

Him. Though there are some problems connected with it, it has generally been taken that the word "shiloh" refers to the coming Messiah. This special blessing upon Judah may have come to him because he demonstrated leadership in those chapters relating to obtaining corn in Egypt, even being willing to bear the blame and the penalty both to his father for the life of Benjamin (Gen. 43:3-9) and to Joseph when Joseph was going to keep Benjamin in ward (Gen. 44:18-34). Such a spirit well depicted ahead of time the attitude of Jesus (Judah's descendant), who was willing to be punished that we might go free.

As we bring this study toward a close, we might ask why it was that God chose Jacob instead of Esau. While it is true that Jacob was possibly not as godly in his overall demeanor as were Abraham and Isaac, yet even at that, he was a credit beside Esau. But, more than that, the real reason lay in this difference: Esau treated his birthright and the blessings that would have attended it (especially in coming generations) with contempt from the standpoint of value while Jacob had the utmost regard for the value of being heir to the Abrahamic promises. Heb. 12:16 calls Esau a "profane person", who for one (only one) morsel of meat (something earthly whose value was slight) sold his birthright (that which had time-lasting blessings connected with it). Those many today preferring the pleasures of sin which last but for a season to the joys of the Lord that will last forever are showing the same lack of character as Esau. Truly,

"Esau despised (belittled) his birthright" (Gen. 27:34).

There are surely many things to be observed in the life of Jacob. He fooled his father when he impersonated Esau; his own sons deceived him when they brought back Joseph's coat of many colors stained with blood. He brought sorrow to others; his sons brought sorrow to him when they sold Joseph. He didn't live as long as his forefathers, and his life had many trials and hardships. How apt are his words when he came to Egypt and was brought in before Pharaoh:

"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage" (Gen. 47:9).

The Israelites in Egypt

In that period of time when God was conversing often with Abraham about his offspring, Abraham having just offered a sacrifice to God fell into a deep sleep about sundown. In his sleep, a horror of great blackness came upon him because of something that was to happen to several generations of his offspring. He was assured, however, that blessings would follow that period of blackness.

This vision that God gave to him is one of the most remarkable in all the Bible. It went:

"Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance" (Gen. 15:13,14).

This prophecy, well known to Bible students, was obviously looking to the time when the children of Israel would be slaves in Egypt and after a long period of time (here referred to in round numbers as 400 years) would come out with great substance, which they did when the time of the exodus came.

With these thoughts as a background, let us study about the Israelites in the land of Egypt.

I. How They Got There.

A. Joseph, Taken There As A Slave, Arose To Great Power.

Jacob had loved Rachel, but because of the custom of the times and place for a father to marry off his firstborn daughter first, he found himself unwittingly married to Leah (Gen. 29:16-26). Loving Rachel as he did (and it not being unc customary for the patriarchs to take more than one wife), he agreed to serve another seven years for her (Gen. 29:27,28). It was Leah who bore Jacob his first four sons--Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah (Gen. 29:31-35)--after which she ceased bearing for a time. Envyng her sister and being unable to bear Jacob children herself, Rachel gave her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob to wife, which resulted in Bilhah bearing him his fifth and sixth sons--Dan and Naphtali (Gen. 30:1-8). Seeing that she was no longer bearing children and seeing that Rachel had given her handmaid to Jacob to wife, Leah decided to give her handmaid Zilpah to Jacob to wife. This resulted in Zilpah bearing Jacob his seventh and eighth sons--Gad and Asher (Gen. 30:9-13). Then, through a bargain between Rachel and Leah whereby Rachel obtained from Leah's son Reuben some mandrakes (a plant believed to stimulate childbearing), Leah was given to Jacob again in the role of a wife (evidently, Rachel was dominating Jacob entirely at this time). The result was three more children by Leah (two sons and a daughter)--Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah (Gen. 30:14-21). Thus, eleven children had been born to Jacob, but his favorite wife Rachel had not as yet borne him a child. When God finally opened Rachel's womb, and Joseph was born (Gen. 30:22-24), it is easy to understand why Joseph became Jacob's favorite son. Gen. 37:3 also adds the thought that Joseph was his father's favorite because of having been born in Jacob's advanced years. This favoritism caused Joseph's brothers to hate him (Gen. 37:3,4).

Besides, God had given Joseph some inspired dreams whereby Joseph's ultimate superiority to them was made known. Gen. 37:5-10 says:

"And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And He said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood

upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

Years later, when his brothers came to Egypt to buy grain from him, and they bowed down before him as the mighty ruler in Egypt, he remembered his dreams (Gen. 42:6-9). To say the least, these dreams, though of God, added fuel to the raging fire of hatred already blazing in his brothers' hearts toward him. One day, when far from home, their animosity took definite action when they first thought of killing him, but changed their plans to selling him to a caravan of traders passing by on their way to Egypt (Gen. 37:12-28). Thus, the first of the Israelites arrived in Egypt. When the caravan arrived in Egypt, they sold Joseph to Potipher, one of Pharaoh's officers (Gen. 39:1).

The next verse opens with a statement (repeated centuries later by Stephen in Acts 7:9) that accounts for all that developed later in Joseph's favor:

"And the Lord was with Joseph" (Gen. 39:2).

First, through the blessings of God's prosperity, Joseph became great in Potipher's eyes (Gen. 39:3-6). But, through the wickedness and misrepresentation of Potipher's wife, Joseph was temporarily demoted, being cast into prison (Gen. 39:7-20). But, through the blessings of the Lord, Joseph there became great in the eyes of the prison-keeper (Gen. 39:21-23). While still in prison, he became great in the eyes of Pharaoh's imprisoned butler, who was reinstated to his butlership as prophesied by Joseph (Gen. 40:1-23). Though the butler forgot to remember Joseph to the king as he had promised to do, Joseph's time was yet to come, which did come when Pharaoh dreamed the dreams about the fat and thin cows and the fat and thin ears of grain, and Joseph was called in to interpret them (Gen. 41:1-36). As a result, Pharaoh put Joseph over the entire project of storing the grain during the years of plenty, making him next in power to himself in Egypt. Gen. 41:39-41 records the words of Pharaoh to Joseph as follows:

"Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou...See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt."

And the reading in Genesis continues:

"And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 41:42,43).

B. Jacob And All His Move To Egypt.

It is a well known story of the mighty famine arriving as predicted, and how the aged Jacob sent his sons (except Benjamin, his last child who was a full brother of Joseph, having Rachel as his mother also, whose birth had transpired after the selling of Joseph) into Egypt to buy grain (Gen. 42:1-4). It is also familiar to most readers of Joseph's making himself known to his brothers on their second journey to buy grain (Gen. 45:1-8). Because there yet remained five more years of the famine, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and the rest of Jacob's household to move them to Egypt (Gen. 45:9-11). When Jacob received the news that Joseph was yet alive and a ruler in Egypt, it was too much to believe, but when he saw the great wagons sent from Egypt, he knew the report was true, for his sons had no way of owning such wagons (Gen. 45:26-28). Thus did Jacob and the other Israelites move into the land of Egypt (Gen. 46:5-7).

C. Where They Settled.

Pharaoh was most cordial to the father and people of Joseph. Learning they were shepherds and could profitably use good grazing land, he gave the following orders to Joseph:

"The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle" (Gen. 47:6).

The land of Goshen was in the northern part of Egypt that lay east of the Nile delta and was very ideal for a pastoral people such as the Israelites.

II. Israelites Put Into Bondage.

A. Factors Bringing This About.

With Joseph being such a mighty man in Egypt and with Pharaoh being so gracious to the Israelites, we might wonder at first just what could have brought about the enslavement of these people. Sometime after the death of Joseph--we know not how long after--the Scripture says:

"There arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Exo. 1:8).

Possibly with none of Joseph's people succeeding to his glory in the land of Egypt after his death, it was only a matter of time until the Israelites were not regarded with any particular regard by the Egyptians. Living as they did in a somewhat segregated portion of Egypt and being shepherds (which was an abominable occupation to the Egyptians--Gen. 46:34), the Israelites easily remained a distinct people in Egypt. With this expected estrangement, it is easy to see how a future king might arise who did not regard the Israelites as the pharaoh of Joseph's day had done.

There was another factor, however, that entered in to the Israelites becoming enslaved. They were multiplying so fast. Exo. 1:7 says of them:

"And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them."

This caused a fear in the heart of the king. He said to his fellow-Egyptians:

"Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land" (Exo. 1:9,11).

Therefore, the descendants of Jacob were cast into an enslavement to the fearful Egyptians.

B. Measures Employed By The Egyptians Against The Israelites.

The first thing they did was to set taskmasters over them, who made them build treasure cities for the king and who afflicted them (probably with whips) as they worked. But, the Scripture says:

"The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Exo. 1:12).

When this didn't cut back the population, the king gave specific instructions to the midwives attending the births of the Israelite children to kill all the male children born among them. This didn't work either, for the Scripture says:

"The midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive" (Exo. 1:17).

Though such mistreatment and abuse did not blot out the Israelites, it did make life most miserable and almost unbearable for them. Exo. 2:23 says:

"The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage."

And the next two verses say:

"And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them" (Exo. 2:24,25).

Thus, it was evident that God was going to step in and change the picture for His covenant-people, which brings us to our next study.

Delivered From Egyptian Bondage

Christ, our high priest, can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15), and it was just as true of God the Father that He was touched with the pitiful condition of His people, the Israelites, in the severe and uncivil bondage which they suffered at the hands of the Egyptians. And we know that whenever people cry to God, as the Israelites did, and their cry comes up before God, as theirs did (Exo. 2:23-25), God is surely going to do some-

thing in behalf of His own. As we shall see in this study, He arose and saved them with a mighty and outstretched arm.

I. Moses, God's Earthly Agent Of Deliverance.

A. His Family.

His father and mother (Amram and Jochebed--Exo. 6:20) were both of the tribe of Levi (Exo. 2:1). He had a brother Aaron (Exo. 6:20) and a sister Miriam (Exo. 15:20). Moses was the last-born of the three children, but by far superceded the other two in both character and importance. As odd as it seems, the fact remains that though Moses was the great law-giver, Aaron the first high priest of Israel, and Miriam a leader of women in Israel, neither of them got to enter the land of Canaan.

B. Adopted By Pharaoh's Daughter.

Moses was born in those days when the king's commandment was to throw every male baby of the Hebrews into the river. The faith of his parents caused them to disregard the order as long as they could:

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment" (Heb. 11:23).

But, as he became about three months of age, it became increasingly hard to conceal him. When she could conceal him at home no longer, his mother made a little basket out of bulrushes, daubed it with slime and pitch, put the baby into it, and let him float in the reeds along the river's edge while his sister Miriam kept watch at a distance. What days of anxiety those were for the little family! How they hoped for the best, though what that would be, they had no idea. (It is interesting to note here that John D. Rockefeller, that great multi-millionaire oil magnate, dispatched many men and much equipment to Egypt to prospect for oil as a result of seeing the word "pitch" in Exo. 2:3 in his Bible class one Sunday morning. Believing in the complete accuracy of the Bible, he reasoned that wherever there was pitch, there was oil. Some of his richest producing oil fields were those he found in Egypt as a result of the above incident.)

When the king's daughter came to the river to bathe, she sent one of her maidens into the river to get the ark. When she opened it, there was the little baby crying. Somehow, this touched her heart, and although he was one of the Hebrews' children, she took him to be her own child. At the proper time, Miriam hurried up to the scene and asked her if she would like to have one of the Hebrew women nurse the baby. Thus, Moses' own mother was brought to the king's daughter, who said to her:

"Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages" (Exo. 2:9).

And what an important matter this turned out to be--reared by his own mother who was going to teach him concerning the true God and that the Hebrews were His chosen and covenant people. Being the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he naturally had every educational advantage. Of his education,

Stephen said:

"And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22).

There is some historical evidence that might point toward the fact that Moses was in line for the Egyptian throne had he not in time renounced his royal ties.

C. Fled into Midian.

By combining Exo. 2:11-14; Heb. 11:24-26; and Acts 7:23-29, we have the following thread of thought:

"By faith Moses when he was come to years (Heb. passage)--that is, forty years old (Acts)--he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter any longer, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God (the Hebrews to whom he really belonged) than to enjoy all the luxuries and pleasures of the palace (Heb.). Thus, sympathizing with his brethren who were so bitterly hated and treated and evidently having the full intention of delivering them from the Egyptians (Acts), seeing an Egyptian mistreating a Hebrew, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand (Exo.). This was evidently the beginning of his plans to deliver them, though his brethren did not take to his leadership (Acts). The next day, when he saw two Hebrews striving together, he sought to make peace between them, but when one of them said, 'Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?' Moses fled both because fearing that this supposedly concealed news would reach Pharaoh and because his brethren had not rallied to his deliverance ideas (Acts)."

The faith that Moses had has been rightfully credited to those early years of teaching and training by his godly and believing mother. When he fled from Egypt, he took refuge in the land of Midian (on the Arabian Peninsula).

D. His Forty Years In Midian.

While there, Moses married Zipporah, one of the daughters of Reuel (sometimes called Jethro), who was priest of Midian (Exo. 2:16-21). The Midianites and the Hebrews were both descendants of Abraham--the Hebrews through his son Isaac, and the Midianites through his son Midian by his wife Keturah.

One day when he was eighty years old (Compare Acts 7:23 with Acts 7:29,30), as he was keeping the sheep, the call of God came to him to return to Egypt to deliver the Israelites from their bondage. Exo. 3:1 speaks of this call occurring at Mt. Horeb while Acts 7:30 speaks of it taking place at Mt. Sinai. It is possible that the same mountain is meant, the two names merely being used interchangeably with each other (which is not uncommon), or it is possible that one name was the range and the other a particular peak in the range. The call began when a bush was on fire that was not consumed. As Moses drew near, evidently to inspect the matter, God spoke to him out of the burning bush:

"Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground...I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their

taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large land, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites...Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me; and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exo. 3:5-10).

Thus, Moses (as leader) was to become a part of that great unfolding plan of God which had included Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for Moses was to lead the people who descended from them into the very land that God had promised to them and their descendants. But, Moses possibly had psychological problems connected with going back to Egypt. He had left there in fear because of having killed the Egyptian (Exo. 2:15), but that king had died (Exo. 3:23). We don't know whether this incident that had occurred so many years ago still struck fear into Moses or not--at least, he did not include it in his remarks to God at the burning bush. At the burning bush, we see "Moses, the excuse-maker", for he offered God several excuses:

"Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"... "When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?"... "But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee"..."O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exo. 3:11-4:10).

