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, which was greatly to his advantage when he compiled Genesis from the tablet records accumulated by the Israelites, and when he composed Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

As described in the article *120 Years* (p. 4) at the age of forty Moses slew an Egyptian in defense of a fellow Hebrew, fled to Midian for forty years, and later returned at God’s command to deliver the Israelites.

The Family of Moses

Exodus 2:1 tells us “a man of the house of Levi ... took to wife a daughter of Levi.” These were Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses. Exodus 6:16-20 gives this information in greater detail. The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. “And Amram took him Jochebed his father’s sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses” (verse 20). The lifespans of this line are also given: Levi 137 years, Kohath 133 years, Amram 137 years.

Thus Moses descended from Levi through both his father and mother. On his father’s side the line was Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses. His maternal descent was Levi, Jochebed, Moses. It is interesting that Moses’ mother was the aunt of his father, a generation ahead in theory, even though probably about the same age. This means Jochebed would have been born later in Levi’s life, whereas her brother Kohath would have been born earlier in Levi’s life.

This deduction is affirmed by the record of Genesis 46:11 that all three sons of Levi were living when Levi came into Egypt, and the record of Numbers 26:59 that Jochebed was born to Levi after he came into Egypt.

A useful feature of these genealogies and lifespans is that they give us a better understanding of the meaning of Exodus 12:40,41, which is a key to the chronology of the Old Testament. “Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass

at the end of the four hundred and thirty years ... that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.”

If the reader checks various translations of this passage, it becomes apparent that some render the passage to express the thought that the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years. Yet this does not accord with the information given above, as a little experimentation will show. For example, say Levi was forty when he came into Egypt—he could have been no younger than that according to the narrative in Genesis about Jacob. This means he would have died 97 years after entering Egypt. If the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years, then 333 years would still remain before the exodus.

Now suppose the unlikely and extreme case that Jochebed was born to Levi in the last year of his life. Because Moses was eighty at the exodus, Jochebed would have been 253 years old at the birth of Moses—which is impossible when people were living on the order of 130 years at the time. Therefore it appears Exodus 12:40,41 does not intend that the Israelites were 430 years in Egypt alone. So what does it mean?

The passage evidently refers to the sojourning of the Israelites and their fathers in the promised land and in Egypt. In this respect it would follow the kind of reckoning Paul used in Hebrews 7:10, when he says Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec while “he was yet in the loins of his father” Abraham. That sojourn began when Abraham came into Canaan following the death of Terah. His first stop of note in the promised land was Sichem, later given as Shechem, at which place God appeared to Abraham “and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land” (Genesis 12:7). Until this time God’s covenant with Abraham had been provisional, but now it was given unconditionally.

The reasoning above is evidently what the rabbis of old also deduced about the meaning of Exodus 12:40,41, and the apostle Paul, schooled under one of Israel’s famous rabbis, Gamaliel, reports this view in Galatians 3:16, 17. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made ... And ... that [Abrahamic covenant] ... the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul.”

The flow of Paul’s statement is unusual because of the point he is making in Galatians. But it does stipulate that 430 years spanned the time from God’s covenant with Abraham until the law which was given just shortly after the exodus.

Without these texts—Exodus 12:40,41 and Galatians 3:16,17—we would have no record affirming this period of time, and thus no sure method of determining the time from Moses back to Adam. Without this key, we could not compute the climax of 6,000 years of human history which introduce the Millennium.

430 Years

This period of time is interesting because it reappears later in the Divine Plan in conspicuous places. Ezekiel 4:4-6 records an instruction of God to Ezekiel to lie on one side, then the other, for 390 and 40 days respectively—430 days total—to represent an affliction of Israel of the same number of years when Israel would be subject to other nations and “eat their defiled [spiritual] bread among the Gentiles” (v. 13). Indeed, from the time of this prophecy until the cleansing of the temple under the Maccabees, was a period of 430 years, counting inclusively.

In both cases this 430 years refers to a tentative, unsettled, provisional state, pending a blessed relief in God’s due time. Probably both of these periods represent the Gospel age when spiritual Israel has been in a tentative, unsettled, provisional state pending a blessed relief from their enemies.

It is at least worthy of note that the 1,290 years of Daniel 12:11 is related to this span of time also, being exactly three intervals of 430 years. Probably there is some deeper meaning that we have yet to fully apprehend in the relationship of these numbers. It is always good, when studying the Lord’s word, to keep in mind the relationships we observe, as they may prove useful in revealing greater insights into the things it has pleased God to put into the Scriptures for our interest, encouragement, and use. (See Proverbs 25:2.)

The Family of Moses’ Wife

During Moses’ forty years of shepherding in Midian he married Zipporah, daughter of Reuel (Exodus 2:18-22), who is also called

The 430 years “sojourning” combines the time spent in the promised land and in Egypt.

