

**SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS**  
**Senior Division**

*Wilderness  
Wanderings (2)*



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*Sabbath Bible Lessons*, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [ ] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

**Illustrations:** Good Salt on the front cover; Map Resources on pp. 4, 25, 72.

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# Foreword

“God would have His people in these days review with a humble heart and teachable spirit the trials through which ancient Israel passed, that they may be instructed in their preparation for the heavenly Canaan.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

As we continue with the second of the two-part series on the “Wilderness Wanderings,” we will study the main events that took place from the covenant at Sinai to the death of Moses, using references from the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy. “The book of Deuteronomy should be carefully studied by those living on the earth today.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1117.

“The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Adventist body. God led His people in the advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt. In the great disappointment their faith was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen the salvation of God. If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844, had received the third angel’s message and proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the earth would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

“It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But ‘they could not enter in because of unbelief.’ Hebrews 3:19. Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land. In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 457, 458.

May God help us to cling to Jesus as our personal Saviour and leave off this grave sin of unbelief. May we trust the hand that has guided us in our past and go forward to give the third angel’s message with power. If we fail to do the work God has appointed us, others will be raised up to take our places.

*The General Conference Sabbath School Department*

## First Sabbath Offering for Johannesburg Chapel and Headquarters

Johannesburg is the commercial capital of South Africa and a gateway between Africa and the rest of the world. Out of South Africa's population of 56 million people, ten million people reside in Johannesburg. South Africa still enjoys religious liberty as this is enshrined in the constitution of the country. Christianity is the dominant religion in South Africa, with the majority belonging to the Roman Catholic Church followed by a diverse number of charismatic Christian churches. Other than Christianity, African indigenous ancestral worship is widely practiced followed by Islam and then Judaism.



The message of Reformation came to Johannesburg in 1944 when two brethren from Zimbabwe visited South Africa. Since then the message has spread throughout South Africa and has reached neighboring countries such as Lesotho and Swaziland. The work here is organized under the South African Field Conference with its headquarters in Johannesburg. However, because of the high cost of property in Johannesburg, the Field Conference has not been able to own a property but is operating from a rented office of about 388 sq. ft. (36 m<sup>2</sup>). Moreover, most of our churches in Johannesburg do not have their own places of worship but rather rent properties from other churches or use government schools for Sabbath services on Sabbath.

A few years ago, by the grace of God, we purchased a plot of five acres with an existing house, funded through donations from church members in South Africa. The plot is about 6 miles (10 km) outside the center of Johannesburg city. The existing house is old and needs some renovations. The project will consist of a permanent headquarters, a central chapel, and in future years a school with dormitories. The realization of this project will need significant financial outlay over several years. All our resources have been used to purchase the plot and therefore we are appealing to you, our brothers and sisters from all over the world, to help us realize this project.

We pray that God will richly bless you as you give generously towards this project and thank you with all our hearts for the help your gift will bring in furthering God's work here in South Africa.

*Your brothers and sisters in the South African Field Conference*

# A Covenant of Grace

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Hebrews 8:10).

“The ‘new covenant’ was established upon ‘better promises’—the promise of forgiveness of sins and of the grace of God to renew the heart and bring it into harmony with the principles of God’s law.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 363–373.

*Sunday*

March 29

## 1. AN ETERNAL MYSTERY

a. For how long has God’s covenant of grace existed? Romans 16:25.

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“The covenant of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting covenant.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 77.

b. When was the covenant of grace confirmed to humanity by promise? Genesis 3:15. When was it fully established? John 19:30; Romans 3:25.

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“The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man, when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race. It then existed in the purpose and by the promise of God; and through faith, men could become its subjects. Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ. . . . When the Saviour yielded up His life, and with His expiring breath cried out, ‘It is finished,’ then the fulfillment of the plan of redemption was assured. The promise of salvation made to the sinful pair in Eden was ratified. The kingdom of grace, which had before existed by the promise of God, was then established.”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 347, 348.

## 2. THE COVENANT BLESSING FOR ALL NATIONS

- a. **What blessing did God promise to Abraham under the covenant of grace? Genesis 12:1–3. Who is the promised “seed”? Galatians 3:16.**
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“Christ was not alone in making His great sacrifice. It was the fulfillment of the covenant made between Him and His Father before the foundation of the world was laid. With clasped hands they had entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan’s sophistry.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, June 14, 1900.

- b. **What does God do under this covenant for all who believe in Christ alone for salvation? Galatians 3:8; Romans 5:1.**
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“The covenant made with Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the law was spoken on Sinai was a covenant confirmed by God in Christ, the very same gospel which is preached to us.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 24, 1891.

- c. **What promise did God’s covenant with Abraham also include, and what will receiving it do for the believer in Christ? Galatians 3:14; Ezekiel 36:26, 27.**
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“The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth ‘the fruits of the Spirit.’ Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked. Through the prophet He declared of Himself, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.’ Psalm 40:8. And when among men He said, ‘The Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.’ John 8:29.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

### 3. GRACE FOR OBEDIENCE

- a. Why did God confirm His everlasting covenant to Abraham by an oath? Genesis 22:16–18; Hebrews 6:13–18.
- 

“This promise [Genesis 22:18] pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it (see Galatians 3:8, 16), and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 370.

“On Mount Moriah, God again renewed His covenant, confirming with a solemn oath the blessing to Abraham and to his seed through all coming generations.”—*Ibid.*, p. 153.

“Abraham was human; his passions and attachments were like ours; but he did not stop to question how the promise could be fulfilled if Isaac should be slain. He did not stay to reason with his aching heart. He knew that God is just and righteous in all His requirements, and he obeyed the command to the very letter.”—*Ibid.*

- b. What shows that obedience to God’s law will always be seen in the life of those under the covenant of grace? Genesis 26:5.
- 

“The covenant with Abraham also maintained the authority of God’s law. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, ‘I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.’ Genesis 17:1. The testimony of God concerning His faithful servant was, ‘Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’ Genesis 26:5. And the Lord declared to him, ‘I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an *everlasting covenant*, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.’ Genesis 17:7.”—*Ibid.*, p. 370.

“The apostle Paul clearly presents the relation between faith and the law under the new covenant. He says: ‘Being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ ‘Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.’ ‘For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh’—it could not justify man, because in his sinful nature he could not keep the law—‘God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that *the righteousness of the law* might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’ Romans 5:1; 3:31; 8:3, 4.” —*Ibid.*, p. 373.

#### 4. THE COVENANT AT SINAI

- a. Why was another covenant formed at Sinai and what was its purpose? Deuteronomy 4:35–37.
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“In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. In delivering them from Egypt, God sought to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and trust Him. He brought them down to the Red Sea—where, pursued by the Egyptians, escape seemed impossible—that they might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid; and then He wrought deliverance for them. Thus they were filled with love and gratitude to God and with confidence in His power to help them. He had bound them to Himself as their deliverer from temporal bondage.

“But there was a still greater truth to be impressed upon their minds. Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God’s law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 371.

- b. Why is the covenant made with Abraham called a “new” covenant even though it was made before the one at Sinai? Hebrews 9:16–20.
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“Though this covenant was made with Adam and renewed to Abraham, it could not be ratified until the death of Christ. It had existed by the promise of God since the first intimation of redemption had been given; it had been accepted by faith; yet when ratified by Christ, it is called a *new* covenant. The law of God was the basis of this covenant, which was simply an arrangement for bringing men again into harmony with the divine will, placing them where they could obey God’s law.

“Another compact—called in Scripture the ‘old’ covenant—was formed between God and Israel at Sinai, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the ‘second,’ or ‘new,’ covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 370, 371.

## 5. DELIVERANCE FROM THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE

- a. What did the Israelites fail to understand when they entered into the covenant at Sinai? Exodus 24:7; Romans 10:2, 3; John 15:5.
- 

“The people did not realize . . . that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, ‘All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.’ Exodus 24:7.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

- b. How can we be in danger today of making the same mistake the children of Israel made at Sinai? Romans 8:15.
- 

“The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength. There is hope for us only as we come under the Abrahamic covenant, which is the covenant of grace by faith in Christ Jesus.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, September 22, 1892.

“All religious service, however attractive and costly, that endeavors to merit the favor of God, all mortification of the flesh, all penance and laborious work to procure the forgiveness of sin and the divine favor—whatever prevents us from making Christ our entire dependence, is abomination in the sight of God. There is no hope for man but to cease his rebellion, his resistance of God’s will, and own himself a sinner ready to perish, and cast himself upon the mercy of God. We can be saved only through Christ.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 24, 1891.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is the covenant of grace called an everlasting covenant?
2. How am I blessed today by the covenant made with Abraham?
3. What does God promise to do for me under the covenant of grace?
4. Why is the covenant of grace called a “new” covenant?
5. How can I ensure today that I am under the covenant of grace?

# The Covenant Broken

**“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves” (Exodus 32:7).**

“Feeling their helplessness in the absence of their leader, they returned to their old superstitions. The ‘mixed multitude’ had been the first to indulge murmuring and impatience, and they were the leaders in the apostasy that followed.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 315, 316.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 315–319.

*Sunday*

*April 5*

## 1. THE PEOPLE PROMISE OBEDIENCE

- a. **After the proclamation of the law, who were called up into the mountain, and who only was told to come near to the Lord? Exodus 24:1, 2.**

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- b. **As the people heard all the words of the Lord as related by Moses, what did they answer with one voice? What did Moses then do? Exodus 24:3, 4.**

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“The minds of the people, blinded and debased by slavery and heathenism, were not prepared to appreciate fully the far-reaching principles of God’s ten precepts. That the obligations of the Decalogue might be more fully understood and enforced, additional precepts were given, illustrating and applying the principles of the Ten Commandments. These laws were called judgments, both because they were framed in infinite wisdom and equity and because the magistrates were to give judgment according to them. Unlike the Ten Commandments, they were delivered privately to Moses, who was to communicate them to the people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 310.

“[Exodus 24:3 quoted.] This pledge, together with the words of the Lord which it bound them to obey, was written by Moses in a book.”—*Ibid.*, p. 312.

## 2. ISRAEL ENTERS INTO A COVENANT WITH GOD

- a. **When Moses took the book of the covenant and read it in the ears of the people, what did they again promise? Exodus 24:7.**
- 

“If the Israelites had obeyed God’s requirements, they would have been practical Christians. They would have been happy; for they would have been keeping God’s ways, and not following the inclinations of their own natural hearts. Moses did not leave them to misconstrue the words of the Lord or to misapply His requirements. He wrote all the words of the Lord in a book, that they might be referred to afterward. In the mount he had written them as Christ Himself dictated them.

“Bravely did the Israelites speak the words promising obedience to the Lord, after hearing His covenant read in the audience of the people. They said, ‘All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.’ Then the people were set apart and sealed to God. A sacrifice was offered to the Lord. A portion of the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon the altar. This signified that the people had consecrated themselves—body, mind, and soul—to God. A portion was sprinkled upon the people. This signified that through the sprinkled blood of Christ, God graciously accepted them as His special treasure. Thus the Israelites entered into a solemn covenant with God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1107.

- b. **What did the Israelites fail to realize in their decision to enter into a covenant with God? Romans 7:18; John 15:5.**
- 

“God . . . gave [Israel] His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience: ‘If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then . . . ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.’ Exodus 19:5, 6. The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, ‘All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.’ Exodus 24:7.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371, 372.

- c. **What was used by Moses to ratify the covenant made at Sinai? Exodus 24:8.**
-

### 3. MOSES IN THE MOUNT

- a. For what purpose was Moses again called into the mount? Exodus 24:12; 25:8, 9, 40.
- 

“During his stay in the mount, Moses received directions for the building of a sanctuary in which the divine presence would be specially manifested. ‘Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them’ (Exodus 25:8), was the command of God. . . .

“Henceforth the people were to be honored with the abiding presence of their King. ‘I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God,’ ‘and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory’ (Exodus 29:45, 43), was the assurance given to Moses. As the symbol of God’s authority and the embodiment of His will, there was delivered to Moses a copy of the Decalogue engraved by the finger of God Himself upon two tables of stone (Deuteronomy 9:10; Exodus 32:15, 16), to be sacredly enshrined in the sanctuary, which, when made, was to be the visible center of the nation’s worship.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 313, 314.

- b. What was seen on Mount Sinai? Exodus 24:15–17.
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- c. How long was Moses upon the mount with God? Exodus 24:18. How did the Lord want to enlighten the world through Israel? How does this apply to us today?
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“From a race of slaves the Israelites had been exalted above all peoples to be the peculiar treasure of the King of kings. God had separated them from the world, that He might commit to them a sacred trust. He had made them the depositaries of His law, and He purposed, through them, to preserve among men the knowledge of Himself. Thus the light of heaven was to shine out to a world enshrouded in darkness, and a voice was to be heard appealing to all peoples to turn from their idolatry to serve the living God. If the Israelites would be true to their trust, they would become a power in the world. God would be their defense, and He would exalt them above all other nations. His light and truth would be revealed through them, and they would stand forth under His wise and holy rule as an example of the superiority of His worship over every form of idolatry.”—*Ibid.*, p. 314.