Each excuse, God answered adequately. His first excuse ("Who am I that I should do this?") was answered by a promise that God would be with him. The second excuse ("Who shall I tell them you are?") was answered by God's telling him to say that "I am" had sent him, who was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The third excuse ("They won't believe me") was met by giving him the miraculous use of his staff. His fourth excuse ("I am not eloquent, but slow of speech") was met by the promise that God would be with his mouth to help him. It was evident to God that Moses was just trying to keep from going, and when Moses suggested that he get somebody else to go, the anger of God was kindled against him. Finally consenting to go, God gave him his brother Aaron as a spokesman (Exo. 4:14-16). Thus, they headed out for Egypt.

II. God's Plagues Upon The Egyptians.

A. They First Went To The Israelites.

This was natural. They communicated to them their intentions, and they performed wonders in the sight of the people. The result of their going to the Israelites was:

"And the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped" (Exo. 4:31).

B. They Next Went to Pharaoh.

At this first visit, they merely asked for a three-days' leave of absence for the Israelites so that they could go into the wilderness and sacrifice to Jehovah. Pharaoh wanted to know who this Jehovah was that he had to obey His voice to let Israel go sacrifice. Suffice it to say, before Moses and Aaron were through with him, he was going to know who Jehovah was! Instead of letting the people go, Pharaoh supposed the Israelites had too much time on their hands, so he commanded the taskmasters to make their work harder. As a result, the wearisome Israelites came to Moses and complained because of what his action had brought upon them, and Moses in turn went to God about the matter, saying:

"Wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all" (Exo. 5:22,23).

God assured Moses that He would work Pharaoh over so properly that he would let the people go and that He would give them the land of Canaan, which He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exo. 6:1-8). But, although Moses spoke these good words to the people, they didn't believe them, for so far, they had seen nothing come out of Moses' efforts (Exo. 6:9).

C. They Went Into Pharaoh A Second Time.

They went in before Pharaoh again, made their demands, and Aaron cast down his staff before the king, and it became a serpent. The king called for his "tricksters", who cast their rods, and they became serpents. Even though Aaron's serpent swallowed theirs, Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let the people go.

D. The Plagues Began.

Because Pharaoh hardened his heart in disobedience to God, God started a series of plagues upon the land. The first was turning the water to blood, which resulted in the fish dying and the people having no water to drink (Exo. 7:17-25). The second plague was that of the frogs (Exo. 8:1-7). The third plague was turning the dust into lice (Exo. 8:16-19). The fourth plague was the scourge of flies (Exo. 8:20-24). The fifth plague was the smiting of Egypt's cattle with murrain and death (Exo. 9:1-6). The sixth plague was the smiting of the Egyptians and their beasts with boils (Exo. 9:8-11). The seventh plague was the sending of fire and hail (Exo. 9:13-26). The eighth plague was the scourge of locusts (Exo. 10:3-15). The ninth plague was that of three days of thick darkness over the land of Egypt (Exo. 10:21-23).

At first, when a plague was brought, the king would call for his magicians to do the same thing. They failed him when they came to the third plague, declaring to him that God was truly behind this plague. But, he paid no attention. When a plague became so unbearable, he would repent and say that he would let the people go. The plague would then stop, and he would harden his heart and reverse his decision.

It is worthy of attention that the Israelites were free from

the blight of these plagues (Exo. 9:6; 9:24-26; 10:22,23). It is also a fact that the gods of the Egyptians failed them in the time of these plagues, for these various plagues were aimed directly at a number of their important gods (like the Nile, the frog, the sun, cattle, etc.). Repeatedly was it said that by these miraculous plagues would the Israelites and the Egyptians both know that Jehovah was God (Exo. 6:7; 7:5; 7:17; 8:22; 10:2; 14:4; and 14:18). Much interesting material could be presented upon this matter, but we must refrain from the lack of adequate space for it.

D. The Final And Crushing Plague.

God had a crushing plague left--the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians, both of man and cattle. He instructed the children of Israel to kill a lamb per household (unless the household was too small to eat a lamb, in which case two households could go together), roast it, put its blood on the door posts of their houses, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (Exo. 12:3-9). At midnight, God would send a mighty death angel throughout Egypt, and in every house where there was no blood on the door post, the firstborn of its cattle would die. Thus, it happened. Death visited Pharaoh's own household, and it visited the household of the most insignificant Egyptian (Exo. 12:29,30). The Egyptians had had enough! Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron yet that night and said:

"Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also" (Exo. 12:31,32).

Having obtained jewels of gold and silver and fine raiment from the Egyptians, they started out yet that night.

III. Their Exodus From Egypt.

A. The Prophecy of Joseph.

Before he died, Joseph predicted the Israelites' exodus (departure) from Egypt and charged them concerning his body:

"God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence" (Gen. 50:24,25).

They had sold him into Egypt. They were to carry his dead body out of Egypt. The promise they made to Joseph must have been handed down from generation to generation, for when Moses and the children of Israel began their journey from Egypt, they took Joseph's bones with them (Exo. 13:19).

B. Crossing The Red Sea.

It was evidently several days before the Israelites came to the Red Sea, which they would cross to leave Egypt. During their journeying, a pillar of cloud went before them in the daytime, and a pillar of fire by night (Exo. 13:21). Pharaoh could not stand to think of losing all the slave labor of the Israelites (Exo. 14:5). Consequently, he decided to pursue after them to recover them if he could (Exo.

14:6-9). He overtook them as they were camped by the sea. The sight of them approaching naturally struck terror into the hearts of the recently liberated Israelites. What was to be done? Moses spoke:

"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exo. 14:13).

Immediately, God spoke the following instructions to Moses:

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen" (Exo. 14:15-18).

That night, the angel of the Lord caused the great pillar of cloud to stand between the Israelites and the Egyptians (Exo. 14:19,20). Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and God sent a strong east wind, which caused the waters of the Red Sea to divide so that the Israelites were able to walk across the bottom of the sea on dry land between the two great walls of water (Exo. 14:21,22). When the Egyptians saw them emerging on the other side, they started across also, but when they got into the midst of the sea, God told Moses to stretch his hand out over the sea, and the walls of water gave way, and all the Egyptians were buried together in the midst of the sea. There is no doubt but what it would take great faith for the Israelites to go down into the bottom of the sea when the walls of water on both sides of them towered so much above them. The Hebrew writer has not overlooked the matter of their faith. He wrote:

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned" (Heb. 11:29).

The news of this miraculous passing through the sea and of the death of Pharaoh and his men got around to the other nations, and they didn't forget it either. Forty years later, after Moses was dead, when Joshua sent the two spies into Jericho, Rahab (a woman of Jericho who talked with the spies) expressed the knowledge and feeling of the other nations. In fear, she said:

"I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:9-11).

In closing this study, we notice that there are many striking comparisons to be made between Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage and our deliverance from the

bondage of sin: (1) They were in a terrible bondage, and so were we; (2) They could not deliver themselves from that bondage no matter how much they desired to do so, and neither could we; (3) God raised up Moses to be their deliverer, and He raised up Jesus to be our deliverer; (4) They had to believe Moses and follow his leadership in order to be delivered, and we have to do the same concerning Jesus; (5) When they were on their way out, Pharaoh did everything he could to retain their service, and the devil does the same thing today; (6) They were not out of Egypt until they had gone through the waters of the Red Sea, and we are not out of the state of bondage until we have gone through the waters of baptism; (7) They came up on the other side with a song of victory and thanksgiving to God for their deliverance, and we come up out of the waters of baptism thankful for our deliverance from sin, and we go on our way rejoicing; (8) Shortly at Mt. Sinai, they were taught what God expected of them, and following baptism, we are taught to observe the commandments of Jesus for our lives; (9) When they emerged from the sea, they were not yet in their home in Canaan--just starting--so when we are baptized, we have not yet reached heaven--just begun our journey thitherward; (10) Not all (only a few) who started for Canaan actually arrived there, and not all who begin the Christian life actually gain heaven's shore; (11) Only those who pleased God by their lives throughout the wilderness period entered Canaan, and only those who please God by their Christian lives will be admitted to heaven. May God help us to be in that number "when the saints go marching in".

The Law Given at Sinai

The movements of the children of Israel between Egypt's bondage and "Canaan's fair and happy land" were completely in God's hand. When the pillar of cloud or of fire moved, they followed; when it stopped, they encamped. The first principal stop that God had planned for them was Mt. Sinai in southern Arabia. But, before they got to Mt. Sinai, there were several interesting items of their history that took place.

When they came to Marah, the drinking water was bitter for them. God directed Moses to cast a tree into the water which, when done, made the water sweet (Exo. 15:23-25). This murmuring by the Israelites was only a foresight of further murmuring during the next forty years association that Moses would have with them.

In the Wilderness of Sin (thought to have been named for the Babylonian moon God "Sin"), they murmured for food. God's answer to this was a daily shower of manna from heaven, Manna (which means, "What is this?") was a small round substance as small as frost (Exo. 16:14), white like coriander seed (Exo. 16:30), and tasted like wafers

made with honey (Exo. 16:30). Each morning, each person was to gather his allotment of one omer (seven pints), but no more. Whatever was not eaten was to be destroyed. Some of them (people-like) gathered more, and others tried to keep some of it over, but God caused it to spoil on their hands, and what an odor! (Exo. 16:16-20). The day before the sabbath, they were to gather twice as much (Exo. 16:5,22). Manna was the Israelites' food until they entered Canaan forty years later (Exo. 16:35). An omer of it was to be preserved by the priests for a perpetual witness to the goodness of God through the wilderness period (Exo. 16:32,33). Twice during this forty-years' period God miraculously fed them with quails also (Exo. 16:12,13 and Num. 11:31,32).

At Rephidim, there were two incidents that took place. Once more, the people murmured to Moses, this time because they had no water. Water was brought forth to them out of a rock that Moses struck with his staff at God's direction (Exo. 17:1-7). It was there also that the Amalekites came against them in battle. Joshua (of whom we read much later) was chosen as the general to lead an army against them. Joshua put the Amalekites to flight as Moses stood on a hill overlooking the battle with his hands held up by Aaron and Hur (Exo. 17:8-13). Several hundred years later, God sent king Saul against the Amalekites in remembrance of their hostility against the Israelites at this time (I Sam. 15:2,3). As they came to the "mount of God", Moses' father-in-law came to him and rejoiced because of the Israelites' victory over Egypt that God had worked through Moses, but when he saw all the responsibility that Moses had to bear, he advised him most wisely to secure capable assistants, which he did (Exo. 18).

It was three months from the time they left Egypt until they encamped near Mt. Sinai. This stop must be considered an important mile-post in their history and travels, for it was here that God delivered to them the law by which they and their succeeding generations were to be governed.

I. The Circumstances Of The Giving Of The Law.

A. The People Instructed To Prepare For God To Speak To Them.

God 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 thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount!" (Exo. 19:10-13).

Surely, all of this was to impress the people that God was a God to reverence, and that it was a solemn matter for them to listen when He would speak to them.

B. God's Descent Upon The Mount To Speak To The People.

The people had made themselves ready as directed, and

on the third day, God descended upon Mt. Sinai as He had promised:

"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; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice" (Exo. 19:16-19).

God called Moses to come up into the mountain. Realizing that the people might try to break through in curiosity to see God, He gave Moses the following instruction:

"Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish" (Exo. 19:21).

C. The First Portion Of The Law Was Delivered Orally From Mt. Sinai.

When Moses had gone down and had charged the people about not breaking through in an effort to gaze upon God, God spoke the ten commandments' portion of the law to the people (Exo. 20:1-17). While He spoke the people stood afar off, listening and beholding the smoking mountain (Exo. 20:18). Trembling, they said to Moses:

"Speak thou unto us, and we will hear: but let not God, speak with us, lest we die" (Exo. 20:19).

Then for more than three chapters (Exo. 20:23--23:33). God gave Moses laws to deliver to the people. This extended passage opens:

"Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon" (Exo. 20:22-26).

After Moses received these laws, he spoke them to the people (Exo. 24:3); then he wrote them in a book (Exo. 24:4). Next, he built an altar upon which were offered burnt offerings and peace offerings (Exo. 24:4). Moses took half of the blood and sprinkled the altar (Exo. 24:6), and the other half he sprinkled on the book of laws he had written and on the people (Exo. 24:7,8; Heb. 9:19).

D. Moses Called Up Into The Mountain.

Taking Joshua with him, they went up into Mt. Sinai while Aaron, Hur, the seventy elders, and the people remained below. Forty days were they in the holy mount (Exo. 24:18) in which time God revealed to Moses the pattern for the tabernacle, the instructions to make Aaron and his sons the priests in Israel, and detailed words concerning keeping the sabbath (Exo. 25:1--31:17). It was at this time that He gave Moses the two tables of stone

engraven with the ten commandments (Exo. 31:18).

II. Disobedience Broke Out At The Foot Of Mt. Sinai.

A. Three Times Before Moses Went Into The Mountain, The People Had Affirmed That They Would Be Obedient.

Before God had spoken any law to them, He said to them:

"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" (Exo. 19:4,5).

To this good offer, all the Israelites answered together:

"All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Exo. 19:8).

Then, when God had spoken the ten commandments to them from Mt. Sinai and Moses had rehearsed to them what God had spoken to him, all the people said with one voice:

"All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (Exo. 24:3).

Then, at the time that Moses brought the children of Israel into covenant-relationship with God by sprinkling with blood both the book of the covenant and the people, even after he had freshly read all the book of the covenant to them, the people said:

"All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Exo. 24:7).

B. The Golden Calf Set Up And Worshipped.

Because Moses was gone for several short weeks (long weeks to the Israelites), the people got it into their heads that he was not coming back. They came to Aaron and said:

"Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him" (Exo. 32:1).

These people, having known nothing but an endless number of gods in all their years in Egypt, were quick to revert to idolatrous ideas. Aaron showed his weakness when instead of rebuking the people, he chose not to resist them. He told the people to break off their golden ear rings from which was formed a golden calf (one of the most common idols of the Egyptians). The next morning, the people offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar that Aaron had built before the calf, and they carried on their idolatry before it. All of this happened in spite of the fact that God had forbidden them to make any graven images and in spite of the fact that they had solemnly promised three times to obey all that God had said unto them.

C. Moses Sent Down To The People.

Knowing what the people were doing, God said to 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, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the

land of Egypt...I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation" (Exo. 32:8-10).

