

## **GOD'S TRAINING: Moses & Israel, 3<sup>rd</sup> of 6, part 1 of 2, 13 pgs**

It is said that *God spoke to Moses as a man speaks with his friend*, **Ex.33:11**.

*Scripture also says, Moses was ... more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth*, **Num. 12:3**

*No prophet ever again arose in Israel like Moses, who knew the Lord face to face ... For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel*, **Dt.34:10-12**.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study continues looking at the **training** God uses to raise up a supernaturally oriented people who know God and understand his ways. The OT teaches us about God and that **it is through trials that we get to know ourselves and become the courageous and righteous people of God, the holy nation we are meant to be**. What do you think happens if we fail to learn from his training? Does he just give up and go on to something else? **NO! - THE ESSENCE OF OUR TRAINING IS TO BELIEVE & TRUST GOD, AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT & JUST, Gen.18:19**. How are we God's people if we won't learn this? God sought to train the Israelites this coming out of slavery in Egypt. But over and over and they refused his governance [**Num.14:22**, see p.5-6 below]. **What we face in life is not nearly as important as our response to it. Our reaction <sup>a</sup> to what we go through [God's training] is effectively our response to God, our training administrator.**

About two months after *coming out of Egypt ... the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron ... Who are we, that you should grumble against us? ... the LORD ... has heard your grumbling against him ...* **You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD**, **Ex.16:2-8**

**We should not test Christ**, as some of them did—and were killed by [venomous] snakes [ ... they spoke against the God and against Moses ... **Num.21:5-6** ]. And do not grumble as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel [ **Num.16:41, 46-49** ]. These things happened to them as **examples** and ... as **warnings for us**, on whom the culmination of the ages has come, **1 Cor.10:9-11**. [see Presuming upon God]

**a.** We typically **react negatively** to something that occurs we don't want, anything that will cause us to go through something we'd rather not. Criticism, complaining, grumbling, and blaming are typically our knee-jerk reactions to undesirable circumstances or events that impact us. God's training and methods are largely undervalued and underappreciated. We tend to **forget or fail to notice the benefits** involved in his leading and what he does for us.

[note to self] *Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits*, **Ps.103:2**.

*Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years* [ **Neh.9:21; Dt. 29:5** ], **Dt.8:4**.

Paying attention to and thinking about details such as these is **the very means by which people learn to trust God**. We are in training!

Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, **to humble and test you** in order to know ... whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you , causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna ... **to teach you** that man does not live on bread alone [by satisfying his own appetites] but on [heeding] every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD ... as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you , **Dt.8:1-5**

**Endure hardship as discipline ; God is treating you as his children ... Heb.12:7**

Israel was characterized by their unbelief, refusal to obey, and rebellion. They would not **respond positively** to God and see through their pain and discomfort until they calmed down and returned to their right minds. Only then would they be open to receive God's teaching about himself and his ways. Riches, success, fame, and the like actually pose a greater spiritual danger to people than hardships as the 1st essay notes reveal.

## MOSES

The LORD said to **Abram** ... for [roughly] four hundred years your descendants will be **strangers** in a country not their own and that they will be **enslaved and mistreated** there. But I will punish the nation they [are forced to] serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions, **Gen.15:13-14** .

Like Jesus, **Moses was a child who was not supposed to live**. After Joseph's death, a new pharaoh had risen to power in Egypt and set taskmasters over the Israelites, **Ex.1:8-11**. He was concerned that the Hebrew slaves were becoming too numerous and could pose a threat to his forces if war was to break out. So he gave orders **to put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor** ... But [this policy had the opposite effect,] the more the Egyptians oppressed them [doubled down], the more the Israelites **multiplied and spread**, and the more **alarmed** the Egyptians became. So they worked the people of Israel without mercy. They made their lives bitter [a fact commemorated in the Passover meal by eating bitter herbs, Ex.12:8], forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields [probably digging irrigation ditches and pumping water from the Nile to irrigate the crops as well]. They were ruthless ... Acts 7:11-14. As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham [ Gen.15:13-14], the number of Hebrews in Egypt had greatly increased [Gen.17:4-6], v.17. [LESSON FOR US: expect pressure. It is evidence that God is working . If God does something that results in pressure on us, we will ultimately benefit by it.]

So Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives to **kill every male child** as he was being delivered, **Ex.1:15-16**. The midwives [risking their own lives] refused to carry out pharaoh's orders. Because they feared <sup>b</sup> GOD more, he blessed them by giving them families of their own, **17-21**. And the people **increased and became even more numerous** [God causes the schemes of the wicked to back-fire]. Pharaoh followed this heinous policy by doubling down again, Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, **Ex.1:22; Acts 7:19**.

... By faith **Moses' parents** hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child [they suspected that God had a special purpose for him and evidently passed this

on to Moses, **Acts 7:25**], and **they were not afraid of the king's edict, Heb.11:23** [to kill all Hebrew males at birth, **Ex.1:16, 22**]. Moses was placed outside in a waterproofed papyrus basket [among the reeds along the bank of the Nile], **Ex.2:1-3**. [Heb. word for "basket" is only used here and in **Gen.6:14** where it refers to the "ark"] This parallels the early childhood of Jesus for **Herod the king** issued a decree that all male children under the age of 2 in a certain area were to be murdered. Upon receiving a warning from God, Jesus' parents took him to Egypt where they lived until Herod died. Out of Egypt have I called my son (**Mt.2:13-16**) applies to Israel, Israel is my firstborn son, **Ex.4:22**, and foreshadows Christ.<sup>c</sup>

**Pharaoh's daughter** took Moses in and brought him up as her own son. He was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians [as a privileged member of the aristocracy] and was powerful in speech and action, **Acts 7:19-22**. He may also have been trained in different forms of self-defense or combat and in the use of different weapons, **Ex.2:12,17**.

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**b.** The Bible is replete with **suggestions and inferences to see things differently than the literal reading expresses**. It is not that the composition of the rock, **Ex.17:6**, differed from that of other common rocks. Understanding its "spiritual" significance means thinking about it **metaphorically**, as representative of something very real in the supernatural story that it is part of . God has pictured the story of redemption for us in the drama of history over and over.

There are a number of places in the Bible, like here, that seem to contradict what was going on. I deal with them by not interpreting them strictly literally. Murdering the Hebrew baby boys had to be so repulsive to the midwives that, although they were afraid for their lives should Pharaoh discover their disobedience and deceit, **they defied him anyway** [because they feared God **more**, implied, **1 Pt.3:6**]. The same is true of Moses' parents, **Heb.11:23**, and for Moses, **v.27**.

Moses argued with God in order to get out of the responsibility God was giving him, **Ex.4:13** [see **Num.11:10-15**]. **Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in both speech and action** ,

**7:22** , **contradicts how he thought about himself** I have never been eloquent ... I am slow of speech and tongue , **Ex.4:10 ; Num.12:3** . [see **Figurative language, GT #5 under note URIA H p.10**]

**c.** Now you, brothers and sisters, **like Isaac** , are children of promise [you have a supernatural existence] , **Gal.4:28** ... the son born by the power of the Spirit ... **v.29** .

### **Moses Leaves Egypt**

When Moses was forty ... he visited his own people [inferring that he had spent his life separated from them] ... He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. **Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them**, but they did not [He had a sense of a higher purpose for his life, as did Jesus as a child, but deliverance of the oppressed Hebrew people would not be by the power of the flesh, Vengeance is mine; I will repay says the Lord, **Rom.12:19**]. The next day Moses

came upon two Israelites fighting. He tried to reconcile them ... But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, **Who made you ruler and judge over us?** Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday? When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, **Acts 7:23-29; Ex.2:11-15.**

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, [God's interpretation of his actions was that he] refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. **He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.** He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to [the recompense] his reward <sup>d</sup> [Heb.13:12-14]. By faith he left Egypt, [God interprets his actions as] not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible [a supernatural perspective], **Heb.11:24-27.**

Moses ... went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well. Now a priest's seven daughters came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but **Moses came to their rescue** ... The girls told their father that **An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock** [which surprised them], **Ex.2:15-19**

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**d.** The book of Hebrews is addressed believers who were losing their place of privilege in society. **They'd begun to experience mistreatment for their connection to Jesus** . They were being driven from a comfortable life because of Christ. Moses' experience exemplifies for them and us what was involved in NT terms, **Heb.10:32-37** .

