
The History of Moses and the Israelites

Narrative
Portions of
Exodus –
Deuteronomy

By Jeremy Sweets

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Schedule

Date	Lesson	Title	Scripture
6/9/19	Lesson 1	Introduction	--
	Lesson 2	Hebrew Slavery in Egypt	Exodus 1-2
6/16/19	Lesson 3	The Call of Moses	Exodus 3-6
6/23/19	Lesson 4	The First Nine Plagues	Exodus 7-10
6/30/19	Lesson 5	The Final Plague and the Exodus	Exodus 11-13
7/7/19	Lesson 6	Journey to Mt. Sinai	Exodus 14-18
7/14/19	Lesson 7	The Covenant at Mt. Sinai	Exodus 19-31
7/21/19	Lesson 8	Breaking the Covenant	Exodus 32-40
7/28/19	Lesson 9	Departure from Sinai	Leviticus; Numbers 1-12
8/4/19	Lesson 10	The Report of the 12 Spies	Numbers 13-19
8/11/19	Lesson 11	To the Plains of Moab	Numbers 20-25
8/18/19	Lesson 12	The Final Days of Moses	Numbers 26-36; Deuteronomy
8/25/19	Lesson 13	Review	--

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Summer Quarter (June - August) 2019, Sunday Morning

Adult Auditorium Class at the Church of Christ at Broadmoor

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Introduction

Moses and Israel

This study considers the history of Moses and the Israelites, which is recorded in the last four books of the Pentateuch (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). These books cover God's covenant with Israel, and the laws of the covenant are intertwined within the narrative. While some of the legal material may be briefly summarized, emphasis will be placed on the narrative portions of the text.

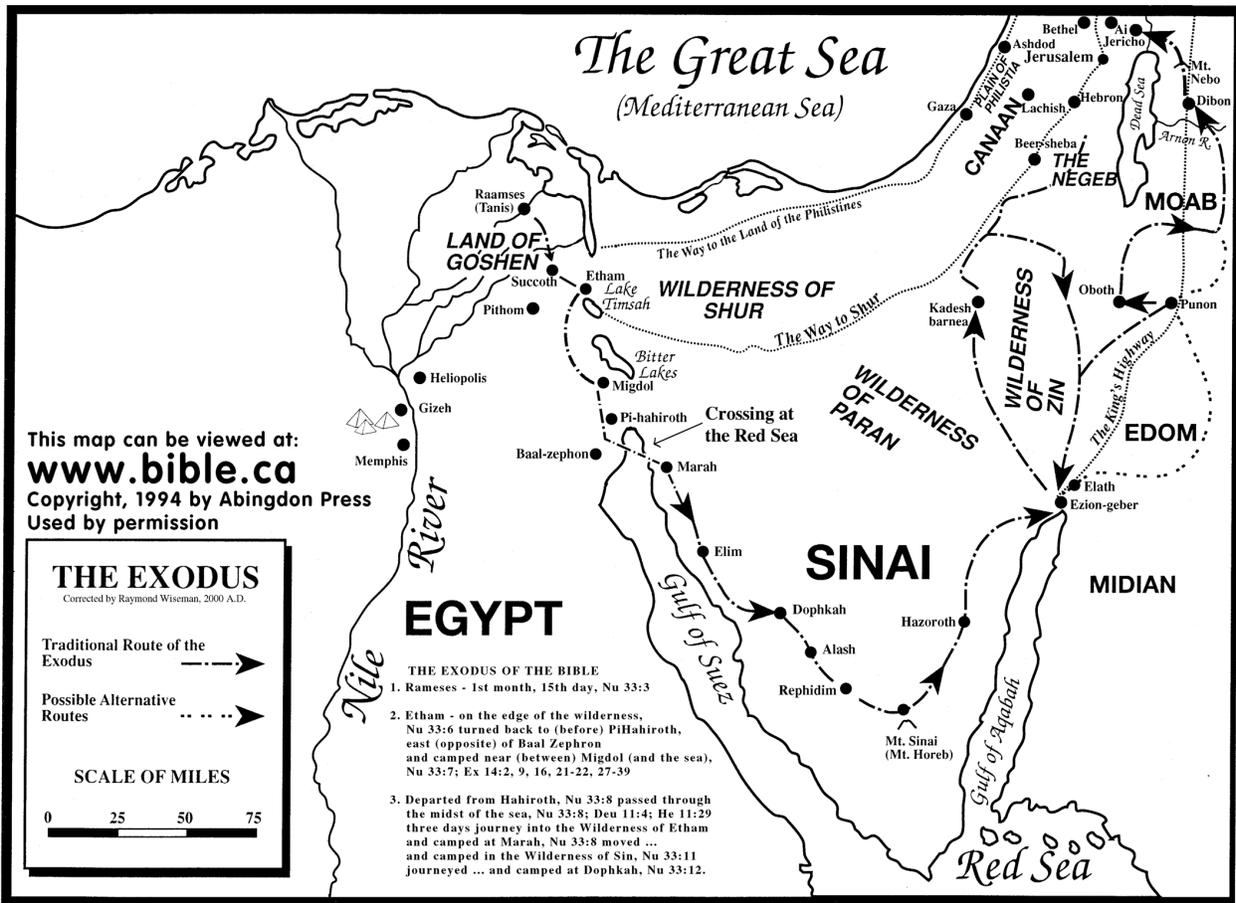
The life of Moses and the history of Israel are inseparably connected. Moses was born into Israel in the midst of Hebrew slavery, and he would lead people through the foundational events of the liberation and exodus from Egypt, the covenant at Mt. Sinai and the journey to the border of Canaan. While he was not always appreciated by the people he led, future generations look back on Moses as a faithful servant of God and a pivotal figure for the nation.

Moses and Israel

When Stephen summarized the history of Israel, he divided the life of Moses into three sets of 40 years, which provides a helpful way to consider his work and relationship to Israel. At each stage in his life, Moses found himself in a different place, which in turn created a different way of relating with the Israelite nation. At each transition period of his life, Moses also found himself in a conflict that would alter the direction of his life.

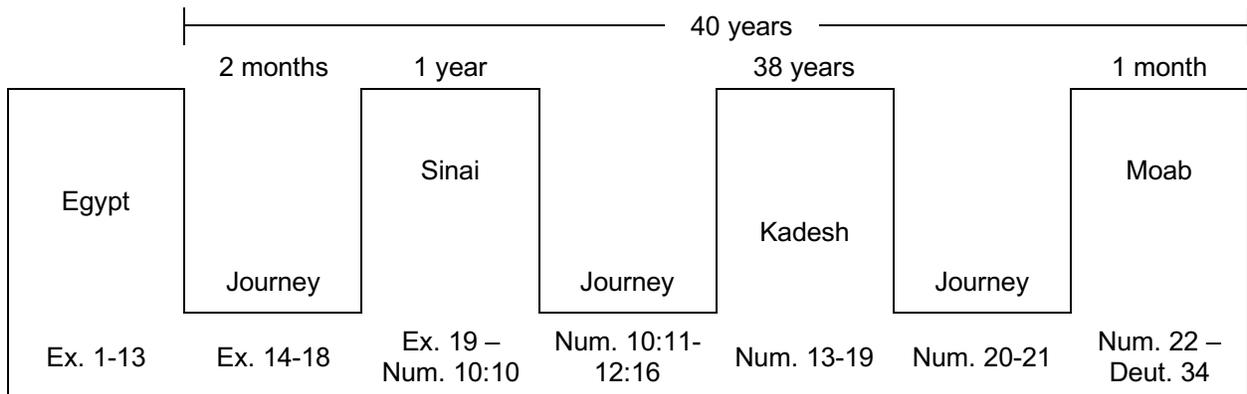
- **1st 40 Years (Acts 7:20-22).** Moses was born as a Hebrew, but he was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and raised in the palace, where he was "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). His upbringing created some emotional distance between him and his fellow Hebrew people. His time at the palace came to an end when he attempted to stand up for the Hebrew slaves. Instead, he was unappreciated by his countrymen and a criminal in his native land, causing him to flee.
- **2nd 40 Years (Acts 7:23-29).** Moses fled to the land of Midian, where he built a new life for himself. After meeting a wealthy man named Jethro, he worked for him as a shepherd, married his daughter, and would father two children. He likely would have continued his life in Midian had God not called him back to Egypt to lead the Israelite people out of slavery. The conflict with Pharaoh over the liberation of the people would be a decisive turning point for Moses and the nation.
- **3rd 40 Years (Acts 7:30-44).** Moses did go on to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and to Mt. Sinai, where they made a covenant with God. The people often complained and rebelled, but Moses persisted to lead the people. The first generation would die in the wilderness because of their faithlessness and would not be allowed to enter into the Promised Land. Moses, too, came in conflict with God because of his sin and was not allowed to go into Canaan.

	Location	Relationship to Israel	Concluding Conflict	Scripture
1 st 40 Years	Egypt	In the Palace among the Oppressors	Conflict with Egyptian Taskmaster	Acts 7:20-22; Ex. 2:3-10
2 nd 40 Years	Midian	In Exile Away from the People	Conflict with Pharaoh	Acts 7:23-29; Ex. 2:11-25
3 rd 40 Years	The Wilderness	Among the People Leading Them	Conflict with God	Acts 7:30-44; Ex. 3 – Deut. 34



Israel's Journey from Egypt to Canaan

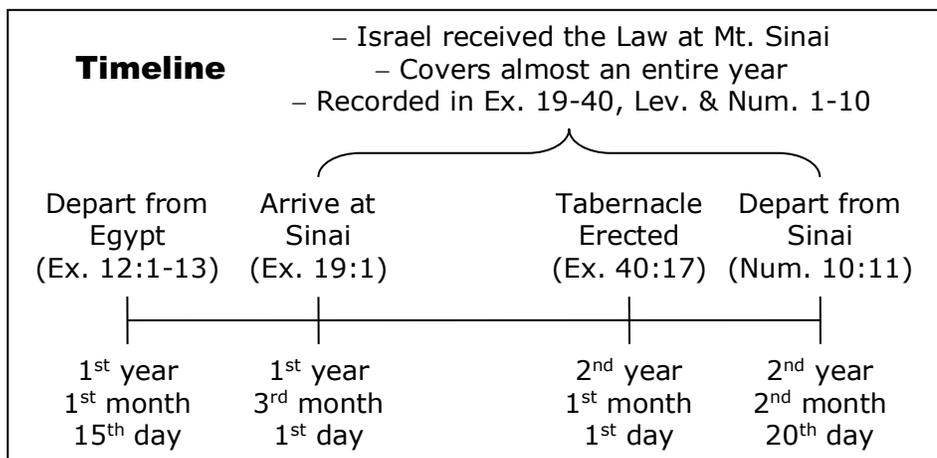
The goal of the Exodus was not only to bring the people out of Egypt, but to make a covenant with them and bring them to the Promised Land. The journey from Egypt to Canaan would be a long and difficult one for the Israelite people, spanning 40 years and 2 generations. Like the division of Moses' life, Israel's time in the wilderness can be divided into three cycles, which includes three stops (Sinai, Kadesh and Moab) and three journeys.



- Similar chart and discussion found in *Numbers* (Tyndale OT Commentary series), by Gordan Wenham, p. 17-21

Stop #1: Mt. Sinai. Mt. Sinai was where Moses first encountered God and received the call to lead the people out of Egyptian slavery (Ex. 3:9-12), and it would be Israel's first major stop upon their departure from Egypt. God brought the people to this mountain to make a covenant with them. Israel's stay at Mt. Sinai lasted just shy of one year and can be found in a large portion of Scripture – the end

of Exodus (20-40), all of Leviticus (1-27) and the first part of Numbers (1-10). Most of this Scripture contains legal material that formed the basis of the covenant. While at Mt. Sinai, the people also broke the covenant by committing idolatry, and they renewed the covenant afterward.



Stop #2: Kadesh.

Israel's next stop came as they traveled to northward, taking the most direct route to the land of Canaan. They stopped at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran and sent scouts into the land to collect information on it (Num. 13-14). The spies reported the bounty of the land, but they also reported the great size of the inhabitants and the fortifications of their cities. Ten of the spies concluded that they couldn't take the land, while two said they could. When Israel listened to the faithless spies, they were punished with death in the wilderness. They people spent the next 38 years wandering in the wilderness, while the faithless generation died out.

Stop #3: Moab. The next generation would take a different approach into Canaan, both physically and spiritually. They traveled along the Transjordan region, just east of Canaan, and they prepared to enter the land by crossing over the Jordan River. Israel's first encounter at Moab was a bad one, resulting in blatant immorality and idolatry at Peor (Num. 25). Once again, God punished the people and atonement was needed. After this, Israel was given the law again and the covenant was renewed. Their stay at Moab is recorded in the last few chapters of Numbers (chapters 22-36) and all of Deuteronomy.

A few things should be noted when looking at the three stops together.

- The first and third stops serve as mirror images of each other. At Sinai, the first generation received the covenant, and at Moab, the second generation received the covenant.
- At each stop, the people committed a major sin against God and violated the covenant. At Sinai and Moab, the people engaged in idolatry while at Kadesh, the people rejected God's ability to give them the land.
- Each sin is followed by a pattern of activity that includes God's wrathful response, plagues, intercession, atonement and renewal of the covenant.

Israel's Sin

Sinai	Kadesh	Moab
The Golden Calf	Faithless Spies	Immorality at Peor

Journeys. With each stop, the text records a journey to their destination, which included the following:

- Journey #1: The Red Sea to Sinai (Ex. 14-18)
- Journey #2: Sinai to Kadesh (Num. 10-12)
- Journey #3: Kadesh to the Plains of Moab (Num. 20-21)

These journeys also seem contain similar themes and patterns of behavior.

- On the journeys, the people were led by God in the form of a cloud.
- Each journey is primarily characterized by grumbling and complaining. Often the complaints were about dissatisfaction with their food/water and leadership. They accused Moses of trying to kill them in the wilderness and longed for a return to Egypt.
- Once again, the first and third journeys serve as mirror images of one another. On both occasions, the people were given military victories over Egypt and Amalek, thirsted at Meribah, and drank water from a well.

