

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

AUGUST 3-9

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 13-14

“Stand Firm and See the Salvation of Jehovah”

(Exodus 14:13, 14) Then Moses said to the people: “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah that he will perform for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you will never ever see again. ¹⁴ Jehovah himself will fight for you, and you will keep silent.”

w13 2/1 4

Moses—A Man of Faith

Moses may have had little idea that God was about to part the Red Sea, thereby opening up an escape route for the Israelites. However, Moses was confident that God would do *something* to protect His people. And Moses wanted his fellow Israelites to have that same conviction. We read: “Moses said to the people: ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will perform for you today.’” (Exodus 14:13) Did Moses succeed in fortifying the faith of his fellow Israelites? Indeed, for the Bible says regarding not just Moses but all the Israelites: “By faith *they* passed through the Red Sea as on dry land.” (Hebrews 11:29) Moses’ faith benefited not only himself but everyone who learned from it.

(Exodus 14:21, 22) Moses now stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah drove the sea back with a strong east wind all night long, turning the sea basin into dry ground, and the waters divided. ²² So the Israelites went through the midst of the sea on dry ground, while the waters formed a wall on their right hand and on their left.

w18.09 26 ¶13

Almighty yet Considerate

¹³ **Read Exodus 14:19-22.** Picture yourself there, trapped between Pharaoh’s forces and the Red Sea. Then God acts. The pillar of cloud moves to the rear of the camp, blocking the Egyptians and keeping them in darkness. Your vast camp, however, is bathed in miraculous light! Then you see Moses stretch out his hand over the sea, and a strong east wind opens a wide path to the other side. In an orderly manner, you, your family, and your domestic animals walk out onto the seabed with the rest of the people. Immediately, you notice something odd. The seabed is not miry or frozen; it is dry and quite firm, making it easy to walk. As a result, even the slowest ones cross safely to the other side.

(Exodus 14:26-28) Then Jehovah said to Moses: “Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, their war chariots, and their cavalrymen.” ²⁷ Moses at once stretched out his hand over the sea, and as morning approached, the sea returned to its normal condition. As the Egyptians fled from it, Jehovah shook the Egyptians off into the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The returning waters covered the war chariots and the cavalrymen and all of Pharaoh’s army who had gone into the sea after them. Not so much as one among them was allowed to survive.

w09 3/15 7 ¶2-3

You Must Not Forget Jehovah

While the Egyptians struggled with their crippled war vehicles, all Israel reached the eastern shore. Moses now stretched out his hand over the Red Sea. At that, Jehovah made the walls of water forming the corridor collapse. Millions

of tons of water roared in upon Pharaoh and his warriors, drowning them. None of those enemies survived. Israel was free!—Ex. 14:26-28; Ps. 136:13-15.

News of this event left surrounding nations with an enduring sense of dread. (Ex. 15:14-16) Forty years later, Rahab of Jericho told two Israelite men: “The fright of you has fallen upon us, . . . for we have heard how Jehovah dried up the waters of the Red Sea from before you when you came out of Egypt.” (Josh. 2:9, 10) Not even those pagan nations had forgotten how Jehovah delivered his people. Clearly, Israel had even more reasons to remember him.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 13:17) Now when Phar’aoth sent the people away, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Phi-lis’tines, although it was near. For God said: “The people may change their minds when they are confronted by war and will return to Egypt.”

it-1 1117

Highway, Road

From ancient times highways and roads, including several important trade routes, linked cities and kingdoms in the area of Palestine. (Nu 20:17-19; 21:21, 22; 22:5, 21-23; Jos 2:22; Jg 21:19; 1Sa 6:9, 12; 13:17, 18; see KING’S ROAD.) What is considered to have been the principal route led from Egypt to the Philistine cities of Gaza and Ashkelon and gradually bent northeastward in the direction of Megiddo. It continued to Hazor, N of the Sea of Galilee, and then led to Damascus. This route via Philistia was the shortest from Egypt to the Promised Land. But Jehovah kindly led the Israelites by another way so that they would not get disheartened by a Philistine attack.—Ex 13:17.

(Exodus 14:2) “Tell the Israelites that they should turn back and encamp before Pi-ha-hi’roth, between Mig’dol and the sea, within

view of Ba’al-ze’phon. You are to encamp facing it by the sea.

it-1 782 ¶2-3

Exodus

Where was the Red Sea parted to allow Israel to cross over?