We cannot but appreciate the unusual concern that Moses demonstrated for the reputation of God in his reply to God:

"Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 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" (Exo. 32:11-13).

But, don't suppose that Moses was taking a soft and compromising attitude toward the people's actions, for when he and Joshua neared the camp to the place where they received their first view of what was actually taking place below, Exo. 32:19,20 says:

"It came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and straved it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it."

He next reprimanded Aaron for the whole affair, who sought to excuse himself for the action.

D. The Outcome Of This Idolatry.

When Moses saw the nakedness of the people (for they were naked in their idolatrous ceremonies), he stood in the gate full of righteous indignation and said:

"Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me" (Exo. 32:26).

The tribe of Levi shared Moses' attitude toward the whole matter and took their stand with Moses. Moses gave them the following instructions:

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour" (Exo. 32:27).

And they did so, and three thousand Israelites lay dead at the hands of the faithful Levites (Exo. 32:28). God called Moses back up into the mountain, and new tables of stone were engraven with the words that had been written on the former tables (Exo. 34:1-28).

III. The Law Lasted Until The Cross.

The giving of the law took place between fourteen hundred and fifteen hundred years before the birth of Jesus. This law was given by God to the Israelites as their rule of faith and practice. It thoroughly furnished them unto every good work. The Scriptures show that this law lasted until Jesus died upon the cross, but no longer.

A. Jesus Referred Men To It As Authoritative As Long As He Lived.

For instance, when Jesus had healed a leper, He gave the healed man the following instructions:

"Go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded" (Mark 1:44).

This is concrete proof that Jesus considered a law as much in effect at the end of the dispensation for which it was given as at the beginning of its dispensation. The same is true today of truth and commandments given through the apostles for our present dispensation. In other words, when God gives a law, it is in effect until God sees fit to repeal it.

So often today, we hear people deny the necessity of baptism because of Jesus' promise to the penitent thief that he would be with Him in paradise (Luke 23:42,43). But, the thief lived and died under the law of Moses (of which baptism was no part); he never lived under the New Testament as we do (of which baptism is an essential part). This but shows the ignorance of the dispensations set forth in the Bible and possibly the prejudice that so many have against the truth of the New Testament which they so boldly deny.

B. Scriptures That Teach That The Law Ended At The Cross.

The following verses in the New Testament epistles were written to Christian people:

"Ye are not under the law" (Rom. 6:14); "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4); "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16).

Notice, according to the following verses, that the law ended with Christ:

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24,25); "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made (that is, Christ--see verse 16)" (Gal. 3:19); "Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead (Jesus)" (Rom. 7:4); "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. 10:4); "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14).

C. Some Of Its Principles Have Been Incorporated In The New Testament.

Stealing (Eph. 4:28), murder (I John 3:15), adultery (Gal. 5:19), covetousness (I Cor. 6:10), and many other acts legislated about in the law of Moses have likewise been legislated about in the New Testament, though the authority for regarding them as sins lies in the fact that they are legislated against in the New Testament rather than because they are legislated against in the law of Moses, whose authority ended at the cross.

The Contents of the Law

Many a fine New Year's resolution to "read the Bible through this year" has come to an abrupt end when the reader gets into the laws recorded in Exodus and Leviticus in spite of the good beginning made when reading Genesis and the first half of Exodus. To one who merely "reads" the Bible, these laws given by God to the children of Israel will hold but little interest, but to the real student of the Bible, the laws enacted by God for His chosen nation are far from being dry and uninteresting. While a law-maker today would naturally delight himself in the studying of these laws (many of our own civil laws have been drawn from the law of Moses to the Israelite nation), yet the Christian student appreciates knowing more about God's mind upon the common matters of everyday life as expressed in the Hebrew law. He further finds it important to study the ceremonial portion of the law for its typical value and for lessons fulfilled in various times of the New Testament faith. Various references to those Old Testament laws are made in his New Testament, and the more familiar he is with those Old Testament laws, the more sense his New Testament makes to him.

It is a shame that so many care so little for the Hebrew law section of the Bible. This is inexcusable. Anyone who is spiritual should pick up his Bible tonight (or as soon as sufficient time is available--even an hour will be sufficient to whet the appetite for more reading) and read and memorize the ten commandments in Exo. 20. Then, beginning with Exo. 21, take a chapter at a time and work through each chapter with great care. You will notice that so many verses begin, "If this or that happens," and then goes on to say what should be done. You will probably not be able to remember all the things legislated against and their particular punishments, but you will remember many of them. Then, when you come to the 25th chapter of Exodus, you may wish to reserve the next few chapters (which give the instructions for the building of the tabernacle) and the last chapters of Exodus (which describe in detail the actual building and erection of the tabernacle) for a special study later on of the tabernacle itself. Before going to the little more difficult laws in the books of Leviticus and Numbers, you may wish to go back and review yourself on the laws in Exodus that you have learned. Even though these laws are repealed, they should not be cut out of the Bible, nor should they be piously left in the Bible and then impiously neglected! You may say that it is hard reading in places, but remember that "there's honey in the rock, my brother!"

We trust that this present study will not only increase your understanding of this part of God's revelation, but that it will create a personal appetite in you for more study in this much-neglected field.

I. The Ten Commandments.

The ten commandments are the best known portion of the law of Moses. This is as it should be, for they are the very heart of the entire law. Of all the laws that God gave through Moses, these alone were chiseled into rock. Their brevity, limited number, practicality, and systematic arrangement all enter in to advance their general familiarity to religiously-minded people. They are recorded twice in the Bible: Exo. 20 (when originally given) and Deut. 5 (when rehearsed by Moses forty years later to the new generation ready to enter the land of Canaan).

A. The Ten Commandments Listed.

1. The 1st commandment:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exo. 20:3).

2. The 2nd commandment:

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them" (Exo. 20:4,5).

3. The 3rd commandment:

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Exo. 20:7).

4. The 4th commandment:

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates" (Exo. 20:8-10).

5. The 5th commandment:

"Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exo. 20:12).

6. The 6th commandment:

"Thou shalt not kill" (Exo. 20:13).

7. The 7th commandment:

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exo. 20:14).

8. The 8th commandment:

"Thou shalt not steal" (Exo. 20:15).

9. The 9th commandment:

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Exo. 20:16).

10. The 10th commandment:

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" (Exo. 20:17).

B. "Seventh-Day Keepers" Position.

The Seventh Day Adventist and others who keep the seventh day claim that since these ten commandments were chiseled into stone that it was only the ceremonial and other such dispensational laws that passed away at the cross, but that these ten laws engraven in stone are actually

the eternal law of God and as such are still in effect today by virtue of that fact. In our last study, we pointed out that the Scriptures teach that the law of Moses passed away, though some of its statutes have been re-enacted in the New Testament. Whatever distinction God had in mind by putting these few laws in stone, He surely did not have in mind the idea that these would abide forever, even throughout our present dispensation. Why do I say this? Simply because when Paul wrote that the law had passed away, he referred expressly to the laws on the tables of stone as having passed as much as he did to any other. Two such references will have to suffice:

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; NOT IN TABLES OF STONE, but in fleshy tables of the heart...Not that we are sufficient of ourselves...but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter (the law) killeth, but the spirit (the gospel) giveth life. But if the MINISTRATION OF DEATH, WRITTEN AND ENGRAVEN IN STONES, was glorious...so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation (the law) be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness (the gospel) exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away the law—even that engraven in stone) be glorious, much more that which remaineth (the gospel) is glorious" (11 Cor. 3:3-11).

In the above lengthy quotation, we have employed capital letters to call your attention to various relevant statements so as to make it possible to eliminate extensive comment. Notice also Col. 2:14,16,17:

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross...Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

When Paul, in the above passage, tells of the law that was nailed to the cross, he included the sabbath, even labeling it as a type, but not the real substance. Heb. 4 shows that the sabbath at the end of the working week was typical of our heavenly rest at the end of life's work.

C. Will People Be Saved By Keeping The Ten Commandments?

God's high evaluation of the eternal truth in most of the ten commandments is seen in the fact that He has re-enacted most of them (though not the sabbath one) in the New Testament. Yet, people are often heard to say that if one merely keeps the ten commandments, he will be saved. The next time someone tells you that, ask him to name all ten of them for you. After all, he ought to have the "plan of salvation" well in mind! The chances are, he won't be able to do it! Try it and see. If the ten commandments alone would save anybody, that is all the Bible that anybody would need. Why do we have more? The ten commandments contain a lot of

good truth from God, but there are many other instructions and condemnations in the Bible that are not included in the ten commandments (such as drunkenness, prayer, doing good to our enemies, parents' responsibilities toward their children, a husband's attitude toward his wife, and vice versa--only to name a few). Even as a moral code, the ten commandments would not be sufficient because they were never given as a complete governing code. Furthermore, if men can be saved by keeping the ten commandments, Christ came and died in vain, for they had the ten commandments to live by a long time before Christ ever came to the earth! Let us appreciate the ten commandments, but let us not misteach them.

D. Why "Two" Tables?

God gave Moses "two" tables of stone containing the ten commandments. Why "two"? It may have been because there would not have been room to have written so much on just one stone without it being too large to be carried conveniently by Moses and later stored in the limited area of the ark of the covenant (Deut. 10:1-5). Or, there might have been some special significance. Most Bible scholars divide the ten commandments into two groups: (1) The first four governing their relationship to God, (2) The last six governing their relationship to one another (that is, man-to-man). If there would be any special significance, it would seem that possibly the first four were written on one table, and the last six on the other table.

II. Different Kinds Of Laws.

There were many, many laws given to the Israelites--far more than we can possibly treat in the confines of this present study. They are not particularly cataloged for us in the Bible with any system, but for convenience's sake, scholars have classified them under various headings. While all classification systems do not totally agree, they are naturally very similar. Anyway, some suitable system will be helpful to adopt. But, regardless of what system is adopted, remember that all of the law was nailed to the cross--not just a particular kind of laws, such as "ceremonial laws".

A. There Were Civil Laws.

By "civil", we mean the kind of laws regularly enacted by a government for the governing of people's business affairs, property rights, etc. Remember that the Hebrew people were a nation, and since they would be living under no earthly government, it was necessary for God to enact certain civil laws to govern them. A look at a few of these laws will prove most interesting:

"He that stealeth a man (kidnapping), and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death" (Exo. 21:6).

"If a man (a master) smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free (release the slave) for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake" (Exo. 21:26,27).

"If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if

the ox were wont (accustomed) to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death" (Exo. 21:28,29).

"If a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; the owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them; and the dead beast shall be his" (Exo. 21:33,34).

"If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep" (Exo. 22:1).

"If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution" (Exo. 22:6).

"If a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good" (Exo. 22:14).

B. There Were Moral Laws.

These laws had to do with what was morally right and wrong. There were many of them given. We shall give you just a few.

"Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people" (Lev. 19:16).

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man" (Lev. 19:32).

"The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 20:10).

"He that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death" (Exo. 21:15).

"Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death" (Exo. 22:19).

"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart" (Lev. 19:17).

"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." (Deut. 21:18-21).

C. There Were Religious Laws.

The term "religious" is used in an accommodated sense, for religion itself involves doing anything that God commands. By "religious" laws, however, we mean those laws that relate to God Himself that can hardly be classified either "civil", "moral", or "ceremonial".

"He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed" (Exo. 22:20).

"Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee" (Exo. 23:24,25).

"Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. And

he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him" (Lev. 24:15,16).

D. There Were Ceremonial Laws.

There were many laws that were "ceremonial". They related to sacrifices, feasts, consecration of priests, the tabernacle, leprosy, touching dead bodies, clean and unclean meats, and others could also constitute a section on "health laws".

"If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Lev. 1:2-6).

"These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat" (Lev. 11:2,3).

"These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales...they shall be an abomination unto you" (Lev. 11:9,10).

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread (the passover), and in the feast of weeks (pentecost), and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee" (Deut. 16:16,17).

Time and space both fail us to go further into the contents of the law, but you can see that the water is deep, but rewarding.

Near the end of Jesus' life, when His enemies were pressing Him from every side, one of the "experts" on the law of Moses asked Him what the greatest commandment in the law was. After this study on the law, we ought to be interested in His answer:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40).

In other words, Jesus boiled all of the law down to two cardinal duties: (1) Love for God, and (2) Love for fellow-man. Paul showed in Rom. 13:8-10 that love for one's fellow-men would fulfill all the law about stealing, killing, bearing false witness, etc., for if a man loved his neighbor, he wouldn't do those things to him. Though these two laws are a foundation for all the other laws, it is significant that God did not give but these two laws. Man needed, especially in his relationship to God, a guide whereby he might be able to direct his love in such a way that there would be no doubt as to whether he was doing right or not. Zacharias and Elizabeth, John the Baptist's parents, are

good examples of those who carried out God's will as relates to the law (Luke 1:5,6), but the Pharisees are otherwise. They took care of some of the external requirements (like tithing), but they omitted these basic, underlying requirements (judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God) (Matt. 23:23 and Luke 11:42).

Under Christ, we have every moral requirement that the Hebrews had, but praise God, we have a Savior in our covenant that was no part of the law except in type and shadow!

The Tabernacle

Seven chapters of the book of Exodus (25-31) are devoted to God's instructions for a tabernacle to be built, which was to become the very center of the Israelites' religious life. Six more chapters (35-40) are devoted to telling of its construction, erection, and dedication. It took about seven months to construct the tabernacle, and when it was first erected at the foot of Mt. Sinai, it had been just about one year since the Israelites had been delivered from Egypt. The many chapters devoted to the subject, the important place that it played in the religious life of the Israelites, and because it foreshadows so many elements of Christianity justly merit for the tabernacle a place in these special studies in "The Plan of God".

I. The Pattern For The Tabernacle.

For a Biblical study of the tabernacle's pattern, consult Exodus, chapters 25-31.

A. The Pattern Was God-Given.

Our God is a God of order and plan. The orderliness of our universe indicates it. He gave Noah a pattern for the ark. A pattern for the Jerusalem temple was given to David, who passed it onto his son Solomon, who built the temple. He has given a plan of obedience for the alien sinner to comply with in order to come into possession of the remission of his sins. He has revealed instructions for the Christian life, for marriage and the home, and for the church of the saints. It is no wonder, then, that He gave a pattern for the tabernacle, and especially in view of the fact that it was to be one of His most elaborate pieces of Old Testament typology. Moses received this pattern when he was in Mount Sinai when God first delivered the tables of stone to him.

