

Gospel Doctrine Lesson 14: "Ye Shall Be a Peculiar Treasure unto Me"

(Exodus 15-20, 32-34)

LESSON GOAL: To encourage us to partake of the Lord's spiritual water and bread, sustain his chosen leaders, and obey his commandments so he can make of us a "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6).

1. The Lord provides water, manna, and quail for the children of Israel.

THE LORD TRIES TO TEACH ISRAEL TO TRUST HIM

The Problem	Israel's Reaction	Lord's Solution	The Lesson
1) The Egyptian Army trapped the Israelites at the Red Sea.	"...hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness" (Exodus 14:12, 13).	The sea was divided and the Egyptian Army destroyed.	Trust me to protect you.

2) Bitter Water When they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. (Exodus 15:23)	"And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" (Exodus 15:24).	"The Lord shewed Moses a tree, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet" (Exodus 15:25)	I will help you meet your legitimate needs.
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3) Hunger "Yehave brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Exodus 16:3)	"And the children of Israel murmured against Mose and Aaron and said, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt. . .when we did eat bread to the full. . ." (Exodus 16:2-3)	Then the Lord said to Moses, I will rain bread from heaven for you" (Exodus 6:4)	Trust me every day. Feast on my word every day.
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4) No water to drink The children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness. . .and there was no water for the people to drink.(Exodus 17:1)	"The people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. . .The people murmured against Moses and said, Wherefore, is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children with thirst?" (Exodus 17:2-4)	Moses thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it. (Exodus 17:5,6).	Trust my leaders.
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5) The Amalekites attack. (Exodus 17:8)	Israel prevails when Moses holds up the rod and they falter when he does not. (Exodus 17:11)	"Aaron & Hur stayed up his hands, and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun" (Exodus 17:12,13)	Trust my leaders
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President David O. McKay: "Let us watch ourselves and be true to the examples set by the Church and the brethren and sisters who have sacrificed their lives, their all, to build the Church and to advance the principles taught therein. **This warning is sometimes expressed in this way: 'Speak not against the authorities.' What does it mean. Be not a murmurer; that is what it means.** It is one of the most poisonous things that can be introduced into the home of a Latter-day Saint--**this murmuring** against presidents of stakes, high councilors, Sunday school superintendents, presidents of high-priests' quorums, seventies, elders, priests, teachers and deacons.... and yet because of his weakness, because, **perhaps, of some little fault that we see** in an officer, we begin to murmur and find fault. **Better stop murmuring, and build up.** Remember that one of the worst means of tearing down an individual is **slander**. It is one of the most **poisonous weapons** that the evil one uses. **Backbiting and evil speaking**, throw us into the class of malefactors rather than the class of benefactors." (CR, Apr 1909, 67)

Elder Marion G. Romney: "I desire to call your attention to the principle of loyalty, loyalty to the truth and loyalty to the men whom God has chosen to lead the cause of truth. I speak of 'the truth' and these 'men' jointly, because it is impossible fully to accept the one and partly reject the other.

"I raise my voice on this matter to warn and counsel you to **be on your guard against criticism**. . . . It comes, in part, from those who hold, or have held, prominent positions. Ostensibly, they are in good standing in the Church. **In expressing their feelings, they frequently say, 'We are members of the Church, too, you know, and our feelings should be considered.'**

"**They assume that one can be in full harmony with the spirit of the gospel, enjoy full fellowship in the Church, and at the same time be out of harmony with the leaders of the Church and the counsel and directions they give.** Such a position is wholly inconsistent, because the guidance of this Church comes, not alone from the written word, but also from continuous revelation, and the Lord gives that revelation to the Church through His chosen leaders and none else. **It follows, therefore, that those who profess to accept the gospel and who at the same time criticize and refuse to follow the counsel of the leaders, are assuming an indefensible position.**" (In Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 17-18).

2. Aaron and Hur hold up Moses' hands so Israel prevails in battle against Amalek. Moses follows Jethro's counsel to appoint judges and delegate authority to them.

President Harold B. Lee, as a counselor to President Joseph Fielding Smith: "I think that is the role President Tanner and I have to fulfill. **The hands of President Smith may grow weary.** They may tend to **droop** at times because of his heavy responsibilities, but as we uphold his hands, and as we lead under his direction, by his side, the gates of hell will not prevail against you and against Israel. **Your safety and ours depends upon whether or not we follow the ones whom the Lord has placed to preside over his church.** He knows whom he wants to preside over his church, and he will make no mistake.... **Let's keep our eye on the President of the Church and uphold his hands** as President Tanner and I will continue to do" (CR, Oct. 1970).

