

Moses, the Reluctant Leader

Appendix 1. Participant Handouts for Classes & Groups

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts in this appendix at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at: www.jesuswalk.com/moses/moses-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll find 4 questions for each lesson. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

Introduction to the Moses and the Exodus

1. The Birth and Call of Moses (Exodus 1-4)
2. Finding Courage to Stand (Exodus 5-11)
3. Passover and Crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 12-15)
4. Grumbling, Conflict, and Delegation (Exodus 15-18)
5. The Covenant at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-24)
6. The Golden Calf and Moses' Intercession (Exodus 32-34)
7. The Tabernacle, Priesthood, and Sacrifices (Exodus 20-31, 35-40; Leviticus 1-17; Numbers 6-10)
8. Rebellion against Moses' Leadership (Numbers 11-17)
9. Conquering the Transjordan and Moses' Death (Numbers 20-27; Deuteronomy 32, 34)

Introduction to the Moses and the Exodus

Dating of the Exodus

There are two popular theories of the date of the Exodus:

- Early date, about 1470 BC, end of the Middle Bronze Age
- Late date, about 1250 BC, Late Bronze Age IIB

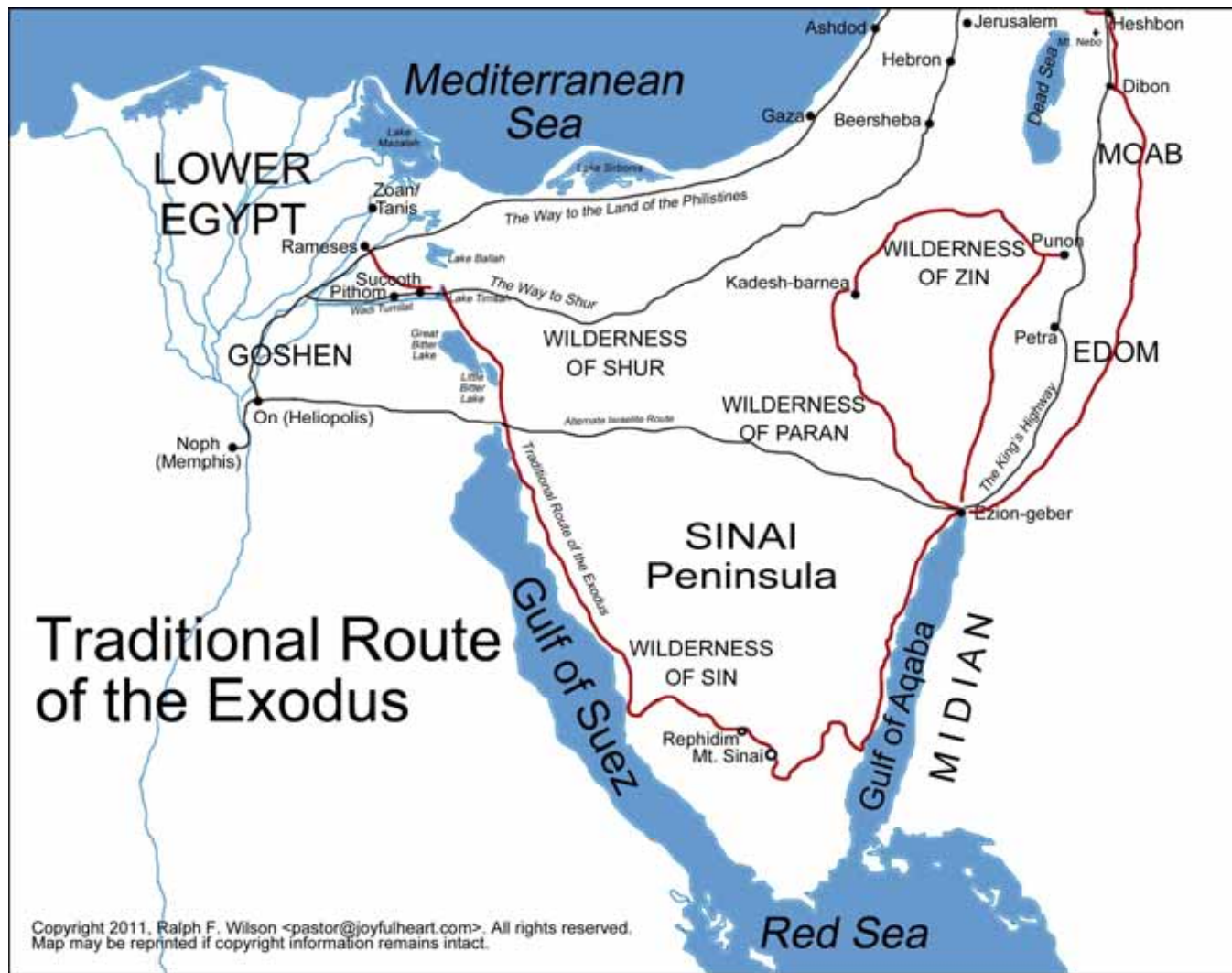
This is not a matter of liberals vs. conservatives, but a matter of weighing the evidence carefully. Here are some of the dating factors:

- Store Cities of Rameses and Pithom (Exodus 1:11; 12:37)
- Pharaohs Seti I (1294-1279 BC), Rameses II (1279-1213 BC)
- Merneptah Stela (about 1220 and 1207 BC) mentions Israelites in Palestine
- Armana Letters (1390-1352 BC) don't mention Israelites
- Conquest of Canaanite cities, archaeological evidence
- Reference in 1 Kings 6:1 of 480 years from Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon's reign

This study assumes the late date for the Exodus, but we don't know for sure.

Who Wrote the Books of Moses?

- "Seams" between narratives
- Voice is "third person"
- Moses was educated and wrote ((Exodus 17:14; 24:4, 12; 34:27; etc.)
- Discredited Wellhausen "Documentary Hypothesis," JEDP theory



Traditional Route of the Exodus

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1. The Birth and Call of Moses (Exodus 1-4)

Oppressing the Israelites (Exodus 1:11-14)

1. Construction projects supply depot cities at Pithom and Rameses.
2. Brick making (Exodus 5:7)
3. Field labor.

Birth of Moses

“When he was placed outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.” (Acts 7:21-22)

Moses Commits Murder (Exodus 2:11-15a)

1. He identifies himself as a Hebrew.
2. He has a strong sense of basic justice.
3. He is a man of action.
4. He is physically strong.
5. No sense yet of acting for God.

Leadership Is Influence

Q1. (Exodus 2:11-15a) What do we learn about Moses’ motivations, character, and leadership ability from the incident of him killing the cruel Egyptian taskmaster? What positive things do you see in his character? What negative things do you discern?

Moses Flees to Midian and Delivers Jethro’s Daughters (Exodus 2:15-17)

Midian is probably east of the Gulf of Aqaba or in the eastern Sinai peninsula. The Call of Moses (Exodus 2:23-4:17)

Three periods in Moses’ life

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Prince of Egypt | Proud in man’s knowledge and status | 40 yrs |
| 2. Shepherd in Midian | Humbled and molded by God | 40 yrs |
| 3. Leader | Obedient servant | 40 yrs |

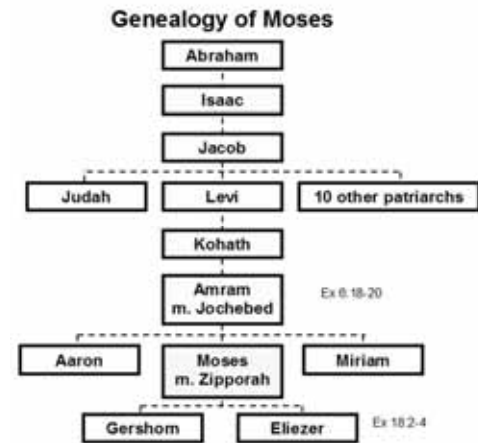
The Burning Bush (Exodus 3:1-9)

1. **Seeing.** I have seen my people’s misery and oppression.
2. **Hearing.** I have heard their cries and prayers.
3. **Rescuing.** I will rescue them.
4. **Giving.** I will bring them into a land that I will give them.