#### 4. THE GOLDEN CALF

- a. **When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, what did they say as they gathered around Aaron? Exodus 32:1.**
- 

“During this period of waiting, there was time for them to meditate upon the law of God which they had heard, and to prepare their hearts to receive the further revelations that He might make to them. They had none too much time for this work; and had they been thus seeking a clearer understanding of God’s requirements, and humbling their hearts before Him, they would have been shielded from temptation. But they did not do this, and they soon became careless, inattentive, and lawless. Especially was this the case with the mixed multitude. . . . There were some who suggested a return to Egypt, but whether forward to Canaan or backward to Egypt, the masses of the people were determined to wait no longer for Moses.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 315.

- b. **How did Aaron reveal his weakness? What did the people do? Exodus 32:2–6; Psalm 106:19, 20.**
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“A few who ventured to denounce the proposed image making as idolatry, were set upon and roughly treated, and in the confusion and excitement they finally lost their lives.

“Aaron feared for his own safety; and instead of nobly standing up for the honor of God, he yielded to the demands of the multitude.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 316, 317.

- c. **What warning does this experience contain for us? 1 Corinthians 10:7.**
- 

“We repeat the sin of Aaron, pacifying, when the eyesight should be clear to discern evil and state it plainly, even if it places us in an unpleasant position, because our motives may be misapprehended. We must not suffer wrong upon a brother or any soul with whom we are connected. This neglect to stand up firmly for truth was the sin of Aaron. Had he spoken the truth plainly, that golden calf would never have been made.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1109.

**5. MOSES PLEADS FOR THE PEOPLE**

- a. Relate the discussion between the Lord and Moses regarding the apostasy in the camp. Exodus 32:7–14.
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“As Moses interceded for Israel, his timidity was lost in his deep interest and love for those for whom he had, in the hands of God, been the means of doing so much. The Lord listened to his pleadings, and granted his unselfish prayer. God had proved His servant; He had tested his faithfulness and his love for that erring, ungrateful people, and nobly had Moses endured the trial. His interest in Israel sprang from no selfish motive. The prosperity of God’s chosen people was dearer to him than personal honor.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 319.

- b. What does God want us to do when we meet apostasy today?  
2 Timothy 4:2.
- 

“Of all the sins that God will punish, none are more grievous in His sight than those that encourage others to do evil. God would have His servants prove their loyalty by faithfully rebuking transgression, however painful the act may be. Those who are honored with a divine commission are not to be weak, pliant time-servers. They are not to aim at self-exaltation, or to shun disagreeable duties, but to perform God’s work with unswerving fidelity.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 323, 324.

**PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How did the additional precepts given to the Israelites relate to the Ten Commandments?
2. How can I be a “practical Christian”? Will this make me unhappy?
3. How can I help to preserve a knowledge of God in this world?
4. Why do we sometimes fail to stand up for what is right? What repercussions can this have?
5. What can I learn from Moses’ attitude toward those who were outright disobedient and others who were inconsistent in their faith?

# The Covenant Restored

**“And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel” (Exodus 34:27).**

“At God’s command [Moses] had prepared two tables of stone, and had taken them with him to the summit; and again the Lord ‘wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 329.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 319–330.

*Sunday*

*April 12*

## 1. MOSES BREAKS THE TABLES OF STONE

a. **What did Moses bring with him when he came down from the mount, and how did Joshua and Moses each interpret the noise that they heard in the camp? Exodus 32:17, 18.**

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b. **Describe the reaction of Moses to the idolatry in the camp and Aaron’s vain attempt at self-justification. Exodus 32:19–24.**

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“When Moses, on returning to the camp, confronted the rebels, his severe rebukes and the indignation he displayed in breaking the sacred tables of the law were contrasted by the people with his brother’s pleasant speech and dignified demeanor, and their sympathies were with Aaron. To justify himself, Aaron endeavored to make the people responsible for his weakness in yielding to their demand; but notwithstanding this, they were filled with admiration of his gentleness and patience. But God seeth not as man sees. Aaron’s yielding spirit and his desire to please had blinded his eyes to the enormity of the crime he was sanctioning. His course in giving his influence to sin in Israel cost the life of thousands.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 323.

## 2. JUDGMENT AGAINST THE OFFENDERS

- a. How offensive was the attitude of Aaron in the eyes of God? Deuteronomy 9:20.
- 

“If Aaron had had courage to stand for the right, irrespective of consequences, he could have prevented that apostasy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 323.

- b. What appeal did Moses make after he had rebuked his brother, and what was the result? Exodus 32:26–29.
- 

“It was necessary that this sin should be punished, as a testimony to surrounding nations of God’s displeasure against idolatry. By executing justice upon the guilty, Moses, as God’s instrument, must leave on record a solemn and public protest against their crime. As the Israelites should hereafter condemn the idolatry of the neighboring tribes, their enemies would throw back upon them the charge that the people who claimed Jehovah as their God had made a calf and worshiped it in Horeb. Then though compelled to acknowledge the disgraceful truth, Israel could point to the terrible fate of the transgressors, as evidence that their sin had not been sanctioned or excused.

“Love no less than justice demanded that for this sin judgment should be inflicted. God is the guardian as well as the sovereign of His people. He cuts off those who are determined upon rebellion, that they may not lead others to ruin.”—*Ibid.*, p. 325.

- c. What did Moses communicate to those who were sorry for their sin, and how did he later communicate with God in their behalf? Exodus 32:30–35.
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“Moses realized how dreadful would be the fate of the sinner; yet if the people of Israel were to be rejected by the Lord, he desired his name to be blotted out with theirs; he could not endure to see the judgments of God fall upon those who had been so graciously delivered. The intercession of Moses in behalf of Israel illustrates the mediation of Christ for sinful men. But the Lord did not permit Moses to bear, as did Christ, the guilt of the transgressor. ‘Whosoever hath sinned against Me,’ He said, ‘him will I blot out of My book.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 326, 327.

### 3. GOD ACCEPTS THE PENITENT

- a. How did the people react when they heard that the Lord would not lead them to Canaan because of their sin? Exodus 33:1–6.
- 
- b. Where did Moses pitch the tabernacle after this dreadful experience? What token revealed hope for those who sought the Lord? Exodus 33:7–10.
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“The tent was pitched without the encampment, but Moses called it ‘the tabernacle of the congregation.’ All who were truly penitent, and desired to return to the Lord, were directed to repair thither to confess their sins and seek His mercy. When they returned to their tents Moses entered the tabernacle. With agonizing interest the people watched for some token that his intercessions in their behalf were accepted. If God should condescend to meet with him, they might hope that they were not to be utterly consumed. When the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the entrance of the tabernacle, the people wept for joy, and they ‘rose up and worshiped, every man in his tent door.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 327.

- c. What assurance did Moses obtain from the Lord? Exodus 33:11–17. How can we obtain the same assurance?
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“This experience—above all else the promise that the divine Presence would attend him—was to Moses an assurance of success in the work before him; and he counted it of infinitely greater worth than all the learning of Egypt or all his attainments as a statesman or a military leader. No earthly power or skill or learning can supply the place of God’s abiding presence.”—*Ibid.*, p. 328.

“Go to God and tell Him as did Moses, ‘I cannot lead this people unless Thy presence shall go with me.’ And then ask still more; pray with Moses, ‘Show me Thy glory.’ What is this glory?—the character of God. That is what He proclaimed to Moses. Let the soul, in living faith, fasten upon God. Let the tongue speak His praise. When you associate together, let the mind be reverently turned to the contemplation of eternal realities. Thus you will be helping one another to be spiritually minded. When your will is in harmony with the divine will, you will be in harmony with one another; you will have Christ by your side as a counselor.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 499.

#### 4. A GLIMPSE OF GOD'S CHARACTER

- a. What further request did Moses make, and what was the Lord's answer? Exodus 33:18, 19. How did the Lord proclaim His name to Moses? Exodus 34:5–7.
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“It is our privilege to reach higher and still higher for clearer revealings of the character of God. When Moses prayed, ‘I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory,’ the Lord did not rebuke him, but He granted his prayer. God declared to His servant, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.’ Exodus 33:18, 19.

“It is sin that darkens our minds and dims our perceptions. As sin is purged from our hearts, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, illuminating His word and reflected from the face of nature, more and more fully will declare Him ‘merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.’ Exodus 34:6.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 464, 465.

- b. After God revealed His glory to Moses, what did Moses pray for, and how did God answer? Exodus 34:8–17, 27.
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“Moses was full of confidence in God because he had appropriating faith. He needed help, and he prayed for it, grasped it by faith, and wove into his experience the belief that God cared for him. He believed that God ruled his life in particular. He saw and acknowledged God in every detail of his life and felt that he was under the eye of the All-seeing One, who weighs motives, who tries the heart. He looked to God and trusted in Him for strength to carry him uncorrupted through every form of temptation. . . . The presence of God was sufficient to carry him through the most trying situations in which a man could be placed.

“Moses did not merely think of God; he saw Him. God was the constant vision before him; he never lost sight of His face. He saw Jesus as his Saviour, and he believed that the Saviour's merits would be imputed to him. This faith was to Moses no guesswork; it was a reality. This is the kind of faith we need, faith that will endure the test.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 651, 652.

## 5. ENTERING THE COVENANT OF GRACE

- a. **What were the children of Israel now able to appreciate about the blessings offered under the Abrahamic covenant in contrast to their first covenant with God? Psalm 103:8; Hebrews 7:19; Jeremiah 31:33, 34.**

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“[The children of Israel] had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 372.

- b. **What did Moses bring down from the mount after forty days, and how did the people feel when they saw him? Exodus 34:28–30, 33.**

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“The glory reflected in the countenance of Moses illustrates the blessings to be received by God’s commandment-keeping people through the mediation of Christ. It testifies that the closer our communion with God, and the clearer our knowledge of His requirements, the more fully shall we be conformed to the divine image, and the more readily do we become partakers of the divine nature.”—*Ibid.*, p. 330.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Why do we often despise the one who rebukes sin and admire the gentle, yielding ones?**
2. **Why was the sin of worshipping the golden calf so great?**
3. **What was of more value to Moses than his skill as a statesman or a military leader? Why?**
4. **As Jesus cleanses the heart from sin, what will we see shining from His Word and reflected in nature?**
5. **What two things will lead me to become more fully conformed to God’s image? How?**

# Unfaithful Priests

“And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean” (Ezekiel 44:23).

“We must abstain from any practice which will blunt the conscience or encourage temptation. We must open no door that will give Satan access to the mind of one human being formed in the image of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 360.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 359–362.

*Sunday*

April 19

## 1. THE CONSECRATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS

- a. Describe briefly the ceremony of consecration of Aaron and his sons for the service of the sanctuary. Leviticus 8:1–9, 12, 13, 24, 30, 33.

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“All had been done as God commanded, and He accepted the sacrifice, and revealed His glory in a remarkable manner; fire came from the Lord and consumed the offering upon the altar. The people looked upon this wonderful manifestation of divine power with awe and intense interest. They saw in it a token of God’s glory and favor, and they raised a universal shout of praise and adoration and fell on their faces as if in the immediate presence of Jehovah.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 359.

- b. What was required of those who were called to service in the presence of the Lord? Exodus 19:22. What disqualifies men for sacred responsibilities?

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“If one has not a vital connection with God, his own spirit and sentiments will prevail. These may be well represented as strange fire offered in the place of the sacred.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 371.

## 2. NADAB AND ABIHU ARE SLAIN

- a. What action on the part of Nadab and Abihu showed that they were not qualified for the sacred office that was given them? Leviticus 10:1. How do professed Christians use “strange fire” in our days?
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“The converting power of God must come upon men who handle sacred things, yet who are unable, through some cause best known to God, to distinguish between the sacred fire of God’s own kindling and the strange fire which they offer. That strange fire is as dishonoring to God as was that presented by Nadab and Abihu. The sacred fire of God’s love would make men tender and kind and sympathetic toward those in peril. Those who indulge in sharp, overbearing words, are really saying: I am holier than thou. Do you not see my exalted position?”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 356.

“Converted men are needed—men who will love and honor God, fearing to move in their own wisdom, and realizing that their efforts can prove successful only as recognized by Him without whose blessing there is no prosperity. Every moment divine power must be combined with human effort, else strange fire will be offered instead of the sacred. . . .