3. The Lord meets with Moses on Mount Sinai and gives Israel the Ten Commandments.

Elder Mark E. Petersen: "The Ten Commandments represent the basic law of the Almighty and have formed the underlying elements of civil and religious law ever since. **They are fundamental to our relationships with God.** They are an integral part of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and are essential to our becoming perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. Variations of these laws are given in Leviticus and Deuteronomy as they are applied to specific matters, but generally **they form the foundation for all proper human conduct.**" (*Moses*, 110)

President Spencer W. Kimball: "**Idolatry is among the most serious of sins.** ... Modern idols or false gods can take such forms as **clothes, homes, businesses, machines, automobiles, pleasure boats**, and numerous other **material** deflectors from the path to godhood. ...Intangible things make just as ready gods. **Degrees and letters and titles** can become idols. ...Many people **build and furnish a home and buy the automobile first**—and then they 'cannot afford' to pay tithing. Whom do they worship? Certainly not the Lord of heaven and earth. ...Many worship **the hunt, the fishing trip, the vacation, the weekend picnics and outings.** Others have as their idols the **games of sport, baseball, football, the bullfight, or golf.** ...Still another image men worship is that of power and prestige. ... **These gods of power, wealth, and influence are most demanding and are quite as real as the golden calves of the children of Israel in the wilderness**" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 40-42).

Our proper relationship to God

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Then

Exodus 34:10–14 ; Deut.5:6–7
Exodus 34:17 ; Deut. 4:15–19
Leviticus 19:12 ; Deut.5:11
Exodus 31:12–17 ; Deut.5:12–15

Now

D&C 76:1–4
D&C 1:15–16
D&C 63:61–62
D&C 59:9–13

Importance of the family and proper family relationships

5. Honor thy father and thy mother.

Exodus 21:15, 17 ; Deut. 21:18–21 D&C 27:9

Our relationships with other people

6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet.

Exodus 21:12–14 ; Deut. 5:17 D&C 42:18–19, 79
Exodus 22:16–17 ; Deut. 5:18 D&C 42:22–26, 74–81
Leviticus 19:13 ; Deut.5:19 D&C 42:20, 84–85
Psalm 101:7 ; Deut. 5:20 D&C 42:21, 27, 86
Proverbs 28:16 ; Deut.5:21–22 D&C 19:25–26

4. The Lord introduces the law of Moses.

Immediately after the Ten Commandments, the Lord revealed a whole series of laws and commandments which we now call the Mosaic law. The law of Moses encompasses hundreds of laws, rules, and regulations. The Jews have identified 613 particular laws as recorded by Moses in Exodus 21-31.

The Golden Calf: Two principles can be emphasized from this story:

- 1) **Old habits and patterns of thought, belief, or behavior are hard to break**
- 2) It is vital to **withstand negative peer pressure**. Aaron gave in to the Israelites' unrighteous desires.

When the Lord spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai, he revealed a law that included the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood. However, the Israelites' idolatrous behavior showed that they were not ready to live the fulness of the gospel. Because they forgot the Lord so quickly, he withdrew the Melchizedek Priesthood from them and revealed a lesser law—the law of Moses.

Exodus 34:1-2:

- 1 And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.
- 2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the atop of the mount.

The Joseph Smith Translation (his additions in *italics*) reads: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two *other* tables of stone, like unto the first, and I will write upon *them also, the words of the law, according as they were written at the first on the tables* which thou brakest; *but it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore my holy order, and the ordinances thereof, shall not go before them; for my presence shall not go up in their midst, lest I destroy them. But I will give unto them the law as at the first, but it shall be after the law of a carnal commandment; for I have sworn in my wrath, that they shall not enter into my presence, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage. Therefore do as I have commanded thee,* and be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me, in the top of the mount."

President Joseph Fielding Smith: "The Lord offered to Israel in the days of Moses the fulness of the Gospel with the Higher Priesthood and its keys, intending to give unto them the blessings of exaltation and make of them a royal Priesthood. When Moses went up into the sacred Mount Horeb and received the writings, which the Lord made with his own finger, he received the fulness of the Gospel with its ordinances and covenants, but when Moses returned after his absence of forty days and found the Israelites reveling in idolatry, he broke the tablets. Later the Lord gave unto him other tablets but changed some of the commandments, and took away the Higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, and gave to the people the carnal law, as stated in this section (84), verses 23-27....