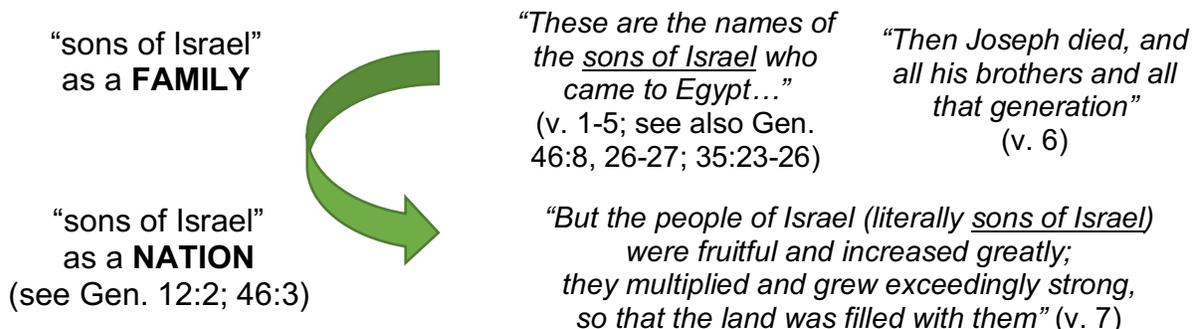
The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

- I. The End of a Generation (1:1-7)
- II. A New Pharaoh Oppresses Israel (1:8-22)
- III. Birth and childhood of Moses (2:1-10)
- IV. Moses flees to Midian (2:11-22)
- V. Israel cries for help from God (2:23-25)

Introduction to Exodus (1:1-7)

The opening verses of the book provide a link between Genesis and Exodus, transitioning from the past to the future. It is also in these verses that the “sons of Israel” shift from a family to a nation of people, fulfilling the promise to Abraham and one of the main plotlines in the narrative of the patriarchs.



A New King Oppresses Israel (1:8-2:10)

“Now there arose a king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph” (1:8)

A new king arose in Egypt who did not know Joseph. With this statement, the author provides the backdrop for the hardships that will befall the Israelites. Joseph’s great contribution to the Egyptians was forgotten and his descendants were viewed merely as a threat to Egyptian stability.

The new king proposes to the Egyptians that they must deal shrewdly with the Israelites or else they will multiply and present a military threat. The pharaoh then pursues three different plans against Israel, all of which are foiled.

“And he said to his people, ‘Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land’” (1:9-10).

The Identity of the Pharaohs of Egypt have puzzled students of Exodus for centuries, but the author of Exodus makes no attempt to provide that information. It is an interesting curiosity, but it was not considered to be necessary to the purpose of the author. But to satisfy a bit of our curiosity, there are two main proposals based upon different dating systems.

The Early Date (the 15th Century, 1446). With this dating, the Pharaoh who initially persecuted the Israelites would likely have been Thutmose III and the Pharaoh of the Exodus would have been Amenhotep II.

The Late Date (the 13th Century, around 1270). If the late date is used, the Pharaoh of the Exodus would most likely be Rameses II, who ruled in the 19th Dynasty of Egypt.

- Identify the three plans of Pharaoh and how each one was foiled.

	Pharaoh's Plan	Foil
Plan #1	1:11, 13-14	1:12
Plan #2	1:15-16	1:17
Plan #3	1:22	2:1-10

- What led the midwives to defy the order of Pharaoh? Is it ever right to defy civil authority?
- What happened to the midwives and the people as a result of their defiance?

The Birth of Moses

Pharaoh's last order to murder the Hebrew newborn males immediately gives way to the birth of one of the baby boys subject to his command. The concerned parents hid their beautiful baby boy in the Nile, and he was then discovered by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses' sister played a pivotal role in protecting the baby, watching from a distance when he was in the Nile and then suggesting that one of the Hebrew women could nurse him. Pharaoh's daughter didn't know that the messenger was the baby's sister and the wet-nurse was his own mother. After Moses was weaned, he was returned to Pharaoh's daughter as an adopted son and would grow up in the royal court.



The reversals and unexpected turns abound in this story. Moses found safety in the Nile instead of the intended death. While it was quite natural for the Hebrew family to save their own baby, the person who ultimately thwarted Pharaoh's plan was his own daughter. She felt compassion for the child where her father had none. The paid wet-nurse for the baby ended up being his own mother, and when the child was old enough, he went and lived in the house of Pharaoh, the same man who wanted him dead.

Story Connector. This pivotal story provides a link to past and future salvation for God's people.

Creation	Noah	Moses	Exodus
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A Look to the Past. When Moses' mother looked upon him, she saw that he was good (often translated as beautiful), which is the same construction and language used in the creation account (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). The birth and life of Moses would be used to provide new life for the Hebrew people. Additionally, the "basket" that provided safe passage for Moses in the Nile was called an ark, a term that is only found elsewhere in Scripture in the story of Noah. It was even sealed with tar and pitch, like Noah's boat. Both Noah and Moses were brought safely in the ark through the water instead of perishing in it.

Anticipating the Exodus. The salvation of Moses as a baby anticipates the salvation of the Hebrew people in the Exodus. His birth foiled Pharaoh's plan to kill all male babies in the Nile, and his life would foil Pharaoh's stubborn plan to keep the Hebrew people enslaved. One element that likely anticipates the Exodus is the mention of reeds in the story. Later, the Israelites would cross the Red Sea (called the "Sea of Reeds" in Exodus) to escape Pharaoh.

- To what tribe did the baby belong? What is important about this tribe? It was identified here even though the parents were not.
- Who named Moses? What did his name mean?

Conflict and Exile (2:11-22)

The story then immediately moves to a single episode in Moses' adulthood that would lead to his exile. Moses went out and saw the plight of his people, and his sympathies would move him to drastic action. He struck down and killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave, and he hid the body in the sand. On the next day when he intervened in a confrontation between two Hebrews, they responded with disdain and asked if he would kill them, too. Moses' sin was not hidden as he intended, and the news reached Pharaoh. Pharaoh sought to kill Moses, and Moses fled from his presence to Midian.

Moses made a life for himself in the land of Midian. He endeared himself to a certain man of Midian when he helped gather his flock and water them. Moses was taken into his house, and given one of his seven daughters as a wife. They had a son together, and he was named Gershom.

- What did Gershom's name mean?
- What nationality is attributed to Moses in Midian? Which people could he identify with at this time?

More Anticipations. The text provides several more elements that anticipate the Israelite Exodus. Moses' upbringing in the house of Pharaoh and his subsequent feud previews the future conflict between Moses and Pharaoh. The conflict he experienced with his own people will also play itself out in the text many times over. He was also a sojourner in a foreign land, just as the Hebrews were in Egypt and would continue on their journey to the promised land. In fact, all of Moses' life provides a preview of the nation of Israel. His life in the first 6 chapters of Exodus parallels the major events in the history of Israel throughout the rest of Exodus, including deliverance, the wilderness period, and the meeting at Mt. Sinai, which included a covenant commission and renewal.

	Moses	Israel
Deliverance	2:1-10	ch. 7-14
Wilderness	2:11-22	ch. 15-18
Meeting at Mt. Sinai	3:1-10	ch. 19
Commission	3:11-4:17	ch. 19-24
Renewal	ch. 6	ch. 34

God Hears (2:23-24)

Exodus 1-2 seems to present Pharaoh as the main actor who will determine the fate of the Hebrew people. The

What Israel Did?	How God Responded?
1. Israel groaned because of their slavery	1. God <u>heard</u> their groaning.
2. They cried out for help.	2. God <u>remembered</u> His covenant.
	3. God <u>saw</u> the sons of Israel.
	4. God <u>took notice</u> of them.

The narrative is dominated by Pharaoh's unrelenting quest to subjugate the Israelites. The longevity of Hebrew enslavement may lead some to conclude that God was absent. Exodus 2:23-25 indicates otherwise, relating God's awareness and concern over the situation. These verses provide a clear transition to God's plans and actions in what follows. It should also be noted that while God's name and activity receive very few mentions in the first two chapters, his fingerprints are all over the story. God is most certainly responsible for the growth of the Israelite nation and the many foils of Pharaoh's plots. The story of Moses' salvation has the marks of God's providential care all over it, despite not being specifically named.

- Why does it seem like God is not aware of the suffering of many people here on earth?
- What can this story teach us about God and his consideration of suffering?

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

- I. God's Commission to Moses (3:1-4:17)
- II. Moses' Return to Egypt (4:18-30)
- III. Moses' Initial Plea to Pharaoh (5:1-21)
- IV. God's Reaffirmation to Moses and the People (5:22-6:9)
- V. Genealogy of Moses and Aaron (6:10-30)

These chapters provide a transition from the plight of the people (ch. 1-2) to the plagues that will cripple Pharaoh and lead to the release of the Hebrew slaves (ch. 7-12). It is in these chapters that God's motivation and intentions are most clearly laid out. God states these intentions in the initial call to Moses (3:1-10) and they are repeated again after initial resistance from Pharaoh (6:1-8). These statements follow closely on the heels of Pharaoh's directions to subjugate and kill the people (chs. 1-2) and his initial refusal and instruction to make the work more difficult (ch. 5).

The Encounter at Horeb

The previous chapter concluded with Moses' flight to Midian and God's notice of the Hebrew suffering. God's encounter with Moses will focus on what God had witnessed and what he intended to do about it. God's method of communication would occur through the unconventional means of a burning bush.



- Where was Moses pasturing when he encountered God?
- What attracted the attention of Moses? What caused him to look away?
- What made the ground holy? What did Moses have to do because of it?
- Identify what God witnessed and what he intended to do about it from Ex. 3:7-10.

What God Witnessed	What God Intended To Do About It
v. 7 I have seen _____ I have heard _____ I know _____	v. 8
v. 9 _____ has come to me I have seen _____	v. 10

- When God revealed his plans to use Moses to relieve the suffering of the Israelites, Moses responded with a series of excuses, which God answered. Identify the excuses and responses below.

Moses' Excuse	God's Response
3:11	3:12
3:13	3:14-22

4:1	4:2-9
4:10	4:11-12
4:13	4:14-17

- What does it say about God that he could have an interaction like this with Moses?
- In Ex. 3:12, God states that “this shall be the sign for you.” What does “this” refer to? What was the sign given to Moses? And what does the sign point to?

When Moses questioned **the divine name**, God responded by stating, “I Am who I Am” (3:14). It includes two uses of the verb “to be” separated by a relative pronoun. Most translations use present tense verbs, but there are other options. Another translation may be “I will be who I will be,” “I am who I will be” or “I cause to be what I cause to be” (see footnote in NIV). The name appears to be a revelation of the nature of God, and there are several possible interpretations.

- It may emphasize His eternal existence (Gen. 1:1). He is the one who has always been.
- It may refer to his immutable character and faithfulness to Israel. He is who He will always be.
- God’s power may also be indicated. God is the One who causes all things. Elsewhere in Exodus, God identifies his name as Yahweh (6:2-3), which has an obscure meaning but may be a causative form of “to be,” meaning “I create/sustain.” God’s power would be applied to help His people and Yahweh would represent his covenant name with Israel.

- Do any of the meanings of God’s name make more sense in the context?

The Return to Egypt

Having received God’s commission, Moses returned back to Egypt to inform the people of what he had heard. This section of Scripture can be divided into four small parts:

- Moses departed from Jethro to Egypt (4:18-20)
 - The Lord’s instruction to Moses (4:21-23)
 - Moses nearly died by the hand of the Lord (4:24-26)
 - The words of God were relayed to Aaron and the Hebrew elders (4:27-31)
- God told Moses that the men who were seeking his life had died (4:19). Which men is he talking about?
 - What relationship did God claim with Israel? What ultimatum would God give Pharaoh?
 - Why did God try to put Moses to death?
 - How did the Israelite elders respond to the words and signs of Moses and Aaron?

Pharaoh’s Initial Refusal

Moses’ first encounter with Pharaoh did not go as he expected. His request to Pharaoh creates a domino effect, which resulted in refusal to the request, harsher treatment for the Hebrew slaves, and Hebrew infighting and discouragement. The complaints that result from the mistreatment provide an opportunity for God to restate his intentions and indicate his resolve.

**Outline of Initial
Rejection and
God's Reaffirmation**

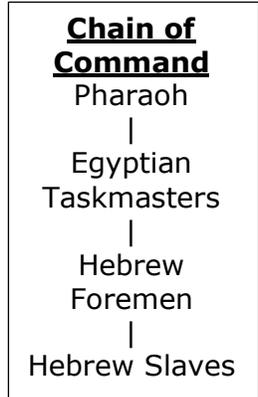
- A. Rejection by Pharaoh (5:1-9)
- B. Rejection by the People (5:10-21)
- C. Moses' Question and God's Response (5:22-6:1)
- B'. Reaffirmation to the People (6:2-9)
- A'. Reaffirmation to Pharaoh (6:10-7:7)

Who is the Lord?

*"Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go?
I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go" (5:2).*

Pharaoh's initial refusal comes by way of a question: "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?" The revelation and subsequent knowledge of God becomes a major theme throughout the Exodus. By the end of the story, Pharaoh will come to know the Lord and why he should listen to him.

- What burden did Pharaoh place on the Hebrew people after refusing Moses' request?
- What continued fear does Pharaoh have about the Hebrews? See 5:5.
- The Hebrew foreman complain twice. To whom do they complain?
- Who gets blamed for the Hebrew hardship?
- Identify God's past actions and future promises below.



Reasons for Action (6:3-5)	I appeared _____ I established _____ I have heard _____ I remembered _____
Promises (6:6-8)	I will bring _____ I will deliver _____ I will redeem _____ I will take _____ [and you shall know] _____ I will bring you _____ I will give _____

- Why did God begin and end his address with the words, "I am the Lord?" See 6:2, 6, 8.
- Of God's promises, which one uses covenant language?