Jethro (Exodus 3:1), and later called Raguel (Numbers 10:29). While in Midian Zipporah bore two sons to Moses, Gershom and Eliezer (Exodus 18:3,4). When Moses returned to Egypt, he took his wife and sons with him: “And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt” (Exodus 4:20).

At some point, however, it appears Moses sent his wife and sons back to Midian, perhaps for their safety, or perhaps because the time preparatory to the exodus was so extended. In either case, when Jethro heard the good news of the blessing of God in the exodus, he joined Moses at Mount Sinai: “And Jethro, Moses’ father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God” (Exodus 18:5).

The great victory God gave to Moses confirmed to Jethro that Jehovah was indeed God: “Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them” (Exodus 18:11). He offered a burnt offering to God, and Aaron and all the elders of Israel joined to “eat bread with Moses’ father in law before God,” by which he publicly declared himself committed to Jehovah (Exodus 18:12).

So should we mark the victories God gives us through the spirit over the enemies we face within and without. Let us in response declare publicly our appreciation, and our commitment to Jehovah who gives us these victories.

It was Jethro who gave Moses such good advice about lessening the burdens he carried in judging all the issues among the Israelites. When he saw that Moses judged the people from morning to evening, he advised Moses to distribute the burden to trusted elders who would refer only the most difficult cases to Moses (Exodus 18:14-22).

The appointees would be “able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens” (verse 21). There was great wisdom in this advice. Not only would it provide release for Moses to focus on the greater matters, but it would distribute the judgment among many trusted men.

Inevitably, had Moses continued to decide every issue, a spirit of accusation would rise

from time to time from parties who did not prevail. As accusation joined to accusation, Moses would face a crescendo of opposition which would weaken his leadership and demoralize his spirit. Even as it was, Moses was frequently accused by various segments within Israel, on one occasion moving God to deliver him from the injustice by overthrowing “two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown” (Numbers 16:2).

In this Moses was an example for us all. Our Lord Jesus, whom Moses represented, was beset even more vehemently by the Pharisees of his day, who were momentarily successful when they crucified him. But the leadership of Israel would suffer the judgment of God when the internal strife within Jerusalem, and the subsequent taking of the city by the Romans, did what they feared—“the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation” (John 11:48).

The brother of Zipporah, son of Jethro, namely Hobab, served as a guide for the Israelites during their wandering from Sinai forward. For interesting comments on his service, see the article *Israel’s Guiding Light* (p. 23).

The Ten Plagues

The ten plagues which fell on Egypt were segregated into two parts, the first three and the last seven. The first three plagues affected all, both Egyptians and Israelites, but the remaining seven fell only on the Egyptians and not in Goshen where the Israelites lived.

This division is noteworthy because it is an integral part of the antitype of this experience. Revelation chapters 15 and 16 speak of “seven last plagues” which are commonly identified as the fulfillment of the last seven of the ten in Egypt.

We understand that the first three refer to three distresses on Christendom which precede the harvest when the “wheat and tares” are mixed. This is before the call “come out of her, my people,” so all are affected. The last seven would then represent seven plagues during the harvest after the call to separate.

We interpret the first three plagues to represent 1) the Reformation, 2) the French Revolution and consequent Napoleonic wars which ravaged Christendom, and 3) the “nuisance”

*Let us publicly
declare our
appreciation
to Jehovah
who gives us
our victories.*

plague of lice as the “nuisance” of the Adventist Movement in the early 1800s. The first of the next seven was like that last one. It was a plague of flies, representing the impact of the truth movement on Christians within Christendom who did not respond favorably. This preceded the first deadly plague, the second of Revelation 16, which affected the broad “sea” class; it resulted in the overthrow of the kings of Europe (compare Ezekiel 26:16 and Isaiah 23:11).

The final judgment among the ten plagues in Egypt was the death of the firstborn, which evidently represents that at the close of the harvest the “inheritors” of the old system will be no more, that is, the present system will come to an end so there is nothing more to inherit.

The firstborn of Israel during that climactic night indicate that the saints of God are still here, until the close of the harvest, in the flesh, under the protection of the blood. Their “passing over” evidently represents the deliverance of the saints from jeopardy through their passing into life beyond the veil. If this is the meaning of the picture, it indicates that some of the church will be in the flesh until the last plague begins to be poured. Until then, the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus” still has some participants who are yet in the flesh.

The midnight hour at which the death angel passed through Egypt would represent the destructive close of the present dispensation. This is not the midnight for the church—that appears at the opening of the harvest, as shown in the parable of the virgins, for “at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom” (Matthew 25:6), and considerable activity among the Lord’s people proceeds thereafter. That midnight marked the close of six periods of the church, and introduced the favorable opportunity of the Laodicean stage of the church which commenced with our Lord’s return in 1874.

The midnight hour of the death angel in Exodus 12:29 is quite different. That will be the midnight hour for the world. In it the old systems pass away, and a transition is made into the kingdom of Christ which is established at Israel through the commotion associated with this last of the seven plagues. The former midnight (for the church) is at the beginning of the

harvest, whereas the latter midnight (for the world) is at the close of the harvest.