It should be noted that, after reaching the second stage of their journey, Etham “at the edge of the wilderness,” God ordered Moses to “turn back and encamp before Pihahiroth . . . by the sea.” This maneuver would cause Pharaoh to believe the Israelites were “wandering in confusion.” (Ex 13:20; 14:1-3) Scholars favoring the el Haj route as the likely one point out that the Hebrew verb for “turn back” is emphatic and does not mean merely to “divert” or “turn aside,” but has more the sense of returning or at least of a marked detour. They suggest that, upon reaching a point N of the head of the Gulf of Suez, the Israelites reversed their line of march and went around to the E side of Jebel ‘Ataqah, a mountain range bordering the W side of the Gulf. A large host, such as the Israelites were, would find no effective way for swift exit from such a position if pursued from the N, and hence they would be bottled up with the sea blocking their way.

Jewish tradition of the first century C.E. conveys such a picture. (See PIHAHIROTH.) But, more importantly, such a situation fits the general picture portrayed in the Bible itself, whereas the popular views of many scholars do not. (Ex 14:9-16) It seems evident that the crossing must have been far enough from the head of the Gulf (or western arm of the Red Sea) that Pharaoh’s forces would not have been able simply to circle the end of the Gulf and easily come upon the Israelites on the other side.—Ex 14:22, 23.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 13:1-20) Jehovah spoke further to Moses, saying: ² “Sanctify to me every first-

born male among the Israelites. The first male to be born, of both human and animal, belongs to me.” ³ Then Moses said to the people: “Remember this day on which you went out of Egypt, from the house of slavery, because with a mighty hand Jehovah brought you out of here. So nothing leavened may be eaten. ⁴ You are going out on this day, in the month of A’bib. ⁵ When Jehovah has brought you into the land of the Ca’naan-ites, the Hit’tites, the Am’or-ites, the Hi’vites, and the Jeb’u-sites, which he swore to your forefathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, then you must keep this observance in this month. ⁶ Seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day, there will be a festival to Jehovah. ⁷ Unleavened bread is to be eaten for the seven days; and nothing leavened is to be found with you, and no sourdough is to be found with you within all your territory. ⁸ And you must tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what Jehovah did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ ⁹ And this will serve for you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial on your forehead, so that Jehovah’s law may be in your mouth, for with a mighty hand Jehovah brought you out of Egypt. ¹⁰ You must keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year. ¹¹ “When Jehovah brings you into the land of the Ca’naan-ites, which he has sworn to you and to your forefathers to give to you, ¹² you must devote to Jehovah every firstborn male, as well as every male firstling of the livestock that you acquire. The males belong to Jehovah. ¹³ Every firstling donkey you are to redeem with a sheep, and if you do not redeem it, then you must break its neck. And every firstborn male of your sons you are to redeem. ¹⁴ “In case your son should ask you later on, ‘What does this mean?’ then

you should say to him, ‘With a mighty hand Jehovah brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. ¹⁵ When Phar’aoh stubbornly refused to send us away, Jehovah killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of man to the firstborn of beast. That is why I am sacrificing to Jehovah all the firstborn males, and I redeem every firstborn of my sons.’ ¹⁶ This must serve as a sign on your hand and as a headband on your forehead, for with a mighty hand Jehovah brought us out of Egypt.” ¹⁷ Now when Phar’aoh sent the people away, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philis’tines, although it was near. For God said: “The people may change their minds when they are confronted by war and will return to Egypt.” ¹⁸ So God made the people go around by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. But it was in battle formation that the Israelites went up out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁹ Moses also took Joseph’s bones with him, because Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear: “God will not fail to turn his attention to you, and you must take my bones up out of here with you.” ²⁰ They departed from Suc’oth and encamped at E’tham, at the edge of the wilderness.

AUGUST 10-16

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | EXODUS 15-16

“Praise Jehovah in Song”

(Exodus 15:1, 2) At that time Moses and the Israelites sang this song to Jehovah: “Let me sing to Jehovah, for he has become highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. ² My strength and my might is Jah, since he has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise him; my father’s God, and I will exalt him.

w95 10/15 11 ¶11

Why Fear the True God Now?

¹¹ Jehovah's destruction of the Egyptian military forces exalted him in the eyes of his worshipers and made his name widely known. (Joshua 2:9, 10; 4:23, 24) Yes, his name was elevated above the powerless, false gods of Egypt, who proved unable to deliver their worshipers. Trust in their deities and in mortal man and military power led to bitter disappointment. (Psalm 146:3) No wonder the Israelites were moved to sing praises that reflected wholesome fear of the living God, who mightily delivers his people!

(Exodus 15:11) Who among the gods is like you, O Jehovah? Who is like you, showing yourself mighty in holiness? The One to be feared with songs of praise, the One doing wonders.

