

## *Lesson 4*

### *Moses—He received God’s Word*

Does God speak to you?

Yes. God speaks to anyone who will give Him opportunity.

Of course we use the word *speak* to mean “communicate” or “get into contact with.” This includes several kinds of speaking. We have just considered how God “spoke” to Joseph through dreams. That is, He made himself and His will known to Joseph in this way.

We remember that God spoke to Noah, telling him of the flood. He spoke as a guiding teacher would, patiently giving specific details for construction of the ark. Certainly God spoke often to Abraham. How clear was the voice that called him forth to begin a new generation. How welcome were those words which God spoke in order to stop the knife, and spare his beloved son.

By speaking to individuals, God accomplished three purposes. He made them aware of His existence. He let them know that He desired their companionship. He gave them instructions for carrying out certain plans.

Now we find that God wishes to speak not only to individuals, but to all people everywhere. He wishes not only to give special instructions, but to make His will known throughout the earth. For this He desires that speech be put into writing. And

according to His usual way of working with His people, God chooses a man.

In this lesson we will consider one of the most interesting and important chapters in all of human history—the life and work of Moses, the first man to receive a written word of revelation from God.

In this lesson you will . . .

Why God Called Moses

We Learn Truth From the Word

We Respect and Obey the Word

This lesson will help you . . .

Explain why God called Moses.

Relate facts concerning the Torah.

Appreciate the Word of God.

Understand and obey the Word.

### WHY GOD CALLED MOSES

God's people were in trouble again. God had preserved them by calling Noah at the time of the flood. He had kept them from idolatry by calling Abraham. He had saved them from famine by calling Joseph. Now they were in need of deliverance from slavery in cruel and wicked surroundings. So God called Moses to lead them.

*The people groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help went up to God. He looked on them and was concerned about them. He*

said to Moses, “I have seen the misery of my people. So now go, I am sending you.”

Moses was a strong, intelligent man. He had learned from his mother that God had preserved him as a child. He knew the ways of God and was submissive. Nevertheless, when he received the call of God, he was meek. “Who am I to lead your people?” he asked God. “Perhaps the people will not follow me. How shall I explain to them that you, my Lord, have sent me? What shall I say if they ask me the name of my Lord?”

God told Moses to go in the name of the God of Abraham. Then He gave him the power to do miraculous signs so that the people would believe him.

We have seen that other men had been called to do special tasks in the service of God. But never before had God given to a man the type of commission He gave Moses.

His was a task of direct leadership and persuasion. He was sent to tell others of God’s will for them and guide them in their relationship with God. God equipped him for his mission in three ways: Through the revelation of His *name*, His *power*, and His *laws*.

The term *name* in the sacred writings refers to the character and inmost nature of a person. It indicates being and purpose. The Lord told Moses to use the name I AM. This was an indication of the unchangeable nature and faithfulness of God.

All the work of Moses and all the words he would record were to be based upon the character of God.

The *power* of God was shown by means of signs and plagues which He revealed through Moses. Before this, God had not used men to work miracles. He told Moses to use these miraculous signs “so that they may believe that the God of Abraham has appeared to you.” By the power of God, Moses’ staff became a snake; his hand became leprous and then was healed; and water could become blood when poured upon the ground. These signs of power confirmed the work of Moses. Later God demonstrated His power in a physical way at Sinai to confirm His written word.

The *laws* of God were delivered to Moses by God Himself. Moses was to lead the people in the ways of God. So God provided him with a set of rules to guide their actions. Obedience to these laws would bring success and help people to live at peace with God and with one another. Thus we see that the work and the words of Moses were based upon the character of God,

confirmed by miraculous signs, and made effective among men by God’s laws.

#### FOR YOU TO DO

**1** Fill in the blanks to complete the following statements:

**a** God equipped Moses for His mission through

the revelation of His **b** Moses was the first man whom God asked to

put His word into **C** Moses was the first man through whom God

worked When God speaks to people and calls them to do His will He may have more than one purpose. We have seen that God called Moses because His people in slavery cried for help. One reason for the call of Moses, then, was the deliverance of the people of Abraham. They needed a leader who would help them to follow God's plans for their escape from the land of Pharaoh.

It is plain, however, that God had other reasons. He told Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that His people be released to go and worship God. The king would harden his heart and refuse to let the people go.

Then Moses would use the signs God had given him. "The Egyptians will know that I am Lord when I stretch out my hand against the land of Pharaoh and bring my people out of it" God declared This is an illustration of the second reason for the call of Moses. God wants to make Himself known, not only to a few people, but to all people, everywhere.