Q2. (Exodus 3:10-12) Does Moses’ response to God’s call reflect a low self image, true humility, or lack of faith? How does God reassure him? How does God reassure us when we are called to impossible situations?

God Reveals Himself as Yahweh (Exodus 3:13-15)

‘I AM WHO I AM...’ “I AM has sent me to you.” (Exodus 3:13-14). See Hebrews 13:8; Revelation 1:8



Excuses and “what ifs”

1. Who am I? (3:11-12)
2. What if they ask your Name? (3:13-15)
3. What if they don't believe me? (4:1-9)
4. But I'm not eloquent (4:10-12)
5. People will kill me (4:19)

Q3. (Exodus 4:13-14a) Why is God angry with Moses? What is Moses' basic sin? Unbelief, fear, or disobedience? Do you think the Lord has ever been angry with you? How did Moses appease God's anger?

Moses Returns to Egypt (Exodus 4:18-31)

Q4. Why are we so afraid to obey God when he puts on our heart to do something decisive? How are we to deal with fear when we feel it? What is the relationship of fear to courage? Why is courage required in leaders and disciples?

2. Finding Courage to Stand (Exodus 5-11)

A. Moses' Early Failure (Exodus 5:1-3)

1. Come with God's word. "Thus saith the LORD" (KJV). "This is what the LORD says" (NIV). See Isaiah 55:11
2. Patient persistence (Hebrews 6:11-12)
3. Courage, "mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty." (Deuteronomy 31:8)

Brick Making

The sun-dried mud bricks the Israelites were making were commonly used to build houses, palaces, and temples. Bricks were made of soil and water mixed with chopped straw that gave the bricks additional strength. The mud mixture was poured into a frame-like mold. The rectangular mud brick was then tapped from the frame and left to dry in the sun.

The Lord Encourages Moses (Exodus 6:6)

"Redeem" is *gā'al*, "redeem, avenge, revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman." It refers to the responsibilities of a next of kin to rescue family members from difficulty, redeem them from slavery, avenge them when they have been mistreated, etc.

Q1. (Exodus 7:6-7) Why did Moses blame God for his troubles? Why do you think Moses and Aaron are so stubborn? Was it fear? Was it unbelief? Or both, perhaps? Why does God have to command Moses and Aaron?

I Will Harden Pharaoh's Heart (Exodus 7:1-6)

1. Yahweh hardens Pharaoh's heart (active) – Exodus 4:21; 7:3, 13; 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10, 14:4, 8, (17)
2. Pharaoh's heart is hardened (passive) – Exodus 7:13, 14, 22; 8:19; 9:7, 35
3. Pharaoh hardens his own heart (reflexive) – Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34

Pharaoh is an unrepentant sinner from the start. See Romans 1:24, 26.

The Plagues upon Egypt (Exodus 7:8-11:9)

"Plague" is *maggēpâ*, "blow, pestilence," from *nāgap*, "to strike."

1. The Egyptians saw the God of the Israelites as the cause of the judgments.
2. The plagues did not fall on the Israelites, only on the Egyptians.
3. The timing was exquisite.

Plagues

1. **Blood** (7:14-24). The blood of the plague makes the Nile's water undrinkable and kills the fish (7:21) – a major industry along the Nile.
2. **Frogs** (8:1-15). Frogs in Egypt were associated with the god Hopi and the goddess Heqt, who assisted at childbirth, and were thus a fertility symbol. For all the frogs to die and rot must have been seen as a defeat of the Egyptian gods.
3. **Gnats** (8:16-19). "Gnats" (NIV, NRSV), "lice" (KJV) is Hebrew *kēn*. We don't really know what kind of insect is intended by the word. "Fleas" or "sandflies" have been suggested, but more likely it refers to "mosquitoes."

4. **Flies** (8:20-32). "Swarm [of flies]" in verse 20 is literally 'ārōb, "swarm" ("mixture," from incessant involved motion). Perhaps flies attracted by the decaying frogs. The Septuagint translates the word as *kynomuia*, "dog-fly," perhaps our modern gadfly or Monarch fly, with a painful bite. This plague it is described as a "severe swarm."
5. **Livestock** (9:1-7). Since "livestock" (NIV), "cattle" (KJV) were considered sacred animals by the Egyptians, this plague was a direct blow against Egypt's gods.
6. **Boils** (9:8-12). "Ashes of the furnace" that Moses and Aaron threw into the air would be black and fine like soot. "Festering boils" (NIV, NRSV) consists of two words, perhaps, "boils breaking out into pustules."
7. **Hail** (9:13-35). Hailstones have been measured as large as 8 inches in diameter. Here destroyed crops in the fields and trees, as well as livestock left in the open.
8. **Locusts** (10:1-20). Amos 7:1-3; Joel 1:1-7 seen a terrible figure of God's judgment. Devoured all that was left after the hail (10:15a).
9. **Darkness** (10:21-29). This darkness is so intense that it can be "felt."
10. **Firstborn** (11:1-10; 12:29-32)

Leadership Lessons

1. The Leader Must Confront When Necessary

Q2. Why is it so difficult for some church leaders to confront people? What fears in this regard does a leader face? How can confrontation and rebuke be a good thing? What happens when we refuse to confront when we should?
2. The Leader Must Deal with Criticism and Pressure
3. The Leader Must Know When to Compromise – and When Not To

Q3. Why didn't Moses accept Pharaoh's compromises? In what instances should church leaders accept compromise? In what instances is it wrong for church leaders to compromise?
4. The Leader Must Know that the Battle Is the Lord's. Ephesians 6:12.
 - Moses: Exodus 14:14
 - David to Goliath and the Philistines: 1 Samuel 17:47
 - Jahaziel: 2 Chronicles 20:14
 - Zechariah: Zechariah 4:6

Q4. Why do we tend to fight our battles "in the flesh" rather than using spiritual weapons? Why do we so often mistake the human enemy for the spiritual enemy? When will God fight our battles – and when won't he?

3. Passover and Crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 12-15)

“Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.... The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will **pass over** you.” (Exodus 12:7, 13)

The word “Passover” is found in Exodus 12:11, 21, 26, 43, 48; 34:25. What does it mean? The word is *pesah*, is traditionally derived from *pāsah*, “to pass over,” and interpreted as “the merciful passing over of a destructive power.”

- Paul: “Christ, our **Passover lamb**, has been sacrificed.” (1 Corinthians 5:7)
- John the Baptist: “Look, the **Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)
- Peter: “You were redeemed ... with the **precious blood of Christ, a lamb** without blemish or defect.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Q1. (1 Corinthians 5:7; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-19) In what sense is Christ our Passover Lamb? In what sense are we marked with his blood? In what sense does God’s judgment pass over us because of Christ’s blood?