(Exodus 15:18) Jehovah will rule as king forever and ever.

w95 10/15 11-12 ¶15-16

Why Fear the True God Now?

¹⁵ Had we stood safely with Moses, we surely would have been moved to sing: "Who among the gods is like you, O Jehovah? Who is like you, proving yourself mighty in holiness? The One to be feared with songs of praise, the One doing marvels." (Exodus 15:11) Such sentiments have been echoed throughout the centuries since then. In the last book of the Bible, the apostle John describes a group of faithful anointed servants of God: "They are singing the song of Moses the slave of God and the song of the Lamb." What is this great song? "Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal?"—Revelation 15:2-4.

¹⁶ So today too there are liberated worshipers who appreciate not only the creative handiworks of God but also his decrees. People from all nations have been spiritually liberated, separated from this polluted world because they recognize and put into practice the righteous decrees of God. Yearly, hundreds of thousands escape this corrupt world to dwell with the clean, upright organization of Jehovah's worshipers. Soon, after God's fiery judgments against false religion and the rest of this wicked system have been executed, they will live forever in a righteous new world.

(Exodus 15:20, 21) Then Mir'i-am the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women followed her with tambourines and with dances. ²¹ Mir'i-am sang in response to the men: "Sing to Jehovah, for he has become highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea."

it-2 454 ¶1

Music

Much of the group singing in Israel appears to have been antiphonal, either two half choruses alternating in singing parallel lines, or a soloist and an answering chorus alternating. In the Scriptures this apparently is referred to as "responding." (Ex 15:21; 1Sa 18:6, 7) This type of singing is indicated by the very way some of the psalms are written, such as Psalm 136. The description of the two large thanksgiving choirs in Nehemiah's time and of their part in the inauguration of the wall of Jerusalem implies that they sang in this style.—Ne 12:31, 38, 40-42; see SONG.

it-2 698

Prophetess

Miriam is the first woman designated a prophetess in the Bible. God evidently conveyed some message or messages through her, per-

haps in inspired singing. (Ex 15:20, 21) Thus, she and Aaron are recorded as saying to Moses: “Is it not by us also that [Jehovah] has spoken?” (Nu 12:2) Jehovah himself, through the prophet Micah, spoke of having sent “Moses, Aaron and Miriam” before the Israelites when bringing them up out of Egypt. (Mic 6:4) Though Miriam was privileged to be used as an instrument of divine communication, her relationship as such toward God was inferior to that of her brother Moses. When she failed to keep her proper place, she suffered severe chastisement from God.—Nu 12:1-15.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 16:13) So that evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning a layer of dew was all around the camp.

w11 9/1 14

Did You Know?

Why did God choose quail to feed the Israelites in the wilderness?

Following the Israelites’ Exodus from Egypt, God twice provided them with an abundance of meat in the form of quail.—Exodus 16:13; Numbers 11:31.

Quail are small birds, about 7 inches (18 cm) in length and weighing about 3.5 ounces (100 g). They breed in many parts of western Asia and Europe. Being migratory birds, they winter in North Africa and Arabia. During their seasonal passage, vast flocks traverse the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea and fly over the Sinai Peninsula.

According to *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, quail “fly rapidly and well, and take advantage of the wind; but if the wind changes its course, or the birds become exhausted from long flight, the whole immense flock is apt to fall to the ground, where the birds lie stunned.” Before continuing their migration, they have to rest on the ground for

a day or two, thus becoming easy catch for hunters. In the early 20th century, Egypt was exporting some three million quail annually for food.

Both times that the Israelites fed on quail were in the spring. Although quail regularly flew over the Sinai area during that time, it was Jehovah who caused ‘a wind to burst forth’ to drive these birds into the Israelite encampment.—Numbers 11:31.

(Exodus 16:32-34) Then Moses said: “This is what Jehovah has commanded, ‘Fill an omer measure of it as something to be kept throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread that I gave you to eat in the wilderness when I was bringing you out of the land of Egypt.’” ³³ So Moses said to Aaron: “Take a jar and put in it an omer measure of manna and deposit it before Jehovah as something to be kept throughout your generations.” ³⁴ Just as Jehovah commanded Moses, Aaron placed it before the Testimony so that it might be preserved.