B. Moses Charged To Build All Things According To The Pattern.

No less than four times did God charge Moses to build all things of the tabernacle according to His pattern. Listen to those charges:

"According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Exo. 25:9); "Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exo. 25:40); "Thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof

which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exo. 26:30); "As it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it" (Exo. 27:8).

When everything had been constructed, Moses saw that everything had been done according to God's plan:

"Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did they... And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them" (Exo. 39:32,43).

The Hebrew writer possibly included Moses' faithfulness in the building of the tabernacle when he wrote:

"Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after" (Heb. 3:5).

Considering the fact that the tabernacle typified certain facts in Christianity, it was important that it be built according to divine specifications; otherwise, there would have been no analogy between it and that which it was intended to typify.

C. The Tabernacle And Its Furniture Were All Of Portable Construction.

When we say that all these were portable, we do not mean to convey the idea that they were cheap. Far from it. The different pieces of furniture were overlaid with pure gold, and the candlestick and the mercy seat were themselves of solid gold. Its various curtains and hangings, the coverings of the tabernacle proper, as well as the walls and sockets, etc. used in putting the tabernacle together were of the costliest materials.

Yet, it was portable. It had to be. It was to serve a people who would be on the march for almost forty more years. They must have something that they could take along with them. A temple built of stones would not do. The various pieces of furniture had rings at their corners through which staves were slipped so they could be carried (Exo. 27:4-7; 30:4), evidently without being touched by the hands of those who bore them. What a lesson in reverence for the things of God! If men were not to touch these things of God in transporting them, how much less will God forgive men actually tampering with and changing His things to suit them!

Wherever they journeyed, they dismantled the tabernacle, and carried it with them. After they crossed the Jordan and conquered the land, the tabernacle was set up at the town of Shiloh (Josh. 18:1), which was in the land allotted to Ephraim. You will remember that it was in Shiloh that the high priest Eli lived, and that Samuel grew up. Notice the references to Shiloh as the place of the Israelites' worship, the abode of the high priest, etc. in I Sam., chapters 1-3. In time, hundreds of years after the settlement in Canaan under Joshua, the portable tabernacle was replaced by the magnificent temple of Solomon at Jerusalem, which had a lay-out very similar to that of the tabernacle.

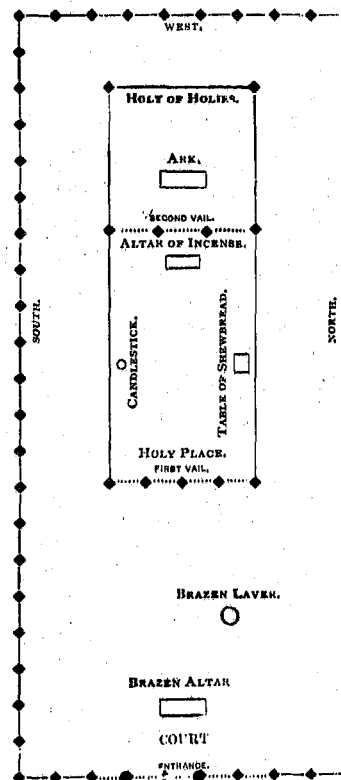
D. The Tabernacle's Various Compartments.

See the diagram. The Court (figuring eighteen inches to

a cubit) was one hundred fifty feet long and seventy-five feet wide (Exo. 27:18). The curtained sides were seven and one-half feet high (Exo. 27:18). The Holy Place (according to an intricate study of Exo. 26) was thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide. The height of the sides of the Holy Place was also fifteen feet. The Holy of Holies was fifteen feet long, fifteen feet wide, and its sides were also fifteen feet high. While the area in the outer Court was open to the sky, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies area was actually in the form of a tent. Within the tent, they were divided from each other by a curtain (called the "vail"). The tent itself was made of fine linen, blue, purple, and scarlet tapestry with cherubim (angels) woven into the material, which must have made a most elaborate effect (Exo. 26:1). Evidently for protection from the weather, the tent itself had three coverings over it--directly above it was a covering of goats' hair (Exo. 26:7); above that one was a covering of rams' skins dyed red (Exo. 26:14); above that one was the one made of badgers' skins (Exo. 26:14). The Hebrew for "badgers' skins" is more properly "seals' skins".

E. The Furniture In Each Compartment.

See the diagram. Exo. 40:1-7 is a condensed section concerning the location of the various pieces of furniture. The altar of burnt offerings and the laver were in the Court outside the tent. The candlestick, the table of shewbread, and the altar of incense were in the Holy Place. The ark of the covenant with its mercy-seat top surmounted by the two golden cherubim was in the Holy of Holies.



The pattern for the altar of burnt offerings is given in Exo. 27:1-8. The pattern for the laver is given in Exo. 30:17-21. The pattern for the golden candlestick is given in Exo. 25:31-39. The pattern for the table of shewbread is

given in Exo. 25:23-30. The pattern for the altar of incense is given in Exo. 30:1-10. The pattern for the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat is given in Exo. 25:10-22. The ark contained (Heb. 9:4) the two tables of stone (representing the law of God to Israel), the pot of manna (representing the goodness of God to the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings), and Aaron's rod that budded (representing the divine authority vested in the Aaronic priesthood among the Israelites).

II. The Construction Of The Tabernacle.

For a study of this section, consult Exodus, chapters 35-40.

A. The Materials For The Tabernacle Were Generously Contributed By The Israelites Themselves.

God said to the people through Moses:

"Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' (seals') skins, and shittim wood, and oil for the light, and spice for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, and onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate. And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the Lord hath commanded; the tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets, the ark, and the staves thereof, with the mercy seat, and the vail of the covering, the table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shewbread..." (Exo. 35:5-19).

All Israel departed to their tents, and Exo. 35:22-28 says:

"And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the Lord. And every man, with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers' (seals') skins, brought them. Every one that did offer an offering of silver and brass brought the Lord's offering: and every man, with whom was found shittim wood for any work of the service, brought it. And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair. And the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breastplate; and spice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense."

One of the finest examples of generosity in giving is this offering the children of Israel made for the tabernacle. They brought, and they brought, and they brought. Finally, the builders told Moses they had too much material, and Moses issued a decree to the people to bring no more:

"And they (the builders) spake unto Moses, saying: The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man or woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing" (Exo. 36:5,6).

B. Those Who Led In The Construction.

God selected and empowered Bezaleel and Aholiab to lead in the actual construction of the tabernacle. He said to Moses in the mount:

"I have called by Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee" (Exo. 31:2-6).

C. The Tabernacle Set Up And Dedicated.

We have already made mention of the fact that Moses examined the various elements of the tabernacle and found them to be according to the pattern (Exo. 39:33-43). Moses having found everything correctly made, God instructed him to set the tabernacle up and the various pieces of furniture, and the priests who were to function in the tabernacle with oil was also included in the Exo. 40:1-15 instructions. When all these instructions were carried out, God honored it by filling it with His glory and in causing the cloud by which they had been led to stand above it (fire by night):

"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys" (Exo. 40:34-38).

And so the book of Exodus comes to a close!

III. The Typical Nature Of The Tabernacle.

For a study of the typical nature of the tabernacle, study principally Hebrews, chapters 9 and 10.

That the tabernacle typified the religion of Christ cannot be Scripturally denied. Heb. 9:8,9 says:

"...The first tabernacle...was a figure for the time then present."

The priests of the tabernacle and the gifts that they offered are said to have been an example and shadow of coming things (Heb. 8:4,5). The typology of these various Mosaic enactments is likewise affirmed in Heb. 10:1.

Following are the conclusions quite generally accepted concerning the various courts, their respective furniture, and the priests who ministered in them.

A. The High Priest.

The Scripture plainly calls Jesus our high priest (Heb. 4:14). More about this in our next study.

B. The Other Priests.

The common priests functioned in the holy place. The

Scripture is very plain is saying that we Christians form a holy priesthood (I Pet. 2:5). More about this in our next study.

C. The Altar Of Burnt Offerings.

Upon this altar, the animal sacrifices were made. This altar found its fulfillment in the death of Christ (Heb. 10:9-12).

D. The Laver.

This in which the priests washed before entering the holy place to minister to the Lord is generally taken to be typical of baptism. A probable reference to this is Heb. 10:22.

E. The Outer Court.

This is usually taken to be typical of the world in which Jesus was crucified. If so, notice that baptism (the laver) is not something that one obeys after he has entered the church (the holy place, as we shall see), but which he obeys before entering the church. Denominationalism has tried to move the laver into the holy place.

F. The Holy Place.

This place in which the priests served (Heb. 9:6) was typical of the church in which Christians today serve God. The following points dealing with the furniture in the holy place also indicate that the holy place typified the church.

G. The Candlestick.

This was the only light in the holy place. By its light, the priests did their work in the holy place. It hardly needs arguing that the candlestick typified the Holy Spirit inspired enlightening Word by whose light Christians go about their service (I Tim. 3:14,15).

H. The Table of Shewbread.

There is a table in the church from which Christians partake. It is the Lord's table spread with the emblems of His body and blood. Surely the table of shewbread prefigured the Lord's table. It is important to notice that the bread upon the table of shewbread was renewed once a week. The Lord's supper is observed weekly.

I. The Altar Of Incense.

Several passages show incense and prayer closely related (Rev. 5:8; Luke 1:18). This altar was located right next to the holy of holies, which contained the symbolic presence of God above the mercy seat. When does one feel the presence of God more than when in prayer? Notice, too, that this altar of incense was not in the outer court (the world). Many today have tried to move it out into the outer court instead of leaving it in the holy place by saying that people out of Christ have the right to pray.

J. The Holy of Holies.

Heb. 9:24 shows that the holy of holies typified heaven into which Jesus, as our high priest, has entered for us, presenting His own blood to the Father once for all time for our redemption.

K. The Vail.

The way into heaven was not realized under the Old Testament, for the high priest alone went through the vail into the holy of holies (Heb. 9:7,8). When Jesus died, the vail of the temple (which took the place of the tabernacle) was rent from top to bottom (Matt. 27:50,51). Heb. 10:19,20 shows that through the crucified body of Jesus, we now have entrance to heaven granted to us.

All the services rendered to God by the priests were carried out with the greatest amount of solemnity. Not everybody had the privilege of ministering--only the priests. They were strictly charged of God concerning their work. They must do all things in the way God directed. A severe punishment attended irreverence for God's instructions. Nadab and Abihu were destroyed by fire for an act of disobedience in performing their duties (Lev. 10:1,2). All the time the priests were in the holy place, only a curtain separated them from the symbolic presence of God. If these who performed the service that was merely typical of our service did it with the strictest reverence and the highest regard for God, should not our service be equally so solemn as theirs?

Let us close our study by reading Heb. 10:19-23:

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)."

The Levitical Priesthood

During the patriarchal times, the father had been God's priest over his household. When He spared the firstborn of Israel's sons and cattle at the time of the tenth plague upon the Egyptians, He said:

"Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine" (Exo. 13:2).

It is generally thought that God's intention was to make the firstborn of each family the priest in behalf of the family. But, the firstborn of the Israelites evidently forfeited the privilege of being God's priests when they mixed in with the rest of the Israelites in the calf-worship at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Only the Levites had kept themselves free from that idolatrous incident (Exo. 32:25-28). From that time on, the tribe of Levi came into prominence and was chosen of God to be the priestly tribe. Num. 3:40,41 shows that God purposely replaced the firstborn by the Levites:

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Number all the first-

born of the males of the children of Israel from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names. And thou shalt take the Levites for me (I am the Lord) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel."

When Moses numbered the firstborn, there were 22,273 (Num. 3:42,43). This was approximately an equal number to the Levites--22,000 (Num. 3:39). So, the exchange was about equal. God even made the Israelites buy (redeem) the 273 extra firstborn (Num. 3:46-51).

Aaron was of the tribe of Levi. God separated him and his offspring from the rest of the tribe of Levi to be the ones who actually ministered unto Him in the priestly role (Exo. 28:1). Besides Aaron and his sons, the tribe of Levi had descendants from Kohath, Merari, and Gershon known as the Kohathites, the Merarites, and the Gershonites. These different families had different responsibilities relating to the tabernacle and the religious life of the Israelites, but they did not minister to God in the office of the priests as did Aaron and his sons. While all the Levites were sometimes referred to as priests (Josh. 3:3), yet the word "priest" was usually applied to Aaron and his descendants as those who ministered before the altar and the word "Levites" to all the others. Thus, in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:31,32), the "priest" was evidently a descendant of Aaron who offered sacrifices, and the "Levite" was either a descendant of Kohath, Merari, or Gershon.

I. The Consecration Of Aaron And His Sons.

A. Special Garments Were To Be Made For Them.

Exo. 28 describes in minute detail the priestly garments. verses 2-39 describe the high priest's garments, and verse 40 tells of the garments of the other priests. A study of that chapter indicates these garments were very costly and must have been very beautiful. It is of particular interest that the high priest wore a small stone set in gold upon each shoulder. Six of the tribes' names were engraven in one of the stones, and the other six names in the other stone. A golden bell was to be worn on his robe so that his sound could be heard as he went into the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle and as he came out. It is said that these costly garments were for glory and for beauty. These garments no doubt prefigured the "royalty" of the New Testament priesthood (I Pet. 2:9) and the spiritual beauty of those functioning as priests unto God today (Heb. 7:26; Eph. 2:10).

B. The Actual Consecration.

God spoke to Moses as follows:

"Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Lev. 8:2,3).

With the children of Israel gathered on the east side of the tabernacle, Moses washed Aaron and his sons with water, put upon them their garments, anointed the tabernacle and its furniture and Aaron with oil, killed a bullock

upon which the priests had laid their hands, and sanctified the altar with its blood. The fat and other parts of the inwards, he burned upon the altar. The bullock's hide, flesh, and dung, he burned outside the camp. Next, he brought in a ram on which the priests laid their hands; then he killed it, sprinkled its blood upon the altar, and burned the ram's body upon the altar for a burnt offering. Another ram, called the "ram of consecration", was likewise killed after the imposition of the priests' hands, and the blood of that ram was used to anoint the priests' right ears, the thumbs of their right hands, and the great toes of their right feet. It is generally thought that the ear must be sanctified, for with it, the priest would hear the law of God; the hand must be sanctified, for with it, he would offer sacrifices to God; and the foot must be sanctified, for with it, he would tread the sacred courts of the tabernacle. Certain parts of this ram's body, together with unleavened bread, a cake of oiled bread, and a wafer, were put into the priests' hands to wave before God as a wave offering after which Moses burned it for another burnt offering. Even Moses took the breast of that ram and waved it as a wave offering before God for himself. The oil and the blood which were upon the altar, Moses used to sprinkle Aaron and his sons to sanctify them and their garments. Aaron and his sons were commanded to remain within the tabernacle for seven days, which were required for their consecration. All of this is given to us in Lev. 8, all of which was in keeping with the way God had commanded it to be done in Exo. 29.