Law of the Passover

Exodus 12 records the instructions of God about keeping the passover. This is a famous passage which many read annually as they study the Memorial of our Lord’s death, an event that occurred on the same day of the Jewish calendar that our Lord Jesus died on the cross and which was also the time the Israelites were slaying their passover lambs.

Five days earlier the Israelites were to select their lambs, on the tenth of Nisan; just as Jesus was presented to the multitudes as he rode into Jerusalem to shouts of Hosanna, on the tenth of Nisan. It was on the previous evening, which opened that day, that Mary anointed Jesus for his approaching death—all fitting to denote Jesus’ “selection” as the passover sacrifice for Israel.

One of the features of the passover celebration was a seven-day feast of unleavened bread, which seems aptly to represent the Gospel age of seven stages, during which we appreciate the benefits of our paschal lamb, Jesus, and cleanse ourselves from the leaven of sin. Exodus 12:16 says that feast closed with a special celebration on the seventh and closing day of the feast, representing the special blessings of the Laodicean stage of the church, for during this period the saints go to their promised blessings in the spirit realm.

The Journey from Egypt

The flight of Israel from Egypt is recorded in chapters 13 and 14, and their song of triumph and thanksgiving after their deliverance through the Red Sea in chapter 15. Frequently the passing of Israel through the Red Sea is applied to the full deliverance of all the world through the last onslaught of Satan during the little season which follows the Millennium. This application is given in *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 6, pp. 458, 459.

Exodus 14:24 contains a prophetic clue which harmonizes with this view. The time the hosts of Pharaoh were being subdued in the Red Sea is described as “in the morning watch.” In Psalm 90:4, a watch in the night is compared to a thousand years. Mark 6:48 shows there were four watches in the night, so

At the close of the harvest the “inheritors” of the old system will be no more.

the one described as the “morning watch” is evidently the last of these. In the Jewish economy the day was divided also into four parts—two parts of the morning, and two parts of the afternoon. Thus the day was divided into eight portions.

The “morning watch” of Exodus 14:24 may thus represent the eighth millennium in God’s plan. This is the time during which the Little Season of Satan’s last endeavor to pursue mankind takes place, for Revelation 20:3 specifies that the Little Season follows the end of the millennium (which most identify with the seventh millennium since Adam).

Wandering in the Wilderness

Exodus 15:22 begins the account of Israel’s experiences following their great deliverance. When the apostle Paul comments on the wilderness experiences of Israel, he applies them to the experiences of the Christian church during the Gospel age.

For example, 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 is explicit about this: “All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (verses 1, 2). This represents our baptism into the greater than Moses, namely our Lord Jesus.

In verse three Paul says they “did all eat the same spiritual meat”—the manna from heaven—which our Lord Jesus says represents the nourishment we have in him (John 6:31-35). The manna represents both the living word, Jesus, and the written word, the Scriptures which testify of Jesus, from which we draw spiritual strength and nourishment. To take advantage of this heavenly manna we should first commit ourselves to God, and by faith “eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood” (John 6:53). We should then “Search the scriptures,” for in them we “have eternal life” (John 5:39).

When the Israelites first received the manna from heaven, they described the taste of it “like wafers made with honey” (Exodus 16:31). What a lovely taste! So is the blessing of the holy spirit, communicated through the Scriptures, to those who appreciate and value it.

But with time the Israelites tired of this miraculous sustenance. So is the jeopardy with us. We can tire of even the miraculous nourish-

ment we have in the Scriptures, through the spirit. We can consider it common, unappreciated, or worse, if we do not focus on what a blessing it is to be thus fed by God in a supernatural way by his spirit.

When the Israelites tired of it, they described its taste differently: “Now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes ... and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil” (Numbers 11:6-8). Could it taste this way to us? We still recognize it as “oil”—the holy spirit—but gone is the likeness to “wafers made with honey.” Honey, in the Scriptures, is the sweetness of the high calling. Do we forget the remarkable sweetness of this call? Does the continuity of our Christian walk—resisting the things of the flesh, pursuing a conscientious life, with principle, patiently, consistently—cause us to weary, and let slip the wonder of the goal, and the sweet fellowship with God and Christ which is both our present inheritance, and our future reward?

Let us instead rejoice every day for the unspeakable privilege which is ours. We know what the world does not know—of God, his plan, and the devoted service of the saints who with us are running for the prize of the high calling. Let us awaken every morning to appreciate another opportunity to express by our deeds, thoughts, and words, “the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

Gospel Age Blessings

Exodus 15:23 begins the record of the healing of waters at Marah. They were cured by a tree cast into them, probably representing how the brackish waters of the law were sweetened by Christ’s death. By this means the “handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us” was taken “out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Colossians 2:14).

