

HOW TO REACH THE JEW FOR CHRIST

by

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CHAPTER THREE

THE ERA OF GREAT LEADERS

There are four great periods covered by this lesson:

- A. The Exodus from Egypt
- B. Wilderness Wanderings
- C. Canaan Conquered
- D. The Rule of the Judges

A. THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT

In the midst of their tribulations, the children of Israel cried unto God for deliverance. God heard their cry and raised up Moses to be their leader. The life of Moses falls into three periods, each of which lasted forty years.

1. THE PERIOD OF EDUCATION IN EGYPT

Information source: Exodus 2:1-10; Acts 7:22-23

The story of Moses' escape from death when an infant is a classic. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and treated as her child. As such he had every educational advantage that Egyptian civilization offered. He was "**learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.**"

But before he learned the wisdom of the Egyptians, he learned about the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from his own mother. Eternity alone will reveal how much the training of Moses by his mother influenced his character. Surely she must have told him about his marvelous preservation; perhaps she even instilled in him the belief that he had been preserved by God in order to deliver His people!

2. THE PERIOD OF SPIRITUAL TRAINING IN ARABIA

Information source: Exodus 3-4

In Egypt Moses became a scholar and a statesman.

He learned about God from his mother, but his education was incomplete until he knew God intimately. Moses had to flee from Egypt for his life. In the Arabian desert he cared for the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro. He had to protect the flock from the wild beasts; thus he learned courage.

He had much time to meditate. There was the bitter problem of his people's bondage. He could not solve this problem himself; he had to commune with God. **“And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.”**

God ordered him back into Egypt for a tremendous task—to lead the children of Israel from the **“iron furnace”** through the desert to the Promised Land. The way through the wilderness was to be hard; only one who knew the way and who knew God intimately could bring the people through it.

3. THE PERIOD AS LEADER OF ISRAEL

Information source: Exodus 5-16

When Moses returned to Egypt he faced Pharaoh with God's demands for the release of the Hebrews. Pharaoh refused. By God's hand Moses wrought plague after plague upon Egypt. Pharaoh's resistance to God only increased the severity of the plagues. The tenth and final plague culminated in the death of the firstborn in the Egyptian homes. **“There was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead”** (Exodus 12:30).

In the houses of the Egyptians it was a son or a daughter. In the houses of the Israelites it was a lamb, slain for the family. During the lamenting of the Egyptians, the Israelites escaped to the Red Sea. **“The Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided”** (Exodus 14:21).

After the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the wilderness experience of the Israelites began (The Passover festival still celebrates the redemption of Israel from Egyptian bondage).

B. WILDERNESS WANDERINGS

Information source: Exodus 17-40.

The books of Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy

Under the leadership of Moses, the children of Israel marched from the Red Sea to Sinai. The Israelites had been delivered from Egyptian bondage; slavery had stunted their growth, had Egyptian-ized their physical appetites. Many problems had to be met. There were questions of food, of worship, of self-defense, of relationships with adjoining tribes. In order to meet these needs God gave the Law to the children of Israel. The Law was much more than the Ten Commandments; it consisted of three parts, which cover more than half the contents of the book of Exodus and the entire book of Leviticus. It may be divided as follows:

1. Moral Law—*a guide to conduct.*
2. Ceremonial Law—*a guide to worship.*
3. Civil Law—*a guide to government.*

The Tabernacle for the worship of God was erected. Other countries might have large cities for their capital, but Israel was to have the presence of God Himself in their midst.

The way through the wilderness was pathless and desolate; food for the people would be scarce. For guidance, God gave the pillar of cloud and fire; for food, God supplied the manna.

The people moved forward to Kadesh-barnea. From there twelve spies were dispatched to search out the Promised Land. All reported that the land flowed with milk and honey. Ten of the twelve, however, were impressed with the strength of the people. The other two, Caleb and Joshua, believed that God was able to deliver the land into their hands. The people accepted the majority report and began a thirty-eight-year wandering in the wilderness. During this time, the whole adult generation, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, died.

Dr. Ira M. Price sums up the wanderings of Israel as follows: "Israel's more or less forty years in the wilderness were worth more than gold to her. At first she was an unorganized host of runaway slaves, suddenly set free. They were wholly unprepared for the hard task before them. They had been entirely dependent upon the will of others; had in a sense lost their power of initiative. Now they should be organized as an army with one purpose. They would be compelled to defend themselves and their flocks from the wandering bandits of the desert. They were forced to hunt pasture for their flocks. Their naturally religious natures were driven much to meditate on the presence and helpfulness of God. Living together they became a unity."

C. CANAAN CONQUERED

Moses was succeeded by Joshua, the son of Nun, a descendant of Joseph. Joshua was forty years old at the Exodus; during the wilderness wanderings he was closely associated with Moses. His training and his confidence in God made him worthy of the high office as leader of the people.

Joshua led the people across the Jordan and there began the conquest. He was a military genius. After taking Jericho, he drove his army into the center of the land. This strategy prevented the enemy in the north and the south from combining for mutual assistance. After subduing the tribes in central Palestine, Joshua and his army conquered the south and then finally defeated the northern tribes under Jabin, king of Hazor, at Merom. The Canaanites were conquered but the Israelites made one mistake: they did not wholly drive them from the land. After the conquest, the final division of territory among the tribes was made.

D. THE RULE OF THE JUDGES

Joshua was the last of the great leaders; he had no successor. After he died, each tribe acted independently of each other; there was no central government and no capital. The tribes acted as a unit only for the purpose of common defense. When the people obeyed God they were delivered from their enemies; when they sinned, God used the people who should have been driven from the land as their chastisers. When the hand of the oppressors was heavy, the people sought the Lord and God sent them leaders to deliver them. These leaders were called judges.

There were twelve judges:

- Othniel who delivered the people from the Mesopotamians;
- Ehud who defeated the Moabites and the Ammonites;
- Shamgar who defeated the Philistines;
- Deborah, together with Barak, who defeated the Canaanites;
- Gideon who routed the armies of the Midianites with only three hundred faithful recruits;

Tola; Jair; Jephthah; Ibzan; Elon; Abdon and Samson. Eli, who was the high priest, also judged the people. Samuel was a judge, but his main office was that of a prophet.

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THIS LESSON APPLIED TO JEWISH MISSIONS

There are three outstanding marvelous types of our Lord Jesus Christ in this lesson: namely, the Passover, Moses and the Tabernacle. A detailed study of each of these types will repay the student with a wealth of valuable Jewish mission material.

EXAMINATION

1. Name the great leaders of this period.
2. What portion of the Scriptures does this lesson cover?
3. Give at least one New Testament reference to show that the following are types of the Lord Jesus Christ:
 - a. The Passover
 - b. Moses
 - c. The Tabernacle
4. Why did God give the Law to the Israelites?
5. Was any benefit to the Jews derived from the wilderness wanderings?
6. Describe the military tactics of Joshua.
7. Who were the judges? Name four of them from memory and give a one sentence description of the exploits of each of the four.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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