### **Moses' Training Begins: following God's directions EXACTLY**

40 years later, at 80, as Moses began his third phase of life. God introduced himself to him. The angel of the LORD appeared to Moses in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that the bush ... did not burn up ... God spoke to him from within the bush ... and said **I have seen** the affliction of My people ... **and have heard** their cry because of their taskmasters. I know <sup>e</sup> their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them ... and to bring them ... to a bountiful land ... **Ex.3:2-10.**

**Thus began Moses' training.** God gave him signs to prove his legitimacy and God's reality, 3:13-20; 4:1-8. Then God sent Moses back into Egypt to lead the Hebrews out of slavery and serve as a type of Christ, the mediator between God and man, who would lead his people out of slavery to sin and death. The LORD said to Moses, When you return to Egypt, **see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do,** Ex.4:21. This **careful attention to God's directions** represents the primary focus and crux of his training ... on the way [back to Egypt], the LORD met Moses and was about to kill him. Why? But Zipporah his wife ... cut off her son's foreskin saying, Surely you are a bridegroom of blood [referring to the covenant of circumcision <sup>f</sup>] to me. So the LORD let him alone ... **Ex.4:24-26.**

When Moses approached Pharaoh with God's demand to release the people to sacrifice to Him, Pharaoh accused Moses of attempting to take the people from their labor, 5:4-5, and **increased**



their workload [even more], let heavier work be laid on the men, 1-14. The Israelite foremen [knew] they were in serious trouble ... They reacted by blaming Moses and Aaron, May the LORD judge and punish you for making us odious to Pharaoh and his officials. You have [given them] an excuse<sup>9</sup> to kill us! 19-21 [This negative reaction to Moses characterized his entire mission and reveals what God had to concentrate on to train the people.]

Moses ... said, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? ... Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued them at all [he didn't recognize this as the first phase of that rescue], Ex.5:22-23. So who is the primary cause<sup>apdx 8</sup> of the people's troubles, Moses, Pharaoh, or God? A PRINCIPLE COMES INTO PLAY: WHENEVER GOD UNDERTAKES TO FREE PEOPLE FROM TYRANNY, BE IT IN THE FORM OF SLAVERY, AS HERE, OR SIN, AS IN THE GOSPELS, release is not easily accomplished, but it is necessarily accompanied by hardships, difficulties, and trials. This is important to bear in mind because disappointments and frustrations are a realistic expectation, especially in the day of the persecuted church. People don't respond positively when they are blindsided by unwanted or unplanned for occurrences. Preparation by providing them with realistic expectations [telling the truth, Eph.4:25] and an understanding of how God works is the best way to minimize negative reactions.

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e. Words such as these imply that God is going to undertake corrective action. He is not a passive observer, but he has his own time frame because he is coordinating many things and pursuing many objectives in the world. [See p.30-31 of PROVIDENCE by John Piper (2020) 751 pgs]

f. God had said to Abraham, you and your descendants ... must keep my covenant ... For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised ... Gen. 17:9-13. MOSES KNEW THIS BUT NEGLECTED TO DO IT. That's why God was training him to be careful to do as he was told. So God began training Moses to follow his directions EXACTLY. Ex.4: 21, 28-30; 6:29; 7:6, 10,20; 8:16-17. This was important because in the OT the symbolism of those details carried the revelation of what God was doing to be revealed in NT times [see footnote I]. God didn't use such explicit language every time because he was teaching Moses to assume same even if the "do it like I told you" clause was absent.

