

MOSES.....3

(Exodus 19:1—Numbers 13:16)

In the third month after leaving Egypt the Israelites came to Mt. Sinai. God called Moses up on the mountain and made promises of great blessings on the Israelites if they would faithfully follow him. 3 days later there was great noise, lightning, smoke, and the earth trembled as God came down to give a set of laws to Moses. The people were warned not to come near the mountain. Exodus 20 records giving the Ten Commandments which were written on tables of stone. In the next several chapters many other laws were given to be obeyed by the Israelites. These included social responsibilities, Sabbath regulations, special festivals, and detailed instructions for building and furnishing the “tabernacle”, a tent which was to be the center of worship. Special instructions were given for the priests, their clothing and responsibilities.

Chapter 32 records the amazing story of the golden calf which Aaron helped the people make. The people had become impatient waiting for Moses to come down from many days on the Mount. They began to worship the calf, crediting it with delivering them from Egypt. When the Lord saw this he was very angry and was ready to destroy all the people, but Moses talked him out of it.

When Moses returned and saw the golden calf and saw the people engaged in shameful revelry, he threw the tables of stone to the ground, breaking them. One of the penalties issued by Moses was to have the people drink water into which ground up bits of the calf had been placed. (Chapter 34 records the Lord engraving another set of tables of stone.)

Chapters 34 through 40 record many details of the law and the various parts of the tabernacle and courtyard, along with priestly duties.

The “Law of Moses” was very long and detailed. One can read through the book of Leviticus and review these details.

The book of Numbers begins with a numbering of the people and arranging them in family groups. More rules and regulations were issued. In chapter 10 the people begin to move on from Sinai. Chapter 12 records that Aaron and Miriam got into trouble for criticizing Moses. For a time Miriam was afflicted with leprosy.

Chapter 13 records the preparations to enter the land of Canaan. Men from each tribe were chosen to go and spy out the land.