A third and very special reason for the call of Moses was that God would deliver to him the written law. Then He would use him to put into writing all that God revealed about His character, His power, and His instructions for worship and for

human action. This would be a revelation for the guidance of mankind:

We learn from this that God called Moses because He was concerned not only for His enslaved people of that time, but for all of us today. The revelation which came from God, through Moses, is the Torah which we now have. We have the exact words today because of God's marvelous provision. The written word is to each of us like the voice of God speaking. It is our duty as well as our privilege to listen to God-to read His message and accept its truth for our own lives.

#### FOR YOU TO DO

**2** Circle the letter of each TRUE statement.

**a** The people of Abraham were slaves in a sinful land.

**b** The people could not save themselves, so God provided a plan for their deliverance.

**c** God called Moses to organize and lead the people.

**d** Through Moses God showed His power.

**e** The call of Moses was part of God's plan to speak to man through the written word.

Everything happened exactly as God planned. Moses went to Pharaoh, saying, "Let the people go." Pharaoh refused, and Moses used the miraculous powers from God. The stubborn heart of Pharaoh caused horrible plagues to come upon the land. Frogs and flies filled the houses. Cattle

died. The people suffered from painful sores, hail and locusts destroyed the crops, and darkness spread over the land.

Finally God said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague upon Pharaoh. After that he will let you go." The plague was to be the death of every first born son in the land. God told Moses that the event of this plague was to be a lesson and symbol to the people. They would learn from it the wrath of God against sin and His power to protect those who believe Him and obey Him.

God said to Moses, "Have each family kill a lamb and put some blood on the door of their house. I will pass through and strike down every first born and bring judgment on all the false gods. When I see the blood on your houses I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you." Once again we see an animal sacrifice become a substitute in place of human life. Just as the

son of Abraham was ransomed from death, so also the people of God were redeemed from the deadly plague by the blood of the lamb. What is God trying to say through all this? What truth lies in this mystery? We shall see that it points to the Perfect Sacrifice that God provides generations later!

Moses and the people made all the arrangements according to God's words. The horrible night of death came, as God had said. The people of God were protected because they had believed God and obeyed Him. Then Pharaoh cried

out in panic, “Leave the country as quickly as possible. Take all your belongings and get out of Egypt!”

In this way God used Moses to lead the people out of slavery toward a place where they could receive His word and learn to live and worship according to His plan.

We can imagine that scene as thousands of people, with their animals and provisions, went marching out of Egypt. Suddenly Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army to capture them and bring them back. When they saw the soldiers coming, of course they were terrified and cried to the Lord. Once more they were in a position of helplessness.

The army was behind them and the sea was before them. There was no way they could save themselves.

God told Moses to stretch out his staff over the sea. The waters parted, leaving firm ground so that the people of Abraham were able to march on. But when Pharaoh’s armies started to follow after, God caused the waters of the sea to flood back and drown them all.

Now at last God’s people had truly escaped. Moses organized the people and guided them through the experiences of the journey, helping them learn to trust God for their daily needs. They followed a route as God directed and camped in the Desert of Sinai.

Moses went up to God, who called to him from the mountain. He listened to words directly from God and carried God's messages to the people. God confirmed His presence with clouds of smoke, thunder, lightning, and a loud trumpet blast.

God gave Moses complete instructions concerning service and worship to God and rules for daily living. Moses took from the mountain two tablets of stone, called the tablets of the Testimony. They were inscribed on both sides. The writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

The account of the deliverance from Pharaoh and the receiving of the tablets of stone on the mountain gives us three important truths concerning our relationships to God. First, to kill the lamb and put blood on the door frame illustrates man's act of faith in God's word. Second, the crossing of the sea illustrates God's power to deliver. Third, the tablets of the Testimony bring assurance that God gives definite guidance and instructions to those who will listen.

### FOR YOU TO DO

**3** Select the correct words from the list to complete each sentence.

man's faith    plagues

God's writings    sacrifices

arguments    God's power

**a** Pharaoh let the people go after many

**b** Blood was put on the door frames as an act of

**c** The sea was parted as an act of **d** The tablets of the Testimony were

## WE LEARN TRUTH FROM THE WORD

Later we will find out what happened when Moses came down from the mountain. But first, let's think about the basic content of the messages which God gave to Moses. There is space in this course to mention these truths only very briefly. Therefore, we will give an outline of the main points. This will answer some important questions for you. Also, it will help you make a more complete study later of the Torah, and other sacred writings. You will find such a study very interesting and helpful. Try to get copies of the Torah, the Psalms, and the Gospels.

