

Journey to Mount Sinai

Listed Scriptures

Ex 16, 17, 18, 19:1-2

Lesson Aim

To express why we obey God and His commands

Memory Verse

"But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him." (1 Jn 2:5)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Exodus 13-20

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Because there were no roads and directions in the wilderness, God led the people in a pillar of cloud by day and by night He lighted their path in a pillar of fire (Ex 13:21-22). In addition to being able to find their way, the Israelites were aware of God's presence among them, a helpful reminder for 2 million people traveling in an unknown place. Mount Sinai is also known as Mount Horeb. It is located to the south of the Sinai Peninsula and has three peaks. The highest peak, at 2,200 meters, is where Moses received the Ten Commandments (Ex 19:20). It is also the location that Elijah fled to after his victory over the false prophets (1 Kg 19:8). Basically, Mount Sinai is surrounded by a great expanse of wilderness. That is why it was able to accommodate over 2 million Israelites as they camped there for about ten months to receive God's commands and laws.



What do you do when you want to show gratitude to someone? Usually you would say thank you or give a gift. The Israelites had a funny way to show God their thanks. They complained about almost everything. Why? Because they forgot about the blessings and grace, and only focused on the trials they were facing. Trials in life are inevitable. But we must remember that, if for no other purpose, they can bring us closer to God and strengthen our faith. Instead of spending time wondering why we encounter trials, remember the good things God has given us. Then ask Him to give us courage to face our problems and come out even stronger than before. Let's take a look at how the Israelites reacted to their trials.

B I B L E S T U D Y



Part 1

Journey to Mount Sinai**A . The Journey**

After the Israelites were set free, they began their journey. Although they panicked when Pharaoh changed his mind and decided to pursue them with his chariots and army, God was there to deliver them. Some scholars have argued that the Israelites actually crossed the Red Sea at a more northern tip, perhaps at a shallow opening. Thus they were able to cross when the waters dried up. But it is clearly recorded that God sent a mighty wind to blow back the waters and as a result, the Israelites were able to cross on dry ground (Ex 14:21). After the Egyptian army was wiped out, Miriam, Moses' sister, led the people in songs and dance to celebrate the Lord's deliverance. Now that the Israelites were greatly bolstered in their faith, they were ready to move into a land of their own. This is the path the Israelites took in their journey until they reached Mount Sinai, where they received the Ten Commandments as well as the laws of God.

**Rameses/ Succoth/ Etham/ Pi Hahiroth/ Red Sea/ Marah/ Elim/
Wilderness of Sin/ Rephidim/ Wilderness of Sinai** (this is where the

Israelites encamped for about 10 months; the entire book of Leviticus takes place at Mount Sinai; they don't set out again toward Canaan until Numbers 10:10)

**B . Trials Along the Way**

Although it would have been much faster to directly cut across the desert from Egypt to Canaan, God had a different plan (Ex 13:17-18). Why did He make them travel around the desert and move toward the south to Mount Sinai instead of heading right for Canaan? For one thing, the Philistines lived right next door to Canaan. Meeting them head on so early in their journey would likely have changed the Israelites' minds about leaving Egypt since they had no combat experience. Secondly, God needed to reveal His commands and laws to His people. By traveling to Mount Sinai, it gave the Israelites time to know God and also toughened their spirit. And the Israelites certainly needed it. The road to Mount Sinai was paved with many trials of their faith and they responded mostly with complaints. But each time, God provided a way to strengthen them. What can we learn from the examples of the Israelites when we encounter our own trials today?

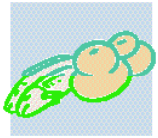
- a. For three days they traveled in the Wilderness of Shur without finding water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water because it was bitter. So they grumbled against Moses. Then Moses cried out to the Lord and He showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water, and the water became sweet (Ex 15:22-27).
- b. When they came to the Wilderness of Sin, the Israelites grumbled again because they were hungry. God answered them by raining manna from heaven. For forty years, they ate bread in the form of manna in the mornings and in the evenings God sent quail so they had meat to eat (Ex 16:1-36).
- c. After they camped at Rephidim they couldn't find any water. So they quarreled with Moses. God instructed Moses to strike the rock and water came out (Ex 17:1-7).
- d. The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. The Bible doesn't record whether the people complained, but it is likely that they did. Trial after trial, they were probably second-guessing themselves as to whether they should have stayed in Egypt. But God already had the solution. While Joshua and some men fought the Amalekites, Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill with the staff of God. Because of Moses' prayer, Joshua overcame the Amalekite army (Ex 17:8-16).
- e. After their victory over the Amalekites, Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, visited him and offered him some sound advice on administering

to the people. It seemed as if Moses' job thus far was to listen to the complaints of the people and then find ways to deal with them. Jethro suggested that he appoint those who were capable, God-fearing and trustworthy as officials over the people (Ex 18:13-27). That way, Moses could concentrate on what was really important.