We are freed from the “letter [which] killeth,” and are privileged instead to follow “the spirit” which “giveth life” (2 Corinthians 3:6). The spirit of the law we can keep, through our intentions, if we focus our affections on things above, and apply ourselves to the spirit of Christ. This blessed spirit we may contain within our minds, our hearts, and use it to control our words, conduct, and the thoughts from which these spring. “Let the words of my

Let us rejoice every day for the unspeakable privilege which is ours.

mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

The Israelites next took their journey to Elim, finding “twelve wells of water, and [seventy] palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters” (Exodus 15:27). After the Christian church began through baptism into Christ, they found the curse of the law removed, they encamped in the sweet blessings of the teachings of the twelve apostles, evidently represented by the twelve wells by which the Israelites would draw water. The seventy palm trees remind us of the seventy disciples that Jesus sent two by two to prepare people for his message; perhaps they represent all the sundry teachers and leaders among the early church, beyond the scope of the twelve apostles.

All of these were a blessing to settle those of the early church into their faith, provide peace and refreshment for them, for the trials of the way would soon commence. “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46).

What a blessed condition! May we each rejoice in the fellowship of saints as they did then. May we never disdain the fellowship of Christian brethren, by looking at the shallow joys of the world.

The Trials Commence

Exodus 16 records Israel’s complaint for food, so God gave them manna. Exodus 17 records Israel’s complaint for water, so God gave them water from a rock in Horeb. On the latter occasion Moses was to strike the rock, which he did, and it gushed forth water. So Christ was smitten at the first advent, and from his sacrifice comes the blessed water of life for the saints now.

Years later, near the end of their journeys, the Israelites would clamor again for water, and God would again produce water for them from a rock. But on this occasion Moses was merely to speak to the rock. So at the close of the Gospel age, the rock which represents Christ will yield yet another wonderful flow of life-giving water, this time for the world of mankind. But he will not be smitten again for this purpose. Merely speaking to the rock would

now suffice, indicating God’s time for a second blessing as a result of Jesus’ original sacrifice (Numbers 20:8).

Exodus 17 then introduces another trial for Israel: “Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim” (v. 8). So the enemies of the church would persecute and afflict them, but never overcome the saints. Ultimately “I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven” God promised (Exodus 17:14); and so God will utterly remove all the enemies which now afflict the saints.

In the book of Hebrews Paul again takes up the comparison of Israel in the wilderness, longing for the promised rest in Canaan, to the saints during our wilderness wandering, longing for the promised rest of the kingdom. He warns there, as he did in 1 Corinthians 10, not to fall as the Israelites so often fell by abandoning their faith: “Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years” (Hebrews 3:8,9). “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:12,13). “For,” as he continues, “we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end” (verse 14).

Israel Gathered at the Mount

Exodus 19 records Israel’s arrival at Mount Sinai. Both Paul and Peter extract lessons from this episode which apply to the saints. As Israel gathered to the literal mountain in the desert, Paul says we have gathered to a spiritual mount in antitype: “Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God” (Hebrews 12:22). As Israel there heard the voice of God speaking from heaven all the ten commandments, so Paul instructs us, “See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking ... from heaven” (Hebrews 12:25, NASB).

At this mountain God offered Israel, gathered expectantly at the mount, a remarkable opportunity: “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a pecu-

At the close of the harvest the “inheritors” of the old system will be no more.

liar treasure unto me above all people ... and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:5,6). This is the source for Peter’s exhortations to the saints: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9).

As wonderful as was the offer of God to Israel, it was only a picture of the higher blessings he offers us. What is our answer? Israel replied, “All that the LORD hath spoken we will do” (Exodus 19:8). Let this be our answer also, but let us be more resolved than Israel to fulfill it.

When Israel rebelled some weeks later, “there fell of the people that day about three thousand men” (Exodus 32:28). So it was at the giving of the Letter of the Law. But when the Spirit of the Law was given at Pentecost, it brought life in proportion as the other brought death: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

When Israel was being inducted into the law covenant, Moses “offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD” (Exodus 24:5). The blood of sprinkling secured from these was used on the people: “And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people” (verse 8). Paul refers to this in Hebrews 9:19, and showed that this required Jesus to die as a sacrifice for sins to thus secure our relationship to God (Hebrews 9:23,24). We, who have accepted God’s offer to become priests and kings, have thus had our “hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,” to cleanse us, and thus enable our induction into Christ (Hebrews 10:22).

Subsequently seventy elders of Israel accompanied Moses, Aaron, and his eldest sons to a remarkable vision of God, who appeared seated high above on a firmament of sapphire. There they feasted and had blessed commu-

nion. So at the opening of the Gospel age did the leaders of faith enjoy blessed spiritual communion with God through Jesus. The testimony of this lingers to this day through the words of New Testament Scripture, so that the blessings of that early time are available even to us.

Closing Chapters

The remainder of the chapters through and including chapter 34 are covered in the articles *Seven Ascents* (p. 8) and *Descending in Glory* (p. 11). In chapter 35 Moses addresses Israel, explaining again the holiness of the Sabbath, which was a day of release from the mundane issues of life, to focus on the higher spiritual values of God and godliness. That was to be a day of holy convocation.