### Truths Revealed in the Torah

1. We are to worship no god but God. God is one. There is no other.

We are not to worship any saints, angels, nor any other person whatsoever.

We are not to have idols of any sort. The Torah speaks it plainly: "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them."

When anything takes the place of God in our hearts we create a form of idolatry. Money, land, or

other possessions may become idols to us if we care more about them than we do about God.

2. God renewed His covenant with His people, and promised to bless them as long as they would serve Him faithfully.

3. God calls men and nations to understand, believe, and obey His commandments.

In order to form a suitable foundation for all His messages to mankind, God prepared the Torah. It gives a clear and unified statement of His laws and His ways of working with people. Thus it is:

A. The basis of all other Scriptures.

B. The basis for human relationships with God and among people; the key to successful living.

4. God gave specific instructions for the use of sacrifice as a symbolic ceremony. The sacrifice of innocent animals showed that sin brings death and God requires that there be a penalty. By making the ceremonial sacrifice, man could show that he understood this, and that he had faith in God to forgive sin.

5. Furthermore, it pointed to a mystery in God's plan for intervening Himself on behalf of man's sinful condition and spiritual separation. Remember the substitute sacrifice that ransomed Abraham's son? Remember the substitute sacrifice that ransomed the people of Moses from the plague? The institution of the animal sacrifices would continually remind the people of the Perfect Substitute Sacrifice that God Himself would

provide for the freeing of all humanity from the bondage of sin and the deadly plague of hell.

The revelation given to Moses was a beginning, to point to the future. It helps us understand the plan of God to reveal Himself to us in a complete and perfect manner if we will listen carefully and obey His word.

#### FOR YOU TO DO

**4** Circle the letter to show which one of the following statements is FALSE. Then write a correction of that statement on the lines.

**a** No idols or saints are to be worshipped.

**b** The Psalms and the Gospels are based on the messages of Moses.

**c** All idols are images made of materials such as wood, stone, or metal.

#### WE RESPECT AND OBEY THE WORD

Now let's get back to Moses. After he received the two tablets of Testimony he carried them down the mountain. He was still some distance from the camp of the people when he heard the noise of shouting and singing. What were the people doing? He could hardly believe it! They had made an idol—a calf of gold. Dancing about it they worshipped it as though it were a god.

Moses was so disappointed and angry that he threw the stone tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces. Was this to be the end of God's written revelation? By no means! Moses was a true

leader. He brought control to the camp. Then he prayed to God, asking for forgiveness for the people. God punished the people by striking them with a plague, but He was merciful. He answered the prayers of Moses and continued with His plan to make His will known in writing on the earth.

To Moses God said, "Carve out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words as they were before." God showed in this way that His word cannot be destroyed nor changed. He wrote on the tablets again with His own hand. Also, God told Moses that He would be with his mouth. That is, He would prevent him from making errors. Thus we can be sure that there are no mistakes in the Word of God.

Moses declared many times that the written Word of God is the precious possession of His people. It came from God and would be preserved by God forever. The God who gave it is all powerful and well able to preserve His Word under all circumstances. As we have seen, God had already confirmed His Word with wonderful signs and miracles. He said, "These are my commandments for all generations."

Now we can look back through history and find that God has indeed protected and preserved His Word. It has come to us pure and correct in every detail, though attempts have been made to destroy it.

Men of evil intent have even attempted to twist the meanings of the Scriptures with their own

tongues and hide certain mysterious truths with their own interpretations. However, God is not to be denied. He is the Victor over all, and His Word is eternally changeless.

When we read the Torah today it brings us the same message as that found in the ancient manuscripts. Scholars declare that the preservation of the Torah, like its delivery to the prophet Moses, is a miracle which demonstrates the power of God and the truth of the Scriptures.

**5** Circle the letter of each sentence which explains how we know the Torah came from God.

a) Some parts of the Torah were written by God's own hand.

b) The entire Torah was engraved on stone tablets.

c) The Word of God has been confirmed by miracles.

d) The message of the Torah remains unchanged.

Moses spent most of his life in the task of helping people to receive, understand, and obey the Word of God. "These are the commands, decrees, and laws God directed me to teach you to observe," he said, "so that your children and their children after them may keep all His commands and enjoy long life. Be careful to obey, so that it may go well with you."

Moses gave the written word to the priests with special instructions to read it and teach it. It was the only hope Moses had for the future as he reached the end of his life. Today it is the hope of all people. It is the duty and the privilege of all people to read the Word of God.