“To handle sacred things as we would common matters is an offense to God; for that which God has set apart to do His service in giving light to this world is holy. Those who have any connection with the work of God are not to walk in the vanity of their own wisdom, but in the wisdom of God, or they will be in danger of placing sacred and common things on the same level, and thus separate themselves from God.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 8, 1896.

- b. How was their profane behavior punished? Leviticus 10:2.
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“At the hour of worship, as the prayers and praise of the people were ascending to God, two of the sons of Aaron took each his censer and burned fragrant incense thereon, to rise as a sweet odor before the Lord. But they transgressed His command by the use of ‘strange fire.’ For burning the incense they took common instead of the sacred fire which God Himself had kindled, and which He had commanded to be used for this purpose. For this sin a fire went out from the Lord and devoured them in the sight of the people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 359.

### 3. THE RESULTS OF FAULTY TRAINING

- a. As Moses immediately saw the cause of the trouble, what did he say to Aaron? Leviticus 10:3. What made the sin of Nadab and Abihu all the more grievous in the eyes of God?
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“Next to Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu had stood highest in Israel. They had been especially honored by the Lord, having been permitted with the seventy elders to behold His glory in the mount. But their transgression was not therefore to be excused or lightly regarded. All this rendered their sin more grievous.”— *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 359.

- b. What principles should Aaron have known in the training of his sons? Proverbs 22:6; 29:21. In what area did he fail?
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“Nadab and Abihu had not in their youth been trained to habits of self-control. The father’s yielding disposition, his lack of firmness for right, had led him to neglect the discipline of his children. His sons had been permitted to follow inclination. Habits of self-indulgence, long cherished, obtained a hold upon them which even the responsibility of the most sacred office had not power to break. They had not been taught to respect the authority of their father, and they did not realize the necessity of exact obedience to the requirements of God.”— *Ibid.*, p. 360.

“Too much importance cannot be placed upon the early training of children. The lessons learned, the habits formed, during the years of infancy and childhood, have more to do with the formation of the character and the direction of the life than have all the instruction and training of after years.”— *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 380.

- c. What instruction and warning did Moses give to Aaron and his surviving sons? Why? Leviticus 10:6, 7.
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“By no manifestation of grief must [Aaron] seem to sympathize with sin. The congregation must not be led to murmur against God.”— *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 361.

#### 4. A WARNING TO US TODAY

- a. **What warning did the Lord give against the use of alcoholic beverages? Leviticus 10:8–11. Does this warning extend to us today? Exodus 19:5, 6.**
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“The use of spirituous liquors has the effect to weaken the body, confuse the mind, and debase the morals. It prevents men from realizing the sacredness of holy things or the binding force of God’s requirements. All who occupied positions of sacred responsibility were to be men of strict temperance, that their minds might be clear to discriminate between right and wrong, that they might possess firmness of principle, and wisdom to administer justice and to show mercy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 362.

- b. **What biblical principles show us that the wine provided by Jesus at the marriage feast was unfermented grape juice? Proverbs 20:1; 23:32.**
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“It has been declared by some that Christ favored the moderate use of fermented wine, in witness whereof they refer to His miracle of changing water into wine. But we protest that Christ never made intoxicating wine; such an act would have been contrary to all the teachings and example of His life.”—*The Health Reformer*, July 1, 1878.

- c. **What will those do who are striving for the mastery in the Christian life? 1 Corinthians 9:25.**
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“True temperance teaches us to dispense entirely with everything hurtful, and to use judiciously that which is healthful.”—*Temperance*, p. 138.

“The only safe course is to touch not, taste not, handle not, tea, coffee, wines, tobacco, opium, and alcoholic drinks. . . .

“Let us never partake of a glass of alcoholic liquor. Let us never touch it.”—*Ibid.*, p. 163.

“The youth and children should understand the effect of alcohol, tobacco, and other like poisons in breaking down the body, beclouding the mind, and sensualizing the soul. It should be made plain that no one who uses these things can long possess the full strength of his physical, mental, or moral faculties.”—*Education*, p. 202.

**5. “HOLY AND REVEREND IS HIS NAME”**

- a. Why was the sin of Nadab and Abihu recorded? Romans 15:4. What can we learn from this incident?
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“God designed to teach the people that they must approach Him with reverence and awe, and in His own appointed manner. He cannot accept partial obedience. It was not enough that in this solemn season of worship *nearly* everything was done as He had directed. God has pronounced a curse upon those who depart from His commandments, and put no difference between common and holy things.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 360.

- b. What kind of men does the Lord call to occupy positions of sacred responsibility? 1 Peter 1:15, 16; 2:9.
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“A minister of Christ should be pure in conversation and in actions. He should ever bear in mind that he is handling words of inspiration, words of a holy God. He must also bear in mind that the flock is entrusted to his care, and that he is to bear their cases to Jesus, and plead for them as Jesus pleads for us with the Father. I was pointed back to the children of Israel anciently and saw how pure and holy the ministers of the sanctuary had to be, because they were brought by their work into a close connection with God. They that minister must be holy, pure, and without blemish, or God will destroy them. God has not changed.”—*Early Writings*, p. 103.

**PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Why is it that we sometimes bring our own opinions and selfish ideas into the work of God?
2. What is necessary in order to avoid placing sacred and common things on the same level?
3. When is self-control to be learned? Why?
4. Why does God want me to be strictly temperate today?
5. Why is reverence so important? Where does this begin? How?

## First Sabbath Offering for a Chapel in Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Mayiladuthurai is a major town in the Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu in the southernmost part of India. It is the headquarters of the Mayiladuthurai taluk (administrative district). Mayiladuthurai serves as a major junction along the main line connecting the city of Chennai with Tiruchirappalli (also known as Trichy). Mayiladuthurai is situated at a distance of 281 kilometers (175 mi.) from Chennai and 130 kilometres (81 mi.) from Tiruchirappalli, in an area of 11.27 km<sup>2</sup> (4.35 sq. mi.). Situated at a distance of only 24 kilometers (15 mi.) from the Bay of Bengal coast, the town is barely 10 meters (33 ft) above mean sea level. The Kaveri River runs through it, bisecting it into Uttara Mayuram and Mayuram proper. Agriculture is the most widely practiced occupation in this tropical region, with about 15% of the total working population being engaged in trade and 25% in other commercial activities.



According to the 2011 census, Mayiladuthurai had a population of about one million. Hinduism is the major religion in Mayiladuthurai and Tamil is the major language spoken. As per the religious census of 2011, Mayiladuthurai had 88.69% Hindus, 6.38% Muslims, 4.19% Christians, 0.04% Sikhs, 0.03% Buddhists, 0.32% Jains and 0.35% following other religions.

The first angel's message of Revelation 14 has "the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6). In order to carry forward the Lord's work to shine as a light to this primarily heathen area, the brethren here have already purchased a small plot of land with our own resources. We are promoting the advancement of this vital message to be carried forward—the gospel together with medical missionary work to act as God's helping hand in ministering to souls afflicted and in darkness.

In view of the urgent need of financial means to complete this project, we humbly ask in the love of Jesus Christ for help that we may be enabled to build this church house for worship and for healing the sick. We request our brethren and sisters to give generously for this project. May the Lord may bless every one of you for your kind help! We thank you in advance for your donations.

*Your brethren and sisters from Mayiladuthuri*

# Departing from Sinai

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

“The repeated murmurings of the Israelites, and the visitations of God’s wrath because of their transgressions, are recorded in sacred history for the benefit of God’s people who should afterward live upon the earth, but more especially to prove a warning to those who should live near the close of time.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 152.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 374–386.

*Sunday*

April 26

## 1. TRAVELING THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

- a. **Why did Moses invite Hobab to accompany the people of Israel? Did he accept the invitation? Numbers 10:29–31; Judges 1:16; 4:11.**
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“Of this tribe [the Kenites] was the brother-in-law of Moses, Hobab, who had accompanied the Israelites in their travels through the wilderness, and by his knowledge of the country had rendered them valuable assistance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 628.

- b. **What prayers did Moses offer when the cloud lifted and the ark set forward and when it rested again? Numbers 10:35, 36.**
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“God Himself directed the Israelites in all their travels. The place of their encampment was indicated by the descent of the pillar of cloud; and so long as they were to remain in camp, the cloud rested over the tabernacle. When they were to continue their journey it was lifted high above the sacred tent. A solemn invocation marked both the halt and the departure.”—*Ibid.*, p. 376.

## 2. COMPLAINING AGAIN

- a. Through what sort of land did the people of Israel travel after they left Sinai? Why? Deuteronomy 8:15, 16; Jeremiah 2:6.
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“As they advanced, the way became more difficult. Their route lay through stony ravine and barren waste. All around them was the great wilderness—‘a land of deserts and of pits,’ ‘a land of drought, and of the shadow of death,’ ‘a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt.’ Jeremiah 2:6. The rocky gorges, far and near, were thronged with men, women, and children, with beasts and wagons, and long lines of flocks and herds. Their progress was necessarily slow and toilsome; and the multitudes, after their long encampment, were not prepared to endure the perils and discomforts of the way.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 377.

- b. When the people began complaining about the discomforts along the way, what happened? Numbers 11:1–3.
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“After three days’ journey open complaints were heard. These originated with the mixed multitude, many of whom were not fully united with Israel, and were continually watching for some cause of censure. The complainers were not pleased with the direction of the march, and they were continually finding fault with the way in which *Moses* was leading them, though they well knew that he, as well as they, was following the guiding cloud. Dissatisfaction is contagious, and it soon spread in the encampment.”—*Ibid.*, p. 377.

“They [the people of Israel] had received great light, as they had been witnesses to the majesty, the power, and the mercy of God; and their unbelief and discontent incurred the greater guilt. Furthermore, they had covenanted to accept Jehovah as their king and to obey His authority. Their murmuring was now rebellion, and as such it must receive prompt and signal punishment, if Israel was to be preserved from anarchy and ruin. ‘The fire of Jehovah burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.’ The most guilty of the complainers were slain by lightning from the cloud.”—*Ibid.*, p. 379.

### 3. LUSTING FOR FLESH

- a. **What did the Israelites complain about next, and with whom did the murmuring begin? Numbers 11:4–6; Psalm 78:18–20.**
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“The Israelites, during their bondage in Egypt, had been compelled to subsist on the plainest and simplest food; but the keen appetite induced by privation and hard labor had made it palatable. Many of the Egyptians, however, who were now among them, had been accustomed to a luxurious diet; and these were the first to complain. At the giving of the manna, just before Israel reached Sinai, the Lord had granted them flesh in answer to their clamors; but it was furnished them for only one day.

“God might as easily have provided them with flesh as with manna, but a restriction was placed upon them for their good. It was His purpose to supply them with food better suited to their wants than the feverish diet to which many had become accustomed in Egypt. The perverted appetite was to be brought into a more healthy state, that they might enjoy the food originally provided for man—the fruits of the earth, which God gave to Adam and Eve in Eden. It was for this reason that the Israelites had been deprived, in a great measure, of animal food.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 377, 378.

“The state of the mind has largely to do with the health of the body, and especially with the health of the digestive organs. As a general thing, the Lord did not provide His people with flesh meat in the desert, because He knew that the use of this diet would create disease and insubordination. In order to modify the disposition, and bring the higher powers of the mind into active exercise, He removed from them the flesh of dead animals. He gave them angels’ food, manna from heaven.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, pp. 1112, 1113.

- b. **How was their demand for flesh food granted, and what were the results? Numbers 11:31–34; Psalm 78:26–32.**
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“God gave the people that which was not for their highest good, because they persisted in desiring it; they would not be satisfied with those things that would prove a benefit to them. Their rebellious desires were gratified, but they were left to suffer the result. They feasted without restraint, and their excesses were speedily punished.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 382.

#### 4. A LESSON FOR US

- a. As the Israelites were already used to plain, simple food, what prior warning did they ignore? Exodus 23:2 (first part). When tempted to murmur and complain about God's ways, what should we do? Psalm 107:21, 22; Philipians 4:6, 7.
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- b. What other lesson should we learn from the rebellious behavior of Israel in the wilderness? 1 Corinthians 10:5, 6.
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“God brought the Israelites from Egypt, that He might establish them in the land of Canaan, a pure, holy, and happy people. In the accomplishment of this object He subjected them to a course of discipline, both for their own good and for the good of their posterity. Had they been willing to deny appetite, in obedience to His wise restrictions, feebleness and disease would have been unknown among them. Their descendants would have possessed both physical and mental strength. They would have had clear perceptions of truth and duty, keen discrimination, and sound judgment. But their unwillingness to submit to the restrictions and requirements of God, prevented them, to a great extent, from reaching the high standard which He desired them to attain, and from receiving the blessings which He was ready to bestow upon them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 378.