Today it is common in Christian cultures to observe Sunday in this respect, a day of relief from the profane concerns of life, to assemble with other Christians, focus on things of the spirit, and mutually edify one another in the faith. If we let the spirit of the world permeate into the blessedness of this opportunity, we are moving away from the spirit and toward the world. Let us, on the other hand, commit ourselves, and encourage our brethren during our meetings with them, avoiding the profane cares of this life.

Moses then gave instructions about building the tabernacle; the work then proceeds through chapter 39. At last “it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up” (Exodus 40:17).

God approved: “So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation [literally, tent of meeting—where God would meet with man], and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:33, 34).

So let us build, and seek the Lord’s approval.

*Let us publicly
declare our
appreciation
to Jehovah
who gives us
our victories.*

News & Views

PBI News

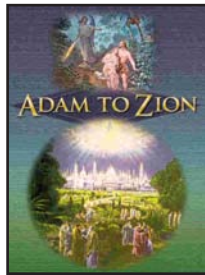
PBI Directors Elected

The members of the Pastoral Bible Institute have elected these seven individuals to serve as directors for the next twelve months:

Todd Alexander	George Tabac
Len Griehs	Tim Thomassen
Carl Hagensick	Dan Wesol
Michael Nekora	

Adam to Zion

This popular book describing in pictures and simple English the truths of the Divine Plan has just been reprinted as a paperback for use in witnessing work. The Institute is providing it for only two dollars, postpaid anywhere in the world. Use the back of the insert found in this issue to place your order.



World News



Religious

Christian mobs killed scores of Muslims, burned their corpses, and defaced mosques as religious violence escalated in Nigeria. The riots started in the mostly Muslim north when Muslims demonstrating against Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed attacked and killed about a dozen Christians. More than 30 churches were torched. Angry Christians in the south took revenge on the Muslim minority there, killing dozens of Muslims in the city of Onitsha alone.

—*The Week*, 3/10/2006

USA: 85% of the population believe in God; 11% believe in a universal spirit

EUROPE: 41% believe in God; 33% believe in a universal spirit

—*Pew Research Center*, July 2005

Pakistan's tiny Christian community has faced attack as a means of seeking revenge for ... Western governments perceived as being 'anti-Muslim'. Churches have been set ablaze, congregations shot at and Christians killed. Non-Muslims make up

around three percent of Pakistan's population of 149 million. Of these, two percent are Hindus, concentrated in Sindh, and around one percent Christians, the largest number based in the Punjab province. All suffer discrimination in various forms.

—*AlertNet.org*, 2/20/2006

The oldest known copy of Old Testament Scripture was discovered in 1979. Two tiny silver scroll amulets were found in a Jerusalem tomb. They were etched with ancient Hebrew script. The script contained a quotation from the blessing recorded in Numbers 6:24-26. The inscription dates to the seventh century B.C., around the time of Solomon's Temple and the prophet Jeremiah. So these verses are older than the Dead Sea Scrolls by approximately 400 years.

—*Israel My Glory*, January/February 2006

Religious pressure on textbooks is growing well beyond Christian fundamentalists' attack on evolution. History books are the biggest battleground, as groups vie for changes in texts for elementary and secondary schools that cast their faiths in a better light. Hindu groups, in particular, have swamped California authorities with proposed revisions, which would delete or soften references to polytheism, the caste system, and the inferior status of women in ancient India. For textbook publishers, to ignore religious groups is to risk exclusion from markets.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 1/25/2006



Social

The Al-Salaam Boccaccio 98 sank in the Red Sea on its way from Saudi Arabia to the Egyptian port of Safaga. The governor of Red Sea province, Bakr al-Rashidi, said that only 388 of the more than 1,400 people on board were known to have survived. Most of the passengers were low-income Egyptians returning from working in Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf countries. Fire broke out in the ship's parking bay as it was about 20 miles from the Saudi shore. The crew decided to push across the Red Sea to try to reach Egypt's shores 110 miles away. As it burned, many passengers moved to one side of the ship. An explosion was heard, and high winds helped topple the unbalanced vessel.

—*Associated Press*, 2/6/2006

Worldwide measles deaths dropped 48% in six years as immunization efforts reached more children in sub-Saharan Africa. The World Health Organization and the U.N. Children's Fund said the fall in deaths to 454,000 in 2004 from 871,000 in 1999 was "an outstanding public-health success story." A safe, cheap and effective measles vaccine has been available since the 1960s, but the highly infectious disease is still a major killer of children in developing countries.

—*Los Angeles Times*, 3/11/2006

Windmills are sprouting on hillsides across the Midwest. Mason City became the first Iowa town to set rules that allow windmills in commercial, industrial and residential zones. The increasing popularity of wind energy is part of a surge in the development of alternative energy source. Last year, a record 9,149 megawatts of electricity was produced by wind in the USA. That's just 0.5% of all electricity generated in the country.