Teaching Tips

Have a map ready so that the students can easily follow the names and the route that the Israelites took. The students can also be given the relevant verses to look up and share with the class what each of the complaints were.

Part 2 Camped at Mount Sinai



In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt, to the very day, they came to the desert of Sinai and camped in front of the mountain (Ex 19:1). God called on Moses to tell the people that they were to become His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex 19:4-6). While the people waited at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses listened to God's instructions on many things. Here are the important highlights.

A .The Ten Commandments

Before this, the people did not really know God and who He was. Now that they had been established as His holy nation, they needed to learn about Him and about what was required of them. The Ten Commandments and the other various laws showed the people how to lead holy lives in a practical sense and also let them understand the nature of God. God Himself wrote the laws on two tablets of stone. In fact, He had to write them twice after Moses broke the first set when the Israelites made a golden calf and worshiped it (Ex 31:18, 34:1). The Ten Commandments can be found in Exodus 20:1-17.

B .The Tabernacle

Before the time of Solomon, there was no temple. Instead, there was a tabernacle, sometimes referred to as the Tent of Meeting. It was a tent where God temporarily

dwelled among His people in order to relay His messages and to strengthen their faith. God gave Moses the exact instructions to build the tabernacle, including the dimensions and the materials to be used. The tabernacle was surrounded by an outer courtyard that contained two important items: an altar for sacrifice (Ex 27:1-8) and a bronze laver (Ex 30:17-21) where the priests washed before entering the actual tabernacle or tent. The tabernacle itself measured 15 by 45 feet and was divided into two main sections: the outer room (also known as the Holy Place) and the inner room (also known as the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place, Ex 26:33). The outer room contained an altar where the incense was burned (Ex 30:1-10). It also had a table for showbread (Ex 25:23-30) and a lamp stand (Ex 25:31-40). The Most Holy Place contained only one item, but it is probably the most crucial item in the entire tabernacle: the ark of the testimony. Only the high priest entered this Holy of Holies once a year (the Day of Atonement) to atone for the sins of himself and all the Israelites. When the tabernacle was finally completed, a cloud covered it and the glory of God filled the tent (Ex 40:34). While the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, the tabernacle was carried with them wherever they went (there is a more in-depth study of the spiritual meaning of the tabernacle as well as the items found in it in the next lesson).

C .The Ark of the Testimony

One of the most important items housed in the tabernacle was the ark of the Testimony. Because this has never been found, no one really knows what it looks like. But based on the detailed descriptions given by God to Moses as to how to construct it, we can make a fairly good guess as to what it might have looked like (Ex 25:10-22). The ark of the testimony was placed in the most inner room because it was where God would "meet" with His people, from above the mercy seat between the two cherubim. When the Israelites left Mount Sinai, they carried the ark before them as a way to remind them that God was always with them.

D .The Priesthood

It was also in the wilderness that the priesthood was instituted. Priests had to come from the tribe of Levi. Aaron, Moses' brother, was made the first high priest (Ex 28:1). A high priest had many responsibilities, being in charge of the priests as well as all the Levites.

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



- 1** List the reasons why God made the Israelites travel a longer route in the wilderness instead of guiding them directly across the desert into Canaan.

- 2** In what ways did the Israelites grumble against Moses and God as they traveled?
- 3** What are the Ten Commandments?
- 4** What purpose did the tabernacle serve?
- 5** What was the Most Holy Place and only who could enter it?
- 6** Why was the ark of the Testimony so important? Can you describe what it looks like? Why do you think God wanted the mercy seat to be made out of pure gold (Ex 25:17)?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N

Jesus Christ and Me



When the Israelites were in the wilderness, they received many commands and laws from God that they had not known before. It must have been quite overwhelming to suddenly have all these rules and regulations. The Bible doesn't record the exact reactions of the people when they learned of all these laws but for the most part, they probably accepted them. Today, we obey the commands and laws God has set before us. But have you thought seriously about why you do it? Is it out of fear? Is it out of love? Or is it out of pressure? Think about the following questions and then look inside of yourself and tell God why you want to obey Him.