A genealogy seems to interrupt the flow of the narrative at the end of chapter 6. The genealogy represents five generations and serves as a selective genealogy, highlighting important figures: Jacob (6:14) – Levi (6:16) – Kohath (6:16) – Amram (6:18) – Moses and Aaron (6:20).

- Notice the similarity/repetition of the Lord's conversation with Moses before and after the genealogy (6:10-13 and 6:26-30). Do any repeated words or phrases stand out to you?
- What function does this genealogy serve? Why do you think it was placed here by the author?

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

- I. God's Intentions for Pharaoh (7:1-7)
- II. The Initial Sign: Staff to Snake (7:8-13)
- III. The First Nine Plagues (7:14-10:29)

God's Intentions for Pharaoh

When Moses faced rejection from Pharaoh and the people, God responded with a restatement of his intentions. First, God reminded the people of his past covenant and their future redemption. Next, God stated his intentions with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, which would result in further confrontation but God's ultimate victory. Notice that God begins his message by stating that Moses would be "like God to Pharaoh." This would be a blow to Pharaoh's ego, who considered himself to be divine.

"Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment" (7:4b)

- Identify the actions of each person or group from Ex. 7:2-7.

Moses and Aaron	Pharaoh	God	The Egyptians

The Ten Plagues

In light of Pharaoh's refusal, God will apply "pressure" to Pharaoh and the Egyptians to challenge the king's resolve. God sent ten plagues. The word "plague" is not actually used in the text, although it serves as an apt description. God refers to these events as "signs and wonders" (7:3) and "great acts" (7:4). As wonders and great acts, the plagues would be a demonstration of God's power and sovereignty. As signs, the plagues would point others to a knowledge of God and his character.

The Purpose of the Plagues. God accomplished his will with his mighty deeds, and they would serve several related purposes:

1. **Freedom from Slavery.** The ultimate goal of the plagues was to provide release for the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery (6:6; 7:4). The plagues would overcome Pharaoh's hard heart so that he would let the people go.
2. **A Knowledge of God.** A widespread knowledge of God was a major purpose of the plagues. The text repeatedly states God's intention that all would know him. It's stated twice in his reaffirmation to Moses (6:7; 7:5), in 6 of the 10 plagues including the final and decisive one (7:17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 16, 29; 10:2; 11:7), and as the people prepared to cross the Red Sea (14:4, 17). Several groups are targeted with this knowledge, including the Israelites, Pharaoh, and the Egyptians. Future generations of readers can also come to know God through the record in the Exodus.
3. **Demonstration of God's Superiority.** When God was more fully known, his superiority was clearly seen. The ten plagues demonstrated God's superiority over Pharaoh, an Egyptian deity, the Egyptian magicians and diviners, and the many national gods (12:12).

4. **Judgment.** The plagues would serve as God’s judgment upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. He mentioned this purpose in the reaffirmation of his will before the plagues, stating that by “great acts of judgment” he would redeem Israel and bring them out of slavery (6:6; 7:4). The word occurs one more time in the Plagues narrative when God stated that he would execute judgment on “all the gods of Egypt” (12:12).
- a. **Reversal.** Pharaoh and the Egyptians would suffer a similar fate that they had imposed upon the Hebrews. The Egyptians would endure an increasing level of suffering as the plagues unfolded, just as Pharaoh imposed greater work and more suffering on the Hebrews. The final plague would be the most severe, culminating in the death of the firstborn in Egypt. This was reminiscent of Pharaoh’s plans to put to death the Hebrew male infants.
- b. **The Natural Order.** God’s initial instruction to the first couple was to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. A great and expansive population was further promised to Abraham and fulfilled in the Israelites in Egypt. Pharaoh’s subjugation of Abraham’s descendants and plans for genocide reversed God’s intentions in the Creation. The plagues reflect this disruption of the natural order of things. Animals and insects appear in an abundance, sickness and death strike, and “natural disasters” like hail and locusts ravage the land. The effects of the plagues extend beyond humans to the land, vegetation and animals in Egypt. Judgment in the plagues resemble apocalyptic literature, where the elements of creation break down and revolt against sin.

The Structure of the Plagues. Internal indicators in the text seem to suggest that the plagues can be divided into three cycles of three plagues each with a culminating 10th and final plague. Some of the internal markers for this division include the following.

- The numbered plague of each cycle follows a similar pattern. The first plague of each cycle begins with a warning to Pharaoh given in the morning (7:15, 8:20, 9:13). The second plague of each cycle was likely conducted indoors, possibly at the palace, and the third plague of each cycle came without a warning to Pharaoh.
- Each cycle affects a different component of nature (water, land, and air). The third plague of insects might more readily be associated with the air, but some have suggested that this insect might be mosquitoes, which has an association with water.
- Each cycle has a different rendering of the staff. The first cycle involves Aaron’s staff, the second cycle makes no mention of a staff, and the third cycle involves the staff of Moses.

	Plague Number	Plagues	Association of Plague	Staff Used
1st Cycle	1-3	Nile to Blood, Frogs, Gnats	Water, Swampland	Aaron’s Staff
2nd Cycle	4-6	Flies, Death of Livestock, Boils	Land	None
3rd Cycle	7-9	Hail, Locusts, Darkness	Air	Moses’ Staff
Final Plague	10	Death of Firstborn	Human Life	None

- According to Ex. 6:7 and 7:5, both the Israelites and the Egyptians would come to know the Lord. How would their “knowledge” or relationship with God be different?
- What significance does the number 10 have in Scripture? Why might this number have been used for the total number of plagues?

For additional reflections on the plagues, see Ps. 78:43-51; 105:27-36; Deut. 4:32-40 (esp v. 35, 39).

- Complete the questions below. Note anything else that stands out to you in each text.

Sign: Staff to Snake (7:8-13)

What sign did Moses and Aaron perform?

Could the Egyptians replicate the sign?

How was God shown to be superior?

How did Pharaoh respond to the miracle?

1st Plague: Water to Blood (7:14-25)

What was the 1st plague and how severe was it?

What did God hope to accomplish with this sign?

Could the Egyptians replicate this plague?

How did Pharaoh respond to the miracle?

2nd Plague: Frogs (8:1-14)

What was the 2nd plague and how severe was it?

What did Moses want Pharaoh to know about God?

Could the Egyptians replicate this plague?

How did Pharaoh respond to the miracle?

3rd Plague: Gnats (8:16-19)

What was the 3rd plague and how severe was it?

Could the Egyptians replicate this plague?

How did the magicians respond to the miracle? How did Pharaoh respond?

4th Plague: Flies (8:20-32)

What was the 4th plague and how severe was it?

Did God make a distinction in this plague? Why?

What did Moses request for Israel? What compromise did Pharaoh propose?

5th Plague: Death of Livestock (9:1-7)

What was the 5th plague and how severe was it?

Did God make a distinction in this plague?

How did Pharaoh respond to the miracle?

6th Plague: Boils (9:8-12)

What was the 6th plague and how severe was it?

What happened to the magicians?

How did Pharaoh respond to the miracle?

7th Plague: Hail (9:13-35)

What was the 7th plague and how severe was it?

Did God make a distinction in this plague?

What did God want Pharaoh to know with this plague?

How did Pharaoh respond to the miracle? How did he respond when it ceased?

8th Plague: Locusts (10:1-20)

What was the 8th plague and how severe was it?

What did God hope to accomplish with this sign?

How did Pharaoh's servants respond to the miracle?

What compromise did Pharaoh offer?

9th Plague: Darkness (10:21-29)

What was the 9th plague and how severe was it?

Did God make a distinction in this plague?

What compromise did Pharaoh offer?

What threat did Pharaoh make to Moses?

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

- I. The Last Plague Announced (11:1-10)
- II. Instructions for the Passover (12:1-28)
- III. The Final Plague and Hebrew Exodus (12:29-42)
- IV. Additional Passover Regulations (12:43-13:16)

The 10th plague was the final and decisive plague against Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Previous plagues had not softened Pharaoh’s heart, allowing God to “multiply” his wonders in the land and bring one final plague to secure the release of the Hebrew slaves (11:9). The final plague and its accompanying instructions on the Passover cover considerably more material in the text than any other plague (11:1-13:16). Repetition of the key elements in the story contribute to its length.

	God’s Instructions	Moses’ Instructions	Narrative of Event	Afterward
Passover	12:1-13	12:21-22, 24-27		12:43-49
The 10th Plague	11:2-9*	12:23	12:29-36	
The Exodus	11:1		12:37-42, 50-51	
Unleavened Bread	12:14-20			13:3-10
Redemption of Firstborn				13:1-2, 11-16

* includes the words of God as reported to Pharaoh by Moses (11:4-9).

Hebrew literature includes repetition in order to emphasize important elements in the story. This section of Scripture is an important text, and it relays many of the major themes of the Bible. These themes will be played out repeatedly throughout Scripture, and the Exodus would be a continual reminder of God’s mighty work.

- The Last Plague conveys death and judgment as the ultimate end of sin and rebellion.
- The Passover carries the theme of atonement through substitution and sacrifice.
- The Feast of Unleavened Bread points to the importance of holiness and removal of sin.
- The Exodus from Egypt represents freedom from bondage through the lordship of God.

The Final Plague

Predicted	Announced	Executed
Ex 4:21-23	Ex. 11:1-9	Ex. 12:29-32

The 10th plague would be the decisive blow against Pharaoh and the Egyptians. The firstborn of man and beast would be put to death, affecting every family in the land. The final plague had been the goal of God’s plan all along. It was predicted while Moses was still in Midian (4:21-23). Pharaoh’s mistreatment of Israel, God’s firstborn, would result in the death of Pharaoh’s firstborn son. Before the final plague, God announced his intentions to Moses, informing that the ordeal would soon be over (11:1-9). The final plague would end the standoff and secure the release of the Hebrew slaves. God’s execution of the final plague matched exactly his stated intentions (12:29-39).

Fitting Retribution. The final plague would be fitting retribution for Pharaoh’s crimes. Just as he had put to death the Hebrew male children, he would suffer the death of the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh’s Crime	Pharaoh’s Punishment
Death of Hebrew Male Babies (1:15-22)	Death of Egyptian Firstborn (11:5; 12:29)
	
Great Cry of Pain (2:23; 3:7)	Great Cry of Pain (11:6; 12:30)

- How widespread was the death of the Egyptian firstborn? Was it even greater than Pharaoh's death sentence of the Hebrews?
- How did the cry of pain in Egypt compare with Israel's cry of pain?
- What other plagues had death associated with it?

Egypt |----- Distinction -----| Israel

Distinction. The last plague would bring about a reversal of fortunes for Israel and Egypt. God would make a distinction between the two groups, so that the Egyptians alone bore the punishment and the Hebrews prospered.

The Egyptian Response. The death of the firstborn in the land of Egypt would cause a change of heart for the Egyptian people. God predicted that the final plague would cause Pharaoh to drive out the Israelites *completely* (11:1) and the Egyptians would beg the people to leave (11:8). The Egyptians acted just as God predicted, urging the Israelites to leave their land (12:31-33). The Egyptian servants and people did not look down on the Israelites, though. They looked favorably upon them, and gave them silver, gold and clothing upon their departure (11:3; 12:36). Thus, the Israelites "plundered" the Egyptians (3:22; 11:1-3; 12:35-36; Ps. 105:37).

- After asking Moses and Aaron to leave, what additional request did Pharaoh make?
- Why were the Egyptians urgent to get the Israelites to leave?
- How is plunder normally acquired? How did the Israelites acquire their plunder from the Egyptians?

Judgment Against the Gods. Egypt was a polytheistic society, worshipping over 2,000 different gods. Every aspect of life was associated with a deity. There were sets of gods associated with elements of nature, natural disasters, life events, and professions. The gods were arranged in

Some Egyptian Deities

Amun – king of gods and goddesses; father of the Pharaohs
Ra (Re) – god of the sun; creator of the world
Osiris – one of most important gods; considered first king of Egypt; associated with vegetation and the growth of crops
Isis – wife of Osiris and mother of Horus; ideal wife and mother; giver of life, healer and protector of the kings
Horus – offspring of Osiris and Isis; god of the sky, war, protection, light; watched over all things from above

a hierarchy, mimicking the structure of Egyptian society. Egyptian Pharaohs were considered divine, and served as mediators between the world of gods and men.

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and **on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord**” (Ex. 12:12).

The plagues were not only directed against Pharaoh and the Egyptians. They were also a blow to the pantheon of Egyptian gods (Ex. 12:12; Num. 33:4). The plagues wreaked havoc upon the animals, insects and elements of nature found on the earth, water and air. The Egyptian gods, who were supposed to be safe-guarding the world, were absent and incapable of averting the plagues. This was particularly true in the final plague that brought the death of the firstborn throughout the land. Death even extended to the house of

Pharaoh, striking his son and the future king of Egypt. Through the plagues, God demonstrated his superiority over the false gods of Egypt. God wanted all people to know that he was truly the Lord, and the Egyptians gods were not.

- Did the Egyptians come to know about God? Is there any indication of this in the text?
- Were Egyptian gods real or not? If they were not real, how did God execute judgment on them?

The First Passover

God gave instructions so that the Hebrew people could avoid the effects of the final plague (Ex. 12:1-13). These instructions center around a small lamb and include the selection, sacrifice and eating of the animal. The meal to be eaten would come to be known as the Passover. When blood from the animal was applied to the doorposts of the house, God would “pass over” the house and not bring the plague of death upon it (v. 12-13).

Instructions for the Hebrew Passover (Ex. 12:3-11)	
Select	1. Select a lamb (Hebrew séh; small livestock) on 10 th of the month (v. 3). 2. Choose a lamb according to number of people present, combining houses with a neighbor if necessary (v. 4). 3. The animal should be a one year old male without blemish, taken from the sheep or the goats (v. 5).
Sacrifice	4. Slaughter the lamb on the 14 th day at twilight (v. 6). 5. Apply some of the blood from the animal to the doorposts (v. 7) using a bundle of hyssop (12:22)
Eat	6. Eat the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (v. 8). 7. The animal should be roasted and not eaten boiled or raw (v. 9). 8. All leftovers should be burnt (v. 10). 9. Eat the meal with haste and prepared to leave (v. 11).