—*USA Today*, 2/24/2006

A supernova has astronomers around the globe racing to their telescopes. The advent of the exploding star was heralded by a burst of gamma-ray radiation, detected February 18 by NASA's Swift satellite. Three days later, scientists matched the burst to the birth of a supernova. The gamma ray burst was the second closest to Earth ever detected.

—*USA Today*, 2/24/2006

Russian authorities killed more than 270,000 chickens in the country's southwestern-most corner to contain a new wave of lethal bird flu, a day after Turkey reported suspected outbreaks in almost a third of its provinces. Avian influenza has broken out across western Asia, possibly leading to outbreaks in Eastern Europe and the European Union. In Turkey, more than 1.87 million poultry have been culled in the past two months.

—*Bloomberg News*, 2/17/2006

Scientists exploring an isolated jungle in one of Indonesia's most remote provinces discovered dozens of new species of frogs, butterflies and plants, as well as mammals hunted to near extinction elsewhere, members of the expedition said. The December expedition to Papua on the western side of New Guinea island was organized by the U.S.-based environmental organization Conservation International and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. The scientists said they discovered 20 frog species, including a tiny microhylid frog less than a half inch long, four new butterfly species and at least five new types of palms.

—*Associated Press*, 2/7/2006

For Africans born with a genetic condition known as albinism, which deprives skin, hair and sometimes eyes of pigmentation, life is complicated by prejudice and illness. Albinism in parts of Africa is estimated to affect as many as one in a thousand people. In many African cultures, they are seen as bearers of bad luck. Many are abandoned at birth or even slaughtered in ritual sacrifice. Albinos in many parts of Africa are in special danger because of animist customs that ascribe magical powers to potions made from sacrificed albinos. Around Africa, parents hide their albino children ahead of elections and important sports competitions, fearing that they will be abducted and killed.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 1/6/2006

A landslide in a central Philippine province buried all but three or four of the 300 houses in a village of Saint Bernard municipality, as well as a school building. As many as 3,000 people may have been killed. The La Nina weather phenomenon is causing three to four times more rain than normal in the Philippines.

—*Bloomberg News*, 2/17/2006

India, despite its reputation as a bottomless well of back-office talent ready to scoop up jobs, is having an increasingly difficult time finding qualified workers to fuel its booming services sector. Consulting firm McKinsey & Co. says India's information-technology industry could face a deficit of 500,000 workers as soon as 2010. At the heart of India's dilemma lies the antiquated higher-education system that produces around three million graduates a year, but of such uneven quality that many aren't employable.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 1/4/2006



Political

China plans the biggest increase in its defense budget in four years, a move likely to raise concern around the world. China announced at its annual National People's Congress, that it would boost military spending to \$35.1 billion, an increase of 14.7 percent. The increase comes as China has stepped up rhetoric against Taiwan. A U.S. government report issued in July said China is building up its military to be able to project power beyond Taiwan. Analysts say China's official budget masks the true size of spending, which could be as much as four times greater.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 3/6/2006

The Kenyan government squandered millions of dollars on luxury vehicles—mainly for the personal use of senior officials—during its first year in office, despite pledges that it was committed to

tackling poverty and creating a more efficient administration. A report compiled by Transparency International and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, said the spending was an example of “wasteful expenditure and conspicuous consumption.” The report said that between January 2003 and September 2004, the government purchased numerous vehicles worth \$12 million.

—*Financial Times*, 1/31/2006

Once best known for opium, the active ingredient in heroin, Afghanistan has been working its way up the production ladder. Now it's the world's largest producer and exporter of heroin. Clandestine labs churn out so much product that the average heroin price in Western Europe tumbled to \$75 a gram from \$251 in 1990, adjusted for inflation, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The business is also spreading disease and addiction in Central Asia and Russia, where traffickers have ramped up a smuggling route to the heart of Europe.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 1/18/2006

The United Nations is calling on military forces from the developed world to help transform an international protection force in Sudan's Darfur region, amid reports of continuing atrocities and warnings that its peace process is failing. The African Union, whose 7,000 strong force in Darfur has proved unable to halt widespread violence, is running out of funds. The challenges for any mission would be massive; Darfur is a vast, underdeveloped region about the size of Iraq, bereft of infrastructure. The conflict involves fractious rebel groups, government-backed militia and government forces.

—*Financial Times*, 1/18/2006

Financial

China raised its estimate for the total size of its economy in 2004 to 15.988 trillion yuan (\$1.981 trillion). The National Bureau of Statistics' revision put China ahead of Italy as the world's sixth-largest economy based on 2004 Gross Domestic Product figures.

—*Dow Jones*, 1/4/2006

Royal Caribbean International ordered the world's largest and most expensive cruise ship yet, a \$1.24 billion vessel that will be almost as long as four football fields and hold up to 6,400 passengers. The ship, dubbed Project Genesis, will be 220,000 gross registered tons when it is delivered to the world's second-largest cruise operator in fall 2009 by Oslo shipbuilder Aker Yards. The ship will weigh about [as much as] a Nimitz-class aircraft carrier. Aker said its contract price of about \$1 billion would be



“the most valuable ship ever ordered in the history of commercial shipbuilding.”