C. The Priestly Office Was Given Exclusively To Aaron And His Sons.

God said to Moses:

"Thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office; and the stranger (anybody else) that cometh nigh shall be put to death" (Num. 3:10).

There came a time when certain other Levites challenged both the leadership of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron. They contended that since they too were holy, Moses and Aaron should not be in an exalted position above them. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (the three leaders in the sedition) were swallowed alive by the earth, and the two hundred and fifty men who aspired to be priests were consumed by fire. Their brasen censers were taken by Eleazer (one of Aaron's sons) and beaten into broad plates for covering the altar of incense which they had approached. Num. 16:40 says the purpose of these plates was as follows:

"To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord."

Num. 16 tells of the foregoing rebellion and the way it ended.

When the rest of the Israelites charged Moses and Aaron with thus killing the people of the Lord, God commanded a rod for each tribe (with the name of the tribe written upon it) to be laid up before the Lord so He might choose in the presence of the people who was to be His priest. Num. 17:7-10 tells us the rest of the story:

"And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness. And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. And Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod. And the Lord said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not."

Heb. 9:4 shows that Aaron's rod was actually kept in the ark of the covenant. King Uzziah, with his heart lifted up, presumed to enter the holy of holies and there burn incense before God in defiance of the Aaronic authority, but he was smitten with leprosy as he resisted the attempts of the priests to banish him from the temple (II Chron. 26:16-21).

II. Qualifications Of A Priest.

A. Physical Fitness Required.

One might eat of the holy things with the other priests who had some physical defect, but he could not serve in the holy place. Lev. 21:17-23 says:

"Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; no man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. Only he shall not go in into the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries; for I the Lord do sanctify them."

As the physical excellence of sacrificial lambs prefigured the spiritual excellence of Christ, the true lamb (I Pet. 1:18,19), it seems safe to conclude that the physical excellence of those who waited upon God as priests under the Old Testament prefigured the spiritual excellence of us who are priests today (I Pet. 2:5).

B. Moral Fitness Required.

Eli was high priest at the time Samuel was born. His sons, who also were priests (I Sam. 1:3), were exceedingly wicked. I Sam. 2 tells of their villainous deeds. To Samuel, whom God had chosen to succeed Eli, God spoke the following message:

"In that day will I perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (I Sam. 3:11-13).

God did not want such scoundrels as Eli's sons in His priestly office. Neither did He approve Eli's softness in dealing with them.

C. Special Instructions Concerning Their Marriage.

The following instructions were given governing priestly marriages:

"He shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take; but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife" (Lev. 21:13,14).

III. Their Duties.

A. They Were Given Specific Instructions To Carry Out.

One cannot read the laws governing the priestly duties without realizing that God gave them most pointed instructions. They were told what kind of animals to sacrifice, when to enter the tabernacle, what garments to wear, where to put the blood of sacrificial offerings, what part of an animal to burn upon the altar, what part of the various sacrifices was theirs to eat, what to prescribe for the various ceremonial cleansings, and a great multitude of other detailed instructions. To suppose that the unchanging God is not a God of law and order is not to be concluded from studying the instructions given the Old Testament priests.

B. He Expected Those Instructions To Be Carried Out.

Lev. 10:1,2 tells of fire coming out from the presence of the Lord and devouring the priests Nadab and Abihu for using "strange fire" one day when burning incense to God. Evidently, God had told them where to get the fire for burning incense (most scholars think it was from the altar of burnt offerings whose fire was never to go out - Lev. 6:13), but they had substituted fire from another origin. Their sudden death testified to the fact that God meant for His instructions to be carried out!

We have seen that God forbade the priests marrying any woman outside of Israel. When Ezra returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, he found that many of the priests left in Jerusalem during the captivity had intermarried with the idolatrous neighbors (Ezra 9:1,2). Therefore, they were commanded, along with others likewise guilty, to put away those wives and the children born by them (Ezra 10:1-5). God meant what He said!

Mal. 1 and 2 dealt with the terrible apostasy of the priests as the writings of the Old Testament came to a close. Malachi dealt most sharply with them. They were polluting God's altar with offering sick animals for sacrifices (Mal. 1:6-8) as well as causing the people to depart from the way of the Lord (Mal. 2:1-9).

C. General Survey Of Their Duties.

A priest was a mediator between man (the sinner) and God (the sinned against). In a broad sense, Heb. 5:1,2 summarizes the mission of the priesthood:

"Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way."

To boil down into a brief section all the duties of the priests is most difficult. Appreciating the fine digest of this subject as carried in Smith's Bible Dictionary, we quote from it as follows: "The chief duties of the priests were to watch over the fire on the altar of burnt offering and

to keep it burning evermore both by day and night (Lev. 6:12; II Chron. 13:11); to feed the golden lamp outside the veil with oil (Exo. 27:20,21; Lev. 24:2); to offer the morning and evening sacrifices, each accompanied with a meat offering and a drink offering at the door of the tabernacle (Exo. 29:38-44). They were also to teach the children of Israel the statutes of the Lord (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 33:10; II Chron. 15:3; Eze. 44:23,24). During the journeys in the wilderness, it belonged to them to cover the ark and all the vessels of the sanctuary with a purple or scarlet cloth before the Levites might approach them (Num. 4:5-15). As the people started on each day's march, they were to blow an alarm with long silver trumpets (Num. 10:1-8). Other instruments of music might be used by the more highly-trained Levites and the schools of the prophets, but the trumpets belonged only to the priests. The presence of the priests on the field of battle (I Chron. 12:23,27; II Chron. 20:21,22) led in the later periods of Jewish history to the special appointment at such times of a war priest. Other functions were hinted at in Deuteronomy which might have given them greater influence as the educators and civiliziers of the people. They were to act (whether individually or collectively does not distinctly appear) as a court of appeal in the more difficult controversies in criminal or civil cases (Deut. 17:8-13)."

Schaff's Bible Dictionary boils the matter down as follows: "The chief duty of the priests was to prepare and offer the daily, weekly, and monthly sacrifices and such as were brought by individuals at the great annual festivals or at especial occasions. But, generally, they conducted the public service, officiated at purifications, took care of the holy vessels, of the sacred fire, and the golden lamp, and of all the furniture of the sanctuary. In war, they sounded the holy trumpets and carried the ark of the covenant. In peace, they ministered as judges at the trial of jealousy, at the estimation of the redemption money for a vow, etc. They kept a kind of superintendence over the lepers, and they expounded the law to the people."

One of the principle functions of the high priest was on the annual day of atonement when he sought to make an atonement for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. Lev. 16 discusses this important Hebrew day, and Heb. 9 discusses it in view of Jesus' more availing priesthood.

Much yet could be said upon the Levitical priesthood, but we shall close our present study of the subject with but two brief considerations. Like the rest of the Levites, the priests were given no land inheritance when the land was divided between the tribes. However, God's provision of tithes and offerings from the rest of the people as well as granting to them certain parts of the things sacrificed formed God's plan for caring for their needs. Finally, Heb. 7 shows that perfection did not come through the Levitical priesthood (verse 11) and that the priesthood has been changed (verse 12). The change is that Christ, our high priest in this dispensation, is not a priest after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek (verse 11).

Old Testament Sacrifices

One of the principal functions of the priests (studied in our last study) was the offering of sacrifices. From the time that Cain and Abel are seen bringing their offerings to God in Gen. 4, the Old Testament doesn't lose sight of the all-important place that the altar played in pre-Christian ages.

The law given through Moses outlined a most detailed and elaborate system of sacrifices for the Hebrew people. The principal sacrifices for the Mosaic dispensation were the burnt offerings, meal offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and trespass offerings. Let us notice how frequently these various kinds of offerings were made at the tabernacle.

There were two daily burnt offerings—a lamb burned in the morning and another lamb at night (Exo. 29:38-42). On the sabbath, there was to be a double burnt offering made (Num. 28:9,10). Every month was to open with special burnt offerings (Num. 28:11-15). This was what was referred to as the "new moons". Besides, burnt offerings were to be made at their great annual feasts—the passover (Num. 28:16-25), pentecost (Num. 28:26-31), the feast of trumpets (Num. 29:1-6), and others. These sacrifices (some of them being rams, some goats, some bullocks, some doves, and some pigeons) were wholly burned. No part was given to the priests to eat. Their significance is usually taken to be that of complete dedication to God.

When one reads the King James' Version, he reads of "meat offerings". The American Standard Version reads "meal offerings". Inasmuch as those offerings were of flour, oil, and wine, we have referred to them properly as "meal offerings". There were daily meal offerings accompanying the daily burnt offerings (Exo. 39:40,41). A double meal offering (two tenth deals of flour instead of the customary tenth deal) was also made each sabbath (Num. 28:9,10). Each new moon (once a month), there were meal offerings made (Num. 28:11-13). Besides, there were meal offerings at their various annual feasts (Num. 28:16-29:39). Contrary to most of the other offerings, there was no blood shed in this offering. It is generally held to have been a thank offering to the Lord. A portion of the meal offerings was burned, and the rest was given to the priests.

If it did not consume too much space, we could go on to show similarly concerning the peace offerings, the sin offerings, and the trespass offerings. But, we cannot take much space here. Besides these principal offerings, there were yet other offerings commanded of the Lord for the Hebrew people.

I. Three Facts Concerning These Sacrifices.

A. *Only The Best Of Everything Could Be Offered To*

God.

As early as Abel, men of God brought to Him the best. Gen. 4:4 says:

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings (probably firstborn) of his flock and of the fat (the best ones) thereof."

This was in rightful recognition that God deserved the best that man could bring in recognition for all His wonderful goodness to the children of men, and such action further indicated that God actually demanded the first and the best in order that He would actually occupy the place of God (the Supreme One) in the eyes and hearts of men.

In giving the law, God said:

"Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evil-favouredness: for that is an abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 17:1).

By "blemish", God meant anything that kept it from being a perfect physical specimen. He said:

"It shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer...Ye shall not offer unto the Lord that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut" (Lev. 22:21,22,24).

This was to indicate that not just anything that man might sacrifice would be acceptable to God, and while these unblemished lambs looked forward to the unblemished Jesus who would be sacrificed (I Pet. 1:18,19), reference is also made to them in describing our own living sacrifice to God in Rom. 12:1. Our sacrifice of self must be "holy" and "acceptable to God", too.

The animals that were offered to God were to be in their first year (Num. 28:3). This would be when they were in the prime of health. Also, they were thus given to God before they were ever used for anything earthly. Thus, God would claim everything from them.

We also notice that man was to offer to God the first-fruits of his harvest:

"The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God" (Exo. 23:19); "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (Prov. 3:9).

Before men got to use any of God's increase for themselves, they were expected to offer the first of the harvest to God. How much in keeping with the practice of proportionate giving today that sets aside a portion for God before any is used for personal needs! How different from the practice of living up whatever we need and want first and then giving some of the "tailings" to God!

B. These Sacrifices Involved A Great Outlay and Much Bother For The People.

Sacrificing the firstborn of their animals and having so many specified sacrifices to make surely amounted to something very sizable by way of financial outlay to the Hebrews. How much easier it would have been to have kept the best for themselves and forget God?

Having to go to Jerusalem so often with their animals and their agricultural products likewise involved what

people would call a lot of "bother". To be sure that everything brought to offer was exactly as it ought to be involved some care and forethought that could have been avoided if God had not specified everything so minutely.

But, therein, as stated above, we see God's purpose in having these sacrifices made fulfilled. They *did* take time, forethought, and outlay. In a sense, they said, "Won't man take time from his things to do something for God who has taken so much time in blessing man? Won't man give some forethought in recognition of the constant forethought that God gives to man's needs? Won't man put himself out a little for the God who has given him everything he has?" God had to provide some system whereby man could show his concern for the things of God, whereby he could acknowledge his guilt, and whereby he could demonstrate a thankfulness to God for what God was constantly doing. When men turned from God, they forgot these sacrifices, and when they turned from these sacrifices, they went farther and farther away from God. Yet, God did not want these sacrifices made unless man's heart was behind them (Isa. 1:2-4, 11-15).

C. These Sacrifices Could Not Take Away Sin.

For all the cost involved and all the extra trouble to which the Israelites were put to make these offerings, these sacrifices did not take away sin. The Jews thought that by their law, they had eternal life (John 5:39), but they didn't have. The writer of Hebrews plainly says of them:

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins" (Heb. 10:1,2).

Heb. 10:11 likewise says:

"Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins."

II. Why These Sacrifices Couldn't Take Away Sin.

A. The Blood Of An Animal Could Not Atone For The Sin Of A Man.

Right after Heb. 10:1,2 states that the Old Testament sacrifices could not take away sin, the writer shows why:

"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (verse 4).

An animal is not on the same plane before God as a man. An animal is of a lower order in God's creation than a man. How could an animal, then, be an acceptable representative for man as a sacrifice? Furthermore, man's need of a Savior lay in the moral realm, but an animal is not a moral creature. Man could be saved from his moral failure before God only by a moral being who could take his place before God, and whosoever that moral being would be would himself have to be a perfect specimen of a moral being. Jesus, tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15), alone is able to save us from our sins:

"Through this man (Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are

justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38,39).

B. The Old Testament Sacrifices Were Not Offered By A Sinless Priest.

One of the things the Hebrew writer raises time after time against the idea that the Old Testament sacrifices obtained the forgiveness of sins is that they were offered by an imperfect priest. But, that which was lacking in Old Testament times has been supplied for us through the sinlessness of Jesus, our high priest:

"For such an high priest (Jesus) became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore" (Heb. 7:26-28).

C. God Did Not Ordain The Old Testament Sacrifices To Take Away Sin.

Inasmuch as God knew it was not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin (Heb. 10:4), we must conclude that He had another purpose in mind in having these sacrifices made. Obviously, then, if God hadn't ordained the Old Testament sacrifices to take away sin, they never could have taken them away, for all that relates to the forgiveness of man's sin must of necessity root in and issue from God and His plan. In other words, He didn't ordain them for that purpose, or they would have fulfilled His purpose in that way.

III. What Those Sacrifices Accomplished.

Let us not conclude that because those sacrifices didn't bring forgiveness, they did not have some very definite accomplishments. Let us realize that all that God does is done well. He had some definite purpose in mind in having those many sacrifices offered.