- c. What do we need to do first to ensure that we do not lust after evil things? Romans 13:14.
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“We must fight against the sins that war against the soul. You cannot in your own strength do this work, but come to Jesus in faith. He will help you and strengthen you to put away evil tendencies, and will array you in the true beauty of His character. We are exhorted to put on the Lord Jesus. Simple faith and obedience go hand in hand. Your faith without obedience to God's holy law is of no value, but obedience to God and faith in the Great Sacrifice offered— that His blood was shed for you, and you will accept the righteousness of Christ—will make you an overcomer. Put your trust in Jesus Christ, and He will bring you off more than conqueror.”—*The Youth's Instructor*, August 18, 1886.

## 5. THE POISON OF ENVY

- a. What happened at Hazereth, which revealed the characters of Aaron and Miriam in contrast to that of Moses? Numbers 12:1–9.
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“God had chosen Moses, and had put His Spirit upon him; and Miriam and Aaron, by their murmurings, were guilty of disloyalty, not only to their appointed leader, but to God Himself. The seditious whisperers were summoned to the tabernacle, and brought face to face with Moses. . . . Their claim to the prophetic gift was not denied; God might have spoken to them in visions and dreams. But to Moses, whom the Lord Himself declared ‘faithful in all Mine house,’ a nearer communion had been granted. With *him* God spake mouth to mouth.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 384, 385.

- b. How did the Lord show His displeasure, and how was Miriam’s punishment mitigated when Moses pleaded for her? Numbers 12:10–16.
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“Envy is one of the most satanic traits that can exist in the human heart, and it is one of the most baleful in its effects. Says the wise man, ‘Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?’ Proverbs 27:4. . . .

“It should not be regarded as a light thing to speak evil of others or to make ourselves judges of their motives or actions. . . .

“We are to honor those whom God has honored. The judgment visited upon Miriam should be a rebuke to all who yield to jealousy, and murmur against those upon whom God lays the burden of His work.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 385, 386.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did God lead His people in their travels? How does He lead us today?
2. Why was it so sinful for the Israelites to complain about how Moses was leading them?
3. Why does God want us to follow a simple, vegetarian diet today?
4. What blessings come from self-denial in appetite?
5. How are we sometimes envious in a similar way to Miriam?

# The Rebellion at Kadesh

**“But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it” (Numbers 14:24).**

“The Lord promised to spare Israel from immediate destruction; but because of their unbelief and cowardice He could not manifest His power to subdue their enemies. Therefore in His mercy He bade them, as the only safe course, to turn back toward the Red Sea.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 391.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 387–394.

*Sunday*

*May 3*

## 1. SPIES SENT INTO CANAAN

a. For what purpose were spies sent from Kadesh into the land of Canaan? Actually, whose idea was it for the spies to go into the land of Canaan? Numbers 13:1–3; 17–20; Deuteronomy 1:20–25.

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b. After how many days did the spies return to Kadesh, and what visible tokens of the fertility of the land did they bring back? Numbers 13:21–26.

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“They went, and surveyed the whole land, entering at the southern border and proceeding to the northern extremity. They returned after an absence of forty days. The people of Israel were cherishing high hopes and were waiting in eager expectancy. The news of the spies’ return was carried from tribe to tribe and was hailed with rejoicing. The people rushed out to meet the messengers, who had safely escaped the dangers of their perilous undertaking. The spies brought specimens of the fruit, showing the fertility of the soil.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 387.

## 2. THE SPIES' REPORTS

- a. What report did ten of the spies bring? Numbers 13:27–29, 31–33.
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“[The ten spies] were resolved to discourage all effort to gain possession of Canaan. They distorted the truth in order to sustain their baleful influence. . . . When men yield their hearts to unbelief they place themselves under the control of Satan, and none can tell to what lengths he will lead them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 389.

- b. What was the response of Caleb and Joshua? Numbers 13:30; 14:6–9. What is one of our greatest needs today?
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“Calebs have been greatly needed in different periods of the history of our work. Today we need men of thorough fidelity, men who follow the Lord fully, men who are not disposed to be silent when they ought to speak, who are as true as steel to principle, who do not seek to make a pretentious show, but who walk humbly with God, patient, kind, obliging, courteous men, who understand that the science of prayer is to exercise faith and show works that will tell to the glory of God and the good of His people.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1113.

- c. How did the people receive the conflicting reports of the spies? Numbers 14:1–4, 10.
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“Hope and courage gave place to cowardly despair, as the spies uttered the sentiments of their unbelieving hearts, which were filled with discouragement prompted by Satan. Their unbelief cast a gloomy shadow over the congregation, and the mighty power of God, so often manifested in behalf of the chosen nation, was forgotten. The people did not wait to reflect; they did not reason that He who had brought them thus far would certainly give them the land; they did not call to mind how wonderfully God had delivered them from their oppressors, cutting a path through the sea and destroying the pursuing hosts of Pharaoh. . . .”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 388.

“Revolt and open mutiny quickly followed; for Satan had full sway, and the people seemed bereft of reason.”—*Ibid.*, p. 389.

### 3. THE PEOPLE MURMUR

- a. **How did Moses and Aaron act when they saw that the people had accepted the cowardly report and were getting rebellious? Numbers 14:5.**
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“In humiliation and distress ‘Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel,’ not knowing what to do to turn them from their rash and passionate purpose. Caleb and Joshua attempted to quiet the tumult. With their garments rent in token of grief and indignation, they rushed in among the people, and their ringing voices were heard above the tempest of lamentation and rebellious grief: ‘The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 389, 390.

- b. **How did the Lord intervene at this crucial moment, and what did He say? Numbers 14:10–12.**
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“The unfaithful spies were loud in denunciation of Caleb and Joshua, and the cry was raised to stone them. The insane mob seized missiles with which to slay those faithful men. They rushed forward with yells of madness, when suddenly the stones dropped from their hands, a hush fell upon them, and they shook with fear. God had interposed to check their murderous design. The glory of His presence, like a flaming light, illuminated the tabernacle. All the people beheld the signal of the Lord. A mightier one than they had revealed Himself, and none dared continue their resistance. The spies who brought the evil report crouched terror-stricken, and with bated breath sought their tents.”—*Ibid.*, p. 390.

- c. **As Moses pleaded with the Lord, what reason did he give for the Lord to pardon and spare the people of Israel? Numbers 14:13–19.**
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**4. THE MURMURERS ARE PUNISHED**

- a. What sentence did the Lord pronounce upon the murmurers and rebels? Numbers 14:22, 23, 29–33.
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“In their rebellion the people had exclaimed, ‘Would God we had died in this wilderness!’ Now this prayer was to be granted. . . . As the spies had spent forty days in their journey, so the hosts of Israel were to wander in the wilderness forty years.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 391.

- b. How did God punish the ten spies who gave the evil report? Numbers 14:36, 37.
- 

“When Moses made known to the people the divine decision, their rage was changed to mourning. They knew that their punishment was just. The ten unfaithful spies, divinely smitten by the plague, perished before the eyes of all Israel; and in their fate the people read their own doom.”—*Ibid.*

- c. What sin of presumption did the murmurers commit the next day, and with what results? Numbers 14:39–45.
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“Forced to submission at last, the survivors ‘returned, and wept before the Lord;’ but ‘the Lord would not hearken’ to their voice. Deuteronomy 1:45. By their signal victory the enemies of Israel, who had before awaited with trembling the approach of that mighty host, were inspired with confidence to resist them. All the reports they had heard concerning the marvelous things that God had wrought for His people, they now regarded as false, and they felt that there was no cause for fear. That first defeat of Israel, by inspiring the Canaanites with courage and resolution, had greatly increased the difficulties of the conquest. Nothing remained for Israel but to fall back from the face of their victorious foes, into the wilderness, knowing that here must be the grave of a whole generation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 394.

## 5. FALLING SHORT OF GODLY SORROW

- a. What kind of repentance leads to salvation? 2 Corinthians 7:10. What was missing in the sorrow of the Israelites?
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“Now [the people] seemed sincerely to repent of their sinful conduct; but they sorrowed because of the result of their evil course rather than from a sense of their ingratitude and disobedience. When they found that the Lord did not relent in His decree, their self-will again arose, and they declared that they would not return into the wilderness. In commanding them to retire from the land of their enemies, God tested their apparent submission and proved that it was not real. . . . Their hearts were unchanged, and they only needed an excuse to occasion a similar outbreak. . . .

“Had they mourned for their sin when it was faithfully laid before them, this sentence would not have been pronounced; but they mourned for the judgment; their sorrow was not repentance, and could not secure a reversing of their sentence.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 391, 392.

- b. What accompanies true repentance? Acts 3:19.
- 

“In order to stand forgiven, the sinner must exercise repentance toward God, whose law has been transgressed, and faith in Christ, his atoning sacrifice. Without true repentance, there can be no true conversion.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 298.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was shown by the fact that the people were eager to send spies to survey the land?
2. How did unbelief affect the ten spies and the congregation as a whole? How can we show the same unbelief?
3. How does a true leader attempt to counteract the work of complainers?
4. Would you like God to take you at your word when you speak in haste?
5. If I am truly sorry for my sins, what will it lead to in my own life?

# The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram

“And they [Korah, Dathan, and Abiram] rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown” (Numbers 16:2).

“The former rebellions had been mere popular tumults, arising from the sudden impulse of the excited multitude; but now a deep-laid conspiracy was formed, the result of a determined purpose to overthrow the authority of the leaders appointed by God Himself.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 395.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 395–405.

*Sunday*

May 10

## 1. A CONSPIRACY

- a. What conspiracy developed among the Israelites while they were chafing under the Lord’s decision that they must wander in the wilderness forty years? Who were the main conspirators? Numbers 16:1–3.

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- b. What test did Moses propose to the conspirators to prove the divine call? Numbers 16:4–7, 16–18. Why were the people inclined to sympathize with the rebels?

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“To those who are in the wrong, and deserving of reproof, there is nothing more pleasing than to receive sympathy and praise.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 397.

“The people thought if Korah could lead them, and encourage them, and dwell upon their righteous acts, instead of reminding them of their failures, they should have a very peaceful, prosperous journey, and he would without doubt lead them, not back and forward in the wilderness, but into the promised land. They said that it was Moses who had told them that they could not go into the land, and that the Lord had not thus said.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 31.

## 2. MOSES' APPEALS AND WARNINGS

- a. How did Moses try to reason with the main rebels, and of what did they accuse him? Numbers 16:8–15.
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“Dathan and Abiram had not taken so bold a stand as had Korah; and Moses, hoping that they might have been drawn into the conspiracy without having become wholly corrupted, summoned them to appear before him, that he might hear their charges against him. But they would not come, and they insolently refused to acknowledge his authority. . . .

“Thus they applied to the scene of their bondage the very language in which the Lord had described the promised inheritance. They accused Moses of pretending to act under divine guidance, as a means of establishing his authority. . . .

“It was evident that the sympathies of the people were with the disaffected party; but Moses made no effort at self-vindication. He solemnly appealed to God, in the presence of the congregation, as a witness to the purity of his motives and the uprightness of his conduct, and implored Him to be his judge.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 399.

- b. What efforts did Moses and Aaron make to save the congregation from destruction? Numbers 16:22–30. What was the result of their efforts?
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“[Moses and Aaron] fell upon their faces, with the prayer, ‘O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt Thou be wroth with all the congregation?’

“Korah had withdrawn from the assembly to join Dathan and Abiram when Moses, accompanied by the seventy elders, went down with a last warning to the men who had refused to come to him. The multitudes followed, and before delivering his message, Moses, by divine direction, bade the people, ‘Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.’ The warning was obeyed, for an apprehension of impending judgment rested upon all. The chief rebels saw themselves abandoned by those whom they had deceived, but their hardihood was unshaken. They stood with their families in the door of their tents, as if in defiance of the divine warning.”—*Ibid.*, p. 400.

### 3. THE REBELS PUNISHED

- a. What fate befell the rebels? Numbers 16:31–35.

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“The eyes of all Israel were fixed upon Moses as they stood, in terror and expectation, awaiting the event. As he ceased speaking, the solid earth parted, and the rebels went down alive into the pit, with all that pertained to them, and ‘they perished from among the congregation.’ The people fled, self-condemned as partakers in the sin.

“But the judgments were not ended. Fire flashing from the cloud consumed the two hundred and fifty princes who had offered incense. These men, not being the first in rebellion, were not destroyed with the chief conspirators. They were permitted to see their end, and to have an opportunity for repentance; but their sympathies were with the rebels, and they shared their fate.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 400, 401.

- b. How do we know that God does not punish indiscriminately? Who was spared? Deuteronomy 24:16; Numbers 26:9–11; 1 Chronicles 9:19. What lessons can we learn from this?