The Importance of the Passover

A New Year. The Passover would be a significant event for the Israelite people, constituting a new year and representing a new beginning (v. 2).

A National Memorial. The Passover was intended to be a remembrance for the Israelite people and their community. These events would define the nation of Israel, and it was important for all future generations to partake of the collective memory. Foreigners were excluded, and only outsiders who circumcised their males and sojourned with the Israelites could take it (12:43-49). Not only that, but Israelites who refused to participate in the feasts were cut off from the nation (12:15, 19).

A Kingdom of Priests. The Passover lamb was not sacrificed by specially designated priests or intermediaries. The head of each household would serve as the priest and sacrifice the animal. The nation would be a “kingdom of priests” as designated by God at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:6).

The Passover Meal. The meal included several important elements as seen in verse 8: *“They shall eat the flesh [of the lamb] that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it”* (12:8).

- The one year old lamb would serve as a replacement for the firstborn human of the house.
- The bitter herbs that seasoned the Passover meal (v. 8) would have reminded the people of the bitter labor they endured in Egypt (1:14).
- The unleavened bread reflected the haste with which the meal was to be eaten (v. 8).

The Exodus

As a result of the 10th plague, the Israelite nation finally left Egypt. The narrative on their departure points out that they left in haste (12:35, 39) at the request of Pharaoh (12:31) and the insistence of the Egyptians (12:33). Two numbers in this text have also received much attention and scrutiny.

600,000 – The Hebrew Population. The population of military aged men who left Egypt was about 600,000 (12:37). This number may be borrowed from the census that

“And on that very day the Lord brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts” (12:51)

would be taken about a year later (28:26; Num. 1:216). Some have also suggested that the number for “thousand” may refer to a clan or smaller military unit, making it a variable number and possibly smaller than one thousand.

430 – Years of Israel in Egypt. Israel “lived” in Egypt 430 years (12:40-41), and the Exodus was the conclusion of God’s plan which spanned hundreds of years. This number was repeated by Paul (Gal. 3:16-17) and close to the 400 year number given previously in Genesis and repeated in Stephen’s sermon (Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6). This number reaches back to the time of the Patriarchs, possibly to the time when Jacob was brought into Canaan by Joseph (Gen. 47:27).

- What is your estimate for the total number of Israelites who came out of Egypt?
- If the Exodus occurred in 1445, when did Israel begin to live in Egypt?

An Ongoing Memorial

“This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast” (12:14).

“Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the Lord brought you out from this place” (13:3).

The Passover was not intended to be a one-time event. It would become an annual feast to memorialize the events of Exodus. Deliverance from Egyptian slavery was a pivotal point for the Israelite nation, a time that would allow Israel to fulfill their mission as the people of God. God wanted these events to remain in their collective memory, so He created these feasts as a continual reminder.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread. Immediately following the Passover was to be the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread. It would last from the 15th – 21st day of the first month, beginning and ending with a holy assembly. On the 1st day of the feast, all leaven was to be removed and the people would eat a diet of unleavened bread for the week. The Passover commemorated the deliverance from the Final Plague, whereas the Feast of Unleavened Bread remembered the Exodus and the haste with which it was taken.

Instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:14-20)	
<i>Remove And Remember</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eat unleavened bread for 7 days, removing the leaven on 1st day (v. 15). 2. Hold holy assemblies on the 1st and 7th days (v. 16). 3. Celebrate Feast of Unleavened Bread in 1st month, 14th-21st day (v. 18). 4. Failure to remove leaven would result in being “cut off from Israel” (v. 15, 19)

When You Enter the Land. While the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread were to be a continual statute, special mention is made of observing these feasts in the land. The destination of the nation after leaving Egypt was the Promised Land of Canaan (12:25; 13:11).

Teach Your Children. An important aspect of an ongoing memorial was its opportunity to teach the next generation of what God had done for the Israelites (12:26-27; 13:8-9, 14-15). It would be a time to look back upon the events of the Exodus, even for those who did not personally experience them.

Redemption of the Firstborn. The Hebrew people were spared from the death of the firstborn. The Passover lamb had served as a substitution, and its blood was shed instead. God also wanted the people to consecrate or redeem the firstborn of man and beast as a reminder of God’s mercy (13:1-2, 11-16). The firstborn among the beast were to be sacrificed, and the firstborn sons were redeemed.

- What do you think was involved in the redemption of the firstborn?

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

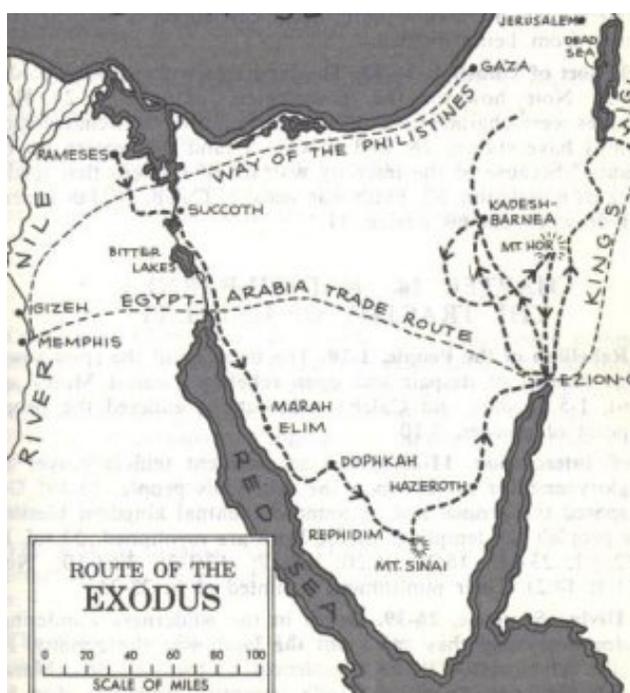
- I. Crossing the Red Sea (14:1-31) and Songs of Delivery (15:1-21)
- II. Grumbling about Food and Water (15:22-17:7)
- III. Battle Against Amelek (17:8-16)
- IV. Jethro's Advice (18:1-27)

Israel's departure from Egypt and journey to Mt. Sinai is a story of God's provision for his people. The Hebrew people faced a tall task by traveling into the wilderness. As a fledgling nation, they were poor, unorganized, inexperienced, and defenseless. Yet, they traveled into a hostile environment, a desert region with little provision for food and water and threatening foreign powers. Normally, that would be a recipe for disaster, but the people had God on their side, and he would provide for them.

Crossing the Red Sea

Exodus 14 contains the familiar story of the crossing of the Red Sea. The chapter contains the following elements:

- **God's Intentions to be Glorified (v. 1-4).** As Israel departed Egypt, God led them toward the southeast. Then God instructed the Israelites through Moses to reverse direction, so that the Egyptians would think they were lost in the wilderness and would pursue them.
 - **The Pursuit of the Egyptian Army (v. 5-9).** Pharaoh played into the Lord's trap. He regretted his decision to let the Hebrews go, and he pursued them with his entire army.
 - **Israel's Complaint and Moses' Reassurance (v. 10-14).** When Israel saw the Egyptian army approaching, they were afraid and complained against Moses. Moses urged the people not to be afraid but to stand firm and see the salvation of the Lord.
 - **Israel Crosses the Red Sea (v. 15-22).** Just as Moses assured, God would provide deliverance for the Israelites. Moses stretched his staff over the sea, and he parted the waters so they formed a wall of water on the right and left side. Then the people walked through the sea on dry ground.
 - **Egypt Perishes in the Red Sea (v. 23-28).** The Egyptian army continued their pursuit of the Hebrew people. When they came to the dry ground of the Red Sea, their chariot wheels became heavy and they were unable to drive like normal. The Lord commanded Moses to once again stretch his hand over the sea, and he caused the sea to come back upon the Egyptians and drown them.
 - **Summary of events (v. 29-31).** The Lord saved the Israelites from the Egyptians once again, allowing them to walk on dry ground through the sea and avoid the Egyptian pursuit.
- What did God want to accomplish by luring the Egyptians to pursue the Israelites?
 - Why was it reported that the people "fled" (v. 5)? Didn't Pharaoh already know that he had let the people go? See Ex. 3:18; 5:3; 8:27 for possible explanation of Pharaoh's expectation of Israel's journey.
 - What kind of army did Pharaoh muster to pursue the Israelites?



- What complaint did Israel bring against Moses? What did they claim to prefer?
- What did the people witness and what effect did it have on them? See verse 31.

The Song at the Sea (15:1-21) was a song of praise for Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea. It was most known for the common refrain of the opening lines (v. 1; see also v. 21):

*I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.*

It contains strong elements of praise to God in the beginning (v. 1-3), the middle (v. 11), and the end (v. 18).

² *The Lord is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation;
this is my God, and I will praise him,
and my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

³ *The Lord is a man of war;
The Lord is his name.*

¹¹ *Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
Awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?*

¹⁸ *The Lord will reign forever and ever.*

The song can roughly be split into halves, with the first portion remembering the deliverance at the sea (v. 1-12), and the second portion looking forward to God's provision of the land of Canaan (v. 13-18). The structure of this song points to this event as a transition in Israel's history. It served as both the end of the Egyptian enslavement and the beginning of their campaign to enter the Promised Land of Canaan. The Lord as a warrior or "a man of war" (v. 3) portrays an important picture of God's role in Israel's deliverance, in both Egypt and Canaan.

- How does God accomplish the victory at the Red Sea according to the song? What were his actions?
- Take note of the statements of praise in the song. What is God praised for?
- Where would God "plant" the Israelites?

A Final Blow. God's victory at the Red Sea served as an encore performance of the 10th plague. With this event, Egypt would never again bring Israel into subjection or play a major political role in their lives. Furthermore, God cemented his purposes by getting "glory over Pharaoh," seeing to it that "the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord" (14:3), and demonstrating his superiority over all other gods (12:12; 15:11). This final blow also served as further vindication for Pharaoh's sins against the Hebrews. The story of the Hebrew enslavement in Egypt began with Pharaoh ordering the Hebrew babies thrown into the Nile, and it ended with God throwing the Egyptian army into the sea.

Israel's Complaint and God's Provision

On the heels of their escape from the pursuing Egyptian army, the Israelite nation faced another challenge in the wilderness – hunger and thirst. The next three episodes in text show the people facing a lack of water at Marah (15:22-27), hunger in the Wilderness of Sin (16:1-36), and thirst at Rephidim (17:1-7). The accounts on thirst are shorter and provide bookends around the longer account of the

Remember the Crossing

Crossing the Red Sea was a watershed moment for Israel. With it, they completely left Egyptian slavery behind, and they continued forward as the people of God. Future generations looked back to this event and remembered God's power and provision for His people.

- Remembered upon entering the Promised Land (Deut. 11:4; Josh. 2:10; 4:23-24).
- Remembered after taking the Promised Land (Josh. 24:6-7).
- Remembered in the Psalms (Psa. 106:1-12; 136:12-15).
- Remembered by the prophets (Isa. 51:10)
- Remembered after the return from captivity (Neh. 9:9).
- Remembered among those who lived by faith (Heb. 11:29).

provision of food. The longer account in the Wilderness of Sin is accompanied with instructions from God on the collection process. These three accounts follow a similar pattern of shortage of food or water, grumbling against Moses and Aaron, Moses' response, and God's provision. These themes are not only found here, but can regularly be found throughout the book with each crisis that Israel faced.

- Complete the chart below on the accounts about Israel's hunger and thirst.

Crisis	Israel's Complaint	Moses' Response	God's Provision
<i>Bitter water at Marah (15:22-27)</i>			
<i>Lack of Food in Wilderness of Sin (16:1-26)</i>			
<i>Lack of Water at Rephidim (17:1-7)</i>			

Israel's Complaint. Note that Israel's complaint against Moses has been a recurring theme throughout the book. When the people encountered difficulties, they directed their anger toward God's servant Moses. The people also complained when their workload was increased by Pharaoh (5:20-21) and at the Red Sea as Pharaoh's army pursued them (14:11-12). Israel kept complaining, and they never seemed to learn from their previous experiences.

God's Provision The text concludes the accounts of Israel's hungering and thirsting with a quote from their grumbling. "Is the Lord among us or not?" (17:7). Over and over again this question is answered with supreme clarity. God provided for the people time and time again in the wilderness. He did so in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds in a wilderness land.

God's Instructions about Food Collection. God promised to rain down bread from heaven, and he instructed the people to collect a daily allotment of food every day. Only the Sabbath would be a rest from food collection with the prior day serving as a day to collect a double portion. God would soon relay the importance of the Sabbath in the 10 Commandments (20:8-11), but here he begins to prepare the people for that instruction.

- What question did the people ask about God (17:7)? How does the text answer that question?
- Why did Israel keep complaining? Did they not learn from prior experiences? Does your life and attitude ever resemble the Israelites?
- Do you think Moses faced discouragement as he led the people? How did he deal with it?
- What lesson could the Israelites (and we) learn from God's provision of a single day of food?
- How long did the Israelites eat manna? How long would they remember God's provision of manna?

Battle Against Amelek

For a second time at Rephidim, Israel faced a challenge that tested their resolve. The first obstacle had been the lack of water (17:1-7), and the second one was the threat of a hostile enemy force (17:8-13). The Amalekites came up to Rephidim to fight the Israelites.

While the Israelites had yet not been tested in battle, the use of military force had been on their mind. Their population upon departure had only included men (12:37), which was often done in a military census. They also departed dressed for battle (13:18). Israel had not gone the way of the Philistines in order to avoid battle with them (13:17). It seemed like they might have to fight the Egyptian army in the desert, but God delivered them safely through the Red Sea. On that occasion, God was a warrior who fought their battle for them (Ex. 14:14; 15:3). In a preview of warfare in the land of Canaan, the battle with the Amalekites would be fought by the Israelites, but the victory would belong to God. The path toward victory was through the unorthodox means of Moses' raised hands.