w06 1/15 31

Questions From Readers

Shortly after their deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites began to murmur about food. So Jehovah provided manna for them. (Exodus 12:17, 18; 16:1-5) At that time, Moses instructed Aaron: “Take a jar and put in it an omerful of manna and deposit it before Jehovah as something to be kept throughout your generations.” The account states: “Just as Jehovah had commanded Moses, Aaron proceeded to deposit it before the Testimony [an archive for the safe-keeping of important documents] as something to be kept.” (Exodus 16:33, 34) While Aaron undoubtedly gathered manna into a jar at that time, the depositing of it before the Testimony had to wait until Moses made the Ark and placed the tablets in it.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 16:1-18) After they departed from E'lim, the entire assembly of the Israelites eventually came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between E'lim and Si'nai, on the 15th day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. ² Then the entire assembly of the Israelites began to murmur against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ The Israelites kept saying to them: "If only we had died by Jehovah's hand in the land of Egypt while we were sitting by the pots of meat, while we were eating bread to satisfaction. Now you have brought us out into this wilderness to put this whole congregation to death by famine." ⁴ Then Jehovah said to Moses: "Here I am raining down bread for you from the heavens, and each of the people should go out to gather his amount day by day, so that I may put them to the test to see whether they will walk in my law or not. ⁵ But on the sixth day when they prepare what they have gathered, it is to be double the amount that they pick up on each of the other days." ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites: "In the evening you will certainly know that it is Jehovah who brought you out of the land of Egypt. ⁷ In the morning you will see Jehovah's glory, for he has heard your murmurings against Jehovah. Who are we that you should murmur against us?" ⁸ Moses continued: "When Jehovah gives you meat to eat in the evening and in the morning bread to satisfaction, you will see that Jehovah has heard your murmurings that you are murmuring against him. But who are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against Jehovah." ⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron: "Tell the entire assembly of the Israelites, 'Come near before Jehovah, for he has heard your murmurings.'" ¹⁰ As soon as Aaron had spoken to the entire assembly of the Israelites,

they turned and faced toward the wilderness, and look! Jehovah's glory appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ Jehovah spoke further to Moses, saying: ¹² "I have heard the murmurings of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread, and you will certainly know that I am Jehovah your God.'" ¹³ So that evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning a layer of dew was all around the camp. ¹⁴ When the layer of dew evaporated, there was a fine, flaky substance on the surface of the wilderness, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they began to say to one another, "What is it?" for they did not know what it was. Moses said to them: "It is the bread that Jehovah has given you for food. ¹⁶ This is what Jehovah has commanded, 'Each one should gather it according to how much he can eat. You are to take an omer measure for each individual according to the number of the people that each of you has in his tent.'" ¹⁷ The Israelites began to do so; they gathered it, some gathering much and some gathering little. ¹⁸ When they would measure it by the omer, the one who had gathered much had no surplus and the one who had gathered little had no shortage. They each gathered it according to what they could eat.

AUGUST 17-23

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 17-18

"Modest Men Train and Delegate"

(Exodus 18:17, 18) Moses' father-in-law said to him: "What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸ You will surely wear out, both you and this people who are with you, because this is too big a load for you and you cannot carry it by yourself.

w13 2/1 6

Moses—A Man of Love

Moses showed love for his fellow Israelites. They recognized that Jehovah was using Moses to guide his people, so they approached Moses with their various problems. We read: “The people kept standing before Moses from the morning till the evening.” (Exodus 18:13-16) Imagine how draining it must have been for Moses to listen—hour after hour—as the Israelites unburdened themselves of their concerns! Yet, Moses was happy to help the people he loved.

(Exodus 18:21, 22) But you should select from the people capable men fearing God, trustworthy men hating dishonest profit, and appoint these over them as chiefs over thousands, chiefs over hundreds, chiefs over fifties, and chiefs over tens. ²² They should judge the people when cases arise, and they will bring every difficult case to you, but every minor case they will decide. Make it easier for yourself by letting them share the load along with you.

w03 11/1 6 ¶1

Trust Is Vital for a Happy Life

These were men who showed certain godly qualities before being appointed to positions of trust. They had already given evidence that they feared God; they had a healthy reverence for the Creator and feared to displease him. It was clear to everyone that these men did their very best to uphold God’s standards. They hated unjust profit, which indicated moral strength that would prevent them from being corrupted by power. They would not abuse trust so as to further their own personal interests or those of relatives or friends.

(Exodus 18:24, 25) Moses immediately listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. ²⁵ Moses chose capable men out of all Israel and appointed them heads over

the people, as chiefs of thousands, chiefs of hundreds, chiefs of fifties, and chiefs of tens.

w02 5/15 25 ¶5

Integrity Leads the Upright Ones

Moses too was modest and humble. When he was wearing himself out in caring for the problems of others, his father-in-law, Jethro, offered a practical solution: Share some responsibility with other qualified men. Recognizing his own limitations, Moses wisely accepted the suggestion. (Exodus 18:17-26; Numbers 12:3) A modest man is not reluctant to delegate authority to others, nor does he fear that he somehow loses control by sharing appropriate responsibilities with other qualified men. (Numbers 11:16, 17, 26-29) Rather, he is eager to help them to progress spiritually. (1 Timothy 4:15) Should that not be true of us also?