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“The children were not condemned for the sins of the parents; but when, with a knowledge of all the light given to their parents, the children rejected the additional light granted to themselves, they became partakers of the parents’ sins, and filled up the measure of their iniquity.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 28.

“When Moses was entreating Israel to flee from the coming destruction, the divine judgment might even then have been stayed, if Korah and his company had repented and sought forgiveness. But their stubborn persistence sealed their doom. . . . God in His great mercy made a distinction between the leaders in rebellion and those whom they had led. The people who had permitted themselves to be deceived were still granted space for repentance. Overwhelming evidence had been given that they were wrong, and that Moses was right. The signal manifestation of God’s power had removed all uncertainty.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 401.

- c. What use was made of the censers of the rebels? For what purpose? Numbers 16:36–40.
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#### 4. THE PEOPLE ARE PUNISHED

- a. **Despite the evidences that were given to the congregation, what course did they pursue toward Moses and Aaron on the next day? Numbers 16:41.**
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“It is hardly possible for men to offer greater insult to God than to despise and reject the instrumentalities He would use for their salvation. The Israelites had not only done this, but had purposed to put both Moses and Aaron to death. Yet they did not realize the necessity of seeking pardon of God for their grievous sin. That night of probation was not passed in repentance and confession, but in devising some way to resist the evidences which showed them to be the greatest of sinners. They still cherished hatred of the men of God’s appointment, and braced themselves to resist their authority. Satan was at hand to pervert their judgment and lead them blindfold to destruction.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 402.

- b. **In what way did the Lord intervene once more with a severe punishment, and what did Moses and Aaron do to avert the judgment? Numbers 16:44–49.**
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“Even after God stretched forth His hand and swallowed up the wrong-doers, and the people fled to their tents in horror, their rebellion was not cured. The depth of their disaffection was made manifest even under the judgment of the Lord. The morning after the destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and their confederates, the people came to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘Ye have killed the people of the Lord.’ For this false charge on the servants of God, thousands more were killed, for there was in them sin, exultation and presumptuous wickedness.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1114.

“The guilt of sin did not rest upon Moses, and hence he did not fear and did not hasten away and leave the congregation to perish. Moses lingered, in this fearful crisis manifesting the true shepherd’s interest for the flock of his care. He pleaded that the wrath of God might not utterly destroy the people of His choice. By his intercession he stayed the arm of vengeance, that a full end might not be made of disobedient, rebellious Israel. . . .

“As the smoke of the incense ascended, the prayers of Moses in the tabernacle went up to God; and the plague was stayed; but not until fourteen thousand of Israel lay dead, an evidence of the guilt of murmuring and rebellion.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 402, 403.

## 5. A TESTIMONY AGAINST REBELLION

- a. What test settled the question of the priesthood forever, and where was Aaron's rod kept as a witness? Numbers 17:1–11.

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“All the remarkable changes in the rod occurred in one night, to convince them that God had positively distinguished between Aaron and the rest of the children of Israel.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1115.

- b. What warning comes to us from that great rebellion? 1 Corinthians 10:10, 11.

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“Do not the same evils still exist that lay at the foundation of Korah's ruin? Pride and ambition are widespread; and when these are cherished, they open the door to envy, and a striving for supremacy; the soul is alienated from God, and unconsciously drawn into the ranks of Satan. Like Korah and his companions, many, even of the professed followers of Christ, are thinking, planning, and working so eagerly for self-exaltation that in order to gain the sympathy and support of the people they are ready to pervert the truth, falsifying and misrepresenting the Lord's servants, and even charging them with the base and selfish motives that inspire their own hearts. By persistently reiterating falsehood, and that against all evidence, they at last come to believe it to be truth. While endeavoring to destroy the confidence of the people in the men of God's appointment, they really believe that they are engaged in a good work, verily doing God service.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 403, 404.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What attitude is pleasing to the natural heart when we are in the wrong?
2. When Dathan and Abiram refused to come and speak to Moses, what was significant about their families standing next to them?
3. What lesson can we learn from God's treatment of the children of Korah?
4. After the destruction of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and their confederates, what was the response of the people? Why is this attitude so dangerous?
5. What cherished attitudes lay at the foundation of rebellion against God?

# Wandering Through the Wilderness

“And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no” (Deuteronomy 8:2).

“The wilderness wandering was not only ordained as a judgment upon the rebels and murmurers, but it was to serve as a discipline for the rising generation, preparatory to their entrance into the Promised Land.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 407.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 406–410.

*Sunday*

May 17

## 1. A DELAYED ENTRANCE INTO THE PROMISED LAND

- a. How long did the children of Israel wander in the wilderness before they came again to Kadesh and crossed the Brook Zered? Deuteronomy 2:14. Why did it take so long?

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“God gave positive evidence that He rules in the heavens, and rebellion was punished with death. Only two of those who as adults left Egypt, saw the promised land. The wanderings of the people were extended until the rest were buried in the wilderness.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1113.

“Had Israel obeyed the directions given them by Moses, not one of those who started on the journey from Egypt would in the wilderness have fallen a prey to disease or death. They were under a safe Guide. Christ had pledged Himself to lead them safely to the promised land if they would follow His guidance. This vast multitude, numbering more than a million people, was under His direct rule. They were His family. In every one of them He was interested.”—*Ibid.*, p. 1118.

## 2. GOD PROVIDES AND INSTRUCTS

- a. What evidences do we have of God's care for His people during their time of wandering in the wilderness? Nehemiah 9:19–21; Psalm 105:37.
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- b. How was the wilderness wandering a discipline for the rising generation? Deuteronomy 8:2, 3.
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“God permitted these lonely travels through the wilderness that His people might obtain an experience in enduring hardship, and that when they were in peril they might know that there was relief and deliverance in God alone. Thus they might learn to know and to trust God, and to serve Him with a living faith.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 409.

“As the people journeyed through the wilderness, many precious lessons were fixed in their minds by means of song. . . . The commandments as given from Sinai, with promises of God's favor and records of His wonderful works for their deliverance, were by divine direction expressed in song, and were chanted to the sound of instrumental music, the people keeping step as their voices united in praise.

“Thus their thoughts were uplifted from the trials and difficulties of the way, the restless, turbulent spirit was soothed and calmed, the principles of truth were implanted in the memory, and faith was strengthened.”—*Education*, p. 39.

- c. What was the main reason why many of the Israelites were unable to enter the Promised Land? How can we avoid falling into the same sin? Hebrews 3:7–14.
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“It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness. . . . In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message. In mercy to the world, Jesus delays His coming, that sinners may have an opportunity to hear the warning and find in Him a shelter before the wrath of God shall be poured out.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 458.

### 3. THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNCONVERTED

- a. **What class of people often proved to be troublemakers? Numbers 11:4.**
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“The mixed multitude that came up with the Israelites from Egypt were a source of continual temptation and trouble. They professed to have renounced idolatry and to worship the true God; but their early education and training had molded their habits and character, and they were more or less corrupted with idolatry and with irreverence for God. They were oftenest the ones to stir up strife and were the first to complain, and they leavened the camp with their idolatrous practices and their murmurings against God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 408.

- b. **What was God’s command with regard to uniting with unbelievers? Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 6:14. What about today?**
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“[The Israelites] were warned not to have any connection with idolaters, not to intermarry with them, nor in any way put themselves in danger of being affected and corrupted by their abominations. They were counseled to shun the very appearance of evil, not to dabble around the borders of sin, for this was the surest way to be engulfed in sin and ruin.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1000.

“God strictly forbade the intermarrying of His ancient people with other nations. . . . But the heathen were in a more favorable condition than are the impenitent in this age, who, having the light of truth, yet persistently refuse to accept it.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 508.

- c. **What is always the result of being closely associated with the unconverted? 1 Corinthians 15:33, 34.**
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“It is wrong for Christians to associate with those whose morals are loose. An intimate, daily intercourse which occupies time without contributing in any degree to the strength of the intellect or morals is dangerous. If the moral atmosphere surrounding persons is not pure and sanctified, but is tainted with corruption, those who breathe this atmosphere will find that it operates almost insensibly upon the intellect and heart to poison and to ruin.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 125.

#### 4. CONTEMPT FOR DIVINE AUTHORITY

- a. **How was contempt for divine authority and violation of the third commandment punished? Leviticus 24:10–16, 23.**
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“On one occasion the son of an Israelitish woman and of an Egyptian, one of the mixed multitude that had come up with Israel from Egypt, left his own part of the camp, and entering that of the Israelites, claimed the right to pitch his tent there. This the divine law forbade him to do, the descendants of an Egyptian being excluded from the congregation until the third generation. A dispute arose between him and an Israelite, and the matter being referred to the judges was decided against the offender.

“Enraged at this decision, he cursed the judge, and in the heat of passion blasphemed the name of God. . . . God Himself pronounced the sentence; by the divine direction the blasphemer was conducted outside the camp and stoned to death. Those who had been witness to the sin placed their hands upon his head, thus solemnly testifying to the truth of the charge against him. Then they threw the first stones, and the people who stood by afterward joined in executing the sentence.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 407, 408.

- b. **Why was the punishment for these offenses so severe? Exodus 20:7.**
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“There are those who will question God’s love and His justice in visiting so severe punishment for words spoken in the heat of passion. But both love and justice require it to be shown that utterances prompted by malice against God are a great sin. The retribution visited upon the first offender would be a warning to others, that God’s name is to be held in reverence. But had this man’s sin been permitted to pass unpunished, others would have been demoralized; and as the result many lives must eventually have been sacrificed.”—*Ibid.*, p. 408.

- c. **How do we sometimes show contempt for God’s authority today? Judges 17:6.**
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“The sin of this age is disregard of God’s express commands.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 483.

## 5. CHOOSING OBEDIENCE INSTEAD

- a. Why did the Lord require obedience of His ancient people? Deuteronomy 6:1, 2, 24, 25. Where does true obedience spring from? Deuteronomy 6:5, 6.
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“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

- b. Where should we begin to teach obedience and why? Deuteronomy 6:7–9.
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“From their earliest life children should be taught to obey their parents, to respect their word, and to reverence their authority. . . . In respecting and rendering obedience to their parents, they may learn how to respect and obey their heavenly Father.”—*Child Guidance*, pp. 82, 83.

“Let the youth and the little children be taught to choose for themselves that royal robe woven in heaven’s loom—the ‘fine linen, clean and white’ (Revelation 19:8), which all the holy ones of earth will wear. This robe, Christ’s own spotless character, is freely offered to every human being. But all who receive it will receive and wear it here.

“Let the children be taught that as they open their minds to pure, loving thoughts and do loving and helpful deeds, they are clothing themselves with His beautiful garment of character.”—*Ibid.*, p. 190.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Had the Israelites obeyed Moses, what would have happened to them?
2. What role did singing have in the wilderness journey?
3. What is to be our sole purpose in associating with unbelievers?
4. How can we reverence God’s name today?
5. How may we be daily clothing ourselves with Christ’s character?

# The Smitten Rock

“And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them” (Numbers 20:12).

“To dispel forever from the minds of the Israelites the idea that a man was leading them, God found it necessary to allow their leader to die before they entered the land of Canaan.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1116.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 411–421.

*Sunday*

May 24

## 1. GOD SUPPLIES ALL NEEDS

- a. How were the Israelites supplied with water during their wilderness wanderings? Psalm 105:41; Isaiah 48:21.

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“From the smitten rock in Horeb first flowed the living stream that refreshed Israel in the desert. During all their wanderings, wherever the need existed, they were supplied with water by a miracle of God’s mercy. The water did not, however, continue to flow from Horeb. Wherever in their journeyings they wanted water, there from the clefts of the rock it gushed out beside their encampment.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 411.

- b. Who was the source of all their temporal as well as spiritual blessings? 1 Corinthians 10:4.

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“[Christ] is the source of all power, the giver of all temporal and spiritual blessings. He employs human beings as coworkers, giving them a part to act with Him as His helping hand. We are to receive from Him, not to hoard for self-gratification, but to impart to others.”—*The Review and Herald*, April 4, 1907.

## 2. THE FAITH OF THE PEOPLE TESTED

- a. **What trial of faith did the people of God have when they again came to Kadesh, and what was their reaction? Numbers 20:1–5.**
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“Just before the Hebrew host reached Kadesh, the living stream ceased that for so many years had gushed out beside their encampment. It was the Lord’s purpose again to test His people. He would prove whether they would trust His providence or imitate the unbelief of their fathers.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 413.

“Before God permitted them to enter Canaan, they must show that they believed His promise. The water ceased before they had reached Edom. Here was an opportunity for them, for a little time, to walk by faith instead of sight. But the first trial developed the same turbulent, unthankful spirit that had been manifested by their fathers. No sooner was the cry for water heard in the encampment than they forgot the hand that had for so many years supplied their wants, and instead of turning to God for help, they murmured against Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 414.