- How was Moses able to keep his hands raised?
- What role did God play in the victory at Rephidim?
- What did God instruct Moses to do after the battle with the Amalekites?

Moses' Staff, which was also called the Staff of God, was often used in times of deliverance and provision for the Israelites in the wilderness.

- Used to part the waters of the Red Sea (14:16)
- Used to provide water from the rock at Rephidim (17:5)
- Used to provide victory over the Amalekites at Rephidim (17:9)

Moses' Encounters with Foreign Nations

Amalekites (17:8-16)	Jethro Priest of Midian (18:1-27)
Came and attacked (17:8)	Came and greeted (18:5-7)
Men chosen to fight (17:9)	Men chosen to judge (18:25)
Moses sits on a stone (17:12)	Moses sits to judge (18:13)
Battle starts the next day (17:9)	Judgment starts the next day (18:13)
Battle lasted all day (17:12)	Judgment lasted all day (18:13-14)
Moses was tired and received help (17:12)	Moses was tired and received help (18:18)
Moses built an altar (17:15)	Jethro sacrificed to God (18:12)
Moses praised God (17:15-16)	Jethro praised God (18:10-11)

Jethro's Advice

The next story in the account relays the encounter of Moses with his father-in-law Jethro. During Moses' first sojourn in Midian, God had told him that he would return to Sinai (3:12). Now Moses has an opportunity to visit with his father-in-law upon returning to the mountain. The account has two main sections in it:

- Jethro's Visit and Praise for God (18:1-12)
- Jethro's Advice for Court System (18:13-27)

Jethro's encounter with Moses comes immediately after Israel's battle with the Amalekites, and two episodes bear several similarities. On both occasions Moses sits at the head of the nation, in the battle in one case and as a judge in the other. Also on both occasions, the task lasts the entire day as Moses becomes tired in his work and receives help

from others. These two episodes relay Israel's first experiences with some important national concerns – the military and judicial system.

Of utmost importance was what Israel's distant cousins and foreign nations found out about God. The news of Israel's departure from Egypt came to both nations. The Amalekites approached God's people in defiance, but soon learned that the Lord would fight for his people. Jethro was a priest of Midian, and after hearing of Israel's deliverance, he acknowledged the God of Israel as the true God and greater than all other gods (18:11).

- What was Jethro's position in Midian? What did he come to believe about God? Why?
- What advice did Jethro give to Moses?

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Lesson 7: The Covenant at Sinai

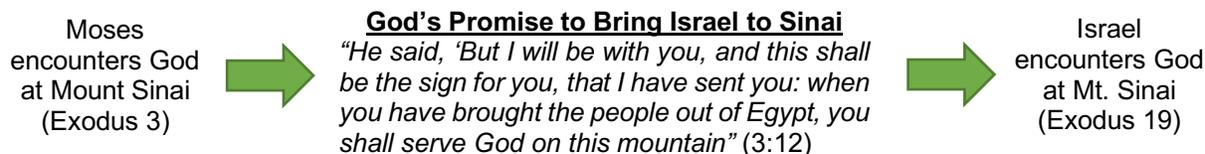
Exodus 19-24

Outline:

- I. Israel Encounters God at Mt. Sinai (19:1-25)
- II. God Speaks to Israel (20:1-21)
- III. The Law of the Covenant (21:1-23:33)
- IV. Israel Confirms the Covenant (24:1-18)

Israel Encounters God at Mt. Sinai

Moses' encounter with God at Mt. Sinai had come full circle. Moses first encountered God in the burning bush on Mt. Sinai when he was watching his father-in-law's flock (Ex. 3:1-6). On that occasion, God revealed to Moses his plan to bring the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage and bring them back to this mountain (3:12). Just as God said, Israel escaped Egyptian bondage and had come back to Mt. Sinai (19:2).



Moses and Mediation. Israel would come to find out the same thing that Moses was told at the burning bush – Mt. Sinai was "holy ground" and the place where God had come to dwell (3:5). It was not to be approached casually. Only Moses ascended to the top of the mountain to receive a word for the Lord. For the most part, Moses mediates for Israel and relays the word of the Lord to them. This mediation would have required Moses to go up and down the mountain several times in order to receive God's word at the top and then bring it back down to the people. While there is some debate on the exact number, he appears to have made at least seven trips up and down the mountain.

The first three trips of Moses occur in Exodus 19 in order to prepare the people for an encounter with God. This encounter occurs in Exodus 20, when God speaks the Ten Commandments directly to the people. On the next two trips, Moses receives additional laws of the covenant, and the final two trips involve Moses making intercession for the sin of the people and receiving a second copy of the law.

Moses' 1st Trip: The Covenant Outlined. While Israel settled into their encampment, Moses ascended the mountain for the first time to receive the word of the Lord. God's message laid out the covenant in simple terms. It would be rooted in God's past actions (v. 4), dependent upon Israel's obedience (v. 5a), and result in a holy people of God (v. 5a-6).

Moses on Mount Sinai

- **Moses' first trip (19:3-6)**
 - Message: Basic covenant outlined (19:4-6).
 - Response: Pledge of obedience (19:8a).
- **Moses' second trip (19:8b-14)**
 - Message: Prepare for Lord's descent.
 - Response: Consecration (19:14-15).
- **Moses' third trip (19:20-25)**
 - Message: Warn the people not to approach the mountain.
 - ❖ *The Lord descends upon the mountain and speaks the Ten Commandments directly to people (20:1-21).*
- **Moses' fourth trip (20:21-24:2)**
 - Message: Laws and rules (20:22-23:32)
 - Response: Covenant sealed (24:3-8).
- **Moses' fifth trip (24:9-18)**
 - Message: Instructions for tabernacle and worship (25:1-31:17).
 - God gave Moses stone tablets.
 - Moses remained 40 days, 40 nights (24:18).
 - ❖ *People make the Golden calf (32:1-6).*
- **Moses' sixth trip (32:31-34:3).**
 - Moses made intercession for the people (32:31-33:23).
 - Two tablets of stone replaced (34:1-28).
 - Moses' face shone (34:29-35).
- **Moses' seventh trip (34:4-33).**
 - Message: Restatement of covenant (34:6-7, 10-26).
 - God gave Moses 2nd copy of tablets.
 - Moses' face shone (34:29-35).

Remembrance	Obedience	Promise
“You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself” (19:4)	“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant...” (19:5a)	Then you shall be... 1) my treasured possession 2) a kingdom of priests 3) a holy nation (19:5b-6)

The covenant with God was the ultimate goal for Israel’s departure from Egyptian bondage and slavery to Pharaoh. The covenant gave liberation true meaning and purpose. With this covenant, Israel would truly become a nation with a governing law and a pledge of allegiance to God. Maintaining this relationship with God would require Israel’s obedience. They were released from Pharaoh’s tyranny, but they were not released from all servitude. Now, they would serve a good master in God. The end result of their obedience was a special relationship with God. They would be treasured by God among all the nations. They would be a holy people called to commune with a holy God. When Moses reported God’s desire for a covenant with the people, they agreed to obey all that God had spoken.

- Why was it important for the people to remember God’s past actions when making the covenant?
- Was God a regional god, meaning was he just the God of Israel?
- Israel would have a select group of priests among them. So, how would the nation be a kingdom of priests?

Moses’ 2nd and 3rd Trips: Preparations for Meeting God. On Moses’ second trip up the mountain, he received instructions to prepare the people for the Lord’s descent, which would occur on the third day. There were two basic instructions in this message: consecrate the people and set limits for them.

- What does consecrate mean? How were the people to consecrate themselves?
- What limits were provided for the people? What would happen if these limits were breached?

When the third day came, God “came down on Mount Sinai” (19:20). His presence could be visibly seen, and it was an awesome and terrifying scene. A descending fire created billowing smoke, and a thick cloud produced thunder and lightning. The whole mountain quaked under God’s presence. With such an awesome display, God called Moses up the mountain on his third trip to relay a message of warning to the people (19:20-25). He reiterated the command not to ascend on the mountain. Moses knew the allure of God’s manifestations, having been attracted to it with the burning bush (3:3).

“On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended upon it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly” (Ex. 19:16-18).

- What group was specifically warned about ascending the mountain?
- Who did God tell Moses to bring with him up the mountain? Why do you think he was specified?

The Ten Commandments

Upon their arrival at Mt. Sinai, the people of Israel prepared themselves for an encounter with God to make a covenant. After three days, God descended upon the mountain in an awesome display before the Israelites, invoking fear, wonder, and further warnings about the boundaries of the mountain. Then God spoke to the people, setting forth “Ten Words” or laws that would form the basis of Israel’s covenant (20:1-17).

The Ten Commandments contain two major categories:

- **Religious (Commands 1-4)** – Laws that deal with Israel's relationship with God, which included principles of exclusive devotion, treatment, and worship of God.
- **Civil (Commands 5-6)** – Laws that deal with Israel's relationships with other people in society, including laws related to the home, life, property rights, and the court system.

The people responded to God's direct speech with absolute fear and trembling (20:18-19). They requested a halt to God's direct communication and for Moses to return to his role as mediator.

- Is there any importance to how these commandments are ordered?
- Do these commandments address a person's inward heart, outward actions, or both?
- Why did Moses say that God had spoken directly to the people?

Receiving the Law

Moses' 4th Trip. Moses complied with the request of the people, and he continued in his role as mediator. On this trip Moses received a wide range of laws related to religious and civil matters (Ex. 21-23), which concluded with instructions for the people's obedience (23:20-33).

Ratifying the Covenant. After descending from the mountain Moses told the people the words of the Lord and wrote them down on a scroll. The people then ratified the covenant after making sacrifices, hearing the words read, and pledging their obedience. Moses took the blood from the sacrifice and applied it to the altar and the people.

Moses' 5th Trip. Moses began his ascent with Aaron, 70 elders, and a few others. They further affirmed the covenant as they saw God and ate a meal in his presence. Then Moses continued up the mountain along with Joshua his assistant. As Moses went up, a cloud covered the mountain, and Moses went into the cloud. He stayed there 40 days and 40 nights receiving instructions about building the tabernacle, appointing priests, and observing the Sabbath. This trip concluded with a presentation of the stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments (31:18).

- Why was blood used in the establishment of the covenant?
- How did the 70 elders witness God as they ascended the mountain?
- What does it mean that "the glory of the Lord" dwelt on Mt. Sinai (24:16-17)? How was this glory witnessed by Israel?

The Law in Exodus

The Ten Commandments (20:3-17)

- You shall have no other gods before Me (v. 3)
- You shall not make for yourself an idol (v. 4-6)
- You shall not take name of Lord in vain (v. 7)
- Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy (v. 8-11)
- Honor your father and mother (v. 12)
- You shall not murder (v. 13)
- You shall not commit adultery (v. 14)
- You shall not steal (v. 15)
- You shall not bear false witness (v. 16)
- You shall not covet your neighbor (v. 17)

The Covenant Code (20:22-23:33)

- Laws on idolatry and altars (20:22-26)
- Laws on Slaves (21:1-11)
- Laws on Homicide (21:12-17)
- Laws on Injury (21:18-32)
- Laws on Property Damages (21:33-22:17)
- Laws on Worship (22:18-20, 28-31)
- Laws on Social Responsibility (22:21-27; 23:1-9)
- Laws on Sabbaths and Annual Feasts (23:10-19)
- Instructions on obedience and devotion to God (23:20-33)

Laws Related to Worship (25:1-31:17)

- Laws on the construction and use of tabernacle and its furnishings (25:1-27:21)
- Laws related to the priesthood (28:1-30:38)
- Laws regarding the Sabbath (31:12-17)

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

- I. Israel's Sin (Ex. 32:1-6)
- II. God's Anger and Moses' Anger (32:7-35)
- III. God's Presence with Moses and the People (33:1-23)
- IV. Renewal of the Covenant (34:1-35)
- V. The Construction of the Tabernacle (35:1-40:38)

Israel's Sin

As the reader comes to Exodus 32, Moses had been up on the mountain receiving the laws on the tabernacle and worship for more than a month. This delay caused the people to question their leader and the covenant they had just made. The people requested Aaron to make "gods" for them, and Aaron replied by asking for their gold jewelry in order to make an idol. The reception of God's laws on worship would be interrupted as the people devised their own method and means of worship.

Undoing the Covenant. Shortly after making a covenant with God for exclusive devotion, the Israelites violated the first two commandments and pursued other gods in the form of a graven calf. Their covenant with God had been sealed with blood and their commitment to follow the laws of the covenant. They built an altar, offered sacrifices and ate a covenant meal with God. With the golden calf before them, the people carried out many of the same ceremonial matters as if to commit themselves anew. They built an altar, offered sacrifices, and celebrated a feast. Israel's covenant unfaithfulness is an action that will be repeated over and over again throughout their history. This failure marks the beginning of rebellion that will plague the nation for years to come.

Israel's Covenant Commitment	Israel's Covenant Failure
<p>1st Commandment: You shall have no other gods before me (20:3).</p> <p>2nd Commandment: You shall not make for yourself a carved image (20:4).</p> <p>Preface: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (20:2).</p> <p>The People's Response: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient" (24:7).</p>	<p>Israel's Request: "Up, make us gods who shall go before us" (32:1).</p> <p>Aaron's Response: He received the gold from the Israelites and "fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf" (32:4)</p> <p>Concluding Statement: "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" (32:4)</p> <p>The Lord's Response: "They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them" (32:8).</p>
Moses rose early... (24:4)	The people rose early... (32:6)
Moses built an altar and 12 pillars before God (24:4)	Aaron built an altar before the calf (32:5)
Young men sent to offer burnt offerings and peace offerings (32:5)	The people offered bunt offerings and peace offerings (32:6)
Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and 70 elders "beheld God, and ate and drank (24:9-11)	"And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play" (32:6)

- What caused the people to turn away so quickly?
- Where had the people gotten the gold that they were wearing?
- Who ate both the meal before God (24:9-11) and the meal before the golden calf (Ex. 32:6)?