Why? Is there a special value in reading a sacred book? Some people think they should read religious books as a kind of religious ceremony. Other people keep sacred books as religious items and respect them but do not read them. But our reason for reading the Word of God is different. We know the books themselves cannot bring us close to God. It is the message in the book which is important and powerful. We do not read as a religious act, but rather to hear the message, allowing God to speak to us through His written Word.

Remember that Moses broke the tablets when he discovered his people worshipping an idol. These tablets were written by God and they were precious to Moses. Yet he knew that obedience to God's law was much more important than having the words on stone. It was as though Moses cried as he broke the tablets, "What good are these if people do not obey the message they contain?"

Still, God did replace the tablets, and this shows that He wants us to have His written Word with us. He wants us to read it. He wants us to love and respect it, just as Moses did. Most of all, He wants us to know that He is speaking to us personally through His Word.

He wants us to pray for understanding of its teachings, and, when we understand them, to obey them in our daily lives.

90 We Hear From The Prophet:

**FOR YOU TO DO**

**6** What can you do to receive the most help from God's Word? Give three short answers here:

**PRAYER**

Oh God, the Deliverer of Moses and the Great I AM; You alone are mighty and wise. I humbly confess that beside You, there is no other god, and beside Your Word, there is no other path to guide me into the mysteries of Your truths. For Your Word alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Give me the courage and a far deeper desire to search all the Scriptures that I might find nourishment for my soul. Help me to accept and act upon Your Words in faith as did your servant Moses and his people. Help me also to take refuge in Your majestic power that is able to deliver me from the bondage and turmoil of sin. And may I find in Your written revelations an assurance from Your Word that speaks to my heart and that confirms Your desire to personally guide me along the path that leads to Your Paradise of eternal life.

Amen.

**CHECK YOUR ANSWERS**

**4 C** Anything we care about more than God is an idol.

**1 a** name, power, and laws. **b** writing.

**C** miraculous signs.

**5 a)** Some parts of the Torah were written by God's own hand.

c) The Word of God has been confirmed by miracles.

d) The message of the Torah remains unchanged.

**2** All the statements are true.

**6** Suggested answers. Read it. Study it. Learn more about it. Pray for understanding. Obey its teachings.

**3 a** plagues.

**b** man's faith.

**c** God's power.

**d** God's writing.

**9**

### **LESSON TEST**

As you prepare to take the lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 4. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

### **GENERAL QUESTIONS**

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A. NO, blacken space B.

**1** Have you carefully read Lesson 4?

**2** Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?

**3** Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?

**4** Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?

**5** Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

#### MULTIPLE CHOICE

**6** God called Moses to deliver His people, to make His name known, and to

a) inflict punishment on Pharaoh.

b) deliver the written law and reveal His instructions for worship and service.

c) bring judgment on Moses' generation.

**7** God equipped Moses for his mission through the revelation of His name, law, and

a) the ability to interpret laws.

b) unique insight.

c) power.

**8** It is the duty and privilege of every person to listen to God-to read His message and

a) accept its truth, fashioning his life after it.

b) be familiar with the ritual worship which it prescribes.

c) agree intellectually with its requirements.

**9** From the Torah one gets the idea that idol worship

a) concerns anything physical which one might worship.

b) involves one's affections and is anything which takes God's place in one's life. '4

c) was an Old Testament practice and that it is no longer practiced.

94 We Hear From The Prophet:

**10** Even though Moses broke the first tablets of testimony, God wrote His words again on other stone tablets, showing that

a) His Word cannot be destroyed.

b) whenever people fail He will give a new revelation.

c) human failure requires a change in His standards.

TRUE OR FALSE

**11** God called Moses so that He could deliver to him the written law, which revealed His character, power, and how He was to be served.

**12** When God sent judgment on Pharaoh, Moses discovered that the only way provided for escape was to leave the country.

**13** The Torah plainly teaches that an idol is an image one constructs out of wood, stone, metal, or the like which becomes an object of worship.

**14** God's Word was miraculously given, and has been marvelously protected and preserved so that our Scriptures are still the changeless revelation of God to man, our authoritative guide to faith, service, and conduct.

#### FILL IN

**15** The Word of God, which came through Moses, is like the voice of God speaking today.

**16** The Torah, which speaks against idolatry, indicates that anything becomes an if it

takes the place of **17** God renewed His covenant blessings with His people as long as they would Him faithfully.

**18** Understanding and obeying God's Word brings us the promise of

**19** The Torah reveals the fact that God is and that there is no other.

**20** When the plague of death touched Egypt, God's people were ransomed from death by the blood of a lamb which they sacrificed in obedience to the