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 17:11-13) As long as Moses kept his hands lifted up, the Israelites prevailed, but as soon as he would let down his hands, the A-mal’ek-ites prevailed. ¹² When the hands of Moses were heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Then Aaron and Hur, one on each side, supported his hands, so that his hands remained steady until the sun set. ¹³ Thus Joshua defeated Am’a-lek and his people with the sword.

w16.09 6 ¶14

“Do Not Let Your Hands Drop Down”

¹⁴ Aaron and Hur literally supported Moses’ hands during a battle. As for us, we can look for ways to support and to give practical aid to others. To whom? To those battling the effects of old age, health limitations, opposition from their family, loneliness, or the loss of a loved one. We can also strengthen young ones who are facing pressure to share in wrongdoing or to seek “success” in this system of things, whether academically, financially, or

professionally. (1 Thess. 3:1-3; 5:11, 14) Look for ways to show genuine interest in others at the Kingdom Hall, in the ministry, while enjoying a meal together, or as you converse on the telephone.

(Exodus 17:14) Jehovah now said to Moses: “Write this as a memorial in the book and repeat it to Joshua, ‘I will completely wipe out the memory of Am’a-lek from under the heavens.’”

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Canon

That these writings of Moses were of divine origin, inspired of God, canonical, and a safe guideline for pure worship, there can be no doubt, in the light of internal evidence. It was not through Moses’ initiative that he became the leader and commander of the Israelites; at first Moses drew back at the suggestion. (Ex 3: 10, 11; 4:10-14) Rather, God raised Moses up and invested in him such miraculous powers that even Pharaoh’s magic-practicing priests were compelled to acknowledge that what Moses did originated with God. (Ex 4:1-9; 8:16-19) So it was not Moses’ personal ambition to be an orator and writer. Rather, in obedience to God’s command and with the divine credentials of holy spirit, Moses was moved first to speak and then to write down part of the Bible canon.—Ex 17:14.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 17:1-16) The entire assembly of the Israelites departed from the wilderness of Sin by stages according to the order of Jehovah, and they camped at Reph’i-dim. But there was no water for the people to drink. ² So the people began quarreling with Moses and saying: “Give us water to drink.” But Moses said to them: “Why are you quarreling with me? Why do you keep putting Jehovah to the test?” ³ But the people were very

thirsty for water there, and they kept murmuring against Moses and saying: “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our sons and our livestock with thirst?”

⁴ Finally Moses cried out to Jehovah: “What should I do with this people? A little longer and they will stone me!” ⁵ Then Jehovah said to Moses: “Go ahead of the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel and your rod with which you struck the Nile River. Take it in your hand and walk on.” ⁶ Look! I will be standing before you there on the rock in Hor’eb. You must strike the rock, and water will come out of it, and the people will drink it.” Moses did so before the eyes of the elders of Israel. ⁷ So he named the place Mas’sah and Mer’i-bah because of the quarreling of the Israelites and because they put Jehovah to the test by saying: “Is Jehovah in our midst or not?” ⁸ Then the A-mal’ek-ites came and fought against Israel in Reph’i-dim. ⁹ At this Moses said to Joshua: “Choose men for us and go out to fight against the A-mal’ek-ites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill, with the rod of the true God in my hand.” ¹⁰ Then Joshua did just as Moses told him, and he fought against the A-mal’ek-ites. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses kept his hands lifted up, the Israelites prevailed, but as soon as he would let down his hands, the A-mal’ek-ites prevailed. ¹² When the hands of Moses were heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. Then Aaron and Hur, one on each side, supported his hands, so that his hands remained steady until the sun set. ¹³ Thus Joshua defeated Am’a-lek and his people with the sword. ¹⁴ Jehovah now said to Moses: “Write this as a memorial in the book and repeat it to Joshua, ‘I will completely wipe out the memory of Am’a-lek from under the heavens.’” ¹⁵ Then

Moses built an altar and named it Je-ho'vah-nis'si, ¹⁶ saying: "Because his hand is against the throne of Jah, Jehovah will have war with Am'a-lek from generation to generation."