The Aftermath of the Golden Calf Incident

God's Anger and Moses' Intervention (32:7-14). God hates sin, and it makes him angry! When the Lord saw Israel's idolatry, he told Moses to go down the mountain so that he could be left alone to stew in his wrath. God was so angry that he was ready to consume the people right there and start over with Moses. Moses intervened for Israel, and he implored the Lord to relent from his anger.

- How did God describe the Israelites?
- What three reasons did Moses give God to change his mind?

Reason #1 (v. 11)	
Reason #2 (v. 12)	
Reason #3 (v. 13)	

Moses' Anger and Confrontation with the People (32:15-24). Even though Moses pleaded for God to spare Israel does not mean that he was not angry himself with what Israel had done. When he came down from the mountain and witnessed the commotion of the people in their sin, he was furious. He threw the stone tablets of the covenant and broke them. Then he melted the idolatrous calf, and forced the people to drink water with the idol's pulverized ashes.

Now it was Moses' turn to burn with anger and Aaron's turn to attempt an intervention. When Moses confronted Aaron with his sin, he shifted the blame to the Israelites and alluded any responsibility for carving the idol.

Anger	Intervention
God's Anger (32:7-11)	Moses' Plea (32:11-14)
Moses' Anger (32:15-20)	Aaron's Plea (32:21-24)

- How did the interventions of Moses and Aaron differ? What was the basis of their appeals?

Punishment for Sin (32:25-35). The people were not completely destroyed as God originally decided, but they would still face punishment for their sin, both from Moses and the Lord. Moses called the Levites to himself, and he sent them throughout the camp to kill their fellow Israelites. Moses then went up to the Lord a second time to make intercession for Israel's sin.

- At what cost were the Levites ordained for service?
- How did Aaron and Moses differ in their attitudes about themselves and sin? See 32:22-24 and 32:31-32.

The result of Israel's sin was a strained relationship with God, as detailed in several places in the text: 1) The Lord sent a plague on the people (32:5), 2) Moses was instructed to lead the people but God would not be with them (33:1-6), and 3) God met with Moses in a temporary tent *outside* Israel's camp (33:7-11). The last of these items is significant. This "tent" of meeting prefigures the tabernacle, which would represent God's presence among the people. Israel's sin interrupted the instructions for the tabernacle, and this tent shows God's presence "outside" the camp.

While Israel's relationship with God was strained, Moses enjoyed close fellowship with him. He was able to approach him in the tent of meeting and speak with him "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (33:11).

- How was God's presence manifest at the tent of meeting?

- Identify the two requests that Moses made to God and how God responded.

Moses' Request	God's Response
#1	
#2	

Renewal of the Covenant

God had listened to Moses and made a renewed commitment to be present with the people Israel. Then God called Moses to himself at the top of the mountain in order to renew the covenant. He was told to come along and bring two more tablets of stone so that he could replace the tablets that Moses had broken. When Moses came up on the mountain, God descended in a cloud and proclaimed his name before him. He was a merciful and gracious God, who would both forgive and call the guilty to account. Moses responded with three requests related to restored fellowship:

- 1) Please let the Lord go in the midst of us.
- 2) Pardon our iniquity and our sin.
- 3) Take us for your inheritance.

"The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty..." (Ex. 34:6-7)

God responded by stating that he was making a covenant with the people and they would see God do awesome things with them. He then outlined fundamental expectations for national Israel. These elements would keep them close to God and help prevent another similar incident of idolatry. When Moses came down from the mountain after talking with God, his face shone. Because the people were afraid of such a sight, Moses wore a veil over his face.

- What did Moses do after God revealed his name?
- How can God be both forgiving and just?
- Provide a summary of God's expectations in the covenant below.

#1 (34:12-16)	
#2 (34:17)	
#3 (34:18-20)	
#4 (34:21-24)	
#5 (34:25-26)	

- How long was Moses on the mountain with the Lord this time?

Construction of the Tabernacle. God's renewed presence among the people of Israel would be further established with the construction of the tabernacle. Exodus 35-40 details the construction of the tabernacle, along with its furniture and prescribed worship.

The Tabernacle	
Instructions (Ex. 25-31)	Construction (Ex. 35-40)

- What filled the tabernacle after its construction? See Ex. 40:34-38

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

- I. The Book of Leviticus
- II. Preparations and Departure (Num. 1-10)
- III. Complaints in the Wilderness (11:1-35)
- IV. Moses' Authority Challenged (12:1-16)

The Book of Leviticus

"Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy'" (Lev. 19:2; see also 20:7, 26; 21:8).

The third book of the Pentateuch contains laws given at Mt. Sinai as part of Israel's covenant with God. The laws of Leviticus reflect the importance of holiness before a holy God. These laws and instructions would have been particularly relevant after Israel's idolatry with the golden calf and the renewal of the covenant.

The content of the book contains a natural flow, starting with laws on sacrifices (ch. 1-7), proceeding to the institution of the priesthood as those who would offer the sacrifices (ch. 8-10), and then providing various laws related to uncleanness and its treatment, which often provided the occasion for the sacrifices (ch. 11-16). The book concludes with discussions of practical laws related to holiness (ch. 17-27).

Outline of Leviticus

- Laws Concerning Sacrifices (ch. 1-7)
- The Institution of the Priesthood (ch. 8-10)
- Laws Related to Uncleanness (ch. 11-16)
- Laws Related to Practical Holiness (ch. 17-27)

Laws comprise the greatest portion of the book of Leviticus, but there are a few narrative sections in the text. These would include the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests (ch. 8), the account of their first sacrifices (ch. 9), the sin of Nadab and Abihu (10:1-7), and the stoning of a blasphemer (24:10-23).

The Ordination and Sacrifices of Aaron and His Sons. Leviticus 8 records the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests. After adorning the priests in special garments and anointing them Moses made offerings for the priests. He functioned as the priest while Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the animals. Once the priests were ordained, they would make their own sacrifices according to instructions from the Lord (Lev. 9).

The Sins of Irreverence and Blasphemy. Nadab and Abihu had a strong pedigree as priests. They were the oldest sons of Aaron (Ex. 6:23), had accompanied Moses and Aaron halfway up Mt. Sinai (Ex. 24:1), and had just been ordained and performed sacrifices as priests (Lev. 8). Yet, despite all of this, Nadab and Abihu took a censer with strange, unauthorized fire, and they were consumed before the Lord.

In the midst of laws related to holiness and reverence for

Aaron's Offering (9:22-24)	Nadab & Abihu's Offering (10:1-3)
- The glory of the Lord appeared	- Fire came out from before the Lord and consumed Nadab and Abihu
- Fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the offering	- God said he would be glorified before all people

God, another instance of sin highlights the importance of those instruction. The son of an Israelite mother and Egyptian father fought with someone and blasphemed the name of God. Once his crime was made known, Moses inquired of the Lord, and it was determined that he would be stoned by the congregation. Irreverence and blasphemy were serious sins, punishable by death.

- What can be learned from the stories of Nadab, Abihu and the blasphemer?

Tabernacle Erected	The 2 nd Passover	Military Census	Passover Reoffered	Departure
2 nd year, 1 st month 1 st day	2 nd year 1 st month 14 th day	2 nd year 2 nd month 1 st day	2 nd year 2 nd month 14 th day	2 nd year 2 nd month 20 th day

- Preparing for Departure**
- Military Census of 12 tribes (ch. 1)
 - Tribal Arrangement around the Tabernacle (ch. 2)
 - Responsibilities of and Census of the Levites (ch. 3-4)
 - Purification Laws (ch. 5)
 - The Nazirite Vow (6:1-21)
 - The Priestly Blessing (6:22-27)
 - Offerings to the Lord (ch. 7)
 - The Service of the Levites (ch. 8)
 - The Second Passover (9:1-14)
 - The Cloud in the Camp (9:15-23)
 - Use of Trumpets (10:1-10)

Preparations and Departure from Sinai

The Israelites would spend just a few days short of a year at Mt. Sinai making a covenant with God and receiving the Law. The opening chapters of the book of Numbers recount the months leading up to their departure, and it describes the preparations they made for the upcoming journey. Preparations included taking a military census, detailing the Levitical responsibilities with the tabernacle, arranging the tribes in the encampment, and establishing trumpet signals for the camp. The people also contributed offerings to the Lord and celebrated the first Passover since they left Egypt. In their preparations, they were reminded yet again about God and the importance of their relationship with him.

The people departed from Mt. Sinai on the 20th day of the 2nd month in the 2nd year. They were directed on their journey by the Lord in the form of the pillar of cloud. The tribes left according to their prescribed tribal order (10:14-28), and they were led out by the ark of the covenant (10:33-36).

The people departed Mt. Sinai and were directed to the Wilderness of Paran by the Lord in the pillar of cloud (Num. 10:11-13). Three episodes are recorded at distinct locations along the way to Paran. These accounts begin a sequence of events of complaining, insubordination and rebellion that come to typify Israelite behavior in the wilderness.

- The people grumbled at Taberah (11:1-3)
- The people complained about food at Kibroth-hattaavah (11:4-35)
- Miriam and Aaron challenged Moses' authority at Hazereth (11:35)

- What did Moses say whenever the ark set out and when it returned?

Grumbling and Complaining

According to Numbers 11, the first two episodes after departing from Mt. Sinai involve complaining. At Terabah, the people grumble in a general way "about their misfortunes" (11:1) while at Kibroth-hattaavah the people renewed their common complaint about the food (11:4-6). These two incidents cover common ground, and they show the people were walking a dangerous path similar to the idolatry at Mt. Sinai when they were almost completely consumed by the Lord.

Moses' Prayer (11:11-15)	How is Moses' feeling? What does Moses request?
God's Response (11:16-20)	How was God going to provide for Moses? How was God going to provide for the people?

The text records a couple of different reactions from Moses. When he was told about the great provision from the Lord, he responded with astonishment and near disbelief, but the Lord assured him that he would provide (11:21-23). When Eldad and Medad prophesied, it was Joshua who tried to stop them while Moses commended them.

The text concludes with the punishment that God executed against the instigators of the grumbling. Before they could consume the meat in their mouth, God consumed them with a plague.

- What is the difference between the people’s complaint (11:1) and Moses’ complaints (11:11-15)?
- What can we learn from Moses about prayer on this occasion?

Challenging the Authority of Moses

Moses was not exempt from typical family squabbles. His siblings, Miriam and Aaron, looked down on him for marrying a Cushite woman and they questioned his special relationship with God (12:1-2). When God heard it, he defended Moses and punished Miriam (12:3-8), although he limited his wrath due to Moses’ intervention (12:9-15).

This episode shares many common elements with the prior two accounts, including the complaints and their consequences. Also, the subject of leadership concludes the prior chapter and leads directly into this one. Moses requested that Joshua refrain from being jealous on his account (11:29), while jealousy appears to be the very sin of Miriam and Aaron (12:1-2).

Complaining at Taberah (11:1-3)	Complaining at Kibroth-hattaavah (11:4-35)	Complaining at Hazeroth (12:1-16)
<p><i>Complaint:</i> The people grumbled about their condition. [The Lord heard it.]</p> <p><i>Response:</i> Lord’s anger kindled</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*** <i>Plague:</i> Fire ***</p> <p><i>Supplication:</i> The people cried out to Moses</p> <p><i>Intercession:</i> Moses interceded for the people’s relief</p> <p><i>Answer:</i> The Lord extinguished the fire</p>	<p><i>Complaint:</i> The rabble craved and the people complained about food. [Moses heard it.]</p> <p><i>Response:</i> Lord’s anger burned hot and Moses was displeased</p> <p><i>Intercession:</i> Moses cried out to Lord for personal relief</p> <p><i>Answer:</i> Leadership help and quail provided</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*** <i>Plague:</i> Cravers executed ***</p>	<p><i>Complaint:</i> Miriam and Aaron complained about Moses. [The Lord heard it.]</p> <p><i>Anger:</i> Lord’s anger kindled</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*** <i>Plague:</i> Leprosy ***</p> <p><i>Supplication:</i> Aaron appealed to Moses</p> <p><i>Intercession:</i> Moses requested the Lord’s healing.</p> <p><i>Answer:</i> Punishment limited to 7 days outside the camp</p>

- What defense did God give for Moses’ unique position?
- Both Miriam and Aaron complained. Why was Miriam the only one punished?
- What punishment did Miriam bear?

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

- I. The 12 Spies and Their Report (Numbers 13-14)
- II. Laws on Offerings (Numbers 15)
- III. Korah's Rebellion and the Aftermath (Numbers 16-18)
- IV. Laws on Purification (Numbers 19)

The Twelve Spies

The account of the spies and their report is a pivotal story in the Pentateuch and the history of Israel. It changed the course of the story for the generation who came out of Egyptian slavery, and it delayed God's promise to the nation. The story in Numbers 13-14, along with the ill-advised battle afterwards, serve as central elements in the continual series of rebellions in the wilderness. At the heart of the matter is whether the people will honor their covenant and trust in God or not. The story is fairly involved and covers many of the themes seen throughout Israel's time as a nation, including the people's rebellion and lack of faith, the devotion and intercession of Moses, and God's goodness, justice and faithfulness.