—*Washington Times*, 2/7/2006

Making a billion just isn't what it used to be. In the [Forbes] inaugural ranking of the world's richest people 20 years ago, there were some 140 billionaires. Just three years ago there were 476. In 2006, the list is a record 793. They're worth a combined \$2.6 trillion, up 18% since last March. Their average net worth: \$3.3 billion.

—*Forbes*, 3/9/2006

Americans' personal savings rate dipped into negative territory in 2005, something that hasn't happened since the Great Depression. Consumers depleted their savings to finance the purchases of cars and other big-ticket items. The Commerce Department reported Monday that the savings rate fell into negative territory at minus 0.5 percent, meaning that Americans not only spent all of their after-tax income last year but had to dip into previous savings or increase borrowing.

—*BusinessWeek.com*, 1/30/2006

Exxon Mobil Corp., the world's biggest publicly traded oil company, announced fourth quarter (October-December) net income of \$10.71 billion. It was one of the biggest quarterly profits of any company in history. The biggest driver of Exxon's surging profit was high energy prices amid the world's increasing thirst for oil and natural gas.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 1/31/2006

There is little doubt that house prices have become one of the dominant issues in the global economic outlook. US house prices have increased by more than 60 percent during the past five years and were still increasing at a 13-14 percent annual rate in the final quarter of 2005. The market value of residential real estate in the US is now equal to nearly 200 percent of personal disposal income, compared with 160 percent during the early 1990s. Mortgage-related assets are now equal to 61 percent of bank credit compared with less than 50 percent 10 years ago and 25 percent in the 1970s. The US housing market now has forms of mortgage lending that have not existed since the 1920s.

—*Financial Times*, 1/26/2006

The “Jobs Bank” is a two-decade old program at General Motors under which nearly 15,000 auto workers continue to get paid after their companies stop needing them. To earn wages and benefits that often top \$100,000 a year, the workers must perform some company-approved activity. Many do volunteer jobs or go back to school. The Jobs Bank at GM and other U.S. auto companies costs around \$1.4 billion to \$2 billion per year.

—*Wall Street Journal*, 3/2/2006

The European Union [EU] agreed to provide US \$143 million in urgent aid for Palestinians before a government takes office led by Hamas, a group the bloc considers a terrorist organization. The funds were required to avoid “economic chaos” from paralyzing the Palestinian Authority [PA], French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said. Officials said the aid package comprises US\$48 million to pay for the PA’s energy and other utility bills, US\$76 million for health and education projects, and US\$21 million to help the PA pay its employees. The money is designed to keep the PA afloat after Israel’s decision to withhold US\$50 million a month in tax funds.

—*Jerusalem Post*, 2/28/2006

★ Israel

With the expected exit from politics of Ariel Sharon, just over a year after the death of Yassir Arafat, a generational shift in power across the middle East is almost complete. In the broader Middle East, Mr. Sharon is among the last of the towering and controversial figures whose careers were defined largely by the Arab-Israeli struggles. Over the past six years, the region has lost Hafez al-Assad, Saddam Hussein, and King Fahd in Abdelaziz of Saudi Arabia. With King Hussein of Jordan long gone, Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian president is the only leader from the old guard to still be in power. The redrawing of Israel’s political map is only now beginning.

—*Financial Times*, 1/10/2006

Israeli inventor Alon Bodner has developed a breathing apparatus that allows divers to breathe underwater without cumbersome, compressed air tanks. The new invention uses relatively small amounts of air that already exist in water to supply oxygen to both scuba divers and submarines. Bodner got the idea for his invention from fish that do not perform chemical separation of oxygen from water. Instead, they use the dissolved air that exists in the water in

order to breathe. Using a physics principle known as Henry’s law, Bodner was able to extract enough oxygen from seawater for a human being to breathe. A model has already been built and tested. It runs on rechargeable batteries and can be worn in the form of a vest.

—*Dispatch from Jerusalem*, November-December 2005

Nearly six million people have visited Yad Vashem’s (Israel’s Holocaust Memorial) new on-line Holocaust computer database since the web site was launched in 2004, according to the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority. The database, accessible free of charge at www.yadvashem.org, lists the names of approximately three million of the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust. Names not listed can be submitted along with stories of those lives.

—*Dispatch from Jerusalem*, November/December 2005

Israel’s life-science industry has grown by more than 16 percent annually (to \$1 billion); Israelis now hold the most medical-device patents per capita in the world. [This statement appeared in an article about PillCam, a tiny Israeli-developed wireless camera which a patient swallows. PillCam transmits two photos per second to a wearable hard drive as it travels through the body. It produces images of the small intestine not otherwise obtainable.]

