

## MOSES....2

( Exodus 6:1—18:27)

When the Israelites complained to Moses about their harsh treatment, he, in turn, went to God to complain. God assured Moses that he and the Israelites would see his great power as he would deliver them from their captivity.

The story is familiar of how Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh to demand release of the Israelites, of his refusal, of the contests with Pharaoh's magicians, and finally of the series of ten plagues which eventually led to their release. In order, the plagues were water to blood, frogs, gnats, flies, disease of livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and finally, the death of the firstborn. God continually hardened Pharaoh's heart, perhaps to emphasize on the hearts of both the Egyptians and the Israelites the magnitude of his power. Certainly the Israelites would need to rely on their faith in God (although they did not do that very well!)

The Israelites were spared having their firstborn killed when the death angel visited Egypt. The Lord instituted a new celebration called the Passover in memory of how the death angel "passed over" the homes of those who had placed blood on their doorposts according to the instructions given to them, which included instructions for a special feast. This celebration was to be observed throughout their future history.

Moses began leading the people toward the Red Sea on their way to Canaan. They were led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The Egyptians decided to come and re-capture the Israelites. But God opened the Red Sea, allowing the people to cross on dry land. As the pursuing Egyptian army attempted to cross, the waters went back into place, drowning the Egyptians.

This began the period of wilderness wandering. The trip to Canaan should have been perhaps a matter of weeks, but the Israelites became so rebellious, complaining, and unfaithful that God became very angry at them and changed his mind. God showed his power through a series of miracles for all the people to see. They included: sweetening water at Marah, providing manna and quail, and providing water from a rock. He also gave them victory over the attacking Amalekites through the armed men, led by Joshua.

During this period Moses was visited by his father-in-law, Jethro, who gave him some very important advice concerning organizing his people into groups with responsible men selected to settle less important disputes.