Rebellion in the Wilderness

1. General Grumbling (11:1-13)
2. Complaining about Food (11:4-35)
3. Challenging Moses' Authority (12:1-16)
4. The Spies' Bad Report (13:1-14:38)
5. An Ill-Advised Battle (14:39-45)
6. Profaning the Sabbath (15:32-36)
7. The Rebellion of Korah (16:1-40)
8. Complaining from Korah's proponents (16:41-50)
9. Idolatry at Peor (25:1-18)

Israel had departed from Mt. Sinai and traveled northward, camping in the wilderness of Paran (12:16). They stopped here to send spies into the land to gather information about the land of Canaan, apparently intending to enter the Promised Land from the most logical location along the southern border. The account contains the following elements:

- Spies Sent** (13:1-24): Selection (v. 1-16), Commission (v. 17-20), and Execution (v. 21-24)
- Spies' Report** (13:25-33): Report (v. 25-29), Good (v. 30) and Bad Assessment (v. 31-33)
- People's Response** (14:1-10): The People (v. 1-4), Moses and Aaron (v. 5-9), Climax (v. 10)
- God's Action** (14:11-38): Intent (v. 11-12), Intercession (v. 13-19), and Punishment (v. 20-38)
- People's Action** (14:39-45): Mourning (v. 39), Presumptuous Battle (v. 40-44), and Defeat (v. 45)

- What type of person was chosen as a spy for the people?
- Identify the five things the spies were to investigate and the report brought back about each one.

Requested Information (13:17-20)	Report Brought Back (13:27-29)
<p>“Go up and see what the land is...”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. <p>“...and bring some fruit of the land.”</p>	

The foundation for the people's assessment was their vision of what lay before them. Caleb saw the challenge ahead through the eyes of faith, while the people emphasized what could be seen with their physical eyes.

- Identify the assessment of the spies along with what contributed to their assessment.

The Two Faithful Spies	The Ten Doubting Spies
Assessment (13:30): What contributed to their assessment (14:6-9)?	Assessment (13:31): What contributed to their assessment (v. 32-33)?

The People's Response (14:1-10). The people responded with the all-too-familiar refrain of grumbling and complaining against Moses, but their rebellion reached a new height (14:1-4). This time the blame was directed directly against God (14:3). They questioned whether God was trying to kill them and their children, twisting God's goodness into evil intent. They decided to choose another leader to take them back to Egypt. Even after Joshua and Caleb encouraged the people to follow God, they continued in their stubbornness and prepared to kill those who were in their way. The glory of the Lord appeared and prevented their rash behavior (14:10).

God's Action (14:11-38). The Lord's response and subsequent events mimics the aftermath of the golden calf (Ex. 32-34). After witnessing the sin of the people, God initially wanted to destroy the people, but he relented after intercession from Moses. Even in the midst of pardon, God issued a punishment for the people that would serve as just retribution. The people rejected the land that God promised, so God rejected them from the land. Similar to God's provision of the quail (Num. 11:18-20), God would give the people what they wanted, even if it was to their detriment. They didn't want to go into the land, and they didn't. They didn't want to die at the hands of the Canaanites, and they wouldn't.

Similarities Between Golden Calf (Ex. 32-34) and 12 Spies (Num. 13-14)

- *The people sinned* (Ex. 32:1-6; Num. 14:1-4, 10)
- *The Lord intended to destroy* (Ex. 32:9-10; Num. 14:11-12)
- *Moses interceded* (Ex. 32:11-13, 30-32; Num. 14:13-19)
- *The Lord relented and pardoned* (Ex. 32:14, 33-34; Num. 14:20)
- *The people punished with death* (Ex. 32:25-29; Num. 14:21-35)
- *The Lord sent a plague* (Ex. 32:35; Num. 14:36-37)

God also sent a plague against the ten unfaithful spies (Num. 14:37), just as he had previously sent after Israel's other rebellions (Ex. 32:35; Num. 11:1, 33; 12:10). In Egypt God sent plagues on the land to punish Pharaoh and secure Israel's liberation. In the wilderness the Israelites would suffer from God's powerful hand just like the Egyptians.

- How long would Israel wander in the wilderness? Why?

The People's Backward Thinking (14:39-45). The last episode in this account illustrates that the people heard what God was saying but failed to learn the appropriate lesson. After being rebuked for refusing to go into the land the people decided to go fight the Canaanites on their own, despite Moses' warning to the contrary. The Lord was not with the people, and they were defeated.

Korah's Rebellion

The cycle of rebellion continued at Kadesh with a recurring scene of grumbling, which in turn provoked a divine response and need for intercession (see basic outline of events below). The major point of contention, leadership, was also not new. Moses had been blamed and challenged at nearly every difficulty that the Israelites faced. Moses' authority had even been challenged by his own family when Miriam and Aaron complained against him (12:1-2). During the episode with the spies, the people were ready to choose a new leader (14:4), and even stone those who opposed them (14:10). With this rebellion Korah and his companions were ready to answer the call for new leadership. Like before, Moses would play a prominent role in the story, but this time Aaron plays an equally important role as the priesthood becomes the focal point. The subject of the priesthood occupies the broader section of Numbers 16-18.

The rebellion falls into two sections with similar events and outcomes: Korah's rebellion (16:1-40) and the people's response (16:41-17:13). Both accounts include complaints against the leaders, a response from the Lord, punishment for the rebellious, intercession, and memorials for the people.

Korah's Rebellion (16:1-40)		Israel's Complaint (16:41-17:13)
<i>Complaint:</i> Korah accused Moses & Aaron of exalting themselves (16:1-3)	<i>Complaint:</i> Dathan, Abiram accused Moses of lording over them (16:12-14)	<i>Complaint:</i> The people accuse Moses of killing Korah and company (16:41)
<i>Reply:</i> Moses said to let the Lord decide (16:4-11)	<i>Reply:</i> Moses prayed that God would not accept their offering (16:15)	
[The glory of the Lord appeared] (16:19b)		[The glory of the Lord appeared] (16:42)
<i>Response:</i> God wanted to consume the people (16:21)		
<i>Intercession:</i> Moses and Aaron requested mercy for the congregation (16:22)		
<i>Warning:</i> Separate from Korah and household that I might consume them (16:23-30)		<i>Warning:</i> Get away from people that I might consume them (16:43-45)
*** <i>Plague:</i> The ground swallowed Korah (16:31-34) *** *** <i>Plague:</i> Fire consumed the 250 men (16:35) ***		*** <i>Plague:</i> Consumed (16:47-50) ***
		<i>Intercession:</i> Moses instructed Aaron to atone for people with a censer (16:46-47)
<i>Memorial:</i> Use censers to make a covering for the altar (16:36-40)		<i>Memorial:</i> Keep Aaron's budded staff as a reminder for complainers (17:1-13)

Moses proposed a contest between the 250 sons of Levi and Aaron to settle the dispute. Both sides would bring censers of fire and incense before the Lord so that he could decide between them. They all assembled before the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord appeared and made judgment between the two parties.

- Identify the complaints made against Moses and Aaron and possible motivations.

By Korah's Faction (16:3)	By Dathan and Abiram (16:12-14)	By the People (16:41)

- Who did the Lord favor in the contest between Korah's faction and Aaron?
- What plagues did God bring in Korah's rebellion? How were they fitting punishments for each group?
- Why did Aaron need to quickly make atonement for the people?
- What memorials were made and how were they fitting reminders for the people?

The chapters following Korah's rebellion help complete the story. Leviticus 18 provides further instruction on the priesthood and their role in Israel. Leviticus 19 relays laws of purification, which would have been needed in light of sin in the camp. Similarly, a chapter of laws on offerings (Num. 15) comes immediately after the sin of the people in listening to the evil report of the spies (Num. 13-14).

Sin	Atonement
12 Spies (Num. 13-14)	Law on Offerings (Num. 15)
Korah's Rebellion (Num. 16-18)	Laws on Purification (Num. 19)

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

- I. Journey from Kadesh to Moab (Numbers 20-21)
- II. Balaam's Divine Encounters and Oracles (Numbers 22-24)
- III. The Sin at Baal-Peor (Numbers 25)

Journey to the Plains of Moab

After 40 years of wandering near Kadesh, the children of Israel departed for the plains of Moab. The journey is recorded in Numbers 20-21 and contains a series of short episodes. In addition to a listing of Israel's travel itinerary, the accounts include death records, Israel's complaints, and various military encounters along the way. The chapters may serve as two complementary units, with each chapter bracketed by a particular event (deaths in Numbers 20 and military victories in Numbers 21) and containing related pairs of events between the two chapters.

"The Wilderness Wanderings"

God's punishment for the faithlessness at Kadesh was that Israel would wander in the wilderness for 40 years until all the adults died (Num. 14:28-35). The narrative in Numbers does not explicitly state the location of their wandering.

- Deuteronomy states that Israel stayed at Kadesh "many days" and then departed on a 38 year journey (Deut. 1:46; 2:14).
- According to Numbers, the people left Kadesh and came to Mount Hor, the place of Aaron's death, in the 5th month of the 40th year (Num. 33:37-38).
- One way to harmonize this information is for Israel to have started and ended their "wandering" period at Kadesh.

Israel's Rebellion. The journey from Kadesh involved a new generation of Israelites, but they would make some of the same mistakes. Just as the old generation complained in the wilderness about food and water (3 occasions recorded in Ex. 15:22-17:7), so too would the new generation (Num. 20:2-13; 21:4-9). The first rebellion on the way to Moab occurred when the 2nd generation mimics the parents by complaining at Meribah (Ex. 17; Num. 20). Israel's sin looked nearly the same, but Moses' response did not. The first time he responded with obedience, but this second time he disobeyed the Lord.

The 1 st Generation at Meribah (Ex. 17)	The 2 nd Generation at Meribah (Num. 20)
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The People's Complaint</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "there was no water for the people" (v. 1). - "The people quarreled with Moses" (v. 2). - Prior deliverance from Egypt questioned (v. 3). - The people ask if Moses is trying to kill them and their children and livestock (v. 3). <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Moses' Obedience</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God stood before Moses on the rock (v. 6) - God instructed Moses to take the staff of God and strike the rock (v. 5). - Moses struck the rock with the staff and water came out for the people (v. 6). - Placed named Massah and Meribah (v. 7). 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>The People's Complaint</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "there was no water for the congregation" (v. 2). • "The people quarreled with Moses" (v. 3). • Prior deliverance from wilderness death questioned (v. 3). • The people ask if Moses is trying to kill them and their cattle (v. 4). <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Moses' Disobedience</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glory of the Lord appeared to Moses & Aaron (v. 6). • God instructed Moses to take the staff of God and speak to the rock (v. 8). • Moses struck the rock twice with the staff and water came out for the people (v. 11). • "these are the waters of Meribah" (v. 13).

- What punishment did God give Moses and Aaron for their disbelief?

Numbers 20 began with the death of Moses' sister Miriam (20:1), and it would conclude with the death of his brother Aaron (20:22-29). As the people came to Mount Hor, God stated that it was time for Aaron to face his punishment. Aaron died at the top of the mountain and Israel mourned him 30 days.

- What did Moses do with Aaron's clothes? What did this signify?

Israel's Sin(21:4-9)
<i>Complaint:</i> Food (21:5)
<i>Plague:</i> Fiery Serpent (21:6)
<i>Supplication</i> (21:7)
<i>Intercession</i> (21:7)
<i>Relief:</i> Bronze serpent (21:8-9)

The second rebellion of the new generation again involved food and followed the familiar pattern of Israel's complaint, the Lord's plague, and Moses' intercession. The plague consisted of poisonous snakes, and relief came in the form of a bronze serpent constructed by Moses. When the people looked upon it, they would be healed. As with the first generation, God further provided for the people with springs of water (Ex. 15:27; Num. 21:16-18).

- What did the people confess before asking for the removal of the snakes?
- What event does the bronze serpent foreshadow in the NT? See John 3:14-16; 12:32-33.

Military Encounters. Israel's journey to Moab brought them from the south of Canaan alongside its western border. Along the way, Israel encountered several of Canaan's neighbors and came into conflict with them. The new generation would get their first taste of military conflict as they prepared to take the Promised Land.

Opponent	Result
Edom (20:14-21)	
Arad in Canaan (21:1-3)	
Sihon and the Amorites (21:21-31)	
Jazer (21:32)	
Og of Bashan (21:33-35)	

- Identify the conflicts' results.

Balaam's Oracles

Israel's presence in the Transjordan valley was perceived as a real threat among the inhabitants of the region. Edom had refused passage while Sihon and Og attempted to repel the Israelites with military force. Both of those efforts failed to deter the Israelites' march. When Israel camped in the plains of Moab, the Moabites and Midianites allied together to hire Balaam to curse the Israelites.

	short	short	long
Divine Encounters	<u>1st Act</u> 22:2-14	<u>2nd Act</u> 22:15-20	<u>3rd Act</u> 22:21-35
Oracles	<u>4th Act</u> 22:41-23:12	<u>5th Act</u> 23:13-26	<u>6th Act</u> 23:27-24:25

Structure. The story is structured around two sets of three act with two shorter sections followed by a prolonged third section: divine encounters (ch. 22) and oracles (ch. 23-24).

Divine Encounters. After the Moabites and Midianites determined to hire Balaam, they sent messengers with the "fees for divination" and a request for his services. Balaam asked the messengers to spend the night while he received his message from the Lord. The Lord conversed with Balaam in the night and refused to let him go. When Balak heard about Balaam's refusal, he sent more messengers. Once again, Balaam asked the messengers to spend the night until he could report back the word of the Lord. This time God permitted Balaam to go, and he went with the messenger.

Balaam's third encounter with the Lord came as he went to meet Balak. God became angry and stationed an angel with a drawn sword in his way. His donkey saw the angel and refused to proceed. Balaam, however, could not see the angel, and he whipped his donkey three times to get him to move. When the donkey asked Balaam why he whipped him, Balaam responded and the two had a conversation. When the Lord opened Balaam's eyes he understood what had happened and he confessed his sin and offered to turn around. The angel of the Lord permitted him to proceed, and he met went to meet Balak.

- How were the people of Israel described by Balak? Why was Balak so scared of them?
- What did Balak hope to accomplish by cursing the Israelites?
- Identify God's message to Balaam and Balaam's statement about God's word.

	The Lord's Message	Balaam's Statement
1st Encounter	22:12	22:13
2nd Encounter	22:20	22:18
3rd Encounter	22:35	22:38

- Why was God angry when Balaam went to meet Balak?