- b. **What did Moses and Aaron do when they heard the complaints of the people? Numbers 20:6.**
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- c. **What were Moses and Aaron directed to do to satisfy the needs of the people? Numbers 20:7, 8. What mistaken idea, still cherished by the people, was the Lord trying to correct?**
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“In all their wanderings, the children of Israel were tempted to attribute to Moses the special work of God, the mighty miracles that had been wrought to deliver them from Egyptian bondage. They charged Moses with bringing them out of the land of Egypt. It was true that God had manifested Himself wonderfully to Moses. He had specially favored him with His presence. To him God had revealed His exceeding glory. Upon the mount He had taken him into a sacred nearness to Himself, and had talked with him as a man speaks to a friend. But the Lord had given evidence after evidence that it was He Himself who was working for their deliverance.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, pp. 1115, 1116.

### 3. MOSES AND AARON FAIL

- a. How did Moses dishonor God when addressing the people? Numbers 20:9–11.
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“By his rash act Moses took away the force of the lesson that God purposed to teach. The rock, being a symbol of Christ, had been once smitten, as Christ was to be once offered. The second time it was needful only to speak to the rock, as we have only to ask for blessings in the name of Jesus. By the second smiting of the rock the significance of this beautiful figure of Christ was destroyed.

“More than this, Moses and Aaron had assumed power that belongs only to God. The necessity for divine interposition made the occasion one of great solemnity, and the leaders of Israel should have improved it to impress the people with reverence for God and to strengthen their faith in His power and goodness. When they angrily cried, ‘Must we fetch you water out of this rock?’ they put themselves in God’s place, as though the power lay with themselves, men possessing human frailties and passions.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 418.

- b. What punishment did Moses and Aaron bring upon themselves? Why? Numbers 20:12; Deuteronomy 3:23–27.
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“God did not on this occasion pronounce judgments upon those whose wicked course had so provoked Moses and Aaron. All the reproof fell upon the leaders. . . . Moses and Aaron had felt themselves aggrieved, losing sight of the fact that the murmuring of the people was not against them but against God. It was by looking to themselves, appealing to their own sympathies, that they unconsciously fell into sin, and failed to set before the people their great guilt before God.

“Bitter and deeply humiliating was the judgment immediately pronounced. . . . With rebellious Israel they must die before the crossing of the Jordan.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 418, 419.

“The transgression was known to the whole congregation; and had it been passed by lightly, the impression would have been given that unbelief and impatience under great provocation might be excused in those in responsible positions. But when it was declared that because of that one sin Moses and Aaron were not to enter Canaan, the people knew that God is no respecter of persons, and that He will surely punish the transgressor.”—*Ibid.*, p. 420.

#### 4. THE SMITTEN ROCK, A TYPE

- a. Of whom was the smitten rock a type, and why was it wrong to smite the rock again? Isaiah 53:3–5.
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“The smitten rock was a figure of Christ, and through this symbol the most precious spiritual truths are taught. As the life-giving waters flowed from the smitten rock, so from Christ, ‘smitten of God,’ ‘wounded for our transgressions,’ ‘bruised for our iniquities’ (Isaiah 53:4, 5), the stream of salvation flows for a lost race. As the rock had been once smitten, so Christ was to be ‘once offered to bear the sins of many.’ Hebrews 9:28. Our Saviour was not to be sacrificed a second time; and it is only necessary for those who seek the blessings of His grace to ask in the name of Jesus, pouring forth the heart’s desire in penitential prayer. Such prayer will bring before the Lord of hosts the wounds of Jesus, and then will flow forth afresh the life-giving blood, symbolized by the flowing of the living water for Israel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 411.

- b. On what occasion and how was the flowing of water from the rock celebrated by the Jewish people in the days of Christ? John 7:37–39.
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“The flowing of the water from the rock in the desert was celebrated by the Israelites, after their establishment in Canaan, with demonstrations of great rejoicing. In the time of Christ this celebration had become a most impressive ceremony. It took place on the occasion of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the people from all the land were assembled at Jerusalem. On each of the seven days of the feast the priests went out with music and the choir of Levites to draw water in a golden vessel from the spring of Siloam. They were followed by multitudes of the worshipers, as many as could get near the stream drinking of it, while the jubilant strains arose, ‘With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.’ Isaiah 12:3. Then the water drawn by the priests was borne to the temple amid the sounding of trumpets and the solemn chant, ‘Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.’ Psalm 122:2. The water was poured out upon the altar of burnt offering, while songs of praise rang out, the multitudes joining in triumphant chorus with musical instruments and deep-toned trumpets.”—*Ibid.*, p. 412.

**5. A LESSON FOR US**

- a. What lesson should we learn from the mistake of Moses? Psalm 106:33.
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“Moses was not guilty of a great crime, as men would view the matter; his sin was one of common occurrence. The psalmist says that ‘he spake unadvisedly with his lips.’ Psalm 106:33. To human judgment this may seem a light thing; but if God dealt so severely with this sin in His most faithful and honored servant, He will not excuse it in others. . . . The more important one’s position, and the greater his influence, the greater is the necessity that he should cultivate patience and humility.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 420.

- b. What warnings are calculated to keep us from self-exaltation? James 4:6, 7; 1 Corinthians 10:12.
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“However great one’s spiritual light, however much he may enjoy of the divine favor and blessing, he should ever walk humbly before the Lord, pleading in faith that God will direct every thought and control every impulse. . . .

“However great the pressure brought to bear upon the soul, transgression is our own act. It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer.”—*Ibid.*, p. 421.

**PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How did God supply water for the Israelites as they traveled? How does He supply our needs today?
2. How did the people react when God tested their faith? What about me?
3. Where was the focus of Moses and Aaron when they failed? Where is my focus, and what will the result be?
4. How was the beautiful lesson of the smitten Rock ruined by Moses?
5. How can I be kept safe from self-exaltation?

## First Sabbath Offerings for World Missions

Dear Brothers and Sisters around the world,

We are living in the last moments of the history of planet Earth and our Lord has anxiously been waiting for a long time to take us home. The prophetic events that are unfolding right before our eyes tell us that the second coming of Jesus is near, even at the door. Unfortunately, the gospel message has not reached the end of the world and not every creature has had an opportunity to hear the truth. “Men will soon be forced to great decisions, and they must have opportunity to hear and to understand Bible truth, in order that they may take their stand intelligently on the right side” (*Evangelism*, p. 25).



As members of God’s church, it is our privilege to represent His character and to take part in spreading the gospel to the end of the world by committing to this special work our time, strength, and financial resources.

Thanks to our members and friends’ prayers and financial contribution, new missions are being instituted in many regions. These new Missions still need our support until they are well established and become self-supporting while new areas are being opened. Every year we collect a special offering to supply the necessary means to spread the message in many parts of the globe.

“The Lord’s heritage has been strangely neglected, and God will judge His people for this thing. Pride and the love of display are gratified by the accumulated advantages, while new fields are left untouched. The rebuke of God is upon the managers for their partiality and selfish appropriation of His goods” (*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 59).

Will you choose to unite your efforts with those of the missionaries and their families by giving liberally from your resources so that the earth would be filled with God’s glory and that Jesus may come soon? We hope you will.

In behalf of a world in need,

*The General Conference Missionary Department*

# The Journey Around Edom

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).

“The brazen serpent was uplifted in the wilderness that those who looked in faith might be made whole. In like manner God sends a restoring, healing message to men, calling upon them to look away from man and earthly things, and place their trust in God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 1, p. 1116.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 422–432.

*Sunday*

May 31

## 1. PASSAGE THROUGH EDOM REFUSED

- a. What message did Moses send to the king of Edom, and what answer was received? Numbers 20:14–18.

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“The Edomites were descendants of Abraham and Isaac, and for the sake of these His servants, God had shown favor to the children of Esau. He had given them Mount Seir for a possession, and they were not to be disturbed unless by their sins they should place themselves beyond the reach of His mercy.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 423.

- b. How did the leaders of Israel renew their appeal to the king of Edom, and what was his answer? Numbers 20:19, 20. What failure on the part of the people gave Satan a decided advantage in this negative experience?

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“The Israelites did not act promptly upon God’s word, and while they were complaining and murmuring, the golden opportunity passed. When they were at last ready to present their request to the king, it was refused.”—*Ibid.*, p. 423.

## 2. THE DEATH OF AARON

- a. **Instead of going through the land of Edom, what route did the children of Israel take? Numbers 20:21, 22; 21:4.**
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- b. **When Israel came to Mount Hor, what did the Lord say to Moses and Aaron? Numbers 20:23–26.**
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“Many years Moses and Aaron had stood side by side in their cares and labors. Together they had breasted unnumbered dangers, and had shared together the signal blessing of God; but the time was at hand when they must be separated. They moved on very slowly, for every moment in each other’s society was precious. The ascent was steep and toilsome; and as they often paused to rest, they communed together of the past and the future. . . . No rebellious feelings found a place in their hearts, no expression of murmuring escaped their lips; yet a solemn sadness rested upon their countenances as they remembered what had debarred them from the inheritance of their fathers.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 425.

- c. **What solemnity attended the transfer of the high-priestly responsibilities for Aaron to Eleazar, and how long did Israel mourn for Aaron? Numbers 20:27–29.**
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“With deep sorrow Moses removed from Aaron the holy vestments, and placed them upon Eleazar, who thus became his successor by divine appointment. For his sin at Kadesh, Aaron was denied the privilege of officiating as God’s high priest in Canaan—of offering the first sacrifice in the goodly land, and thus consecrating the inheritance of Israel. Moses was to continue to bear his burden in leading the people to the very borders of Canaan. He was to come within sight of the Promised Land, but was not to enter it. Had these servants of God, when they stood before the rock at Kadesh, borne unmurmuringly the test there brought upon them, how different would have been their future! A wrong act can never be undone. It may be that the work of a lifetime will not recover what has been lost in a single moment of temptation or even thoughtlessness.”—*Ibid.*, p. 426.

### 3. DEFEAT OF KING ARAD

- a. Who attacked Israel soon after the death of Aaron, and what was the result? Numbers 21:1–3.
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“Soon after leaving Mount Hor the Israelites suffered defeat in an engagement with Arad, one of the Canaanite kings. But as they earnestly sought help from God, divine aid was granted them, and their enemies were routed. This victory, instead of inspiring gratitude and leading the people to feel their dependence upon God, made them boastful and self-confident.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 427, 428.

- b. Instead of being thankful to the Lord, into what practice did the people again relapse? Numbers 21:4 (last part), 5.
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“Soon they fell into the old habit of murmuring. They were now dissatisfied because the armies of Israel had not been permitted to advance upon Canaan immediately after their rebellion at the report of the spies nearly forty years before. They pronounced their long sojourn in the wilderness an unnecessary delay, reasoning that they might have conquered their enemies as easily heretofore as now.

“As they continued their journey toward the south, their route lay through a hot, sandy valley, destitute of shade or vegetation. The way seemed long and difficult, and they suffered from weariness and thirst. Again they failed to endure the test of their faith and patience. By continually dwelling on the dark side of their experiences, they separated themselves farther and farther from God. They lost sight of the fact that but for their murmuring when the water ceased at Kadesh, they would have been spared the journey around Edom. God had purposed better things for them. Their hearts should have been filled with gratitude to Him that He had punished their sin so lightly. But instead of this, they flattered themselves that if God and Moses had not interfered, they might now have been in possession of the Promised Land. After bringing trouble upon themselves, making their lot altogether harder than God designed, they charged all their misfortunes upon Him. Thus they cherished bitter thoughts concerning His dealings with them, and finally they became discontented with everything. Egypt looked brighter and more desirable than liberty and the land to which God was leading them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 428.

#### 4. STUNG BY THE SERPENTS

- a. **Because of the unwarranted murmurings of the people, what did the Lord permit to come into the camp of Israel? Numbers 21:6.**
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“Because they had been shielded by divine power they had not realized the countless dangers by which they were continually surrounded. In their ingratitude and unbelief they had anticipated death, and now the Lord permitted death to come upon them. The poisonous serpents that infested the wilderness were called fiery serpents, on account of the terrible effects produced by their sting, it causing violent inflammation and speedy death. As the protecting hand of God was removed from Israel, great numbers of the people were attacked by these venomous creatures.

“Now there was terror and confusion throughout the encampment. In almost every tent were the dying or the dead. None were secure. Often the silence of night was broken by piercing cries that told of fresh victims. All were busy in ministering to the sufferers, or with agonizing care endeavoring to protect those who were not yet stricken. No murmuring now escaped their lips. When compared with the present suffering, their former difficulties and trials seemed unworthy of a thought.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 429.