After [God miraculously brought them out of Egypt] ... Israel entered the Desert of Sinai, and camped ... in front of mount Sinai. Then ... the LORD called to Moses ... and said, This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob ... So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak, Ex.19:2-7. Ex.20-31 records the giving of the LAW to Israel and Moses followed all God's directions to the letter. See that you make [the tabernacle and its accouterments] according to the pattern shown you on the mountain, 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; 31:11; 39:32, 42-43; Num.8:4. This warning is emphasized in the NT as being necessary for accurately pointing to the true dwelling place in heaven, Heb.8:5; 10:1; Acts 7:44.

**g.** Throughout the 40 year Exodus episode the people reacted negatively to the circumstances they encountered. They **grumbled, complained, provoked God, and accused Moses** not only of being responsible for their situation, but of acting with evil intentions. The trials themselves were God's instruments by which he would (1) prepare the people both physically and mentally for leaving Egypt, *Then he led the Israelites out ... and all of them were healthy and strong, Ps.105:37.* (2) free them from the cruel oppression of slavery, (3) prepare them physically, mentally, and spiritually to conquer Canaan, (4) and become a spiritual nation, his **supernatural people**. Moses himself didn't understand what God was doing nor the benefits of perseverance, so he was being trained in God's ways as well, **Ex.5:22-23.** This is why our reaction to what we go through is more crucial than the difficulties we face and the suffering we endure. It is our response to God, just like Israel's reaction to Moses was in fact their response to God, **16:6-8 ... why do you put the LORD to the test ? Ex.17:2 .** They had no idea that God was training them to know and trust him. His ways of accomplishing his purposes were a mystery to them because they lived in a constant fog of discontent characterized by a lack of gratitude and a short memory.

**Ps.78:1-8** is a proclamation to faithfully teach succeeding generations the truth about God and their ancestors, so future generations would know it ... *and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands . They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation , whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him , 6-8 .* This they failed to do.

**Verses 9-56** continue the sad story of Israel's rebellion and the Lord's marvelous works throughout the Exodus experience. **Ps.106:6-33** is a confession of Israel's rebellion during the same period. Certain verses encapsulate it: *When our ancestors were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember [or even notice] your many kindnesses ... The waters [of the Red Sea] covered their adversaries; not one of them survived. Then they believed his promises and sang his praise [rejoiced] . But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his plan to unfold 7, 11-13 .*

### Training the Descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

**Obey these instructions** [regarding the Passover, **Ex.12**] as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, **observe this ceremony.** And when your children ask you, What does this ceremony mean ... tell them, *It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD ... The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, Ex.12:24-28.* Here we see the same training emphasis for the rest of Israel as it was for Moses. **Passing on the knowledge of the Lord and training in his ways** from one generation to the next is included in our faithfulness to him. It is expected and connected with our cooperation with him in achieving his goals.

Now God's plans for Pharaoh and Egypt began to unfold. He doesn't **do or allow** ANYTHING pertaining to accomplishing his ultimate purposes without good reason - He didn't for them and he doesn't for us. Moses confronted Pharaoh on God's behalf saying, *By now I could have ... struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But [instead] I have*

*raised you up ... that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth, Ex.9:15-16 [Warning before the plague of hail].*

So ended the ten plagues that God had ordained **to pressure Pharaoh** into releasing his people, **12:29-38** ... *There were about six hundred thousand Israelite men on foot, besides women and children. Many other people went up with them [from now on "Israel" refers to this mixed multitude], and also large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds, Ex.12:37-38. The Israelites had lived in Egypt 430 years, v.40. They left Egypt **armed for battle** [this was during the late bronze age, but there was no battle with the Egyptians because God saved them supernaturally], 13:18*

When they finally left Egypt, the company exiting had grown to over a million people. **God deliberately led them on a safe route though it was longer.** *When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter [it was heavily guarded by a string of Egyptian fortresses]. For God said, If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt. So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt armed [probably only with spears, bows, and slings] Ex.13:17-18 . However the route God led them on ended at the Red Sea. **This was according to God's purpose to wipe out the Egyptian armed forces** [which was apparently coming to herd the people back to Egypt] **in a last spectacular miracle, 14:3-9.** As the chariot brigades approached, the people could see them and began to panic, once again blaming Moses for their dire situation.*