Commemorating the Passover (Exodus 12:14-20)

1. Passover Lamb.
2. Unleavened Bread. Exodus 12:14-20, 34
3. Bitter Herbs. Exodus 1:14

Plundering the Egyptians (Exodus 12:35-36)

Genesis 15:13-14; Exodus 3:21-22. God had a use for the gold and silver: the tabernacle

The Israelites Begin Their Journey (Exodus 12:37-40)

1. Route. From store-city of Rameses to Succoth.
2. Number of Israelites. 600,000 men, plus women and children.
3. Time in Egypt. This completed 430 years from the time Jacob entered Egypt, see also Genesis 15:13.
4. God’s army, divisions, hosts. Exodus 13:18.
5. Heterogeneous group. “Rabble,” Numbers 11:4; Leviticus 24:10-11.
6. Night Watch. The Lord Brought the Israelites Out of Egypt (Exodus 12:50-51)

The people’s deliverance is founded on two elements mentioned in verse 50:

1. Moses and Aaron obeyed what God had commanded them.
2. The people obeyed what Moses and Aaron commanded them.

Q2. (Exodus 12:50) Why was obedience so important to the people’s deliverance? Why is obedience so important to our deliverance from “sin, the flesh, and the devil”? Is there any discipleship without obedience? Does a person who says he believes in Jesus but doesn’t obey him have real faith?

The Desert Route (Exodus 13:17-18a)

Road to the Philistines had two drawbacks:

1. The presence of military garrisons.
2. Nation-building time needed.

Location of the Red Sea

The Hebrew phrase *yām sūp*, “Reed Sea” is a term used in the Old Testament to identify a number of different bodies of water. Here it is probably some body of water east of the Nile delta, probably either at Lake Timsah or at the Great Bitter Lake, both of which lie along the present route of the Suez Canal.

Chariots

An Egyptian light chariot contained one driver and one fighter, usually armed with a bow. The chariot is fast and deadly – all of the fear factor of cavalry, but with the added accuracy of a stable shooting platform, with room to store additional arrows (and short spears when the arrows were exhausted).

Moses Encourages the People (Exodus 14:13-14)

Commands:

1. **Do not be afraid.** Fear is their central weakness.
2. **Stand firm.** The opposite would be to run from the opposing army’s forces. Ephesians 6:13-14a
3. **Be still.** Stop whining!

Faith Assertions:

1. You will see the deliverance the Lord will bring.
2. You won’t see the Egyptians ever again.
3. The Lord will fight for you! Exodus 15:3.

Q3. (Exodus 14:11-14) Why do the people blame Moses for the advancing Egyptian army? What motivates their fear? Who are the people really blaming? How does Moses respond to their blame and fear? Why doesn’t Moses defend himself from their unfair criticism? How do the people respond to Moses’ words?

Gaining Glory over the Egyptians (Exodus 14:4, 17-18)

“Gain glory” (NIV, NRSV), “get honor” (KJV) is the verb *kābēd*, here in the Niphal stem. The basic meaning of the root is “to be heavy, weighty,” extending to the figurative idea of a “weighty” person in society, someone who is honorable, impressive, noteworthy, worthy of respect. Common translations are to be “honorable, honored, glorious, glorified.” Numbers 14:20-23; Isaiah 42:8; 48:11; 43:7; Ephesians 1:12; Isaiah 66:18-19; John 17:24; Romans 9:23

Q4. (Exodus 14:4, 17-18) Why is God’s glory important in the Exodus? How is recognition of his glory important to faith? To holiness? To reverence? What happens when leaders take for themselves the credit and glory that should go only to God? How can leaders keep themselves from pride?

Reasons for the Destruction of Pharaoh’s Army (Exodus 14:23-30)

1. Protection.
2. Glory.
3. Faith. Exodus 14:31
4. Leadership



Proposed route of the Exodus from Rameses to the Red Sea.

4. Grumbling, Conflict, and Delegation (Exodus 15-18)

A. Grumbling (Exodus 15:22-17:7)

Finding Drinkable Water at Marah (Exodus 15:22-25a)

The first crisis they met in the desert was – predictably – thirst. They found water, but it was bitter – unpalatable to drink – perhaps brackish, alkaline water.

Grumbling, Complaining, Murmuring, and Quarreling against Leaders

“Grumble” (NIV), “complain” (NRSV), “murmur” (KJV) is *lin*, which means, “to murmur, rebel (against).”

Scripture	Summary	Motivation
Exodus 5:21	Your demands to Pharaoh have made us a stench to him, demanding bricks without supplying straw.	Fear of punishment
Exodus 14:11-12	You brought us to die in wilderness	Fear of dying in battle
Exodus 15:24	Grumbling. Water is bitter at Marah. “What shall we drink?”	Fear of dying of thirst
Exodus 16:2, 7-9, 12	Grumbling. “We’ll Starve to death!” Recalled pots of meat in Egypt.	Fear of dying of starvation
Exodus 17:3	At Rephidim, Moses strikes the rock at God’s command.	Fear of dying of thirst
Numbers 11:1-6	Complaints about their hardships. Tired of manna, craved other food, instigated by the “rabble.”	Dissatisfaction with manna
Numbers 14:2, 27, 29, 36-37; Deut 1:27 and Ps 106:25	Fear of war in Canaan after the report of the 10 unbelieving spies. “We’ll fall by the sword. Our wives and children will be taken as plunder.” There is talk of selecting another leader.	Fear of death and slavery
Numbers 16:11, 41; 17:5, 10	Korah rebels against Moses and the God-ordained Aaronic priesthood. Moses is also blamed when the leaders of rebellion are struck down by God.	Envy of Moses’ leadership
Numbers 20:1-13	At Kadesh the people “gather in opposition against” and “quarreled” with Moses (also Exodus 17:2). Moses strikes the rock in anger rather than speaking to it as God instructed – and is punished by failing to enter the Promised Land.	Fear of dying of thirst

Scripture	Summary	Motivation
Numbers 21:4-9	Impatience, short-tempered, discouraged. Rebels accuse Moses of bringing them out of Egypt to die of thirst and starvation. They detest manna. Punished by poisonous snakes. Set up of bronze serpent on which they look and live.	Impatience with difficult conditions

Psalm 78:11, 17, 21-22, 32; 1 Corinthians 10:10.

Q1. (Exodus 15:24) What are the reasons that people grumble and complain? How do fear and faith relate to grumbling? What symptoms of grumbling do you see in your own life? What should you do about it?

Grumbling against the Lord, not Moses (Exodus 16:7b-8)

Exodus 14:11-12; 1 Samuel 8:6-8; Luke 10:16; John 15:20-21.

Q2. (Exodus 16:7-8) Why can grumbling against a leader really be a symptom of grumbling against the Lord? Are there any cases where this might *not* be true? Why do leaders tend to take complaints so personally? What does it take to learn that “it’s not about you.”

The Glory of the Lord Revealed (Exodus 16:6-12)

The word “glory” is *kābôd*, from the verb *kābēd*, “to be honorable, glorious,” “to be heavy, weighty,” someone who is honorable, impressive, worthy of respect, “gravitas.” Carries the idea of brilliant shining light.

- **Moses’ shining face.** Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:13).
- Jesus: “**his face shone like the sun** and his clothes became as white as the light” (Matthew 17:22; Mark 9:2-3; Luke 9:29)
- **Son of Man’s face “was like the sun shining** in all its brilliance” (Revelation 1:16; cf. 10:1).
- “The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the **glory of God is its light**, and its lamp is the Lamb.” (Revelation 21:23; cf. Isaiah 60:19-20).

Often, however, the appearance of God’s glory comes with severe judgment:

- When the people accept the bad report of the 10 spies (Numbers 14:10).
- At the rebellion of Korah against Moses authority (Numbers 16:19, 42).
- At the people’s complaint about no water (Numbers 20:6).