- b. **What did the people do when they realized that the Lord was punishing them for their rebellious behavior, and what remedy was provided? Numbers 21:7–9.**
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“Moses was divinely commanded to make a serpent of brass resembling the living ones, and to elevate it among the people. To this, all who had been bitten were to look, and they would find relief. . . .

“The people well knew that there was no power in the serpent of brass to cause such a change in those who looked upon it. The healing virtue was from God alone. In His wisdom He chose this way of displaying His power. By this simple means the people were made to realize that this affliction had been brought upon them by their sins. They were also assured that while obeying God they had no reason to fear, for He would preserve them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 430.

## 5. THE REMEDY FOR SIN

- a. Of whom was the brazen serpent a type? John 3:14, 15; Amos 5:4.
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“The Israelites saved their lives by looking upon the uplifted serpent. That look implied faith. They lived because they believed God’s word, and trusted in the means provided for their recovery. So the sinner may look to Christ, and live. He receives pardon through faith in the atoning sacrifice. Unlike the inert and lifeless symbol, Christ has power and virtue in Himself to heal the repenting sinner.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 431.

- b. By whom and how only can we be healed? Psalm 103:2, 3; 1 Peter 2:21, 24.
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“While we realize our helpless condition without Christ, we are not to yield to discouragement, but rely upon the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. Look and live. Jesus has pledged His word; He will save all who come unto Him. Though millions who need to be healed will reject His offered mercy, not one who trusts in His merits will be left to perish.”—*Ibid.*, p. 432.

“While the sinner cannot save himself, he still has something to do to secure salvation. ‘Him that cometh to Me,’ says Christ, ‘I will in no wise cast out.’ John 6:37. But we must *come* to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours.”—*Ibid.*, p. 431.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why were the Edomites not destroyed at this time?
2. What can we learn from the experience of Moses and Aaron about the far-reaching consequences of just one action?
3. What thought pattern leads to murmuring? How can we avoid this?
4. What simple remedy was provided for the snake bites? Where was the healing virtue in the brass serpent?
5. Where do we need to look to be saved from sin? What is involved in looking?

# Victory over Sihon and Og

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:5).

“The calm faith of their leader inspired the people with confidence in God. They trusted all to His omnipotent arm, and He did not fail them. Not mighty giants nor walled cities, armed hosts nor rocky fortresses, could stand before the Captain of the Lord’s host.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 436.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 433–437.

*Sunday*

June 7

## 1. ISRAEL THREATENED WITH DESTRUCTION

a. What directions did the Israelites receive concerning the Moabites and the Ammonites? Deuteronomy 2:9, 19.

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b. When Israel reached the land of the Amorites, what message did Moses send to Sihon, their king, and what was his answer? Deuteronomy 2:26–30; Numbers 21:21–23.

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“The answer [of Sihon] was a decided refusal, and all the hosts of the Amorites were summoned to oppose the progress of the invaders. This formidable army struck terror to the Israelites, who were poorly prepared for an encounter with well-armed and well-disciplined forces. So far as skill in warfare was concerned, their enemies had the advantage. To all human appearance, a speedy end would be made of Israel.

“But Moses kept his gaze fixed upon the cloudy pillar, and encouraged the people with the thought that the token of God’s presence was still with them. At the same time he directed them to do all that human power could do in preparing for war. Their enemies were eager for battle, and confident that they would blot out the unprepared Israelites from the land.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 433, 434.

## 2. THE AMORITES ARE CONQUERED

- a. What instruction came from the Possessor of all lands to the leader of Israel? Deuteronomy 2:31.
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- b. What had been prophesied concerning the Amorites in the time of Abraham? Genesis 15:16.
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“Although the Amorites were idolaters, whose life was justly forfeited by their great wickedness, God spared them four hundred years to give them unmistakable evidence that He was the only true God, the Maker of heaven and earth. All His wonders in bringing Israel from Egypt were known to them. Sufficient evidence was given; they might have known the truth, had they been willing to turn from their idolatry and licentiousness. But they rejected the light and clung to their idols.

“When the Lord brought His people a second time to the borders of Canaan, additional evidence of His power was granted to those heathen nations. They saw that God was with Israel in the victory gained over King Arad and the Canaanites, and in the miracle wrought to save those who were perishing from the sting of the serpents. . . . In all their journeyings and encampments, past the land of Edom, of Moab and Ammon, they had shown no hostility, and had done no injury to the people or their possessions. On reaching the border of the Amorites, Israel had asked permission only to travel directly through the country, promising to observe the same rules that had governed their intercourse with other nations. When the Amorite king refused this courteous solicitation, and defiantly gathered his hosts for battle, their cup of iniquity was full, and God would now exercise His power for their overthrow.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 434, 435.

- c. What was the result of the battle? Deuteronomy 2:32–35; Numbers 21:24.
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“The Israelites crossed the river Arnon and advanced upon the foe. An engagement took place, in which the armies of Israel were victorious; and, following up the advantage gained, they were soon in possession of the country of the Amorites. It was the Captain of the Lord’s host who vanquished the enemies of His people; and He would have done the same thirty-eight years before had Israel trusted in Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 435.

### 3. HAVING CONFIDENCE IN GOD

- a. How does David aptly describe the attitude Moses would have had when hearing of the great armies of Canaan? Psalm 112:7, 8.
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“Help and grace sufficient for every circumstance are promised by Him whose word is truth. His everlasting arms encircle the soul that turns to Him for aid. In His care we may rest safely, saying, ‘What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.’ Psalm 56:3. To all who put their trust in Him, God will fulfill His promise.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 467.

- b. What could Moses confidently say after conquering Sihon, king of Heshbon? Deuteronomy 2:36. How were the people inspired?
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“The Hebrews now remembered how once before, when their forces had gone to battle, they had been routed, and thousands slain. But they had then gone in direct opposition to the command of God. They had gone out without Moses, God’s appointed leader, without the cloudy pillar, the symbol of the divine presence, and without the ark. But now Moses was with them, strengthening their hearts with words of hope and faith; the Son of God, enshrined in the cloudy pillar, led the way; and the sacred ark accompanied the host.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 437.

- c. Of what can we be confident as we journey through life on this earth? Philippians 1:6.
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“Those who live amid the perils of the last days may realize that just as at the beginning of their experience the truth united them to the Saviour, so He who is the author and finisher of their faith will perfect the work He has begun for them. God is faithful, by whom we are called to fellowship with His Son. As men and women cooperate with God in doing the work He has given them, they go forward from strength to greater strength. As they exercise simple faith, believing day by day that God will not fail to establish them in Christ, God says to them as He did to ancient Israel: ‘Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.’ Deuteronomy 7:6.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 24.

**4. OG, KING OF BASHAN, IS CONQUERED**

- a. What was the next target of the Israelites after the victory over Sihon? Deuteronomy 3:1. Describe the land and the people of Bashan.

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“Filled with hope and courage, the army of Israel eagerly pressed forward, and, still journeying northward, they soon reached a country that might well test their courage and their faith in God. Before them lay the powerful and populous kingdom of Bashan, crowded with great stone cities that to this day excite the wonder of the world—‘three-score cities . . . with high walls, gates, and bars; besides unwalled towns a great many.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 435.

- b. What message did the Lord send to Moses concerning Og and his army, and what was the result of the battle? Numbers 21:34, 35; Deuteronomy 3:2–7.

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“Not mighty giants nor walled cities, armed hosts nor rocky fortresses, could stand before the Captain of the Lord’s host. The Lord led the army; the Lord discomfited the enemy; the Lord conquered in behalf of Israel. The giant king and his army were destroyed, and the Israelites soon took possession of the whole country. Thus was blotted from the earth that strange people who had given themselves up to iniquity and abominable idolatry.”—*Ibid.*, p. 436.

- c. How did the Lord help His people in the war against the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og? Joshua 24:12. How did the new generation of Israelites see the mistake of their fathers?

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“In the conquest of Gilead and Bashan there were many who recalled the events which nearly forty years before had, in Kadesh, doomed Israel to the long desert wandering. They saw that the report of the spies concerning the Promised Land was in many respects correct. The cities were walled and very great, and were inhabited by giants, in comparison with whom the Hebrews were mere pygmies. But they could now see that the fatal mistake of their fathers had been in distrusting the power of God. This alone had prevented them from at once entering the goodly land.”—*Ibid.*

## 5. LESSONS FOR US

- a. What lesson can we learn when seeing how Israel, greatly outnumbered from a human perspective, triumphed over their enemies? Zechariah 4:6.

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“In comparison with the millions of the world, God’s people will be, as they have ever been, a little flock; but if they stand for the truth as revealed in His word, God will be their refuge. They stand under the broad shield of Omnipotence. God is always a majority.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 590.

“Is not God a majority? If we are on the side of the God who made the heaven and the earth, are we not on the side of the majority? We have the angels that excel in strength on our side.”—*Temperance*, p. 258.

- b. What lesson does this event teach us? Psalm 37:1–3, 5.

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“This experience has a lesson for us. The mighty God of Israel is our God. In Him we may trust, and if we obey His requirements He will work for us in as signal a manner as He did for His ancient people. Everyone who seeks to follow the path of duty will at times be assailed by doubt and unbelief. The way will sometimes be so barred by obstacles, apparently insurmountable, as to dishearten those who will yield to discouragement; but God is saying to such, Go forward. Do your duty at any cost. The difficulties that seem so formidable, that fill your soul with dread, will vanish as you move forward in the path of obedience, humbly trusting in God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 437.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In preparing to fight against the Amorites, how did Israel show a faith that works?
2. Why does God still spare the wicked inhabitants of this world today?
3. Just as God wanted to establish Israel in Canaan, in what does He want to establish us today? What does this mean?
4. What did the next generation of Israelites realize about the focus of their fathers?
5. What will happen when we do our duty regardless of the obstacles in our way?

# Apostasy at the Jordan

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12).

“It is the special work of Satan in these last days to take possession of the minds of youth, to corrupt the thoughts and inflame the passions; for he knows that by so doing he can lead to impure actions, and thus all the noble faculties of the mind will become debased.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 440.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 453–461.

*Sunday*

June 14

## 1. GOD’S FAVOR IS OUR PROTECTION

- a. What did Balak, king of Moab, seek to do? Why? Numbers 22:2, 3, 5–7.

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- b. Why couldn’t Balaam curse Israel? Numbers 22:38; 23:8.

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- c. What fact about the spiritual state of Israel was another reason why they couldn’t be cursed? Numbers 23:21. How is this so encouraging for us?

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“While they were under the divine protection, no people or nation, though aided by all the power of Satan, should be able to prevail against them. All the world should wonder at the marvelous work of God in behalf of His people—that a man determined to pursue a sinful course should be so controlled by divine power as to utter, instead of imprecations, the richest and most precious promises, in the language of sublime and impassioned poetry. And the favor of God at this time manifested toward Israel was to be an assurance of His protecting care for His obedient, faithful children in all ages. When Satan should inspire evil men to misrepresent, harass, and destroy God’s people, this very occurrence would be brought to their remembrance, and would strengthen their courage and their faith in God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 449.

## 2. BLESSINGS AND PROPHETIC PROMISES

- a. **What blessings did God inspire Balaam to pronounce upon Israel? First blessing: Numbers 23:7–10. Second blessing: Verses 18–24. Third blessing: Chapter 24:5–9.**
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- b. **What prophecy did Balaam then utter about Israel and the coming Messiah? Numbers 24:15–17**
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“The light of God is ever shining amid the darkness of heathenism. As [the] magi studied the starry heavens, and sought to fathom the mystery hidden in their bright paths, they beheld the glory of the Creator. Seeking clearer knowledge, they turned to the Hebrew Scriptures. In their own land were treasured prophetic writings that predicted the coming of a divine teacher. Balaam belonged to the magicians, though at one time a prophet of God; by the Holy Spirit he had foretold the prosperity of Israel and the appearing of the Messiah; and his prophecies had been handed down by tradition from century to century. But in the Old Testament the Saviour’s advent was more clearly revealed.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 59, 60.

- c. **What did Balaam prophesy about the fate of the nations then dwelling in the Promised Land? Numbers 24:17–23.**
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“God gives nations a certain time of probation. He sends light and evidence, that, if received, will save them, but if refused as the Jews refused light, indignation and punishment will fall upon them. If men refuse to be benefited, and choose darkness rather than light, they will reap the results of their choice.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 4, pp. 1143, 1144.

“With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While His mercy is tendered with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf.

“The prophet [Ezekiel], looking down the ages, had this time presented before his vision. The nations of this age have been the recipients of unprecedented mercies. The choicest of heaven’s blessings have been given them, but increased pride, covetousness, idolatry, contempt of God, and base ingratitude are written against them. They are fast closing up their account with God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 208, 209.