*As Pharaoh's forces approached, **The Israelites** [who knew God's power in bringing the plagues upon Egypt, nevertheless reacted characteristically] **were terrified** and ... said to Moses, Was it because there were no graves in Egypt? **Didn't we say to you in Egypt, Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians?** It would have been better ... than dying in the desert! **14:10-12.** By day the LORD went ahead of them in a **pillar of cloud** to guide them ... and by night in a **pillar of fire** to give them light, 13:21.*

God brought the people across the Red Sea and destroyed the Egyptian forces, **Ex.14:21-30.** **The damages to Egypt for their extraction were terrific:** loss their food resources; death of the first-born livestock males; death of the first-borne human males; destruction military forces; and loss of their slave labor force. **They left the once powerful nation of Egypt in shambles, 10:7.** However the people who experienced these supernatural demonstrations of God's power didn't learn the lessons incorporated therein. **They still didn't fear God, trust him, or understand his ways.**

The people had complained and grumbled at every trial and they did so again after they broke camp for the next phase of the wilderness crossing, **Ex.16.** **God treated them with patience** and kindly intervened supernaturally to correct the problems. 2½ months after leaving Egypt, he rained quail down on them in the evening and deposited manna on the desert in the morning for them to gather. He set aside one day out of each 7 as a weekly Sabbath rest, made supernatural provision for that day, and **continued that practice for 40 years** while Israel wandered in the wilderness. **There was another continual witness to God's presence,** *In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the [pillar of] cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out ... So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all*

their travels, **Ex.40:36-38**.

So it went as the people continued across the desert, **God tested them** to see if they would *listen carefully to the voice of the Lord, 15:25-26*; they complained to Moses, he cried out to the Lord, and God brought relief to them, **22-25**. The people continually wanted to go back to slavery in Egypt [remember Lot's wife who being double-minded hesitated, *looking back* as God was rescuing his family from the destruction of Sodom, **Gen.19:17, 24-26; Lk.17:28-32**]. They longed for the food they had in Egypt so God supplied them manna and rained quail on the camp, **Ex.16:1-4, 11-12**. Eventually they came to another place where **there was no water** so they **tested<sup>h</sup> God** again. He stood on a rock and told Moses to strike the rock with his staff. When he did, water [representing life in the desert] gushed out, enough for the whole congregation and their livestock, **Ex.17**. But God's long suffering is not infinite.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lCCszYRkro>

Marc Martel does Keith Green's **So You Wanna Go Back To Egypt**

The NT has a passing comment about this whole episode as part of a warning to the Corinthian church, *don't ... forget ... about our ancestors in the wilderness ... All of them were supernaturally guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and ... walked through the sea on supernaturally dried ground. In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were [metaphorically] baptized as followers of Moses. All of them ate the same [supernaturally provided] food, and all of them drank the same [supernaturally provided] water. For they drank from the spiritual<sup>i</sup> rock [ Ex.17:5-6 ] that traveled with them, and that rock represented Christ . Yet God was not pleased with most of them , and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness [ They never made it into the promised land, Num.14:27-35 ] . Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did ... These things ... were ... warnings<sup>i</sup> for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come, 1 Cor.10:1-11.*

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**h.** Whenever the people came to a place that made them **uncomfortable**, they reacted the same way. **They didn't seem to be aware of the implications** of what was going on [see **GT#6, p.3**]. Since they couldn't directly accuse God for bringing them there, they murmured against Moses. As pointed out, this was equivalent to grousing about the situation or conditions God had led them to. **They understood that Moses was following God's directions, so all blame was effectively placed on God's plate.** *Did he make a wrong turn to bring us here where there was no drinkable water [ Ex. 15:22-25 ] ? Oh no! We are encroaching on Amalekite territory [17:8-13], how could that have happened?*