Two related words:

1. **Theophany** is a theological term used to describe a visible manifestation of God, a self-disclosure of the deity.
2. **Shekinah** was used by later Jews to describe the glory of God’s presence.

God’s Provision of Quail and Manna (Exodus 16)

The word “manna” came from the Israelites’ question in verse 15: “What is it?” Hebrew *mān hû’*, from *mâ*, “what” + *hû’*, “it.”

“The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was **white like coriander seed** and tasted like **wafers made with honey.**” (Exodus 16:31)

“The manna was like **coriander seed and looked like resin**. The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a handmill or crushed it in a mortar. They **cooked it in a pot** or made it into **cakes**. And it tasted like something made with olive oil. When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down.” (Numbers 11:7-9)

“The Israelites **ate manna forty years**, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.” (Exodus 16:35; cf. Joshua 5:10-12)

Q3. (Exodus 16) Why did God provide manna for the people? Why did the manna finally cease? Why do you think that the people gradually began to take the manna for granted? What provision of God are you taking for granted?

The People Grumble about Water (Exodus 17:1-7)

Moses goes to God. Exodus 17:4

Psalm 105:39-41

Jethro Teaches Moses to Delegate Responsibility (Exodus 18:13-27)

Tradition of judgment: 2 Samuel 15:2; 1 Kings 3:16-28)

Qualifications of judges:

1. Capable.
2. God-fearing, that is, those who revere God.
3. Honest, trustworthy, who not only refuse bribes, but hate the very idea.
4. Accountable. They share the task with Moses.

Ephesians 4:11-12. Equipping role.

Delegating to the 70 Elders (Numbers 11:10-30)

Q4. (Exodus 18:13-27; Numbers 11:10-30) Why do you think it took Moses so long to delegate his judicial role to others? What were the qualifications of these judges? How is Moses' role similar to the role of leaders in Ephesians 4:11-12? What is the importance of the anointing of the Spirit in Christian leadership?

5. The Covenant at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-24)

Invitation to a Unique Covenant Relationship (Exodus 19:3-6)

“⁴You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now if you obey me fully and keep my **covenant**, then out of all nations you will be my **treasured possession**. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶you will be for me a **kingdom of priests** and a **holy nation**.” (Exodus 19:4-6)

Requirement: Keeping the Covenant (Exodus 19:5a)

The word “covenant” is the Hebrew noun *bʿrit*. Between nations it is a “treaty, alliance of friendship.” Between individuals it is “a pledge or agreement, with obligation between a monarch and subjects: a constitution.” Between God and man it is “a covenant accompanied by signs, sacrifices, and a solemn oath that sealed the relationship with promises of blessing for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking it.”

Ancient Near East suzerain-vassal treaties were commonplace. A great king (suzerain) would conquer weaker kingdoms and extract pledges of allegiance – and annual tribute – from their kings (vassals). In return, the suzerain had an obligation to protect vassal kingdoms in case they were attacked. The suzerain was known as the king of kings – the king of all the other kings.

Here are the steps involved in making this covenant at Sinai, as outlined in Exodus 19-24:

1. Israel arrives at Sinai and encamps (19:1-2)
2. God announces his intention to covenant with Israel and the people agree (19:3-9)
3. Preparations prior to the third day, washing clothes, consecration (19:10-15)
4. Assembly before Mt. Sinai on the third day (19:16-25)
5. Proclamation of the Ten Commandments (20:1-17)
6. Further laws and stipulations of the covenant (20:18-23:19)
7. Promise of the Land (23:20-33)
8. Reading the Book of the Covenant and sprinkling with blood (24:1-11)

God’s Treasured Possession, Personal Property, Chosen People (Exodus 19:5)

“Treasured possession” (NIV, NRSV), “peculiar treasure” (KJV), “personal possession” (New Jerusalem Bible) is a single word: *segullâ*. The basic meaning of this noun is “personal property.”

Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18; Psalm 135:4; Malachi 3:16b-17 (KJV “when I make up his jewels”); Titus 2:13b-14; 1 Peter 2:9.

Q1. (Exodus 19:5; 1 Peter 2:9) From an emotional standpoint, what does it feel like to take out and look over one of your treasured possessions? How was the idea of “treasured possession” fulfilled in Israel? What does it feel like to be God’s treasured possession – as we Christians clearly are according to 1 Peter 2:9?

A Kingdom of Priests (Exodus 19:6a)

Israel, then, is either a kingdom *consisting of* priests – people, set apart to God (that is “holy”), who relate to God directly and serve him. Or “royal priests,” a cadre of priests *belonging* to Yahweh the King. Either way, it is a position of great privilege and access. 1 Peter 2:9.

Q2. (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9) What did priests do in the Old Testament? In what sense are you a priest? How do you function as a priest? In what sense are you a “royal” priest? In what areas can your personal priestly function improve?

A Holy Nation (Exodus 19:6b)

“The adjective *qādôsh* denominates that which is intrinsically sacred or which has been admitted to the sphere of the sacred by divine rite or cultic act. It connotes that which is distinct from the common or profane.”

Q3. (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9) In what sense is Israel a “holy” nation? What does it mean to be holy? Why do you think that personal holiness is de-emphasized in our time?

Consecrate the People (Exodus 19:10-11)

The word “consecrate” (NIV, NRSV), “sanctify” (KJV) is *qādash*, “to be holy.” In the Piel stem, it has the causative sense, “to make holy, to sanctify, to consecrate.”

The idea of holiness is prominent in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy especially. God is pure, holy, full of glory. To approach God, man must prepare himself.

- Take off one’s shoes (Exodus 3:5; Joshua 5:15)
- Wash one’s clothes and sometimes one’s body (Exodus 19:10, 14; Leviticus 16:26, 28; Numbers 8:21; 19:7)
- Abstain from food, fast (Leviticus 16:29; 23:27)
- Abstain from sexual relations (Exodus 19:15)
- Offer sacrifices for atonement for sin (Exodus 12:7; Leviticus 1; etc.)
- Confess one’s sins (Leviticus 16:21; 26:40)
- Act justly and keep the moral laws (Exodus 20; Micah 6:8)
- Keep the Sabbath
- Keep other rules of ritual purity

We hold two truths side by side:

1. **The Lord sanctifies us:** “You shall be for me ... a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:6)
2. **We sanctify ourselves:** “Prepare yourselves....” (Exodus 19:15)

The Ten Commandments and Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20-23)

Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4-5. They are placed in the ark (Deuteronomy 10:5), which is subsequently known as “the ark of the covenant” (Numbers 10:33; 14:44; Deuteronomy 10:8; 31:9, 25-26).

The Blood of the Covenant (Exodus 24:8)

“Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, ‘This is **the blood of the covenant** that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.’” (Exodus 24:8)

Hebrews 9:18-22; Matthew 26:27b-28; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 10:4; 1 Peter 1:19

Q4. (Exodus 24:8; Matthew 26:27-28) What is the function of the “blood of the covenant” in Exodus? What is the “blood of the covenant” in the New Testament? How is the Old Covenant similar to the New Covenant? How are they different?

6. The Golden Calf and Moses' Intercession (Exodus 32-34)

The Israelites Worship the Golden Calf (Exodus 32:1-6)

- This practice of combining elements of various religions is called syncretism
- The Apis Bull and the bull-headed Khnum were comparable objects of worship in Egypt.

Q1. (Exodus 32:1-6) Why do you think the people of Israel were so quick to make idols, even after hearing the monotheism of the Ten Commandments that forbade graven images? Why do you think Aaron facilitated their sin? How do you think the golden calf made God feel? What idols do Christian churches allow that lead them away from pure worship of God in our day?