Questions to think about:

- 1.** *Why do we still need to obey the Ten Commandments but not the other laws regarding everyday life?*

- 2.** *Why do you come to church on the Sabbath?*
- 3.** *What is most important to you about prayer?*
- 4.** *When you find yourself reading the Bible, what do you hope to gain from it?*
- 5.** *Why do you love God and why do you want to obey Him? Think about the following questions. Your answers will tell you a lot about whether you really love God. They will also show why you obey Him.*
- a. *God wants us to, "Honor our fathers and mothers in the Lord." The world says, "Well, what's wrong with telling them that I can have my own ways?"*
You say, _____
- b. *God wants us to, "Keep the Sabbath by coming to church and worshipping." The world says, "Well, what's wrong with skipping an occasional Sabbath service and having a good time with our friends?"*
You say, _____
- c. *God does not want us to cheat on tests and "bear false witness." The world says, "What's wrong with cheating on some tests? It's not like I killed someone. Besides, I know the answers anyway."*
You say, _____
- d. *God does not want us to lie and "bear false witness." "Each one of you must put off falsehood..." (Eph 4:25). The world says, "Well, if you don't tell a white lie here and there, you are not going to get anywhere and you are not going to succeed in life."*
You say, _____
- e. *God wants us to take care of and treasure our bodies since the body is the "temple of God." The world says, "It's okay to get drunk and have sex. Everyone is doing it. What are you afraid of? Grow up now!"*
You say, _____
- f. *God wants us to get rid of lustful thoughts and "not even have a hint of sexual immorality."*

The world says, "How can you guard your eyes and hearts? There are plenty of pretty guys and girls out there. What's wrong with flirting with one another? Besides, it is not like you are going to have sex."

You say, _____

g. God does not want us to gossip and slander other people.
The world says, "How can you not gossip? That's part of life. How else are you going to know the latest news?"

You say, _____

h. God does not want us to use "His name in vain."
The world says, "'Oh, my God!' is just an expression. Of course you don't mean it!"

You say, _____

i. God does not want us to hate our friends, family and enemies, because hating is like killing.

The world says, "What's wrong with a bit of hatred. Why be a goody-goody all the time?"

You say, _____

j. God wants us to read the Bible and pray to Him every day.
The world says, "That's for the nerds. Go and watch a movie and have a good time with your friends. Why be stuck in the house and read the Bible?"

You say, _____

REFLECTION & PRAYER



Love is a hard word to define. But when we love people, we try hard to show it. We might buy them cards, give them hugs, or cook them special meals. How does God feel your love for Him? What are you doing to let Him know? Think about some concrete things you have done recently to show your love for the Almighty Lord. When you send your love to God, is it short-lived or is it on a regular basis, despite the trials you are facing? In other words, do you love God as unconditionally as He loves you?

Lesson 7

Salvation in the Book of Exodus

Listed Scriptures

Ex 12:5-13, 12:15-20, 25:10-30:21; Jn 1:29; 1 Cor 5:6-8

Lesson Aim

1. To identify the teachings concerning salvation found in the book of Exodus
2. To build our own spiritual tabernacle

Memory Verse

"And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex 19:6a)

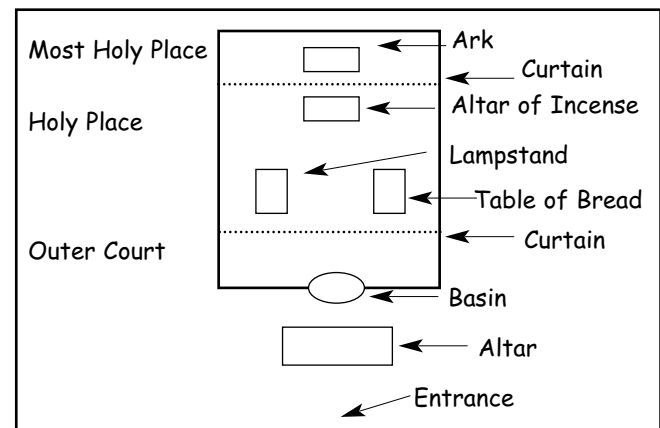
Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Exodus 21-30

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



The tabernacle can be represented as follows:



Many materials were used in putting it together. They included gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn; fine linen; goat hair and ram skin dyed red; acacia wood; clear pressed olive oil and fragrant incense.