**3. THE CURSE CAUSELESS SHALL NOT COME**

- a. **With what lures did Satan seek to entrap the children of Israel as they were just about to enter the Promised Land? Numbers 25:1.**
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- b. **What did the Moabites do to allure Israel still further away from God? Numbers 25:2, 3.**
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“At Balaam’s suggestion, a grand festival in honor of their gods was appointed by the king of Moab, and it was secretly arranged that Balaam should induce the Israelites to attend. He was regarded by them as a prophet of God, and hence had little difficulty in accomplishing his purpose. Great numbers of the people joined him in witnessing the festivities. They ventured upon the forbidden ground, and were entangled in the snare of Satan. Beguiled with music and dancing, and allured by the beauty of heathen vestals, they cast off their fealty to Jehovah. As they united in mirth and feasting, indulgence in wine beclouded their senses and broke down the barriers of self-control. Passion had full sway; and having defiled their consciences by lewdness, they were persuaded to bow down to idols. They offered sacrifice upon heathen altars and participated in the most degrading rites.

“It was not long before the poison had spread, like a deadly infection, through the camp of Israel. Those who would have conquered their enemies in battle were overcome by the wiles of heathen women. The people seemed to be infatuated. The rulers and the leading men were among the first to transgress, and so many of the people were guilty that the apostasy became national. ‘Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor.’”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 454.

- c. **What swift punishment did God send upon the disobedient? Why? Numbers 25:4, 5, 9.**
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“A terrible pestilence broke out in the camp, to which tens of thousands speedily fell a prey. God commanded that the leaders in this apostasy be put to death by the magistrates. This order was promptly obeyed. The offenders were slain, then their bodies were hung up in sight of all Israel that the congregation, seeing the leaders so severely dealt with, might have a deep sense of God’s abhorrence of their sin and the terror of His wrath against them.”—*Ibid.*, p. 455.

#### 4. THE SNARE OF SENSUALITY

- a. What sins are among the works of sinful human nature? Galatians 5:19. How prevalent is lasciviousness, or licentiousness, in our day?
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“Licentiousness is the special sin of this age. Never did vice lift its deformed head with such boldness as now. The people seem to be benumbed, and the lovers of virtue and true goodness are nearly discouraged by its boldness, strength, and prevalence. The iniquity which abounds is not merely confined to the unbeliever and the scoffer. Would that this were the case, but it is not. Many men and women who profess the religion of Christ are guilty. . . . Every Christian will have to learn to restrain his passions and be controlled by principle.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 346, 347.

- b. As we stand today on the borders of the heavenly Canaan, what lesson can we learn from the apostasy of Israel at the Jordan? 1 Corinthians 10:8, 12.
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“All along through the ages there are strewn wrecks of character that have been stranded upon the rocks of sensual indulgence. As we approach the close of time, as the people of God stand upon the borders of the heavenly Canaan, Satan will, as of old, redouble his efforts to prevent them from entering the goodly land. He lays his snares for every soul. It is not the ignorant and uncultured merely that need to be guarded; he will prepare his temptations for those in the highest positions, in the most holy office; if he can lead them to pollute their souls, he can through them destroy many. And he employs the same agents now as he employed three thousand years ago. By worldly friendships, by the charms of beauty, by pleasure seeking, mirth, feasting, or the wine cup, he tempts to the violation of the seventh commandment.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 457, 458.

“Sensual indulgence weakens the mind and debases the soul. The moral and intellectual powers are benumbed and paralyzed by the gratification of the animal propensities; and it is impossible for the slave of passion to realize the sacred obligation of the law of God, to appreciate the atonement, or to place a right value upon the soul. Goodness, purity, and truth, reverence for God, and love for sacred things—all those holy affections and noble desires that link men with the heavenly world—are consumed in the fires of lust.” —*Ibid.*, p. 458.

## 5. AVOIDING THE SINS OF THIS AGE

- a. What warnings are calculated to protect us from apostasy especially today in our preparation for heaven? 2 Corinthians 6:17; James 4:4.
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“It was by associating with idolaters and joining in their festivities that the Hebrews were led to transgress God’s law and bring His judgments upon the nation. So now it is by leading the followers of Christ to associate with the ungodly and unite in their amusements that Satan is most successful in alluring them into sin. ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean.’ 2 Corinthians 6:17. God requires of His people now as great a distinction from the world, in customs, habits, and principles, as He required of Israel anciently. If they faithfully follow the teachings of His word, this distinction will exist; it cannot be otherwise. The warnings given to the Hebrews against assimilating with the heathen were not more direct or explicit than are those forbidding Christians to conform to the spirit and customs of the ungodly.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 458.

- b. What can we do to avoid licentiousness? 1 Peter 1:13; Philippians 4:8.
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“Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices, must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts. The mind must not be left to dwell at random upon every subject that the enemy of souls may suggest.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 518.

“Every wrong tendency may be, through the grace of Christ, repressed, not in a languid, irresolute manner, but with firmness of purpose, with high resolves to make Christ the pattern. Let your love go out for those things that Jesus loved, and be withheld from those things that will give no strength to right impulses.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 135.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What should give us hope and courage as evildoers plot against us?
2. How was Baalam used to enlighten heathen nations in regard to Christ?
3. How did Israel forfeit God’s protection on the borders of Canaan?
4. Why should sensual indulgence be a major concern for us today?
5. How can we keep our thoughts pure?

# The Death of Moses

“And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end” (Hebrews 3:5, 6).

“As a shepherd of sheep, Moses was taught to care for the afflicted, to nurse the sick, to seek patiently after the straying, to bear long with the unruly, to supply with loving solicitude the wants of the young lambs and the necessities of the old and feeble.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 343.

**Suggested Reading:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 469–480.

*Sunday*

June 21

## 1. MOSES ENCOURAGES THE PEOPLE

- a. As Moses' end was drawing near, with what encouraging words did he address first the people, and then Joshua? Deuteronomy 31:1–8.

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“As the people gazed upon the aged man, so soon to be taken from them, they recalled, with a new and deeper appreciation, his parental tenderness, his wise counsels, and his untiring labors. How often, when their sins had invited the just judgments of God, the prayers of Moses had prevailed with Him to spare them! Their grief was heightened by remorse. They bitterly remembered that their own perversity had provoked Moses to the sin for which he must die.

“The removal of their beloved leader would be a far stronger rebuke to Israel than any which they could have received had his life and mission been continued. God would lead them to feel that they were not to make the life of their future leader as trying as they had made that of Moses. God speaks to His people in blessings bestowed; and when these are not appreciated, He speaks to them in blessings removed, that they may be led to see their sins, and return to Him with all the heart.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 470.

## 2. READING THE BOOK OF THE LAW

- a. How often were the people required to listen to the reading of the laws, and which groups of people were to do so? Why? Deuteronomy 31:9–13.
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“[God] requires parents to train up their children and with unceasing diligence to educate them with regard to the claims of His law and to instruct them in the knowledge and fear of God. These injunctions which God laid upon the Jews with so much solemnity, rest with equal weight upon Christian parents.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 294.

- b. What was the plan of God for Israel? What were the conditions upon which this promise was to be fulfilled? Deuteronomy 28:12–14.
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“These promises given to Israel are also for God’s people today.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 351.

- c. What was given to the Israelites as a continual reminder of their calling as God’s special people? Numbers 15:38, 39. Of what then should every piece of clothing we put on today remind us?
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“The children of Israel, after they were brought out of Egypt, were commanded to have a simple ribbon of blue in the border of their garments, to distinguish them from the nations around them, and to signify that they were God’s peculiar people. The people of God are not now required to have a special mark placed upon their garments. But in the New Testament we are often referred to ancient Israel for examples. If God gave such definite directions to His ancient people in regard to their dress, will not the dress of His people in this age come under His notice? Should there not be in their dress a distinction from that of the world? Should not the people of God, who are His peculiar treasure, seek even in their dress to glorify God? And should they not be examples in point of dress, and by their simple style rebuke the pride, vanity, and extravagance of worldly, pleasure-loving professors? God requires this of His people. Pride is rebuked in His Word.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 23, 1900.

### 3. WRITING A NEW SONG

- a. What aspects of God's character are brought out in the song Moses wrote for the benefit of the people? Deuteronomy 32:3, 4, 6.
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- b. How is God's care for His people shown in this song? Deuteronomy 32:9–12.
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"God surrounded Israel with every facility, gave them every privilege, that would make them an honor to His name and a blessing to surrounding nations. If they would walk in the ways of obedience, He promised to make them 'high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor.'"—*Education*, p. 40.

"[God] rescued them from their servile state, that He might bring them to a good land, a land which in His providence He had prepared for them as a refuge from their enemies. He would bring them to Himself and encircle them in His everlasting arms; and in return for His goodness and mercy they were to exalt His name and make it glorious in the earth."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 16.

- c. In what sense was this song calculated to be a help to the people? Deuteronomy 31:19–22. What can we learn from this?
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"The more deeply to impress these truths upon all minds, the great leader [Moses] embodied them in sacred verse. This song was not only historical, but prophetic. While it recounted the wonderful dealings of God with His people in the past, it also foreshadowed the great events of the future, the final victory of the faithful when Christ shall come the second time in power and glory. The people were directed to commit to memory this poetic history, and to teach it to their children and children's children. It was to be chanted by the congregation when they assembled for worship, and to be repeated by the people as they went about their daily labors. It was the duty of parents to so impress these words upon the susceptible minds of their children that they might never be forgotten."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 467, 468.

#### 4. THE COMING OF CHRIST PREDICTED

- a. What did Moses say about the first coming of Jesus Christ? Deuteronomy 18:15, 18.
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- b. What rebuke did Jesus direct to the Jews in connection with this prophecy? John 5:45–47.
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“There are those who profess to believe and to teach the truths of the Old Testament, while they reject the New. But in refusing to receive the teachings of Christ, they show that they do not believe that which patriarchs and prophets have spoken. ‘Had ye believed Moses,’ Christ said, ‘ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me.’ John 5:46. Hence there is no real power in their teaching of even the Old Testament.

“Many who claim to believe and to teach the gospel are in a similar error. They set aside the Old Testament Scriptures, of which Christ declared, ‘They are they which testify of Me.’ John 5:39. In rejecting the Old, they virtually reject the New; for both are parts of an inseparable whole. No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 128.

- c. In what sense was Moses a type of Christ? Hebrews 3:5, 6.
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“Moses was a type of Christ. He himself had declared to Israel, ‘The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.’ Deuteronomy 18:15. God saw fit to discipline Moses in the school of affliction and poverty before he could be prepared to lead the hosts of Israel to the earthly Canaan. The Israel of God, journeying to the heavenly Canaan, have a Captain who needed no human teaching to prepare Him for His mission as a divine leader; yet He was made perfect through sufferings; and ‘in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.’ Hebrews 2:10, 18. Our Redeemer manifested no human weakness or imperfection; yet He died to obtain for us an entrance into the Promised Land.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 480.

## 5. MOSES' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

- a. What command and assurance did Moses receive from the Lord when he had finished his work? Deuteronomy 32:49, 50, 52.
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“In solitude Moses reviewed his life of vicissitudes and hardships since he turned from courtly honors and from a prospective kingdom in Egypt, to cast in his lot with God’s chosen people. . . .

“He did not regret the burdens he had borne. He knew that his mission and work were of God’s own appointing.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 471, 472.

- b. How did God bring Moses back to life, and what classes of saints did Moses and Elijah each represent on the mount of transfiguration? Jude 9; Matthew 17:1–5.
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“Moses upon the mount of transfiguration was a witness to Christ’s victory over sin and death. He represented those who shall come forth from the grave at the resurrection of the just. Elijah, who had been translated to heaven without seeing death, represented those who will be living upon the earth at Christ’s second coming, and who will be ‘changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;’ when ‘this mortal must put on immortality,’ and ‘this corruptible must put on incorruption.’ 1 Corinthians 15:51–53.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 421, 422.

## PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. As Moses was about to die, how did the people now view him? Why?
2. How should our calling as children of the King, as God’s special, peculiar treasure, affect the way we dress and the way we dress our children?
3. What is one way parents can deeply impress truth on the minds of their children? How does Satan fiendishly try to use this same tool in an opposite direction?
4. How are we rejecting Christ if we set aside the Old Testament?
5. As Moses considered the riches and fame he had left behind in exchange for a life of toil and hardship, why did he have no regrets?

# First Sabbath Offerings



**APRIL 4**

Johannesburg Chapel  
and Headquarters

(see p. 4.)

**MAY 1**

a Chapel in Mayiladuthurai,  
Tamil Nadu, India

(see p. 25.)



**JUNE 6**

for World Missions

(see p. 51.)