A Stiff-Necked People (Exodus 32:7, 9)

Stiff-necked" is a reference to a mule or ox which would resist the lead rope and refuse to let its master lead it. Instead it would stiffen its neck against the reins.

God's Righteous Anger (Exodus 32:10)

God's anger at sin can't be understood apart from his own holiness, his separateness from sin, his nature utterly opposed to injustice, sin, and human degradation. Our sins offend God's very character. If you can't accept an angry God, then you won't be able to understand him.

Moses Intercedes for the People (Exodus 32:11-13)

The basis of Moses' appeals:

1. Because the Israelites are God's own people
2. Because of God's reputation among the heathen
3. Because of God's promises

The leader stands between God and the people in intercessory prayer.

Moses Reprimands Aaron (Exodus 32:21-24)

Aaron's sin.

1. **Bringing idolatry and syncretism** (32:21), in the sense that he not only passively allowed it to occur, but actually led by supervising the fashioning of the golden calf.
2. **Letting people get out of order and control** (32:25) uses a single Hebrew word twice: *pāra* ' , "let go, let loose, ignore." Here it has the sense of "to let go, let loose people, that is, remove restraint from them."

Q2. (Exodus 32:21-24) What was the nature of Aaron's sin with the golden calf? Why do you think he won't take responsibility for his actions? Why do you think he gets off so easily? Why must leaders be accountable for their actions? What is necessary for leaders to be able to learn from their mistakes?

Moses Intercedes for the People – Again (Exodus 32:30-35)

On what bases does Moses appeal to God?

1. God's promise to be with Moses personally (Exodus 3:12), not through an intermediary.
2. God's statement that he has found favor with God.
3. Moses' continued to desire to learn from God and please Him – "teach me your ways."
4. God's declaration that the Israelites are "my treasured possession" (Exodus 19:5). Moses reminds God, "Remember that this nation is your people."

Lessons for Leader-Intercessors

1. Leaders are to intercede for their people, even when their people have not acted in a worthy manner.
2. We intercede on the basis of God's promises.
3. We intercede on the basis of our personal relationship with God, forged in prayer. John 16:23-27

Q3. (Exodus 32:11-13, 30-35; 33:12-17) Why is interceding for the people so important in Moses' ministry? Why is this such an important role for pastors and lay leaders today? To intercede effectively before God, why must we know both his character and his promises?

Teach Me Your Ways (Exodus 33:13)

Psalm 103:7; 25:4; 27:11; 86:11

Moses' "Tent of Meeting" Outside the Camp (Exodus 33:7-11)

	Moses' "tent of meeting" (Exodus 33:7-11)	The Tabernacle
Location	Outside the camp	Center of camp (Num 2:2)
Purpose	Inquiring of the Lord and speaking with the Lord face-to-face	Formal worship and sacrifice, and location of the ark of the covenant
Attendants	Joshua	Priests and Levites

Q4. (Exodus 33:7-11) Why is Moses' pre-tabernacle "tent of meeting" so important in Moses' ministry? Why is it called the "tent of meeting"? What would it take for you to spend longer periods of intimate time seeking God? How do you think this would affect your ministry?

Show Me Your Glory (Exodus 33:18-23)

Philippians 3:8a, 12b, 13b-14

Proclamation of the Name of Yahweh (Exodus 34:5-7)

"⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished....'" (Exodus 34:5-7a)

Notice that when God revealed his glory, he declared his goodness and graciousness. So here on the mountain God reveals his character. This quintessential statement of God's gracious character is reiterated at least twelve times in Scripture. (Numbers 14:17-19; Deuteronomy 5:10; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:7; 2 Chronicles 30:9; and Psalms 86:15; 103:8-13; 111:4; 112:4; 116:5; and 145:8)

7. The Tabernacle, Priesthood, and Sacrifices (Exodus 20-31, 35-40; Leviticus 1-17; Numbers 6-10)

A. The Kingdom of God

The key unifying concept to grasp is that Yahweh is Israel's King. Exodus 15:18, Numbers 23:21; Deuteronomy 33:5

The Suzerain or Great King or King of kings makes treaties with kingdoms under him, and in return for obedience and subservience, offers protection and aid. Exodus 19:5-6

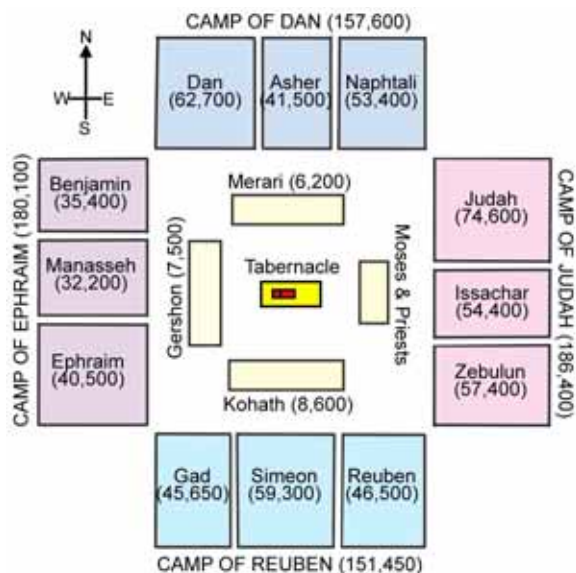
Yahweh's Presence in the Midst of His People (Numbers 2:1-3:39)

The very organization of Israel's camp reflected this truth according to Numbers 2:1-3:39. God's presence dwelt in the tabernacle.

Q1. (Numbers 2:1-3:39) Why was the camp of the Israelites laid out as it was? What did this layout teach the Israelites? Why were the Levites and priests camped closer than the other tribes?

B. The Laws of the Covenant

1. The *civil law* that governed the nation Israel. Only binding on the theocracy of Israel. Hebrews 8:13; 9:10; Matthew 21:43
2. The *religious law* that detailed the sacrifices and temple ceremonies required for the forgiveness of sin. Fulfilled by Jesus. Hebrews 9:22b; John 1:29; Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 10:10
3. The *moral law*, underlying principles such as those found in the Ten Commandments. Now fulfilled by the Spirit working in us. Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:40; Romans 7:6; Galatians 5:18.



C. The Tabernacle

The keys to understanding the tabernacle:

1. It is the throne-room and precincts of the King's dwelling.
2. Moses received the exact pattern on Mount Sinai to be reproduced by skilled craftsmen detail by detail. Exodus 25:9, 40; Hebrews 8:5

Three Names for the Tabernacle

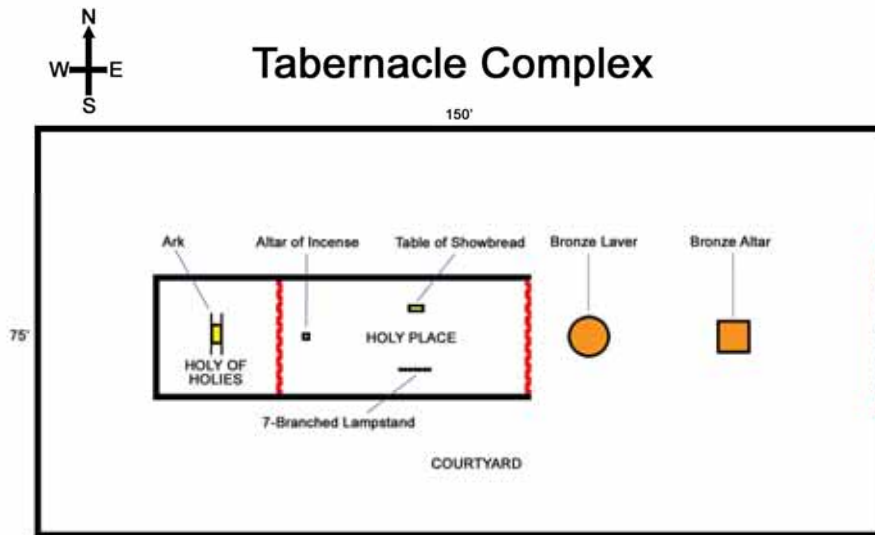
1. **Sanctuary** emphasizes the sacredness or holiness of the place.
2. **Tabernacle**, literally, "tent, dwelling," emphasizes the nearness and closeness of God's presence dwelling with the Israelites in the midst of their camp.
3. **Tent of Meeting**, emphasizing that function of being a place of "meeting" between God and his people.

