

MOSES LEADING THE ISRAELITES TO SINAI

Exodus 12:43 - 17:16

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Moses and the Israelites

Key-locations: Red Sea, Marah, Desert of Sin, and Rephidim

Key-repetitions:

- Each time the Israelites faced a problem: the people complained, Moses prayed, and then God acted. This happened when: the Israelites saw Egyptians chasing them (Ex 14:1-30); at Marah where the water was bitter (Ex 15:22-25); at the Desert of Sin when they remembered food in Egypt (Ex 16:1-35); at Rephidim where there was no water (Ex 17:1-7).
- God's provisions in the desert: the cloud and the fire (Ex 13:20-22); water (Ex 15:13-25; 17:1-6); food (Ex 16:13-19); protection from the Egyptians (Ex 14:10-28); protection from the Amalekites (Ex 17:8-13).

Key-attitudes:

- Israelites' complaints each time they faced a crisis.
- Moses' anger toward the Israelites when they disobeyed God.
- Moses' worship of the Lord.
- God's feeling that the Israelites were indebted to him since he liberated them from slavery in Egypt.
- God's predominance expressed in everything that happened.

Initial-situation:

Israel's descendants became slaves in Egypt. The Lord used Moses to confront Pharaoh and demand that the Israelites be allowed to leave Egypt. The Lord sent ten plagues against the Egyptians before Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to leave. After 430 years in Egypt, the Israelites left, and started on their way to Canaan.

Initial-problem:

Pharaoh changed his mind about letting the Israelite slaves leave Egypt.

Final-situation:

The Amalekites attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. Joshua led the Israelite men to fight the Amalekites and defeated them in battle.

BIBLE STORY

Leaving Egypt

The Israelites left Egypt. The Lord guided them, by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire (Ex 13:20-22).

Pharaoh changed his mind about letting the Israelite slaves leave Egypt. His troops pursued the Israelites and caught up with them as they camped by an inlet of the Red Sea. The Israelites saw the Egyptians and cried out in terror. Moses told them, "Don't be afraid. God will fight for you." Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The sea-waters split. The Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. Pharaoh's army pursued the Israelites. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its place covering the entire army of Pharaoh. The Israelites put their trust in the Lord and in Moses (Ex 14:1-31).

Moses and the Israelites sang, celebrating God's actions in Israel's favor (Ex 15:1-18). Miriam led the women in singing (Ex 15:19-21).

God's Provisions in the Desert

Moses led Israel from the Red Sea into the desert. *The Middle Eastern deserts were rocky, dry wastelands.* They came to Marah and the water was bitter. The people complained to Moses, "What are we to drink?"

Moses cried out in prayer to the Lord. The Lord showed him a stick of wood. Moses threw the wood into the water, and the water turned sweet (Ex 15:22-26).

Forty-five days after leaving Egypt, the Israelites came to the Desert of Sin. They all complained, "In Egypt we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you brought us out into this desert to starve all of us to death" (Ex 15:27 - 16:3).

Moses and Aaron told the Israelites, "You'll know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt; in the morning you'll see the glory of the Lord. He's heard your complaints against him. You'll know that it was the Lord when he gives you bread in the morning. He has heard your complaints against him. You aren't complaining against us, but against the Lord" (Ex 16:4-8).

The next morning, thin flakes as fine as frost appeared on the desert ground. The Israelites saw it and asked one another, "What is it?"

Moses told them, "It's the bread the Lord has given you to eat."

The Israelites called the bread, "Manna," which means "What is it?" They ate manna forty years, until they reached the border of Canaan (Ex 16:9-36).

The Israelites camped at Rephidim where there was no water. They confronted Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt with our children and animals to die of thirst?" They tested the Lord when they questioned, "Is the Lord here with us or not?"

Moses cried out in prayer to the Lord, "What can I do with these people? They're ready to stone me."

The Lord told Moses, "Take the staff in your hand. Strike the rock, and water will gush out of it." Moses obeyed and water gushed out of the rock (Ex 17:1-7).

The Amalekites attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. Joshua led the Israelite men to fight the Amalekites in the valley. Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of a hill. Moses held up his hands and the Israelites won; whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites won. Moses sat on a stone. Aaron and Hur held his hands up so that his hands remained up till sunset. So Joshua defeated the Amalekites in battle (Ex 17:8-16).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did God guide the Israelites when they were in the desert?
2. How does God guide people today?
3. What were some of the problems the Israelites faced after they left Egypt?
4. Which of those problems were not the fault of the Israelites?
5. How did the Israelites react to problems?
6. How did Moses react to problems?
7. How is a person's character revealed by the way he reacts to problems?
8. What provisions did God make for the Israelites in the desert?
9. God had done so much for the Israelites, why did they complain and lack trust in God?
10. When do you have a tendency to lack trust in God?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **God guides his people.** The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire guided the Israelites (Ex 13:20-22). Followers of Jesus are guided by the Bible and the Holy Spirit.
2. **God's people may face crisis situations which are neither their fault, nor a consequence of disobedience or sin.** The waters of Marah were bitter (Ex 15:23). Rephidim had no water (Ex 17:1). The Amalekites attacked the Israelites at Rephidim (Ex 17:8-16). God delivered the Israelites, and then led them into the desert where they were unable to provide for their bare necessities: water, food and protection from enemies.
3. **Crisis reveals character.** The Israelites saw the Egyptians pursuing them and were terrified. Moses displayed faith in the delivering power of God (Ex 14:10-14). The Israelites faced problems beyond their abilities to solve, and they lost faith, complained and criticized Moses. Moses faced the same circumstances, yet he had faith and prayed, asking God for help. Circumstances revealed that the Israelites'

disposition was to complain. Faced with the same circumstances, Moses revealed his disposition to trust God, expecting him to solve the problems.

4. **The lesson that God is trustworthy may need to be repeated many times before it is learned.** God had freed the Israelites from the Egyptians through powerful plagues. However, when the Israelites saw the Egyptians pursuing them, they were terrified (Ex 14:10-11). Israel had to learn from repeated experiences that God was able to provide for them.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Sharing Groups:

After telling the story, ask the listeners to get into groups of three or four. Ask each listener to share a life-lesson that they personally learned in the past, but they have trouble remembering it when a similar experience returns.