AUGUST 24-30

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 19-20

"The Ten Commandments and You"

(Exodus 20:3-7) You must not have any other gods besides me. ⁴ "You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. ⁵ You must not bow down to them nor be enticed to serve them, for I, Jehovah your God, am a God who requires exclusive devotion, bringing punishment for the error of fathers upon sons, upon the third generation and upon the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing loyal love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷ "You must not take up the name of Jehovah your God in a worthless way, for Jehovah will not leave unpunished the one who takes up His name in a worthless way.

w89 11/15 6 ¶1

What Do the Ten Commandments Mean to You?

The first four commandments highlight our responsibilities toward Jehovah. **(First)** He is a God who still exacts exclusive devotion. (Matthew 4:10) **(Second)** None of his worshipers should use images. (1 John 5:21) **(Third)** Our use of God's name should be proper and dignified, never disrespectful. (John 17:26; Romans 10:13) **(Fourth)** Our whole life should revolve around sacred matters. This enables us to rest, or 'take a sabbath,' from a course of self-righteousness.—Hebrews 4:9, 10.

(Exodus 20:8-11) "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it sacred. ⁹ You are to labor and do all your work for six days, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath to Jehovah your God. You must not do any work, neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your slave man nor your slave girl nor your domestic animal nor your foreign resident who is inside your settlements. ¹¹ For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and he began to rest on the seventh day. That is why Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and made it sacred.

(Exodus 20:12-17) "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you. ¹³ "You must not murder. ¹⁴ "You must not commit adultery. ¹⁵ "You must not steal. ¹⁶ "You must not testify falsely when you are a witness against your fellow man. ¹⁷ "You must not desire your fellow man's house. You must not desire your fellow man's wife nor his slave man nor his slave girl nor his bull nor his donkey nor anything that belongs to your fellow man."

w89 11/15 6 ¶2-3

What Do the Ten Commandments Mean to You?

(Fifth) The obedience of children to their parents continues to serve as the cornerstone of family unity, bringing with it Jehovah's blessings. And what a marvelous hope this "first command with a promise" offers! It is not only "that it may go well with you" but also that "you may endure a long time on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1-3) Now that we are living in "the last days" of this present wicked system, such godly obedience offers young people the prospect of never dying.—2 Timothy 3:1; John 11:26.

Love for our neighbor will prevent us from causing him harm through such wicked deeds

as **(Sixth)** murder, **(Seventh)** adultery, **(Eighth)** stealing, and **(Ninth)** making false statements. (1 John 3:10-12; Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 4:28; Matthew 5:37; Proverbs 6:16-19) But what of our motives? The **(Tenth)** commandment, against covetousness, reminds us that Jehovah requires that our intentions always be upright in his eyes.—Proverbs 21:2.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 19:5, 6) Now if you will strictly obey my voice and keep my covenant, you will certainly become my special property out of all peoples, for the whole earth belongs to me. ⁶ You will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites.”

it-2 687 ¶1-2

Priest

The Christian Priesthood. Jehovah had promised that if Israel kept his covenant they would become to Him “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Ex 19:6) However, the priesthood of Aaron’s line was to continue only until the coming of the greater priesthood that it foreshadowed. (Heb 8:4, 5) It would endure until the ending of the Law covenant and the inauguration of the new covenant. (Heb 7:11-14; 8:6, 7, 13) The offer was first made exclusively to Israel to become Jehovah’s priests serving in God’s promised Kingdom arrangement; in time this offer was extended to the Gentiles.—Ac 10:34, 35; 15:14; Ro 10:21.

Only a remnant of the Jews accepted Christ, the nation thereby failing to provide the members of the *real* kingdom of priests and the holy nation. (Ro 11:7, 20) Because of Israel’s unfaithfulness God had forewarned them of this by his prophet Hosea centuries before, saying: “Because the knowledge is what you yourself have rejected, I shall also reject you from serving as a priest to me; and because you keep forgetting the law of your God, I shall forget

your sons, even I.” (Ho 4:6) Correspondingly, Jesus told the Jewish leaders: “The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its fruits.” (Mt 21:43) Nevertheless, Jesus Christ, being under the Law while on earth, recognized the Aaronic priesthood as being in force, and he directed ones whom he cured of leprosy to go to the priest and make the required offering.—Mt 8:4; Mr 1:44; Lu 17:14.