The Tabernacle Covering (Exodus 26-27)

1. **Tapestry**, beautiful tapestry that decorated the inside of the tabernacle, visible on the ceiling and walls from within.
2. **Goat's Hair**, spun and woven goat's hair, the material commonly used for making tents.
3. **Ram Skins Dyed Red**
4. **Hides**, on the outside of the tabernacle, were apparently from sea cows, dugongs, or dolphins



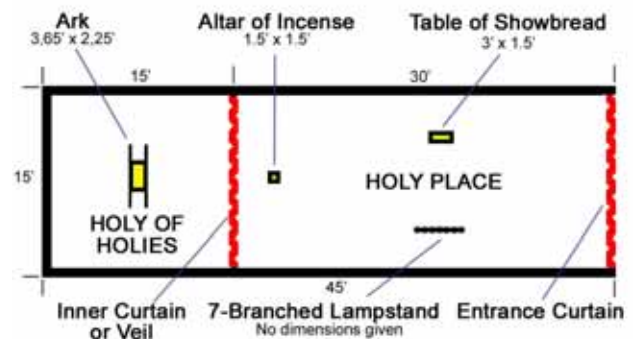
Cherubim are probably similar to the sphinx or winged bulls or lions found in the Ancient Near East. Striding sphinx. Phoenician, 899–700 B.C. From Nimrud, ivory, 6.9 cm x 7.75 cm..



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Tabernacle Furniture (Exodus 25, 27, 30)

1. **Altar of Burnt Offering.** The altar was a acacia wood box covered with bronze sheets, about 7½ feet square and 4½ feet high, topped by a grate, filled with earth, with horns at each corner. Here offerings were made to the Lord, both animals and grain.
2. **Bronze Laver or Basin.** This was a basin made of solid bronze set on a bronze stand. It was filled with water for the priests to wash their hands and feet before making an offering or entering the tabernacle.
3. **Table of Showbread.** "The bread of the Presence" (NIV, NRSV), "shewbread" (KJV) is literally "bread before the face." The table made of acacia-wood, plated in gold, and measured 3 feet by 1½ feet and 2¼ feet high. It bore 12 flat loaves of bread, one for each of the tribes, which were refreshed weekly. It symbolized providing food for the King in their midst.



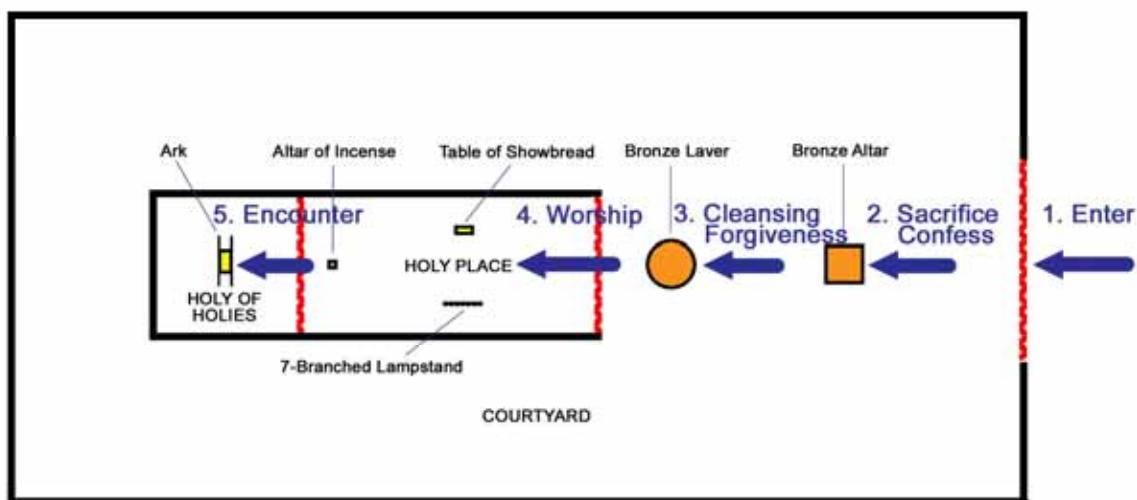
Tabernacle in the Wilderness

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4. **7-Branched Lampstand.** The lampstand elevated seven oil lamps high enough to illuminate the entire Holy Place. The lamps were probably open saucers with a wick draped over a lip formed in one end of the vessel burning olive oil. The lamps were to remain lit always.
5. **Altar of Incense.** This altar is 1½ feet square and about 3 feet high, with horns on each corner, and made of acacia-wood plated with gold. It was used to burn sweet-smelling incense in the presence of the Lord.
6. **Ark of the Covenant** (Exodus 25:10-22). The ark in the Holy of Holies was the most holy object of all, a gold-covered acacia-wood chest (dimensions 3¾ by 2¼ feet and 2¼ feet high) that served as the portable throne of Yahweh. The top lid made of pure gold and called the “atonement cover” (NIV), “mercy seat” (NRSV, KJV), *kappōret*, literally, “performance of reconciliation or atonement” or “place of atonement,” from *kāpar*, “make an atonement, make reconciliation.” At each end of the cover was a solid gold cherub. These cherubim faced each other with their “wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover” (Exodus 25:20). Portable throne of Yahweh: Exodus 25:22, cf. Numbers 7:89; 1 Samuel 4:4.

Q2. (Exodus 25:10-22) What is the significance of the Ark in the Holy of Holies? What did it represent? Why was it considered so holy? If no one really sat upon it, why was it so important?

Flow of Worship



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1. **Entering.** We enter into prayer to begin to seek God and draw near to him.
2. **Sacrifice and confession of sin** are represented by the bronze altar where sacrifices for sin were made. Christ is our sacrifice and our sin causes estrangement from him. As we confess our sins in humility and look with faith to his sacrifice for us on the cross, we connect with his grace and atonement.
3. **Cleansing and forgiveness** are represented by the bronze laver or basin. We receive his forgiveness and cleansing by faith with thankfulness.
4. **Worship** is the next step. As the priests tended the lamps, the table, and the altar of incense, we offer regular thanksgiving and praise to God in the Holy Place, as a sweet fragrance before him.

- 5. **Encounter with God** in the Holy of Holies is the ultimate goal. We hear this in Moses' plea, "Show me your glory" (Exodus 33:18) and in Paul's cry, "that I may know him" (Philippians 3:10).

Q3. What does the arrangement of the furniture, the tabernacle, and the courtyard teach us about worship? Why do you come to the bronze altar and the laver or basin before you reach the tent itself?

D. Priests, Levites, and Sacrifices

Priests

Priest in Hebrew is *kōhen*, from which we get the common Jewish surname "Cohen." The etymology of the word is obscure.

