

Lesson 10: Exodus Chapters 31-34

PART A: EXODUS 31-32

FIRST READING: EXODUS 31 PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL HELP

A1. Moses was not a young man when God set him the task of building a tabernacle. The instructions were given : According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. (Exodus 25:9)

a) What strengthening promises does God make to him in the first six verses of this chapter?

b) Personal: Have you ever accomplished a huge task with the aid of “the wise hearted” whom God raised up to help? Explain.

A2. a) What particular commandment does the Lord recommit Israel to at this time?

b) How do you think keeping this particular commandment is a “sign between me and the children of Israel forever”? The Hebrew word for sign is “*oth*” and can mean signal, beacon, witness, or evidence.

c) Why might this be an important commandment to commit to just as a great task or work is about to begin?

SECOND READING: EXODUS 32 THE GOLDEN CALF

A3. The people did not know why Moses was taking so long to come down. They saw the fire on the mountain. How do you think their fears and their dependency on Moses were working on them?

b) How could the phrase “the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron” have played out in real life? Do you think Aaron could have felt threatened?

c) No one apparently stood up against the people in their demands—even the 70 elders who had just seen God on the mountain! What examples of this kind of public pressure to do wrong or to keep silent are at work on us today?

A4. In verse 1 and 23 we read, “As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.” Can you tell anything of the people’s attitudes from the language here?

A5. a) Name some of the phrases that God uses to describe the sin of the people.

b) What specific commandments did the people break that they had solemnly covenanted to obey less than a month before?

A6. God states to Moses that He is about to destroy the Children of Israel and start over, raising up a new people through Moses. According to the covenant so recently made, was He within His rights to do so?

A7. By telling Moses He was going to destroy Israel and start over, God invited Moses' response. It's in effect, a test for Moses. a) What might Moses have replied to God if he was a proud or ambitious man?

b) How did God identify the people in verse 7?

c) How did Moses re-phrase this in verse 11?

A8. Moses prayed that God would change His stated purpose to destroy the people. What two (or three) reasons did he give in his prayer for God to reconsider?

A9. God of course, did not really repent or change His mind. He knows all along how every story ends. Sometimes however, He says or does things to illicit a certain response from a person. What are we able to learn from the interaction Moses had with God in these verses? Do you see in them some larger theme or truth about God and His grace or interaction with mankind?

A10. What was Aaron's lame excuse for what he did?

A11. What things did Moses do so that the people felt the seriousness consequences of their sin?

A12. After Moses sees for himself what the people have done he feels he must go back up the mountain-side to seek a promise of forgiveness from God.

a) What does he personally offer up to God in his petition for the people?

b) Many people have seen this intercessory prayer of Moses as a type of Christ. In what way could it be a type of Christ?

PART B: EXODUS 33-34**FIRST READING: EXODUS 33**

B1. Moses is reassured that God is not going to wipe out Israel and start over. God says He will still take them to the Promised Land, though His angel will be guiding them. He says the people are so stiff-necked (disobedient) that if God were in their midst they would be destroyed.

a) What was the reaction of the people to this news? And how did they show their humility and repentance

b) What did Moses do with the tent of meeting, presumably the tent that had functioned as “city hall” and the place where God used to meet with him, that demonstrated God’s moving away from the people?

B2. What did the people observe when Moses was meeting with God there? And what was their response?

B3. THOUGHT QUESTION: The people seem much humbled by the events since the golden calf. Is this typical of those trying to live God’s laws after they commit serious sin? Is there a humility that comes with shame and remorse that is a *good* thing?

B4. a) Consider Moses’ requests in verses 13 and 14. What is *the heart* of the plea Moses makes with the Lord?

b) What was God’s answer? Cite verse.

B5. Please look up Moses 1:11 and reconcile this verse with Exodus 33:20. How are they both true?

SECOND READING: EXODUS 34

B6. Please look at Deuteronomy 9:10-12, Deuteronomy 10:2 and Exodus 34:2. What do all these scriptures tell us about what was on the second set of stone tablets¹?

b) Read D&C 84:18-27. What does verse 23 tell you about Moses’s leadership and efforts to work with the people throughout the years?

c) Challenge Question: Moses 7 contains the story of what great prophet and the city he founded? (The name of which is still synonymous with the righteousness of the people of God to this day)

d) Moses is the one who recorded the stories in the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. How do you think reading about the prophet and city in the previous question, influenced Moses’ desires for his own Israelite people?

B7. Verse 5 says that after God places Moses in a “cliff” or cleft in the rock, He will pass by and proclaim the name of the Lord. What is the name He proclaims in verses 6 and 7?

B8. How do you explain the fact that God says He forgives iniquity, transgression and sin, yet He will “by no means clear the guilty”?

B9. This answer gives Moses hope that God will still go with the people, even though they have well demonstrated that they are a sinful, stiffnecked people. What is Moses’ prayer in verse 9?

B10. a) Read (skim) Psalm 106, a psalm that recaps the history we have been studying in Exodus. To what does this psalm attribute God’s decision not to destroy his rebellious people? Cite verse.

b) What hope do you take from all of Moses’ prayers and pleadings in behalf of his people? Does this kind of prayer seem to work?

B11. Verses 10 through 27 are the instructions God gives Moses for the people, which are particularly tailored for their arrival in the land of promise. Name 3 things He instructs them concerning the heathen nations already living there.

B12. a) Take one of the commands from this section, and tell how you think it would help the people stay free of pagan influences.

b) Is there something in this section that is good advice or similar to things we do in our families to stay free of the worldly influences around us?

B13. When Moses came down from the mountain his face shone with reflected glory from his encounter with the Lord. We have a wonderful promise in the D&C 88:67 that “if our eye be single to his glory, then shall [our] whole bodies be filled with light.” How do we become women whose eyes are single to God?

B14. What was particularly meaningful to you about these chapters in Exodus? Please share.

¹What we call “The Joseph Smith Translation” has never been canonized or made doctrinally binding upon the church. No less an authority than Bruce R. McConkie has said we do not consider it scripture, in the same way as the other standard works are considered scripture. Therefore, for this study, we will not visit the issues it raises, though you are free to do so on your own.