It was continual **unbelief** for them to live with such **discontent [as it is for us]**, having been told that they were headed for the place where the promises to Abraham would finally be realized. Every route they traveled and place they stopped was according to God's leading. **It was conditioning them physically, mentally, and spiritually, for obedience, trust, humility, perseverance, and conquest.** But they didn't think this way. **They had no conception of living with God forever** as Abraham did. [See **Heb.11:8-16; 13:14**]



**Putting the Lord to the test** is to try and force his hand [provoke him], to demonstrate [prove to us] he is really God. Do not put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah, Dt.6:16 .

The whole Israelite community ... camped at Rephidim, but there was no water ... So they quarreled with Moses and said, Give us water to drink. Moses replied, Why do you quarrel with me? ... Why do you put the LORD to the test ? ... the people ... grumbled against Moses ... the Israelites ... tested the LORD saying, Is the LORD among us or not? Ex.17:1-3, 7 ; 1 Cor.10:9 . God's testing us is part of his training – he uses the crisis to draw out what we are really like under pressure, **Dt.8:2-5**. What does the Scripture say? Is not the trying of your faith more valuable than refined Gold?

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. It is reserved in heaven for you, who by God's power are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. This brings you great joy, although you may have to suffer for a short time in various trials. Such trials show the proven character [genuineness] of your faith, which is much more valuable than gold refined by fire ... and will bring praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but you believe in him, and **so you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, because you are attaining the goal of your faith—the salvation of your souls, 1 Pt.1:3-9**.

**I.** A friend once told me that at a Thanksgiving dinner he actually witnessed the food on the table increase. I wasn't present so I didn't challenge this. I told him **I don't need to see miracles like that to strengthen my faith in Christ**. Then he said that he did need such demonstrations. I was reminded of an occasion after Jesus had risen from the dead. Thomas hadn't been there when Jesus first appeared to the other disciples so he expressed doubt. A week later Jesus appeared again and invited Thomas to put his hand into his wounds. Thomas believed this was indeed Jesus risen from the grave. Jesus said to him, Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet have believed, Jn.20:26-29

**j.** Do not be [or stop being] conformed to [or molded by the naturalism of] this age , but be transformed [fundamentally changed into supernaturalists] by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God, Rom.12:2

## REST

As Moses was leading the Israelites out of oppression and slavery in Egypt (**Ex.12**), there was a progression of relief in the rest God made for them beyond no longer serving the Egyptians. It was also God's gracious response to the griping of the people. They had just been supernaturally freed from Egyptian tyranny, supernaturally led across the desert (**Ex.13**), and supernaturally rescued from annihilation by the Egyptian military forces (**Ex.14**). They drank water supernaturally purified, and were led to an [unoccupied] oasis with abundant water and shade (Ex.15:27) for the people and their livestock to rest from the dangers and rigors of the journey.

*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me. For I am meek and lowly [humble] in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light, **Mt.11:28-30**.*

*Almost immediately after God provided water from the rock, **the Amalekites attacked Israel** [now leaving Egypt armed for battle makes sense]. Here we first meet **Joshua** as the general of the forces of the Lord, **Ex.17:9***

### **The 10 Commandments and the REBELLION of the People**

At **Mt. Sinai** Israel set up camp, **Moses ascended the mount**, and God gave him 10 commandments representing the Law, which later included construction details for the tabernacle, the ARK of the covenant, making of the priests' garments, the order of march and all kinds of other particulars [see The Ark, the Mercy Seat, and the Incense Altar, **NLP**, for a wonderful explanation of some of the features of the tabernacle, their meaning, and worship]. **It was also the place where the people rebelled and worshiped a golden calf in place of God, Ex.32.**

**Moses went up on the mountain of God** ... the cloud covered it, and **the glory of the LORD** settled on Mount Sinai ... To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain and stayed ... forty days and nights, **Ex.24:13-18**