1. Ministering to the Lord, worship.
2. Ministering to the people of Israel, atonement

Levites

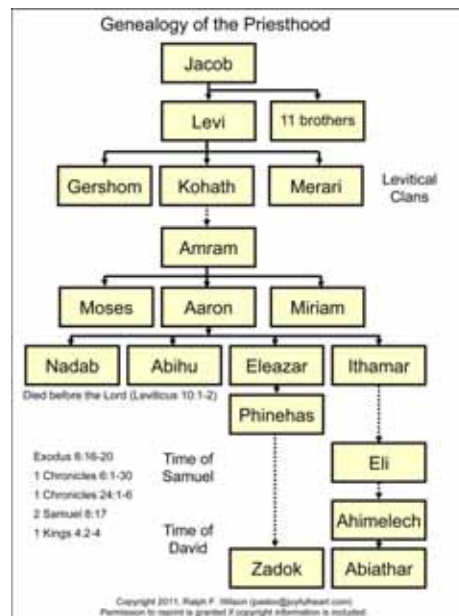
The present-day Jewish surnames "Levi" and "Levine" come from this tribal name.

Tithing

Supported by the tithes of the people. Numbers 18:8-21, 26; 2 Chronicles 2:2-10; Malachi 3:10; Luke 11:42; 1 Corinthians 9:13-14.

Priestly Garments (Ex 28, 39, Lev 8:7-9)

"To give them dignity and honor" (Exodus 28:40). The garments – and differences between the high priest and regular priests is shown below:



	High Priest	Regular Priests
Sacred crown of gold, engraved with the words: "Holy to the Lord."	High priest only	None
Turban of linen, different types	<i>Mis̄nepet</i>	<i>Migbā'â</i>
Breastpiece , colorful, like the ephod, with 12 stones representing each tribe, plus a pocket in which to put the Urim and Thummim, which seem to be lots used to seek God's will.	High priest only	None
Ephod , "a sleeveless linen waistcoat" worn over the robe.	Ephod made with gold; blue, purple and scarlet yarn; and finely-twisted linen.	Plain linen ephod, at least in David's time.
Robe of the ephod, made of blue cloth, the hem with alternating embroidered pomegranates and gold bells.	High priest only	None
Sash	Embroidered sash	Regular sash
Tunic , linen, ankle-length	Perhaps checkered.	Plain white linen

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Breeches , underwear, linen	Fine-twisted linen	Regular linen
Footwear	None	None

The Sacrifices

1. **Burnt Offering** (Leviticus 1; 6:8-13) the entire sacrifice is consumed on the altar, not just a part. This offering is designed to make atonement for the offerer's sin.
2. **Grain Offering** (Leviticus 2; 6:14-23). It is an offering or gift to God from one's crops. A portion is kept by the priests for their share.
3. **Peace or Fellowship Offering** (Leviticus 3; 7:11-34). This offering was accompanied by the communal celebration of the worshippers who shared in the meat of the offering. There are three sub-types: thank offering, votive offering, freewill sacrifice.
4. **Sin (Purification) Offering** (Leviticus 4:1-5:1; 6:24-30), to purify people from an unwitting sin.
5. **Guilt (Reparation) Offering** (Leviticus 5:14-6:7), that a restitution is required, to make atonement for desecration or mishandling of sacred things.

Special Sacrifices

1. **Morning and Evening Sacrifices** (Exodus 28:38-39; Numbers 28:1-8)
2. **Passover offerings** (Exodus 12; Numbers 9; Deuteronomy 16)
3. **Day of Atonement** (Yom Kippur, Leviticus 16) is the day each year when the high priest seeks atonement for the sins of the whole nation.

Steps in a Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1:3-9)

1. **Sacrifice is without defect** (verse 3; 1 Peter 1:19).
2. **Offerer lays his hand on head of animal** (verse 4). Laying on of hands is accompanied by confession (Leviticus 16:21).
3. **Offerer slaughters the animal** (verse 5a).
4. **Priest collects the blood and sprinkles it against the altar** (verse 5b; Leviticus 17:11)
5. **Offerer skins and cuts the sacrifice in pieces** (verse 6).
6. **Priest puts the pieces of the sacrifice on the altar** (verses 7-8)
7. **Sacrifice is completely consumed on the altar** (verse 9).

Q4. (Leviticus 1:3-9) In the burnt offering for an individual's sin: What is the significance of the offerer laying his hand on the animal's head? Why do you think the offerer is to slay the sacrifice rather than having the priest do it? How is the animal's blood significant in sacrifice? In what ways does Jesus' sacrifice on the cross fulfill all of this?

Priests Participate in the Sacrifice (Leviticus 10)

Aaron's older sons, Nadab and Abihu, died before the Lord for "offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command" (Leviticus 10:1)

1. God demands holiness and obedience from his servants. Leviticus 11:44-45
2. God demands a pure heart from those who make offerings to him. Matthew 5:23-24; cf. Mark 11:25
3. God shows mercy when he sees in us a desire to please him, even if we haven't kept all the rules.

The priests are partakers of the altar – as part of the atonement. 1 Corinthians 10:16, 18

8. Rebellion against Moses' Leadership (Numbers 11-17)

Moses' Complaint to the Lord (Numbers 11:11-15)

1. The burden of leadership is too heavy for him.
2. He knows he is inadequate to supply the people's desires.

God answers:

1. God puts some of his Spirit on 70 of Israel's elders (Numbers 11:24-30)
2. God promises abundant meat (Numbers 11:31-34)

Q1. (Numbers 11:11-15) Why do you think Moses is so frustrated in his prayer? What do you think is going on in him emotionally and physically at this point? Does he have any grounds for his complaints, do you think? Do you think this is designed to be a model prayer? Why are we shown this prayer? How did God answer him?

Miriam's and Aaron's Criticism and Punishment (Numbers 12:1-15)

Moses' Cushite wife is only a smokescreen. Cush (*kûsh*) can refer to (1) Nubia, the area along the Nile south of Egypt, (2) a people in Mesopotamia, or (3) just possibly, Midian.

Real issue: a challenge by Miriam and Aaron to Moses' role as God's authoritative spokesman (Numbers 12:2), a power struggle.

Moses, the Humble (Numbers 12:3; 11:11-15; Matthew 5:5; 11:29; Mark 10:42-45)

Aaron and Miriam Rebuked for Speaking Against Moses (Numbers 12:4-9)

"Faithful" is *'āman*. The root idea is firmness or certainty, as we might describe a person as a "solid" leader. The Niphal participle here means "to be faithful, sure, dependable." (Psalm 105:15; 2 Chronicles 16:22)

Q2. (Numbers 12) What was Miriam's and Aaron's motivation for speaking against Moses? Why do people seeking power feel a need to discredit the existing leader? How did Moses handle this provocation? How might he have handled it if he were a proud man? How did the Lord handle it?

Spying Out the Land (Numbers 13:1-25)

Their instructions are to conduct surveillance to determine:

1. Character of the land and its fruitfulness
2. Strength and numbers of the populations
3. Fortification of towns and cities
4. Forestation

They travelled the land from south to north, a distance of about 250 miles each way and were gone 40 days. Report: Numbers 13:27-29. They all agreed on the *facts* of the report. It was at the point of *interpretation* that they differed.

1. Caleb (with Joshua) looked with eyes of faith: "We should go up and take possession of the land, for **we can certainly do it.**" (Numbers 13:31)
2. Ten other spies looked with eyes of unbelief and "spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored." "We can't attack those people; **they are stronger** than we are (Numbers 13:31-33)

Fear and Unbelief Spread (Numbers 14:1-9)

Bad report fed fears:

- Men would “fall by the sword”
- Women and children would be “taken as plunder”

Met by positive statements of faith:

1. **The Lord will lead us into the land.**
2. **We will consume the people.**
3. **Their protection has been removed.**
4. **The Lord is with us.** Genesis 39:2, 21; Exodus 3:12; 33:14; Joshua 1:5; Deuteronomy 31:23; Psalms 46:7, 11; Matthew 1:23; 18:20; 28:20; 2 Timothy 4:17; Hebrews 13:5b.