A. They Brought To Man's Minds The Fact Of Their Guilt Before God.

Had those sacrifices taken away sins, they would have ceased to be offered (Heb. 10:1,2). Jesus' sacrifice, because it does take away sins, was made but one time (Heb. 10:9-12). Every year, there was the day of atonement, upon which the high priest went into the holy of holies to make an atonement for the sin of the nation, but because he himself was imperfect and because he took in animal blood with which to make the atonement, God would not cleanse the people of their sins. Next year, he had to do the same thing over again. Thus, instead of enjoying the remission of sins through one availing sacrifice (like we do through Jesus' sacrifice), each year they were reminded once more that their sins were still on God's books. In other words, those sacrifices, instead of bringing remission of sins, brought a recollection of the fact that they were still in their sins before God:

"In those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year" (Heb. 10:3).

This growing burden of this load of sin was divinely intended to cause men to seek the true relief to be offered

them in time through God's coming Messiah.

B. These Priestly Offerings Were God's Way Of Instructing People Of The Necessity Of A Sacrifice For Sin And Of Their Need Of A Mediator.

When an Israelite sinned in some particular way, God commanded him to do as follows:

"It shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: and he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin" (Lev. 5:5,6).

Notice two things: when he sinned, a sacrifice was necessary, and he could not offer the sacrifice himself—he had to have the priest (a go-between or a mediator) do it. What basic lessons were thus taught. It taught men to associate the necessity of sacrifice with sin and the necessity of a mediator with God. The law of Moses most definitely taught men the following truth:

"Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

All of this was intended to prepare men for the truth recorded in I Tim. 2:4-6:

"Who (God) will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time".

C. These Sacrifices Did In A Ceremonial Way What Jesus' Sacrifice Does In An Actual Way.

It is a full study all of its own to consider the many ways in which these sacrifices prefigured the death of Jesus. Among them, Heb. 9:13,14 shows that they purified the flesh in a ceremonial way, and that if they were able to do that, Jesus' blood is surely able to cleanse our consciences from sin:

"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

The above verses are immediately followed with that which we have chosen to use as the concluding thought of this study; namely, that the death of Christ actually atoned for the sins committed during the Old Testament times:

"For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, FOR THE REDEMPTION OF THE TRANSGRESSIONS THAT WERE UNDER THE FIRST TESTAMENT, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15).

No doubt, those who obediently carried out the sacrificial system of Old Testament times will be saved by the death of Christ; and those who didn't will be lost. If this be right (and surely it is, for those who were under the law will be judged by the law), those sacrifices instead of providing the actual cleansing themselves (as the Israelites thought) turned out to be the conditions of their salvation through the blood of Christ which they prefigured just as

baptism and the Lord's supper (pictures of that death) are among those conditions of salvation today.

The Three Great Jewish Feasts

Deut. 16:16 says.:

“Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose”.

Those three times were: the feast of Passover, the feast of Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles. (These three feasts were called by various names in different places in the Bible, in its respective section below, each feast's names will be considered.)

According to our calendar, these three feasts occurred annually as follows:

Passover in April
Pentecost in June
Tabernacles in October

We notice that all “males” were required to go to these feasts, There were times, as in the case of Jesus and His mother (Luke 2:41-43), when the entire family went, though the law did not make the attendance of the entire family compulsory. We notice also that while the original Passover (observed in Egypt in connection with the tenth plague) was conducted in their private houses (Exo. 12:21-23), the law given through Moses a few weeks later prescribed that the Passover and the other feasts of the Jews would be observed “in the place which he (God) shall choose”. That “place” was wherever the tabernacle (later where the temple) was. After the conquest of Canaan, that was at Shiloh where the tabernacle was stationed (Josh. 18:1; I Sam. 1:3). Later, the tabernacle was replaced with the temple at Jerusalem, That is why Jesus' parents went to “Jerusalem” to keep the Passover.

There were, in addition to the above three feasts, other Jewish feasts also, though all the males were not expressly commanded to journey to Shiloh or Jerusalem to keep them. There was the feast of Trumpets (Num. 29:1ff), The Jews had two kinds of calendars--the sacred calendar and the civil calendar. The feast of Passover occurred in the first month of their sacred calendar, Six months later, or the same month during which the feast of Tabernacles came, their civil year began (just as the Jews' civil year today begins in the fall), The feast of Trumpets was their way of celebrating the arrival of the new civil year. There was also the feast of Purim (Esth. 9:20-32) instituted in the days of Esther to commemorate the Jews' deliverance from their enemies in her days, The feast of Dedication, which we read about in John 10:22, was a feast which arose during the four hundred year period between Malachi and Matthew

to commemorate the rededication of the temple by devout Jews after it had been desecrated by the Grecian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes, whose bitter hatred for the Jews was climaxed in his insulting expression of burning a sow on their temple altar.

But, as interesting as the many feasts of the Jews were, we must not allow ourselves to go too far afield in this introduction from the main consideration of this lesson; namely, the three particular feasts that we have announced for this study.

I. The Feast of Passover.

A. The First Feast of Passover Was Observed In Egypt,

Exo. 12 tells of God's intention to smite the firstborn of Egypt with death. Not that God needed a display of blood upon the individual Hebrew houses in order to know which houses were the Hebrews, but for typical reasons and possibly to test the obedience of individual Hebrews He instructed them to prepare and eat a lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs in the place where they displayed the blood of the lamb, The promise was fulfilled that wherever the blood was found, the firstborn of that household lived, but death visited the home of every Egyptian family that unforgettable night. At that time, God informed them that such a feast would be a permanent part of their religious life. At Mt. Sinai, in conjunction with the giving of the other laws through Moses, He gave permanent instructions concerning the observance of this feast. Most of the instructions given through Moses parallel the original observance in Egypt.

B. Instructions Concerning Their Observance.

As we have seen, there was a particular place for this feast to be observed--as long as the tabernacle stood, wherever it was; and after it was replaced with the temple, Jerusalem was the place.

God devised the sacred calendar for the Hebrew people, beginning their year with their deliverance from Egypt, At the time that the preparations were being made for the tenth plague and the first Passover, God said to Moses and Aaron:

“This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you” (Exo. 12:2).

In that first Passover, they kept their lambs up from the tenth day of that month, killed it on the fourteenth day at sunset, and ate it that night (which would have been their fifteenth day of the month) (Exo. 12:3-10). At that time, God indicated they should eat unleavened bread for a week (Exo. 12:14-20); Thus, the feast of Passover is commonly referred to throughout the Scriptures as the feast of Unleavened Bread also (Luke 22:1; Deut. 16:16; and many others). Thereafter, the Israelites began their Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month (Num. 9:3-5; Josh. 5:10). For those who were ceremonially unclean for some reason acceptable to God, they were permitted to observe their Passover one month later (Num. 9:6-11). Any man, however, who refused to keep the Passover was to be cut off from Israel (Num. 9:13).

At the time of institution, Moses said to the people:

"It shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service, And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses" (Exo. 12:25-27).

In studying this subject, it is important to observe that the word "passover" is sometimes used as regards that brief period of time in which the lamb was killed and eaten; other times, it is used with reference to the entire feast; still other times, it is used of the lamb itself (such as when it talks of "killing the passover"). Unless one keeps this careful distinction in mind, the last half of the book of John will be very confusing.

C. Christ Is Our Passover Lamb.

I **Ca. 5:7** says:

"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

How apt! All under the blood of the passover lamb in Egypt were safe. All not under it were destroyed. Even so, all under the blood of Jesus are in possession of salvation; all not under that blood will be destroyed. The passover lamb actually died in place of the firstborn—any family that would not sacrifice a lamb would have lost its firstborn. Jesus actually died in our place. God thereafter considered the firstborn His. Even so, we who have been ransomed by the blood of Jesus are considered God's (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 6:19,20). In our partaking of the feast of Christ, our Passover, we are to cast out the leaven of sin and malice even as the Hebrews were to cast out all leaven from their houses in order to participate in their feast of Passover (I Cor. 5:7,8).

II. The Feast Of Pentecost.

A. The Time Of This Feast.

Most of you have heard that the day of Pentecost, the year the church was established, came fifty days after Jesus' resurrection. That is correct, and though the conclusion is known by many, the actual proof could be given but by few. Let us see how it is figured.

The very first of their crops were beginning to ripen at Passover time. When they came to the feast of Passover, they were to bring some of the first-ripe grain along. During Passover week, there naturally would be a sabbath day. According to Lev. 23:11-13, on the day following that sabbath, the priest was to wave those firstripe heads as a sheaf before God, a lamb was to be offered for a burnt offering, a meal offering was to be offered, and also a drink offering. Verses 15 and 16 of that chapter say:

"Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days."

If they were to start numbering fifty days, beginning with the day after the sabbath of Passover week, they started with the first day of the week as day number 1. The next

sabbath would be 7; the next sabbath 14; the next (or third sabbath) would be 21; the fourth sabbath 28; the fifth 35; the sixth 42; and the seventh sabbath 49. Therefore, the fiftieth day would be another first day of the week, This was the day of Pentecost (which means "fiftieth" in Greek). You can also see why that feast was sometimes called the "day of the firstfruits" (Exo. 34:22) (Num. 28:26), sometimes the "feast of harvest" (Exo. 23:16), and sometimes the "feast of weeks" (Exo. 34:22).

Since Jesus arose on the day following the sabbath of Passover week, which was day number 1 in the count, it is evident why teachers have told people the day of Pentecost both came on the first day of the week (it always did) and came fifty days after Jesus' resurrection (for He arose on the day when the count of fifty days began).

B. The Purpose Of This Annual Feast.

When they would have gathered in their harvest, there should have been two particular things to have been thankful for: for the harvest itself and that they were no longer bondmen in Egypt, but had fields of their own to reap. It was, therefore, a feast of thanksgiving and rejoicing, and it is described for us in Deut. 16:10-12:

"Thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God, according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee: and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, In the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his name there. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt."

The reason why the stranger, fatherless, and widow would likewise rejoice was that the Hebrew was commanded, in anticipation of this feast, not to harvest the corners of his fields nor any loose gleanings in the fields, but to leave these for the stranger and the poor (Lev. 23:23).

Many see also a typical fulfillment of the things of this feast in the beginning of Christianity. The resurrection of Jesus was that which actually gained permanently for time and eternity the first complete believers in the absolute deity of Jesus. These would include the women who went to the tomb, the two men to whom He appeared at Emmaus, and the ten apostles to whom He appeared—all on the day of His resurrection. These were the "first-ripe" heads forecasting the real harvest soon to be gleaned. Then, fifty days later, when the Jews were bringing the firstfruits of their grain harvest to God, the real firstfruits of the gospel harvest (three thousand souls--Acts 2:41) were being presented to God. If the above reasoning is correct, there is a wonderful analogy between them.

III. The Feast Of Tabernacles.

A. The Time Of This Feast.

The law of this feast as given in Lev. 23:34 indicated the exact time and duration of this feast:

"The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord."

The feast of Passover came in the first month. The

feast of Tabernacles coming in the seventh month would, therefore, be *six* months after Passover and at the *same* time *six* months before the next Passover.

B. The Purpose Of This Feast,

The purpose of this feast was double, It was a feast of thanksgiving for the year's crops then completely harvested, and it also commemorated the years of their forefathers in the wilderness when they lived in tents (or tabernacles),

Coming in the autumn as it did, the grapes had been harvested, the figs had *been* gathered, the olive crop had been processed, and all the grain crops had likewise been gathered into the storehouses. That is why it is called the "feast of ingathering" (Exo. 23:16). The thanksgiving element is involved in Deut, 16: 13-15:

"Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine: and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord shall choose: because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice."

In commemoration of the wilderness wanderings of their forefathers, they dwelt in booths (whence the name "feast of tabernacles") during the feast:

"Ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days...All that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: that your generatipns may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 23:40,42,43).

C. This Feast Was Heavy With Sacrifices.

Of the three feasts, this feast was attended with *more* sacrifices than the others. On the opening day of the feast, the burnt offering consisted of thirteen young *bullocks*, two rams, and fourteen lambs (Num. 29:13). On the *second* day, the *sin* offering consisted of twelve young bullocks (one less than on opening day), but the number of rams (two) and the number of lambs (fourteen) remained the same (Num, 29:17). Each day of the feast, the number of rams offered was two and the number of lambs fourteen, but the number of young bullocks *diminished* by one per day up until the last day (Num. 29:20-32). On the eighth (or last day), there was one young bullock offered, one ram, and seven lambs (Num, 29:35,36).

A study of the above quoted chapter (Num. 29) will also give you the information concerning their various meal offerings and sin offerings by days.

In studying the New Testament, we come across the above three feasts numerous times. We have already made reference to the fact that Jesus' parents attended the Passover every year (Luke 2:41). It was at a Passover season in Jerusalem that we see Jesus in the temple at the age of twelve confounding the wise men of the Jews and affirming that He must be about His Father's business

(Luke 2:41-49). At the first Passover during His ministry, He cleansed the temple and thereby infuriated the Jewish leaders (John 2:13-18). At another feast (undoubtedly the Passover), He healed a lame man at the pool of Bethesda, and because it was done *on* the sabbath, He was involved in a controversy with the Jews (John 5:1-16). John 7 tells us of Jesus and the disciples: attending the feast of *Tabernacles*, It was Passover time when Jesus was crucified (Luke 22:1--23:33). It was at the feast of Pentecost, when Jews from all over the then-known world were gathered together at Jerusalem, that Jesus sent the gospel forth, and the church had its beginning (Acts 2:1-47). Paul sometimes made it a point to be in Jerusalem at the time of some of these feasts.

There are many things very interesting about those feasts. They played an important part in the religious life of the nation. Except for the continual feast upon spiritual things that we Christians have (we don't have to go to Jerusalem to worship--John 4:19-24), the only set feast that we have is the Lord's supper, but instead of it occurring just once a year or three times a year, it occurs every Lord's day. May we be faithful to Him, eating and drinking at His table in His kingdom (Luke 22:29,30).

Israel Condemned in the Wilderness

God had a double blessing in mind for His people. He was going to deliver them from Egyptian bondage, and He was going to give them a home (a land that flowed with milk and honey), Thus far in our studies, they have received only one-half of the promised blessing--they had escaped Egyptian bondage. On broad lines, we might say that God's *mercy* exhibited itself in delivering them from their afflictions and oppressions in Egypt, and His goodness toward them sought to give them the wonderful land of Canaan for a home.