(Exodus 20:4, 5) “You must not make for yourself a carved image or a form like anything that is in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. ⁵ You must not bow down to them nor be enticed to serve them, for I, Jehovah your God, am a God who requires exclusive devotion, bringing punishment for the error of fathers upon sons, upon the third generation and upon the fourth generation of those who hate me,

w04 3/15 27 ¶1

Highlights From the Book of Exodus

20:5—How is it that Jehovah brings “punishment for the error of fathers” upon future generations? After reaching an age of responsibility, each individual is judged on the basis of his own conduct and attitude. But when the nation of Israel turned to idolatry, it suffered the consequences of this for generations thereafter. Even the faithful Israelites felt its effects in that the nation’s religious delinquency made staying on a course of integrity difficult for them.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 19:1-19) In the third month after the Israelites went out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the wilderness of Si’nai. ² They pulled away from Reph’i-dim and came to the wilderness of Si’nai and camped in the wilderness. Israel camped there in front of the mountain. ³ Then Moses went up to the

true God, and Jehovah called to him from the mountain, saying: "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and to tell the Israelites, ⁴ 'You have seen for yourselves what I did to the Egyptians, in order to carry you on wings of eagles and bring you to myself. ⁵ Now if you will strictly obey my voice and keep my covenant, you will certainly become my special property out of all peoples, for the whole earth belongs to me. ⁶ You will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites." ⁷ So Moses went and summoned the elders of the people and declared to them all these words that Jehovah had commanded him. ⁸ After that all the people answered unanimously: "All that Jehovah has spoken, we are willing to do." Moses immediately took the people's response to Jehovah. ⁹ And Jehovah said to Moses: "Look! I am coming to you in a dark cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and so that they may always put faith in you as well." Then Moses reported the words of the people to Jehovah. ¹⁰ Then Jehovah said to Moses: "Go to the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and they must wash their clothing. ¹¹ And they must be ready for the third day, because on the third day Jehovah will come down upon Mount Si'nai before the eyes of all the people. ¹² You must set boundaries for the people all around it and tell them, 'Beware of going up to the mountain or touching its border. Anybody touching the mountain will surely be put to death. ¹³ No hand is to touch him, but he will either be stoned or be shot through. Whether beast or man, he will not live.' But at the sound of the ram's horn they may come up to the mountain." ¹⁴ Then Moses went down from the mountain to the people, and he began to sanctify the people, and they washed their

clothing. ¹⁵ He said to the people: "Get ready for the third day. Abstain from sexual relations." ¹⁶ On the morning of the third day, there was thunder and lightning, and there was a heavy cloud on the mountain and a very loud sound of a horn, and all the people in the camp began to tremble. ¹⁷ Moses now brought the people out of the camp to meet the true God, and they took their place at the base of the mountain. ¹⁸ Mount Si'nai smoked all over, because Jehovah came down upon it in fire; and its smoke was rising like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain was trembling violently. ¹⁹ As the sound of the horn grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and the voice of the true God answered him.

AUGUST 31–SEPTEMBER 6

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 21-22

"Reflect Jehovah's View of Life"

(Exodus 21:20) "If a man strikes his slave man or his slave girl with a stick and that one dies by his hand, that one must be avenged.

it-1 271 Beating

A Hebrew slave owner was permitted to strike his slave man or slave girl with a stick if the slave was disobedient or rebellious. But if the slave died under the beating, the slave owner was to be punished. If the slave lived for a day or two afterward, however, this would be evidence tending to indicate that the slave owner did not have murder in his heart. He had the right to mete out disciplinary punishment, for the slave was "his money." A man would be very unlikely to want to destroy completely his own valuable property, thereby suffering a loss. Also, if the slave died after the passage of a day or more, it might not be certain whether

death was from the beating or from some other cause. So if the slave continued alive a day or two, the master would not be punished.—Ex 21:20, 21.

(Exodus 21:22, 23) “If men should struggle with each other and they hurt a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but no fatality results, the offender must pay the damages imposed on him by the husband of the woman; and he must pay it through the judges. ²³ But if a fatality does occur, then you must give life for life,

Ivs 95 ¶16

Do You Value Life as God Does?

¹⁶ Every human life is important to Jehovah. Even an unborn baby is precious to him. Under the Law of Moses, if a person accidentally hurt a pregnant woman and either she **or** her baby died, Jehovah held that person guilty of manslaughter. This meant that even though it was an accident, someone had been killed and the life had to be compensated for. **(Read Exodus 21:22, 23.)** To God, an unborn baby is a living person. Knowing that, how do you think he feels about abortion? How do you think he feels when he sees millions of unborn babies killed every year?