Warnings:

1. Do not **rebel**.
2. Do not **be afraid** of the people of the land.

Moses Intercedes Again (Numbers 14:13-20)

1. **God’s glory.** The Egyptians and Canaanites will hear about it, and God’s previous reputation will be hurt. It would be claimed that since he couldn’t bring the people into the land, he killed them (14:13-16).
2. **God’s character.** God’s character had been spoken to Moses when the glory of God came before him in the cleft of the rock: He both loves and forgives of sin and rebellion (Exodus 34:5-7). Moses recites God’s words back to him.

God answered Moses according to the statement of character Moses had claimed before him.

1. **Forgiveness.** God forgives the people, that is, he will allow the people of Israel, not just the descendants of Moses, to be the heirs of the promise.
2. **Punishment.** The 10 leaders who brought the bad report that precipitated the general unbelief were punished with sudden death.
3. **Visiting the sins of fathers on the children.** “Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert.” (Numbers 14:33-34)

Israel’s sins keep them from entering the Promised Land (14:22-23):

1. Disobedience
2. Testing God
3. Treating God with contempt

Caleb’s Faith (Numbers 14:24)

“Wholeheartedly” (NIV, NRSV) is the Piel stem of *mālē*, “be full, to fill, literally “to be after fully” (KJV). Numbers 26:65; 32:12; Deuteronomy 1:36; Joshua 14:6-15.

Discipleship and Leadership Lessons

1. Godly leaders must possess faith, not just influence. Acts 6:3; 11:24.
2. The majority doesn't necessarily discern God's will.
3. Leaders have a strong influence on the people who respect them.
4. Fear opposes faith and vice versa.
5. Leaders calm fearful people with faith statements.
6. Rebellion against authority can be spawned by fear.
7. Leaders must intercede on behalf of their people's sins.
8. God can forgive the congregation while punishing the offenders. 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.
9. The sins of the congregation's fathers are visited upon future generations.
10. Some decisions cannot be undone. Hebrews 12:16-17
11. We must follow Lord wholeheartedly. Joshua 14:6-15.

Q3. (Numbers 14) Why is this failure to enter the Promised Land so serious? What did it represent on the people's part? What did it represent on the Lord's part? In your opinion, was the punishment too severe? Why or why not? If the people had moved in faith, how long would their trip from Egypt to Canaan have taken?

Korah's Rebellion (Numbers 16)

The Levites, whom Korah represented, wanted to have the status of priests.. Numbers 16:8b-10. Moses and Aaron are accused of pride, of setting themselves above the people.

Q4. (Numbers 17) What was the root cause of Korah's rebellion? Which of their accusations were true or partially true? Why is challenging the authority of a spiritual leader so dangerous to the challengers? How is intercession for a sinful people such an important part of a leader's job?

9. Conquering the Transjordan and Moses' Death (Numbers 20-27; Deuteronomy 32, 34)

Moses Strikes the Rock at Kadesh and Is Disciplined (Numbers 20:1-13)

The nature of Moses' and Aaron's sin is two-fold:

1. **Disobedience.** They disobeyed God's instructions to *speak to the rock*. Instead they *struck the rock* and *spoke to the people*, as though they possessed the power to produce water from the rock.
2. **Not sanctifying God.** When Moses and Aaron used the word "we" (Numbers 20:10), rather than giving God glory by declaring God's act of power, it had the effect of compromising divine holiness, which was an unpardonable act of insubordination.

Q1. (Numbers 20:1-13) What did God tell Moses to do to bring water out of the rock? What did Moses actually do? In what way did he sin? What emotions and attitudes were behind his sin, do you think? What must leaders do when they sin in these ways?

Vipers Attack the Israelites (Numbers 21:4-9)

The Israelites begin to complain: lack of water and manna, which they've grown to hate.

Jesus compared the snake lifted up in the wilderness to himself being lifted up on the cross – that those who look on him with faith live. (John 3:14-15)

Q2. (Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-15) What precipitated the plague of snakes? Is being impatient with God's provision a sin? Why or why not? What are the points of comparison between the bronze snake in the desert and Christ on the cross?

Israelite Men Sin with Moabite Women (Numbers 25)

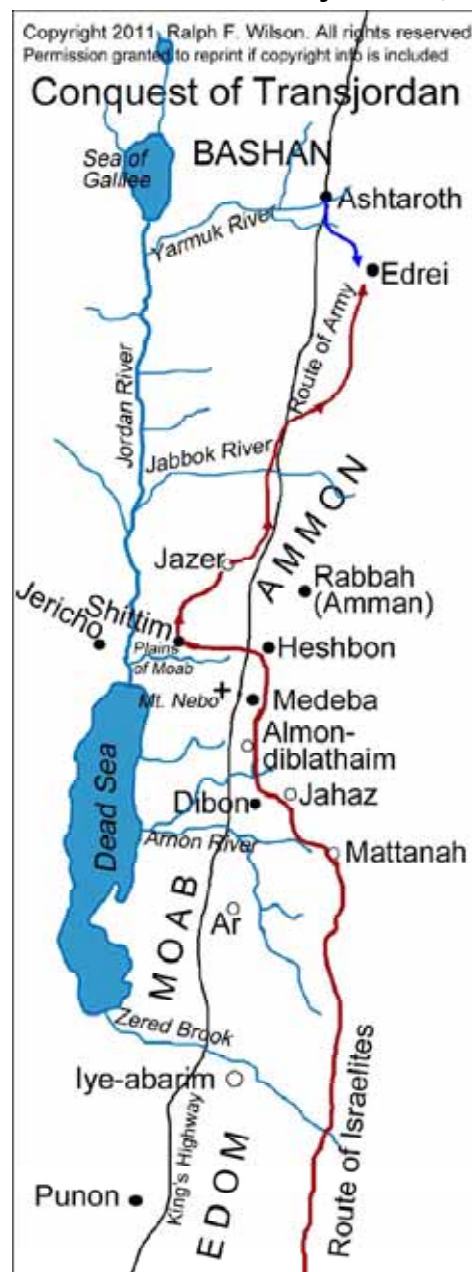
Q3. (Numbers 25; Revelation 2:14) Though Balaam wouldn't prophesy evil against Israel, he was willing to counsel the Moabites how to hurt Israel. How did Balaam's counsel lead

Israel into sin? Why was Aaron's grandson Phinehas so honored for his action? What was his reward? Why are we so often zealous to defend the rights of God's enemies and so slow to defend God's honor?

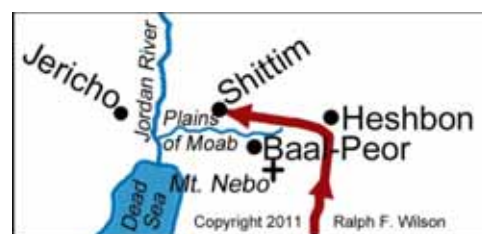
The Death of Moses

When Moses' speech and song before the people were completed – on the same day – God tells him how he will die on Mount Nebo, within sight of Canaan, but never to enter it, Deuteronomy 32:51-52; 35:4

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Conquest of the Transjordan



Q4. What about Moses' strengths have inspired you? What about his weaknesses have been a warning to you? If there is one primary thing God has taught you from Moses' life that you seek to apply to yours, what is it?