When **the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain**, they gathered around Aaron and said, Come, **make us a god** who will go before us [???]. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt [???], we don't know what has happened to him ... Aaron [didn't argue or object]. He made **an idol cast in the shape of a calf**, Then [their leaders] said, This is your god, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt. [Really!!! After all these people had seen and experienced, they are going to settle for this???] Aaron built an altar in front of the calf and announced, Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD. So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry, **Ex.32:1-6**

God then moved the camp toward the entrance to the promised land of Canaan. Soon the people began to complain about their hardship, and the LORD heard everything they said. Then **the LORD's anger blazed against them, and he sent a fire to rage among them** ... Then the people screamed to Moses for help, and when he prayed to the LORD, the fire stopped ... Moses heard all the families standing in the doorways of their tents whining, and **the LORD became extremely angry**. **Moses was also very aggravated**. And Moses [took it personally and] said to the LORD, Why are you treating me, your servant, so harshly? Have mercy on me! What did I do to deserve the burden of all these people? **Num.11:1-11**. Even Moses' older sister and brother complained against him ... and God was furious with them as well, **12:1-15**

God instructed Moses to send out men to explore the land that he had promised them, and bring back a report on the productivity of the land, the state of the cities, and strength of the defenses, etc. (**Num.13-14**) [not that it was relevant to conquest of the land since God had already promised to give

them Canaan]. The only purposes assessment of it could possibly serve was to encourage the people to move forward by confirming that the land was as God described it and to test them. But in spite of affirming what God said, **the report frightened the people so much they refused to go into the land [to possess their possessions].** These people did not learn, could not be trained to think differently no matter how many miracles they were shown. Only Joshua and Caleb saw the land through the lens of the promises of God. Time after time Moses interceded for the people and God had pardoned them. And so he did again, though **not without consequence** which resulted in an unnecessary parenthesis in Jewish history, **JFH p.62-63**. Men above twenty, with 2 exceptions, would not be permitted to enter the land. The rest would die in the desert during the next 40 years as God trained another generation. [Neither the Levites nor the children under twenty, nor the wives of the offenders were included in the **severe sentence**]. The remainder of the book of Numbers is a record of those 40 years in **fulfillment of that judgment**.

They complained against God at every opportunity. To complain is to criticize God's management of a given situation. It is often accompanied by an **outright or unstated accusation that he had bad motives**. But you were **unwilling to go up [into the land God gave you]** ; you [referring to this generation] rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. You grumbled in your tents and said, **The LORD hates us ... Dt.1:26-27** It is a totally **irreverent and uncalled for way to approach God in disregard for his providence**. [see Is There a Future for National Israel? **p.1-3**]

### **Anger & the Deceptiveness of Self-Righteousness**

*In the ... [40<sup>th</sup> year after the exodus, most of the people 20 and older at the time of the rebellion at Kadesh would have already died, **Num.14:22-23**], the whole community of Israel ... [once again] camped at Kadesh ... There was no water ... at that place, so **they rebelled against Moses and Aaron**. The people blamed Moses and said, If only we had died in the LORD's presence with our brothers [parents whom God cursed to die in the desert]! **Why have you** brought the congregation ... into this wilderness to die ... ? **Why did you** make us leave Egypt and bring us here to this terrible place? **Num.20:1-5**.*

**Who was it that cried for rescue from the hardships of slave labor in Egypt?** Was it not their previous generation? Was the journey harder than they had imagined? Did God not supply everything they needed along the way? **Have they learned nothing through this ordeal?** These people had become experts at grumbling and complaining, but they were **unable to express gratitude**.<sup>k</sup>

*and the LORD said to Moses ... **take the staff** and ... **As the people watch, speak to the rock** over there, and it will pour out its water ... Then he and Aaron summoned the people to come and gather at the rock. **Listen, you rebels! he shouted. Must we bring you water from this rock?** Then Moses raised his hand and **struck the rock twice with the staff in anger**,<sup>l</sup> and water gushed out. So the entire community and their livestock drank their fill. But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, **you will not bring this community into the land I give them, Num.20:7-12**.*

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**k. Dealing with Irritations:** irritations are nuisances, annoyances, frustration producing agents that test us. <sup>apdx 9</sup> They get our attention because they bother us and may become anxiety-producing agents unless attended to. What can we do about them? **Reclassify them in order to see them from a different perspective.** Remember that these are God's training tools! Discover their message. Discern their purpose. Respond accordingly. Give thanks to God for his training and individual attention.