Having stopped at Mt. Sinai to obtain the law, construct and erect the tabernacle, and to have a priesthood consecrated for them, they then were led directly toward Canaan. At Kadesh, where they pitched camp, they were only fifty miles from Beersheba, the southern gateway to Canaan. This is where things took a definite turn for them.

I. The Spies Sent And Return.

A, God Commanded Moses To Send Spies Into The Land,

God didn't need information concerning the land and its inhabitants. He knew all about Canaan. He evidently wanted to test the faith of His people before proceeding. Thus, He said to Moses:

"Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every

one a ruler among them" (Num. 13:2).

The names of the twelve spies were: Shammua, Shaphat, Caleb, Igal, Oshea (who was also known as Joshua), Palti, Gaddiel, Gaddi, Ammiel, Sethur, Nahbi, and Geuel (Num. 13:4-15).

B. Moses' Instructions To Them.

Moses gave those twelve men the following instructions:

"Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain: and see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds; and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land" (Num. 13:17-20).

C. They Enter The Land.

When they entered the land, they were entering the land of their forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. What a natural attachment and appreciation they should have had for the land! They searched out the land for forty days (Num. 13:25). It was the season of the first-ripe grapes (Num. 13:20). Near the brook Eshcol, they cut down a cluster of grapes, the size of which must be somewhat indicated by the fact that they carried it between two of them on a staff (Num. 13:23). They also brought back pomegranates and figs (Num. 13:23). They found it to be such a land as that which God had promised to them when they were yet in Egypt (Exo. 13:5).

D. Their Report.

When they returned, they gave the following report to Moses, Aaron, and all the people:

"We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan" (Num. 13:27-29).

E. Caleb Fails To Persuade Them.

Caleb, the spy from the tribe of Judah, recognized the might of those who lived in the land, but he realized that God had promised them the land. Therefore, he insisted that they go up against the land to take it:

"Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30).

But, all the other spies except Joshua contended that they were not able to take the land. The thing which seemingly loomed as the greatest barrier to them was the giant-sized men in the land:

"We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we... The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Num. 13:31-33).

F. The Congregation Weeps And Murmurs Against Moses.

The people were dismayed. Their hopes all seemed to be dashed to the ground in a day. As usual, when things didn't go as they desired, they complained against Moses:

"Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! (Note—God was going to keep this statement in mind.) And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?... Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt" (Num. 14:2-4).

G. Caleb And Joshua Almost Stoned.

In your writer's judgment, one of the greatest speeches recorded in the Bible is this one delivered to the complaining Israelites, the faithless Israelites, by those two faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb, and it is but two and one-half verses long. Listen to it:

"The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not" (Num. 14:7-9).

What faith! "If the Lord delight in us, he will give it to us." What faith! "Don't fear the people, they are bread for us, and their defence is departed from them." What faith! "The Lord is with us; fear them not." Forty years later, when the succeeding generation entered the land, what Caleb and Joshua here said was proven true! Yes, they had faith; their listeners didn't (they took up stones to stone Caleb and Joshua). Because they had faith, they were permitted to enter the land in spite of the rebels to whom they preached, and because the people didn't have faith, they were cursed, as we shall see in the following section of study.

II. That Generation Condemned To Die In The Wilderness,

A. God Was Insulted.

God was witnessing all that was going on, and He was sorely displeased with it. He said to Moses:

"How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they" (Num. 14:11,12).

Unbelief itself is a terrible sin! So many people have the idea that the only way a person can sin is by some wicked deed, but one can sin by not believing what God has said. Herein lies the danger of not believing that one's sins are forgiven when he has obeyed the terms of pardon. Herein lies the danger of not believing that God answers the prayers of His children. Herein lies the danger of not trusting the Lord for material provisions when we give ourselves to spiritual things. Oh, the prevalence of unbelief today! Few indeed have totally escaped its paralyzing effect. When the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8).

B. Moses Entreated God Not To Wipe Them Out.

Moses, well aware of God's feelings, entreated God as follows:

"Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) 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. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now" (Num, 14:13-19).

Though this entreaty involved the future of the people, it was God whom Moses was particularly concerned about. God's great name—what would happen to it? This is the voice of true worshippers, It is not always so much, "What about us?" but, "What about God?" Oh, that people would so give themselves to God and His work today that it would go forward with great strides! But, so many are content to relax "just so long as they are saved", How unspiritual an attitude! How unlike Moses! Yes, and probably the day of judgment will show how far short of salvation they themselves are because of lacking a spiritual attitude!

C. God Was Entreated In A Sense.

God listened to Moses' entreaty. He did not wish to disregard it totally. But, He was not shut up to a choice between wiping the whole people out or sparing the whole people and giving them Canaan anyway. He was determined that those who had sinned would be punished for their sin, and though He was not going to blot out the whole nation, He was not going to spare a single one who had disbelieved His ability to fulfill His promises to the children of Israel. Consequently, He said to Moses:

"I have pardoned according to thy word: but as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with Him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Num, 14:20-24).

He then told Moses and Aaron to deliver the following message to the congregation:

"Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein,

save Caleb the sons of Iephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. I the Lord have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die" (Num, 14:28-35).

God said it, and He meant it! Every word that He spoke came true.

When God took things in hand and killed the ten unfaithful spies with a plague (Num. 14:36,37), the people could see that they had been wrong. Consequently, they rose up early the next morning willing to proceed into Canaan. They said:

"Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned" (Num. 14:40).

How childlike! How frivolous! They evidently thought they could over-prevail upon the mercy of God. Because He had tolerated them before, they thought His mercy was still great toward them. But, it wasn't. God had sworn with an oath that they would not enter that land, and He would not change His decree. Furthermore, He was going to see that they wouldn't enter it. Consequently, when they disregarded Moses' telling them not to go up because the Lord was not with them (Num, 14:42), they were badly defeated by the Amalekites and the Canaanites (Num, 14:44,45). What reasoning they employed--they wouldn't go up to battle when the Lord was with them, but they would go after He had departed from them.

III. The New Testament Uses This History To Exhort Us.

A. Some People's Reasoning Needs Correcting.

There are those who teach that a Christian cannot be lost no matter what he does. If he was once God's child, they say, there is no possible danger of him ever being lost. But, such reasoning does not hold up when we study I Cor. 10:1-12 and Heb. 3 and 4 (as well as many other well known passages of Scripture). In correcting such an idea, Heb. 3 and 4 uses the very history studied in this study. Let us look at it.

B. A Consideration Of Heb. 3 and 4.

In speaking of the Israelites in the wilderness, the Hebrew writer said:

"I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter my rest" (Heb. 3:10,11).

The very next verses continue with a warning based upon the above:

"Take heed, brethren (Note—he is writing to Christians), 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,

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:12-14).

In looking back upon those Israelites, the Hebrew writer continued:

"With whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? and to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:17-19).

Now, notice the way the next chapter opens:

"Let us (Christians today) fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest (that is what we have been promised), any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1).

There was a danger that many of the Hebrew Christians, through falling away from faith in God's Messiah, were going to miss out on the goodnews of heavenly rest that God had told them about. The writer was urging them on with exhortation after exhortation. How useless if their heavenly inheritance could not be lost through backsliding and unbelief! Notice, by way of closing out this thought, what he said in Heb. 4:11:

"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

God brought them out of Egypt, but He did not take them into Canaan. The New Testament shows that He can save us from our past bondage of sin, but if we do not persevere in faith and faithfulness to Christ, we shall never enter heaven (the antitype of Canaan to the Hebrews).

The Conquest Under Joshua

Many interesting and heart-breaking incidents occurred during the forty years of wilderness wanderings. The book of Numbers (so named because the first part of the book contains the numbering of the generation that came out of Egypt and the twenty-sixth chapter contains the numbering of the new generation that would enter Canaan) supplies us with what transpired during those forty years. The patience of both God and Moses were sorely tried numerous times during those years. Wearing by their continual griping, Moses one time referred to them as suckling babies that he was carrying in his bosom (Num. 11:10-12). The song writer of "I Must Tell Jesus" obtained some of his words from Moses' words:

"I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me" (Num. 11:14).

But, surely, they were no harder on Moses than on God. Time and time again during those forty years, God had every reason to confirm the rightness of His oath to exclude

that generation from Canaan. What a rightful description of them Heb. 3:10 gives:

"They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways."

Somewhere in the latter half of this wilderness period, our present study begins.

I. Preparations For The Conquest.

A. Joshua Chosen To Succeed Moses As Leader.

One of those times when Moses' patience had reached the breaking-point, he (and Aaron with him) committed a grave sin. But, all unrighteousness is sin (I John 5:17) whether such takes place at a time of weakness, or whether it is something deliberately done. His sister Miriam had just been buried when the people gathered together against Aaron and him because they had no water. In an outburst of undisciplined temper, Moses smote a rock twice and said:

"Hear now, ye rebels: must we fetch you water out of this rock?" (Num. 20:10).

Though the incident is narrated in but a few sentences, leaving possibly a few questions in our minds, we know that Moses and Aaron (who was necessarily involved, according to the record) overstepped their bounds and failed to give proper glory to God for the issuance of water from the rock. Consequently, God said to them both:

"Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12).

Surely, there is no respect of persons with God. When a righteous man sins, God takes notice and deals with him accordingly (Ezek. 18:24). Though Moses had been so good all along the way, God did not overlook the wrong committed at the rock at Kadesh. How down-hearted he and Aaron must have been! How crest-fallen! But, God would not change His decision. Moses recited to the new generation how he had said to God at the time:

"O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand; for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon" (Deut. 3:24, 25).

Evidently, he so spake to God several times, for God said to him:

"Speak no more unto me of this matter" (Deut. 3:26).

Instead of Moses leading them into the land, God chose Joshua. He said to Moses:

"Charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see" (Deut. 3:28).

This Joshua had been their military leader (Exo. 17:9), he had been with Moses in the mountain when the law was given (Exo. 24:13), and he was one of the two faithful spies (Num. 13:8, 16).

B. Moses' Instructions To The New Generation.

The word "Deuteronomy" breaks down into "deuter" (second) and "onomy" (law). The book of Deuteronomy has been so named because it contains a record of Moses reciting much of the law to the new generation that was about to enter Canaan. Many chapters of the book are consumed with this repeating of the law. This explains why there are two accounts of the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament (Exo. 20 and Deut. 5).

In Deuteronomy, Moses also recited to them the history of their forefathers, recalling to them why God had refused admittance to their parents. In recalling God's goodness upon them, he included the interesting information that God had caused their clothing not to wear out throughout those forty years (Deut. 8:4).

When they would enter the land, Moses charged them not to intermarry with the people of the land, but to destroy completely all of them and their idols (Deut. 7:1-5). He also instructed them to write the law in plastered stones, which were to be set up in Mt. Ebal (Deut. 27:2-4).

Moses also gave them the following appropriate warning:

"When the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full, then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deut. 6:10-12).

C. Moses Viewed The Land And Died.

The last chapter of Deuteronomy opens with these words:

"Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead (east of the Jordan) unto Dan (the northern extremity of the land) and all Naphtali (along the Sea of Galilee), and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh (the central section), and all the land of Judah (west of where he was in Mt. Nebo) unto the utmost sea (the Mediterranean), and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho (the first city that would be conquered under Joshua), the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither" (Deut. 34:1-4).

The next verses say that he died there, and the Lord buried him in an unknown place, he being at the time one hundred twenty years old, with his eye-sight yet good and his strength yet with him. A strange reference is made to the body of Moses in Jude 9, where it tells of the devil and the archangel Michael disputing about his body. The Bible fails to shed light upon this dispute further, this brief passage in Jude being the only reference to it in the Bible. The fact that Moses appeared "in glory" with Jesus upon the Mt. of Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-31) would seem to indicate that God kept Moses out of Canaan in fulfillment of His word, but that in the time that intervened between Moses' sin at the rock and the time of his death, he possibly got matters right with God so that his non-admittance

to Canaan does not necessarily mean his non-admittance to heaven. A sudden, unexpected death may be physically and mentally desirable, but knowing of the approach of coming death has some spiritual advantages--which Moses probably utilized to his ultimate salvation.

D. Two Spies Sent Into The Land.

Joshua sent two men across the Jordan into the town of Jericho to spy it out. This was to be the first city to be conquered. Rahab, frequently referred to as a harlot, hid the spies from the king of Jericho who sought them, for she believed that God had given Israel her city:

"I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you" (Josh. 2:9).

Their fear of Israel was based upon the way God had dried up the Red Sea for them, and the way He had delivered other peoples into their hands (Josh. 2:10). How wrong the unfaithful spies had been! They were scared of the people of the land, but the people of the land were truly afraid of Israel! For hiding the spies, she asked for mercy upon her household when they would destroy the city (Josh. 2:12,13). The men agreed to it on the basis of her having a scarlet cord in her window (to identify the house probably, and there possibly could be a type involved in it also) with all her family gathered into that house at the time (Josh. 2:14-19). When these spies returned to Joshua, telling him that the whole country was smitten with fear of them, he was ready to enter the land and begin the conquest.

II. The Conquest Itself.

A. The Crossing Of The Jordan.

It was flood-time on the Jordan (Josh. 3:15 and 4:18). The priests led the way, bearing the ark of the covenant. As soon as their feet touched the water, God stopped the waters above them so that it piled up like a heap. The priests stopped in the midst of the river-bed while the people filed across. A man from each of the twelve tribes took a stone apiece out of the river-bed where the priests' feet had stood while the children of Israel crossed. These stones were used to erect a monument on the west side of Jordan (at Gilgal) so that when coming generations might inquire as to the meaning of the stones, they would be told of Israel's miraculous crossing of the Jordan. Joshua also set up twelve stones in the river-bed where the priests stood. Then, the priests passed over, and the river began to flow once more, spreading out over the plain in its former flood condition. The above facts are narrated in Josh. 3 and 4.

B. The Manna Ceased.

During their years in the wilderness, they could do but little about supplying their own food. Therefore, God did for them what they could not do for themselves. He gave them manna for food. But, now that they were in a land of abundance, it was different. He withdrew the daily provision of manna (Josh. 5:12). He had promised them this land, and if they didn't go forth to conquer it with His help, it would be their own fault if they starved.