(Exodus 21:28, 29) “If a bull gores a man or a woman and that one dies, the bull must be stoned to death and its meat is not to be eaten; but the owner of the bull is free from punishment. ²⁹ But if a bull was in the habit of goring and its owner had been warned but he would not keep it under guard and it killed a man or a woman, the bull is to be stoned and its owner is also to be put to death.

w10 4/15 29 ¶4

Jehovah Wants You to Be “Safe and Sound”

The sanctions of the Law also applied to injuries caused by domestic animals. If a bull killed a person by goring, the owner had to destroy

the bull to keep other people safe. Because he could not eat the meat or sell it to others for food, killing that animal was a big loss. But suppose that after a bull had injured a person, its owner did not keep the animal under guard. What then? If that same bull later killed someone, the bull *and its owner* would be put to death. That law gave pause to anyone inclined to be careless with his livestock.—Ex. 21:28, 29.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 21:5, 6) But if the slave should insist and say, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my sons; I do not want to be set free,’ ⁶ his master must bring him before the true God. Then he will bring him up against the door or the doorpost, and his master will pierce his ear through with an awl, and he will be his slave for life.

w10 1/15 4 ¶4-5

Why Dedicate Yourself to Jehovah?

⁴ Christian dedication is a serious matter. It is more than a mere commitment. How, though, does making a dedication benefit us? By way of comparison, let us consider how making a commitment in human relationships brings benefits. One example is friendship. To enjoy the privilege of having a friend, you have to accept the responsibility of being a friend. That involves a commitment—you feel an obligation to care about your friend. One of the most outstanding friendships described in the Bible is that of David and Jonathan. They even made a covenant of friendship with each other. *(Read 1 Samuel 17:57; 18:1, 3.)* Although friendships with that level of commitment are rare, most friendships flourish when companions are committed, or feel some obligation, to each other.—Prov. 17:17; 18:24.

⁵ The Law that God gave to Israel describes another relationship in which people benefited by making a commitment. If a slave wanted the security of belonging permanently to a good

master, he could enter a permanent and binding agreement with him. The Law states: “If the slave should insistently say, ‘I really love my master, my wife and my sons; I do not want to go out as one set free,’ then his master must bring him near to the true God and must bring him up against the door or the doorpost; and his master must pierce his ear through with an awl, and he must be his slave to time indefinite.”—Ex. 21:5, 6.

(Exodus 21:14) If a man becomes very angry with his fellow man and he deliberately kills him, the man must die even if you have to take him from my altar.

it-1 1143

Horn

The statement at Exodus 21:14 may mean that even a priest was to be executed for murder, or that the act of taking hold of the horns of the altar would not shield any willful murderer. —Compare 1Ki 2:28-34.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 21:1-21) “These are the judicial decisions that you are to convey to them: ² “If you buy a Hebrew slave, he will serve as a slave for six years, but in the seventh year, he will be set free without paying anything. ³ If he came by himself, he will go out by himself. If he is the husband of a wife, then his wife must go out with him. ⁴ If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children will become her master’s, and he will go out by himself. ⁵ But if the slave should insist and say, ‘I love my master, my wife, and my sons; I do not want to be set free,’ ⁶ his master must bring him before the true God. Then he will bring him up against the door or the doorpost, and his master will pierce his ear through with an awl, and he will be his slave for life. ⁷ “If a

man sells his daughter as a slave, she will not go free the same way that a slave man does. ⁸ If her master is not pleased with her and he does not designate her as a concubine but causes her to be purchased by someone else, he will not be entitled to sell her to foreigners, for he has betrayed her. ⁹ If he selects her for his son, he is to grant her the rights of a daughter. ¹⁰ If he takes another wife for himself, the sustenance, the clothing, and the marriage due of the first wife are not to be diminished. ¹¹ If he will not render these three things to her, then she is to go free without paying any money. ¹² “Anyone who strikes a man so that he dies must be put to death. ¹³ But if he does it unintentionally and the true God lets it happen, I will designate for you a place where he can flee. ¹⁴ If a man becomes very angry with his fellow man and he deliberately kills him, the man must die even if you have to take him from my altar. ¹⁵ One who strikes his father or his mother must be put to death. ¹⁶ “If anyone kidnaps a man and sells him or is caught holding him, he must be put to death. ¹⁷ “Anyone who curses his father or his mother must be put to death. ¹⁸ “This is what should happen if men quarrel and one strikes his fellow man with a stone or a fist and he does not die but is confined to his bed: ¹⁹ If he is able to get up and walk around outdoors with the aid of a staff, then the one who struck him must be free from punishment. He will only make compensation for the time the injured man lost from his work until he is completely healed. ²⁰ “If a man strikes his slave man or his slave girl with a stick and that one dies by his hand, that one must be avenged. ²¹ However, if he survives for one or two days, he is not to be avenged, because he is someone bought with his owner’s money.