

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – Moses' History Lesson – 2-8 October 2021

Christ was the Rock that led ancient Israel. “And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10:3-4). Christ was also the Holy Spirit that was in Moses and in all the prophets. “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Peter 1:10-11). In Moses we are to receive Christ, yea: “It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}.

Sunday: The Ministry of Moses – The leadership of Moses was but the leadership of Christ. “For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us” (Isaiah 33:22). In Numbers 20:4-6, we have the partial record of an incident that took place while the children of Israel were in the wilderness: “And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom; and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.” The people spoke against God and against Moses, saying, Why have ye brought us up into the wilderness? They found fault with their Leader. This is why they were destroyed by serpents. Now read the words of the Apostle Paul concerning this same event: “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents” (1 Corinthians 10:9). What does this prove? That the Leader against whom the people were murmuring was Christ. This is further proved by the fact that, when Moses cast his lot with Israel, refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews 11:26). Paul says that the fathers “did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” And in the third of Hebrews it is again shown that it was Christ who was “grieved forty years” in the wilderness. So, then, Christ was the Leader of Israel from Egypt. Moses, the visible leader, “endured as seeing Him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:27). It was Christ, the brightness of the Father’s glory, who spoke the Law of His Father at Sinai. It was the Creator of all created things who led through Moses. As God was in Christ reconciling man to Himself, the intercessory ministry of Christ was also seen in Moses. When Moses was pleading for Israel, after their great sin at Sinai, God said, “Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them” (Exodus 32:10). Interceding, as does Christ, Moses was far from being discouraged by this seemingly stern command. He saw in the words the proof that God could not be angry with the sinful people as long as one pleaded in their behalf, even though they themselves were not seeking His favour; so the petition was with boldness, and the people were spared.

Monday: Fulfilled Prophecy – In Numbers 13, the children on their way from Egypt to Canaan, had gone as far as the desert of Paran, on the borders of the promised land, when the Lord asked Moses to send men to search the land. Twelve men were sent to spy the land. Ten of them said, “we are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.” All the people agreed with the ten. Two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, “stilled the people before Moses,” and said: “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” The spies were in Canaan for forty days. When the majority did not believe, a prophecy was given: “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise” (Numbers 14:34). This prophecy was fulfilled, the people wandered in the wilderness for forty years. It was just as each one said. Those who said, “We are not able to go up,” did not go up. They *could not*, indeed, “because of unbelief.” But those who said, “We are well able to go up and possess it,” found nothing to hinder them to possess it. Those who expressed a wish to die in the wilderness, had their wish gratified;

those who wished to possess the promised land, had it. Even so it is today. "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). God is able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Ephesians 3:20), and that is "His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion" (Ephesians 1:19-21). It is impossible therefore for our faith to make too large demands upon God's love and power and protection. We cannot exhaust His gifts.

Tuesday: A Thousand Times More Numerous – As the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, they multiplied in great number. The Lord had so evidently wrought through Moses that the people would naturally look to him to settle any controversy that might arise. This Moses did do until Jethro, his father-in-law, visited the camp, and seeing the heavy burdens borne by Moses, gave wise counsel to choose "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens" to work under Moses (Exodus 18:13-24). The Lord's recognition of such a plan is recorded in Numbers 11:16-17). We find the execution of that plan by Moses recorded in Deuteronomy 1:9-18. Moses accepted the advice of Jethro, the Lord recognised the plan, and thus was "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38) organised. In 'Gospel Workers,' page 160, we see that the Lord is "as particular now as then. And He designs that we should learn lessons of order and organization from the perfect order instituted in the days of Moses, for the benefit of the children of Israel."

Wednesday: Kadesh Barnea – Read Numbers 20 for details. As the people abode in Kadesh, there was no water, the people murmured against Moses and Aaron. Moses and Aaron took the matter to the Lord. The Lord instructed Moses to speak to the Rock so that the Rock would pour out water. Moses spoke unwisely, saying "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" (verse 10). The psalmist says, "They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes; because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips" (Psalm 106:32-33). The sin of Moses was a great one, even greater than that of the people; for he had all the light that they had, and more. It is true that the people were the cause of his fall, yet that did not in the least relieve him from responsibility. The real cause, after all, was in his own heart, otherwise nothing that the people could have done would have moved him. The Lord cannot tolerate sin, no matter in whom it appears; yet He is "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34:6-7). That Moses repented, and was fully pardoned, is shown by the fact that after his death he was raised and taken to Heaven and was commissioned to come on the message of love to Christ. From this we are warranted in concluding that if it had not been for this one sin he would not only have been permitted to enter the land of Canaan, but would, like Elijah, have been translated without seeing death.

Thursday: The Iniquity of the Amorite – The Lord told Abraham, "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Genesis 15:15-16). In the fourth generation, or after the lapse of four hundred years, his seed was to come out of bondage in Egypt, into the promised land. They could not possess the land at once because the iniquity of the Amorites was not then full. That shows that God would give the Amorites time to repent, or, failing that, to fill up the measure of their iniquity, and thus demonstrate their unfitness to possess the land. And that teaches us further that the land which God promised to Abraham and his seed could be possessed only by righteous people. God would not cast out of the land those of whom there was any seeming prospect that they might become righteous. The Lord gives life to all, and as Judge of all hearts knows when that life is finally and hopelessly rejected. He may then withdraw it in justice and mercy. The Lord destroyed Sodom by fire, after having delivered the few who had not wholly rejected life; but it by no means logically follows that one may righteously burn down the house of a neighbour who may be considered wicked. Judgment belongs to God. The wars of Israel were but the execution of the judgment of God upon the people of Canaan. The case of Rahab in Jericho shows that God delivered every soul that had not eternally rejected life.