C. The Fall Of Jericho.

God reassured Joshua of His presence and help when He caused the angel-captain to appear to him (Josh. 5:13). All Jericho in those terror-filled days remained within the city walls (Josh. 6:1). A most unusual military strategy was to be employed for taking the city. This, no doubt, was to assure the minds of the people that it was *God* who made the victory possible and not their own military process. The strategy was for all the men of war to march around the city once a day for six days. Then, on the seventh day, they were to march around it seven times. The seven priests preceding the ark of the covenant were then to blow the trumpets, and all the people were to shout. The wall was then to fall down flat, and every man was to go directly forward across the old fallen wall and smite. The orders were to kill everybody except Rahab and her family and all the animals, but the silver, gold, brass, and iron were to be consecrated to the Lord. No one was to take any of it for himself. All of the foregoing is told for us in Josh. 6. Everything went off according to orders and promise. It is interesting to notice that Rahab became a part of Israel (Josh. 6:25) and became an ancestor of Jesus.

Unbelievers attempted to fault the Bible upon the basis that it would be impossible for people to walk around a city seven times on one day. While that would be true as regards our modern-day cities, yet archaeology has found that the wall of Jericho enclosed an area of about seven acres. This area would be smaller than our small towns. The city was a military fortress city in which people crowded for protection. Thus, it did not cover a large area. So, it was altogether possible for the soldiers to encompass the city seven times on one day!

Archaeology has further shown that in the ruins of the wall, there was one part of the wall that didn't fall down. Rahab's house! The Scripture also says they burned the city with fire (Josh. 6:24). John Garstang, who excavated the ruins of Jericho in the early thirties of this century, found a deep layer of burned debris. Ashes from the fire set by Joshua and his men!

Joshua pronounced a curse upon anyone rebuilding the city:

"Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it" (Josh. 6:26).

About five hundred years later, a man by the name of Hiel rebuilt Jericho. Abiram, his firstborn son, died at the time of laying the city's foundation, and his youngest son Segub died when he completed the city by setting up its gates just like Joshua had pronounced (I Kings 16:34).

D. Their Failure At Ai.

Ai was such a small town compared with Jericho. Only a limited army was dispatched to take care of it. But, the men of Ai rose up and surprized the Israelites with a stunning defeat. What was wrong? Joshua went to God in prayer about the matter. God told him there was sin in the camp. God sent him to find the sinner. It proved to be a man by the name of Achan, and his sin was that he had taken and hidden a rich Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight from the

battle of Jericho. This was all to be dedicated to God. God was displeased with such covetousness, and His wrath would not be turned away from the people until they had gotten rid of the sinner. This was another lesson that Israel needed to know and remember. Consequently, Achan and all his were stoned and burned. Josh. 7 enumerates the various details of the failure at Ai. The next chapter gives an interesting account of Israel's victory over Ai in their next attempt.

C. Joshua Conquered As Long As He Was Able.

Chapters 9 through 12 of Joshua contain a record of the rest of Joshua's conquests. When Joshua was an old man, there was yet much land to possess (Josh. 13:1). Joshua had been faithful throughout his years of leadership to the instructions God gave him concerning conquering (Josh. 11:15). When the conquest had gotten as far as it could get under the physical strength of Joshua's leadership, the land of Canaan was divided up according to the various tribes (chapters 13-22 of Joshua). Thereafter, each tribe was expected to conquest its own individual territory (see Judg. 1). Almost any Bible will have among its maps a map of Canaan as divided among the tribes. Notice (on the map in your Bible) that Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh settled east of the Jordan River. (Actually, only one-half of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan. Notice another area allotted to Manasseh on the west side.) The two and one-half tribes had requested Moses to give them that east land as their inheritance, for that land of Gilead was wonderful pasture-land (Num. 32:1-5). Moses had promised it to them provided they would go ahead with the Israelites throughout the conquest of Canaan itself (Num. 32:20-22). They had been true to their pledge to Moses. Consequently, the division of the land under Joshua gave Gilead to them (Josh. 13:15-32). If you look on your map, you will see that no inheritance was given to the tribe of Levi. This was according to God's directions through Moses that the Levites should have no inheritance in the land-division, but they were to receive a tenth of all that the other tribes produced for their priestly service in behalf of the other tribes (Num. 18:20-22).

Joshua was a great leader, greatly obedient to God, who lived a most eventful life. At the age of one hundred ten, he died and was buried in the border of his inheritance (Josh. 24:29,30). The influence of his godly life is evidenced in these parting words concerning him:

"And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel" (Josh. 24:31).

He had been true to God's original orders to him at the time of Moses' death:

"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all

the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. 1:2-9).

May God increase the tribe of Joshua!

The Time of the Judges

Moses had led the children of Israel for the first forty years of their national history. Joshua was raised up to lead them following the death of Moses. Thus, from the time they left Egypt until the death of Joshua, they had a leader who served to weld the nation together. The division of the land among the tribes, each of which went its own way to its allotted land, made for a disorganized people, whose only resemblance of anything central was the location of their tabernacle at Shiloh to which they came for their set feasts throughout the year.

Let it not be concluded from the above, however, that Israel was in any way unprovided for as far as a plan from God was concerned. Had they carried out the will of God, they would have been as adequately taken care of, each tribe dwelling happily and godly and its own possession, as Israel had ever realized under Moses and Joshua. But, they didn't obey the will of God, and the same sad story of sin, that has so characterized men and nations throughout the annals of time, was re-enacted once more to the sorrow and dismay of the people.

I. The Commandment That Israel Failed To Obey.

A. God's Commandment Concerning The People In Canaan.

Moses said to the new generation:

"When the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them" (Deut. 7:2).

This commandment to destroy all the people of those nations was repeated over and over again.

B. The Terrible Religion Of The Canaanites.

Some have thought to criticize the commandment to wipe out those peoples, but when one considers the degeneracy

of their religion and that God wanted to spare Israel from becoming involved in it, it is no wonder that God commanded all the people to be wiped out without mercy. Halley's "Pocket Bible Handbook" gives us some valuable data concerning their religion: "Baal was their principal god; Ashtoreth, Baal's wife, their principal goddess. She was the personification of the reproductive principle in nature. Ishtar was her Babylonian name; Astarte her Greek and Roman name. Baalim, the plural of Baal, were images of Baal. Ashtaroeth, the plural of Ashtoreth. Ashera was a sacred pole, cone of stone, or a tree trunk, representing the goddess. Temples of Baal and Ashtoreth were usually together. Priestesses were temple prostitutes. Sodomites were male temple prostitutes. The worship of Baal, Ashtoreth, and other Canaanite gods consisted in the most extravagant orgies; their temples were centers of vice...In excavations at Gezer, Macalister, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1904-09, found, in the Canaanite stratum, which had preceded Israelite occupation, of about 1500 B.C., the ruins of a 'high place', which had been a temple in which they worshipped their god Baal and their goddess Ashtoreth (Astarte). It was an enclosure 150 by 120 feet, surrounded by a wall, open to the sky, where the inhabitants held their religious festivals. Within the walls were 10 rude stone pillars, 5 to 11 feet high, before which the sacrifices were offered. Under the debris, in this 'high place', Macalister found great numbers of jars containing the remains of children who had been sacrificed to Baal. The whole area proved to be a cemetery for new-born babes! Another horrible practice was what they called 'foundation sacrifices'. When a house was to be built, a child would be sacrificed, and its body built into the wall, to bring good luck to the rest of the family. Many of these were found in Gezer. They have been found also at Megiddo, Jericho, and other places. Also in this 'high place', under the rubbish, Macalister found enormous quantities of images and plaques of Ashtoreth with rudely exaggerated sex organs, designed to foster sensual feelings. So, Canaanites worshipped, by immoral indulgence, as a religious rite, in the presence of their gods; and then, by murdering their first-born children, as a sacrifice to these same gods. It seems that, in large measure, the land of Canaan had become a sort of Sodom and Gomorrah on a national scale. Do we wonder any longer why God commanded Israel to exterminate the Canaanites? Did a civilization of such abominable filth and brutality have any right longer to exist? It is one of history's examples of the wrath of God against the wickedness of nations. Archaeologists who dig in the ruins of Canaanite cities wonder that God did not destroy them sooner than He did."

C. Israel Did Well Under Joshua, But They Didn't Finish The Job.

We pointed out in our last study that in the years that Joshua lived and was able to lead the people, he did not compromise with those nations, but besieged them with all his military might (Josh. 11:15-20). It was after the division of the land among the tribes and the death of Joshua that the various tribes failed to carry the task to completion. What is recorded of Manasseh below is likewise recorded of the other tribes in the first chapter of Judges:

"Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of

Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out" (Judg. 1:27,28).

II. What This Disobedience Brought.

A. What God Foresaw That It Would Bring.

God expressly forbade them making any covenant with those nations (Deut. 7:2) or to intermarry with them (Deut. 7:3). He commanded them to destroy their altars and their images (Deut. 7:5). He knew that intermarrying with them and a "live and let-live" policy toward them would result in Israel becoming idolatrous just like them:

"For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly" (Deut. 7:4).

As early as the giving of the law through Moses, God had said:

"They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me; for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee" (Exo. 23:33).

B. This Is Exactly What Happened.

People then must have been much like people today--they had their own ideas about things and did what they pleased more than what God commanded. But, the truth of God's Word was amply shown in the results that followed. Judg. 3:5-7 says:

"The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves."

C. Because Of Their Idolatry, God Delivered Them Into The Hands Of Their Enemies.

Judg. 2:14,15 says:

"And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed."

How much then they wished they had obeyed God in the first place! People-like, they disobeyed carelessly, but repented bitterly.

III. Where The Judges Fit In.

A. The People Cried To God For Deliverance.

Not always (Rev. 9:19-21 and Rev. 16:8-11), but many times men will turn to God in times of misfortune, reverse, and chastening. In those days of bitter bondage to their enemy neighbors, the burden became so heavy that they cried out to God for deliverance (Judg. 3:8,9; 3:15; 4:3; etc.).

B. Each Time, God Raised Up A Deliverer For Them.

Herein we see the mercy of God toward His people. The Psalmist said in Psa. 103:9 that God would not always chide nor keep His anger forever. When their cry came up before Him, He would raise up deliverers, called "judges", for them. These judges were not judicial men, as we commonly employ the term, but were military leaders and sometimes religious reformers.

C. The Different Judges.

Altogether, there were fifteen different judges. They were, with the Scripture references covering their labors, as follows:

Othniel - Judg. 3:5-11
 Ehud - Judg. 3:12-30
 Shamgar - Judg. 3:31
 Deborah and Barak - Judg. 4:1--5:31
 Gideon - Judg. 6:11--8:32
 Tola - Judg. 10:1,2
 Jair - Judg. 10:3-5
 Jephthah - Judg. 11:1--12:7
 Elon - Judg. 12:11,12
 Abdon - Judg. 12:13-15
 Samson - Judg. 13:2--16:31
 Eli - Judg. 17:1--I Sam. 4:18
 Samuel - I Sam. 3:1--25:1

D. These Men Were Famous For Their Great Deeds Of Valor.

Othniel subdued the Mesopotamians. Ehud personally killed the king of Moab and led in a great triumph over the Moabites. Shamgar killed six hundred Philistines with an ox goad. Deborah and Barak obtained a mighty victory over Sisera and his men. Gideon's victories over the Midianites are stories full of great faith and courage. Jephthah led in victory over the Philistines. The great feats of valor performed by Samson against the Philistines are probably the best known of all the judges' victories. Only time and space failed the Hebrew writer to detail some of their great victories in his "Faith Chapter" (Heb. 11:32-34).

E. The Period Of The Judges Covered A Longer Period Than Most People Realize.

Following Othniel's triumph over the Mesopotamians, Judg. 3:11 says they had rest for *forty years*. After Ehud's slaughter of the Moabites, Judg. 3:30 says the land had rest for *eighty years*. These were but the first two judges. Thus, it is evident that this period in Old Testament history, commonly referred to as the "Judges' Period", covered a considerable expanse of time. Acts 13:20 states:

"He gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years."

Thus, this becomes one of the longer periods of Old Testament history.

IV. An Important Matter Near The End Of This Period.

A. The People Desired A King.

In Samuel's older years, some of the prominent men of Israel came to him with the following request:

"Thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5).

Here was Israel's same old trouble--they wanted to be like the nations around them. God had called them to be different. They were His "special" people. He said to them through Moses:

"The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth...Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them...Thou shalt be blessed above all people" (Deut. 7:6,11,14).

But, Israel wouldn't have it that way! How much like people today, who instead of being the people of God by carrying out His Word are consumed with the mania to be like their religious neighbors and thus compromise any peculiar tenets of the gospel. Congregations are infested with them! They are the ones holding "Israel" back!

B. What Their Request Indicated.

Samuel thought they had rejected his leadership. But, God said, "No, they have rejected Mine." And He permitted them to have a king:

"Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee (Samuel) for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8:7).

God had loved Israel. He had fed them. He had led them. He had given them a land. He had given them victory. What more of a king could they have wanted? God never did forget this insult, and He ever afterward referred to it as a sin (1 Sam. 10:19; 1 Sam. 12:12; 1 Sam. 12:16-19; Hos. 13:9-11).

C. God, Realizing Ahead Of Time This Request That Would Come, Had Given Instructions Concerning Any King They Might Have.

Through Moses, God had said:

"When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel" (Deut. 17:14-20).

D. God Gave Them Their Wishes To Their Own Sorrow.

So often in Scripture, God gave disobedient people their wishes to their own regret later. Wishes uttered rashly in moments of temper or impatience have come true, much to the sorrow of those who wished them. They wanted a king. They were determined to have a king. God gave them a king, but not without telling them of some of the grievances that would come upon them because of their king:

"He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horseman; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day" (1 Sam. 8:11-18).

But, the people didn't give heed to these words either (verses 19 and 20). They still wanted a king. Some people can't be told--they must be shown. If we may so speak, they got shown all right. It did cost them tremendously to support a king, his palace, his court, and his army. By the time that Solomon had gotten through with them (just the third king), they were calling for relief from such heavy taxation. Their kings led them into idolatry, which brought their national ruin at the punishing hand of God. Their wars (because they were a nation with a king and had assumed the usual role of a nation with a king) greatly weakened the nation time and time again.

How right God was! How wrong they were! Thus, with the coming of the kings came the end of the judges. When Samuel died, Israel had had its last judge.

Israel's First Three Kings

Israel thought an earthly king would be a step forward; God told them it would be just the opposite. While the truth of God will always be manifested in time, yet the will of man must exert itself in the meantime. Just because God permitted them to have a king did not mean that He approved the idea. Sometimes, He permits some things to take place for punishing reasons. This was the case with their request for a king.

In this study of the first three kings of Israel, we are considering a period of their history that covered one hun-