—*Newsweek*, 2/20/2006

Israel has become a large-scale international lender in the past three years, with global sources owing Israel US\$23 billion at the end of 2005. According to a Globes report, global debt to Israel rose 92% over the past year. Most of the debt (US\$22.7 billion) is to the private sector, and Israel banks are owed US\$3.1 billion. The public sector, though, led by the Israeli government, continues to borrow in order to recycle debts and cover budget deficits. Israel’s gross external debt was US\$75.5 billion in 2005, a drop of US\$250 million.

—*Arutz 7*, 2/28/2006

El Al, Israel’s largest airline, completed the installation of an anti-missile system on each of its 29 passenger aircraft. The new security equipment was developed by Israel Military Industries and its subsidiary Elta, both of which are state-owned. Carrying a US\$1 million price tag per unit, the ... installation of the system is the final touch on a security overhaul that began in 2002 after an al-Qaida terrorist in Kenya fired shoulder-held missiles at an Israeli charter flight.

—*Arutz 7*, 2/17/2006

News & Views is edited by Len Griehs. Items of interest may be sent to him at 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades CA 90272, or via e-mail (Griehs@comcast.net).



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Convention Announcements

Inquiries should be sent to the individuals listed below.

May 6, 7—Metro Detroit MI.
 Southfield Hotel & Conv. Center,
 17017 Nine Mile Rd., Southfield
 MI. Norman or Linda Pedlar
 586.759.3459.
 ☎ MrsLindaJarvisP@aol.com

May 7—West Newton PA.
 Sewickley Grange Hall. John
 Krasonic 724.872.6215.

May 20, 21—Agawam MA.
 Captain Leonard House, 668
 Main St., Agawam MA 01001.
 Fred Sansom 860.889.7517.
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May 20, 21—Buffalo NY.
 Holiday Inn, 5440 Camp Road,
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 585.322.7459.

May 26-29—Los Angeles CA.
 Chapman University, Orange CA.
 Richard Bieniak 949.457.0894.
 ☎ rjbieniak@aol.com

May 27, 28—Puget Sound WA.
 Clarion Hotel Seattle Airport,
 3000 So. 176th St., Seattle WA
 98188. Rosalie Palmgren
 425.742.4439
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May 27-29—Chicago IL.
 Elk Grove High School, 500 Elk
 Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village
 IL 60007. Julie Vasilevich
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June 16-18—Portland OR.
 Ramada Inn, 6221 NE 82nd Ave.,
 Portland OR. Jerry Black
 503.659.6930.
 ☎ gbblack@pceez.com

June 25—Detroit MI.
 Northwest YWCA, Grand River at
 Beech Daly, Redford MI. Frank
 Nemesh 248.649.6588.
 ☎ NemeshF@aol.com

July 7-9—Vernon Canada.
 Schubert Centre, 3505 30th Ave.,

Vernon BC. Bernice Blencowe
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 ☎ dblencowe@telus.net

July 15-20—General Convention
 Univ. of Pittsburgh, Johnstown PA.
 Michael Nekora 310.454.5248.
 ☎ nekora@aol.com

July 19-23—Indiana-Ohio Conv.
 Manchester College, 604 E. Col-
 lege Ave., North Manchester IN
 46962. Sarah Easton
 812.945.5526.
 ☎ s.l.easton@att.net

Aug. 5, 6—Winnipeg Canada.
 Northwood Community Centre,
 1415 Burrows Ave., Winnipeg.
 Barry Kuly 204.757.9166.
 ☎ thekuly@sshaw.ca

Aug. 6-11—International Conv.
 Nowy Sacz, Poland. Tom Mach-
 acek 219.662.8107 (Int'l. Youth
 seminar follows in Baia Mare,
 Romania, Aug. 14-18.)
 ☎ tommach@aol.com

Aug. 18-20—Portland OR.
 Collins Retreat Center, 32867 SE
 Highway 211, Eagle Creek OR.
 Robyn Hack 503.682.9016
 ☎ Hack@easystreet.com

Sept. 2, 3—Jackson MI.
 FaHoLo Camp & Conf. Center,
 3000 Mt. Hope Rd., Grass Lake
 MI 49240. Mrs. Ray Lumley
 517.782.7252.
 ☎ Lumley@aol.com

Sept. 2, 3—New York NY.
 Wellesley Inn, Two Bridges Road
 at Exit 52 (Route 80), Fairfield
 NJ. Debra Szybinski
 212.998.2095. ☎ ds2@nyu.edu

Sept. 2-4—Seattle WA.
 Seabeck Christian Conf. Center,
 15395 Seabeck Highway NW,
 Seabeck WA 98380. Laurie Flinn
 253.939.9838.
 ☎ laurie@flinn.us

And finally...

God led Israel out of bondage into marvelous freedom. He brought them away from the idols of Egypt and gave them a divine Law with divine principles. Then he made them a remarkable offer. "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 ... a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." This offer is fulfilled even more completely in the Gospel Age Church. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation ... called out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9). Let us highly esteem this honor, and highly esteem those whom God has so honored.



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