Oracles. Oracles from the Lord are recorded in Numbers 23-24 alongside the narrative of Balaam and Balak's interactions and search for the divine message. The oracles are contained in three units that follow a fairly clear pattern with slight alterations among them. This pattern includes the following.

1st Unit of Oracles (22:41-23:12)	2nd Unit of Oracles (23:13-26)	3rd Unit of Oracles (23:27-24:25)
Balak took Balaam to the top of a mountain:		
Bamath-Ball (22:41)	Pisgah (23:13)	Peor (23:27)
Balaam instructed Balak to build 7 altars and sacrifice 7 bulls and 7 rams		
(23:1)	(23:14)	(23:29)
Balaam instructed "Stand here beside your burnt offering" while I go over there. (23:3)	(23:15)	Balaam does not depart from Balak but sets his face to see all Israel and the Spirit of God came upon him (24:1-2).
Balaam met the Lord and told, "return to Balak and thus you shall speak" (23:4-5)	(23:16)	
Balaam came back to men standing by the burnt sacrifices (23:6)	(23:17)	
Oracle introduced with "And Balaam took up his discourse and said..."		
(23:7-10)	(23:18-24)	(24:3-9)
(23:11)	Balak responded to the oracle (23:25)	(24:10-11)
(23:12)	Balaam answered Balak (23:26)	(24:12-14)
		Oracle 4 (24:15-19) Oracle 5-7 (24:20-24)

When Balak heard the word from the Lord, he responded with disappointment and frustration (23:11, 25; 24:10-11), but as Balaam stated over and over, he could only speak what God told him to say (23:12, 26; 24:12-14).

This story certainly contains humorous elements, especially Balaam's matter-of-fact conversation with his own donkey. Yet, it conveys important truths and plays an important role in the overall story of the Pentateuch. The story introduces the reader to the polytheistic atmosphere of the foreign nations while showing God's will to be Sovereign, absolute and unalterable.

- What message did Balaam reveal about God and his word in 23:19-20?

Three Times. Everything in this story seems to happen in sets of three, including divine encounters, mountain settings, sacrifices, and blessings. "Three times" is repeated, you guessed it, three times in the story of Balaam and the donkey. Balak also mentioned it an additional time.

- Donkey: "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" (22:28).
- Angel: "Why have you struck your donkey these three times?... The donkey saw me and turned aside before me these three times..." (22:32-33).
- Balak: "I called you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed them these three times" (24:10)

- What did Balaam reveal about Israel and the nations in 23:24 and 24:8-9?
- Which nations did Balaam prophesy that Israel would defeat? See 24:17-18

The Sin of Baal-Peor

While Israel camped on the plains of Moab, the Moabites and Midianites attempted to bring a curse upon the people of Israel, but a foreign prophet was constrained to speak the word of the Lord. Now, the people of Israel would do their own damage by committing immorality with the daughters of Moab and Midian. Unlike Balaam, Israel was not constrained by the word of the Lord as immorality led to idolatry.

Just like their parents at Mt. Sinai, the new generation committed idolatry and transgressed the covenant with God. Instead of a suggestion from within Israel, idolatry came as a direct result of the influence from the nations. The danger of outside influence would be a major concern as the people prepared to enter into the land of Canaan.

	The 1 st Generation	The 2 nd Generation
Sin	<u>Ex. 32:1-6</u> Formed an idol Feast Sacrifices Rose up to Play	<u>Num. 25:1-3</u> Bowed down to idols Ate with people Sacrifices to gods Immorality
Aftermath	<u>Ex. 32:7-35</u> Anger of Lord burned Execution by Levites Intercession by Moses Atonement Divine Plague	<u>Num. 25:3-15</u> Anger of Lord burned Execution by Moses, Judges Intervention by Phinehas Atonement Divine Plague

Just like before, Israel's idolatry angered the Lord and drew a severe response of judgment.

- The Lord instructed Moses to hang/impale the chiefs of the people (25:4).
- Moses instructed the judges to kill the perpetrators (25:5).
- Phinehas executed the blatantly immoral man and his mistress (25:6-8).

The Lord then directed his anger to the Midianites, instructing Moses to strike them down.

- What kind of influence did Moab and Midian have on Israel? Is there a similar danger of influence for Christians today?
- What imagery is invoked by Israel being "yoked" to Baal of Peor?
- What was so bad about the sin of Zimri and Cozbi?
- How many people died in God's plague upon Israel?
- Who was Phinehas? What were his family and tribe?
- What did God give to Phinehas because of his actions?

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Outline:

- I. Preparations for the New Generation (Numbers 26-36)
- II. Covenant Renewal for the New Generation (Deuteronomy 1-30)
- III. Death of Moses and Transition of Leadership (Deuteronomy 31-34)

Preparations for the New Generation

The new generation of Israelites were not delivered from Egyptian slavery, but had grown up wandering in the wilderness. As they came to the plains of Moab, they would be prepared to enter into the Promised Land, a task that was initially assigned to their parents. If they were to avoid their parents' failure of heeding the unfaithful spies at Kadesh, they must be prepared to enter the land and trust God in the process.

In addition to a travel itinerary (Num. 33), the concluding chapters of Numbers contains a variety of elements related to preparations for the new generation to take and inhabit the land of Canaan. Some of the instructions were religious in nature like the offerings at appointed times and vows. Others directly related to possessing the land like inheritance laws and provision of Levitical cities.

Travel Itinerary. Moses reviewed the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to their present location in the plains of Moab. It covered the locations and encampments the people made from Egypt to Sinai, Sinai to Kadesh and then Kadesh to their present location. After concluding where the people had been, Moses instructed the people about where they were going (33:50-56). They were going to enter the land of Canaan, drive out the inhabitants and divide the land among the tribes as a possession.

- What would happen if they failed to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan? See 33:55-56.

Census. Like he did for the previous generation, the Lord directed that a census be taken of Israel for those males who were able to go to war (Num. 1:2-3; 26:2). As a military census, it excluded the Levites, who worked in the service of religious matters and would not be going to war. It would also be used to determine the size of the inheritance for the tribes once the people took Canaan.

Census Totals
1 st Generation (Num. 1:46) – 603,550
2 nd Generation (Num. 26:51) – 601,730

- Was anyone from the prior census included in this census? See 26:63-65.

Early Settlement. The tribes of Reuben and Gad had many livestock, and they saw that one of the captured cities from the Amorites was fit for pasturing their animals (see Num. 21:32; 32:1). The people came to Moses and requested that they take possession of the land in the Transjordan region without crossing over the Jordan river into Canaan. Initially Moses was upset with such a request, but when the tribes of Reuben and Gad assured Moses that they would build their homes there and then fight with Israel in Canaan, he relented and gave them the land for their inheritance.

Preparation for the New Generation (Num. 26-36)

Civil & Religious Preparations

- Census of the New Generation (ch. 26)
- Inheritance Laws & Transition of Leadership (ch. 27)
- Appointed Times and Seasons (ch. 28-29)
- Women's Vows (ch. 30)

Preparations for Settlement

- Conquest of the Midianites (ch. 31)
- Settlement of the Trans-jordan Region (ch. 32)
- Travel Itinerary (ch. 33)
- Levitical Cities and Cities of Refuge (ch. 35)
- Inheritance Laws (ch. 36)

The Battle with the Midianites

The incident at Peor concluded with the Lord's instruction to strike down the Midianites (25:16-18), and Numbers 31 provides the fulfillment of those instructions. The Lord again instructed Moses to avenge the people of Israel on the Midianites, providing one final task before his death. With an army of 12,000 people the Israelites defeated the Midianites, killing all the males including the Midianite kings and Balaam the prophet. The women, children and livestock were kept alive as plunder and presented to Moses.

Moses instructed that only the female children and virgins be spared and that they could be taken as wives after a week of purification. The plunder would be divided between the army and the congregation of Israel with a contribution given to the Lord.

- Why was Moses upset that the Israelite army spared the Midianite women?

Deuteronomy: Renewing the Covenant

The Lord made a covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai with Moses serving as the mediator between God and the people. After the people committed idolatry, Moses retrieved tablets to replace the ones he broke and he renewed the covenant between God and Israel. The same thing would be needed for the 2nd generation. They also committed idolatry before God, forsaking the first and most important commandment in the law. They had pursued another god and violated the covenant. Before his death, Moses would relay the law and renew the covenant with the new generation. This covenant renewal is found in the book of Deuteronomy, which is structured in the form of contemporary suzerainty-vassal covenants from that time. This type of covenant was simply an agreement for peace between a ruler (suzerain) and his subjects (vassals).

1 st Generation	2 nd Generation
Sin: Golden Calf (Ex. 32:1-6)	Baal of Peor (Num. 25:1-3)
Covenant Renewal (Ex. 34:1-28)	Covenant Renewal (Deut. 1-32)

Covenant Format	
Preamble – setting and occasion of the covenant	Deut. 1:1-5
Historical Prologue – reminder of ruler's accomplishments	Deut. 1:6-4:43
Stipulations – laws and principles of the covenant agreement	Deut. 4:44-26:15
Document Clause – provision for storage and reading of document	Deut. 27:2-3
Witnesses – those who attest to the agreement of the covenant	Deut. 31-32
Blessings & Curses – consequences for obedience & disobedience	Deut. 27-28

Moses' Final Speeches. In addition to the covenant format, the book of Deuteronomy served as a farewell address of Moses to the Israelites before entering the land of Canaan. It can be outlined according to the major speeches the Moses made with a concluding section made up of smaller units. The speeches follow a natural progression from history of the people to the law its importance and finally a concluding challenge to the people.

- Moses' 1st Speech: History of Israel (Deut. 1:1-4:3); introduced by "These are the words" (1:1)
- Moses' 2nd Speech: The Law (Deut. 4:44-28:68); introduced by "This is the law" (4:44)
- Moses' 3rd Speech: Summary (Deut. 29:1-30:20); introduced by "These are the words" (29:1)
- Epilogue (Deut. 32-34) including Moses' song, blessing, death and commission of Joshua

Important Themes. Moses' speeches or sermons, as they have sometimes have been called, are filled with words of exhortation, encouragement and warnings. They present many important themes and comprise the dying words of Israel's finest leader. One passage where many of these themes are found is in the Shema. The Shema, found in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, is an important devotional passage named after the first word in original language (Hebrew *shema* means "hear"). This passage along with Deut. 11:13-21 and Num. 15:37-41 are used in daily prayer in modern Judaism.

The Uniqueness of God. “The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” There is one God, the God of Israel, and he is consistent in his nature and character. The nations worshipped many gods, but there is only one true God. See also Deut. 4:32-39.

❖ **Covenant Loyalty.** “You shall love the Lord your God...” God had chosen Israel to be his special people, and he desired that they would love him with all of their being. They were chosen, not because of their greatness, but because of God’s lovingkindness, and they were to respond with covenant loyalty. See also Deut. 7:6-11.

❖ **The Law.** “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.” The law is repeated in Deuteronomy, including the foundational Ten Commandments (5:6-21). Moses instructed the people to put the words in their heart and obey it. They would be blessed in obedience but cursed in disobedience. See Deut. 7:12-16; 28:1-13.

❖ **Instruction.** “You shall teach them diligently to your children...” The covenant was to be passed down from generation to generation. Parents were to teach their children, instructing them of what God had done for them and teaching them to obey God’s law. See Deut. 4:9-14.

The Shema – Deut. 6:4-9

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children...”

The Death of Moses and Transition of Leadership

When Moses struck the rock at Meribah instead of speaking to it as God instructed, he and his brother Aaron were sentenced to death (Num. 20:12). Like the generation that they led out of Egypt, they would die before entering into the Promised Land. Aaron’s death would happen shortly after Meribah. When the people came to Mt. Hor, Aaron’s garments and his position as high priest were transferred to his son Eleazar before all Israel (Num. 20:22-29). Like his brother, Moses would die before entering Canaan and transition his power to another person.

Moses’ death and succession became an important part of the preparations for entry into Canaan, and it is mentioned several times throughout the end of Numbers and the book of Deuteronomy.

Three main elements are discussed related to his death. Each of these can be found in Num. 27:12-23 (and further discussed in Deut. 1:26-40; 3:23-29; 31:1-8; 32:48-52). The book of Deuteronomy concludes with a record of Moses’ death and fulfillment of these matters (Deut. 34:1-12).

Transition of Leadership

Moses → Joshua

Aaron → Eleazar

- Identify the reason, provision and transition plan for Moses’ death.

1. The Reason for Moses’ Death	
2. The Provision before Moses’ Death	
3. The Transition after Moses’ Death	

- What was Moses’ physical condition at the time of his death?
- How long did the Israelites mourn him?

The History of Moses and the Israelites

Lesson 13: Review

“And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel” (Deut. 34:10-12).

- In what ways were “none like Moses” according to the conclusion of Deuteronomy?
- How was Moses’ relationship with God unique?
- In what ways did Moses’ life mimics Israel’s history as a nation?
- How long did Moses live? What happened in each 40-year period of Moses’ life?
- What different roles did Moses perform for Israel?
- What was the purpose of the plagues inflicted on Pharaoh and the Egyptians?
- Contrast God and Pharaoh as kings over Israel.
- Who did God want to know about him? What did he want them to know about him?
- What were the major stops on Israel journey to Canaan, and what happened at each stop?

- How long was Israel at Mt. Sinai and what Scripture is covered during this period?
- What was the purpose of God's covenant at Mt. Sinai? What role does covenant play in the story of Israel?
- What difficulties did Moses face as a leader? How did he cope with those issues?
- What rebellions did Israel commit in the wilderness? What kind of attitude did they have in the wilderness?
- What kind of leader was Aaron? What were his failures and his successes?
- How did God respond to Israel's sin? What does that say about sin? What does that say about God?
- Which memorials were established for Israel? What role did they play?
- In what ways does Moses serve as a type (foreshadow) of Christ?