**l.** Forty years earlier, the Lord had Moses strike the Nile River with his staff and all the water turned to blood, killed all the fish, and stank. **Ex.7:20-21**. Later at Horeb, God stood on a rock and had Moses strike it and water flooded out for the whole congregation, **17:5-6**. Now 40 years later at Kadesh Moses stood before the generation that had succeeded their parents and the Lord had Moses take the staff and **speak** to the rock, **Num.20:8**. But Moses disobeyed and spoiled the portrayal of Christ's crucifixion by striking the rock **in anger, exasperation, and frustration** that had accumulated over the last 40 years in dealing with the Israelites. Thus the picture of the Gospel and God's holiness was corrupted. The rod of God's wrath came down once (**Ex.17:5-6**) upon his son who bore the sins of the world, completing God's justice, turning away his anger, and pouring out his grace [see footnote f].

**Abraham** reacted out of FEAR for his life, but Israel reacted out of discontent and anger at their circumstances. **Moses** was provoked to ANGER at the people's constant complaining. And this boosted his **self-righteousness** into an uncontrollable rage. At the waters of Meribah they angered the LORD, causing Moses serious trouble for they aroused his temper [embittered his spirit], and he spoke rashly, Ps.106:32-33. Schaeffer describes the 6<sup>th</sup> lesson for Joshua (**JFH p.14-15**) as, there is a place for Godly anger ... but the exercise of it is dangerous to us because we so often mix it with egoism.

*Don't sin by **letting anger control you**. Think about it overnight and remain silent [or be still, quiet your heart] (NLT); Shake [tremble with anger] and do not sin. When you are on your bed, look into your hearts [examine yourselves] and be quiet (NLV), Ps.4:4.*

***In your anger do not sin:** Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry [We were not meant to hold grudges. Resolve your differences quickly. Don't let your anger mature into **unforgiveness**. Left to fester, even righteous anger eventually morphs into the corrosive ulcer that is **bitterness**.], and do not give **the devil** a place [an opportunity to corrupt your heart], **Eph.4:26-27; Jas.1:19-21.***

## LOOKING BACK

**It took courage** for **Moses** to stand up to the Egyptian who was beating a fellow Hebrew, to face down the shepherds who bullied the women in Midian, and to confront Pharaoh with God's demands. On several occasions **Moses** interceded on behalf of the Israelites by reasoning with God. Twice God threatened to **destroy** the people and **raise up a new nation from Moses**. But **Moses** interceded for them and argued against it, so God relented, **Ex.32:9-14; Num.14:11-23**. **Abraham** interceded with God on behalf of **Sodom and Gomorrah** by reasoning with him. Moses argued with God to the point of **aggravating** him on two occasions: **first** in attempting to avoid taking on the



mission of leading the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt; **second** in trying to get God to change his mind and allow him to cross the Jordan into the promised land after he struck the rock twice. But God refused to allow him to lead the people across the Jordan river into Canaan. Ironically **Moses** was disappointed when he died in the desert at 120 with the people who had rebelled, though *His eye was undimmed and his vigor unabated (Dt.34:7)* for God had prepared him to lead the people in conquest of Canaan. Because of God's curse, the people crossing the Jordan would no longer be a mixture of Egyptians and Hebrews. The oldest of the men, with two exceptions, would have been about 60 by the time of the crossing.

I recommend the following book for further study:

**Beginning at Moses BAM** by Michael P. V. Barrett, 2018, 320 pages,  
A Guide to Finding Christ in the Old Testament;

Join me in **Beyond Moses** for a look at  
Joshua and his stint in leadership.