"The Aaronic Priesthood remained with Israel and also the law of Moses, or the law of carnal commandments, until the coming of Jesus Christ, when again the fulness of the Gospel and the Priesthood were given to Israel. The Prophets of Israel and Judah, however, from the time of Moses until Malachi, held the Melchizedek Priesthood, but it was not conferred upon others during that time. Elijah, who held the fulness of the Priesthood, was a prophet during that time when the people of Israel were restricted to the preparatory Gospel!" (CHMR, 2:104).

Ezra Taft Benson: I would urge you to heed strictly the commandments of God, particularly the Ten Commandments. **As long as we regard God as our Sovereign and uphold His laws, we shall be free from bondage and be protected from external danger.**

God has not left us alone to flounder over right and wrong in the area of personal ethics and morality. His laws are circumscribed in the Decalogue—the Ten Commandments. These laws embody our relationships with God, family, and fellowmen. Yes, the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount are the foundation principles upon which our personal happiness is predicated. **To disregard them will lead to inevitable personal character loss and ruin.** (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 353)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell: "Murmurers have short memories. Israel arrived in Sinai, then journeyed on to the Holy Land though they were sometimes hungry and thirsty. But the Lord rescued them, whether by the miraculous appearance by quail or by water struck from a rock. (Ex. 17:6.) Strange, isn't it, brothers and sisters, how **those with the shortest memories have the longest lists of demands!** However, **with no remembrance of past blessings, there is no perspective about what is really going on**" ("Murmur Not," *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 83).

President George Albert Smith: "There is a line of demarcation well defined between the Lord's territory and the devil's territory.... **If you cross onto the devil's side of the line, you are in his territory,** and you are in his power, and he will work on you to get you just as far from that line as he possibly can, knowing that **he can only succeed in destroying you by keeping you away from the place where there is safety**" (CR, Oct 1945, 118).

Elder M. Russell Ballard: "Although the Law of Moses was fulfilled, the principles of the law of sacrifice continue to be a part of the doctrine of the Church. ... While the primary purpose of the law of sacrifice continued to be that of testing and assisting us to come unto Christ, two adjustments were made after Christ's ultimate sacrifice. First, the ordinance of the sacrament replaced the ordinance of [animal] sacrifice; and second, this change moved the focus of the sacrifice from a person's animal to the person himself. In a sense, **the sacrifice changed from the offering to the offerer...**After his mortal ministry, Christ elevated the law of sacrifice to a new level...Instead of the Lord requiring a person's animal or grain, **now the Lord wants us to give up all that is ungodly. This is a higher practice of the law of sacrifice; it reaches into the inner soul of a person**" ("The Law of Sacrifice" [CES Symposium, 13 Aug. 1996], 5).

Excerpts from Two Talks to Help Us Determine Our Devotion to the Lord

1992: Discipleship and Scholarship / Neal A Maxwell, BYU Studies

1. The real test is **individual discipleship**, not scholarship.
2. You will recall the episode in the fifth chapter of the book of Acts about how Ananias and Sapphira "kept back part" of the monetary proceeds from their possessions (Acts 5:3). We usually tend to think of consecration in terms of property and money. Indeed, such was clearly involved in the foregoing episode. **But there are so many ways of keeping back part and so many things we can withhold a portion of besides property.**
3. This holding back may occur even after one's having given a great deal, as likely had Ananias and Sapphira. Having done much, **we may mistakenly think that surely it is all right to hold back a remaining part.** Obviously, **there can be no total submissiveness when this occurs.**
4. **There is no lasting place in the Kingdom for unanchored and unconsecrated brilliance.**
5. You serve as mentors and models for the rising generation of Latter-day Saint scholars and students. **Let them learn submissiveness and consecration from the eloquence of your examples.**

1995: Faith, Authority, and Scholarship / Henry B Eyring

1. Just as one's quest for knowledge should be unending, so too should the quest for greater love, meekness, and patience. In considering consecration, it is well to remember that ... nothing is held back—whether turf, attitude, or hobbies. **One's will is to be swallowed up in the will of God**—just as occurred with Jesus.
2. Most forms of holding back are rooted in pride or are prompted by the mistaken notion that somehow we are diminished by submission to God. Actually, **the greater the submission, the greater the expansion!**
3. In addition to submission to the authority of Jesus Christ, **we are asked to be submissive to His mortal authorized servants.**
4. **Notice that God often, perhaps most often, gives His word through messengers.**
5. Only through **submission to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ in faith** will you gain eternal life; and by that submission you will gain the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.
6. It is reassuring to know that **submission is not a one-time thing.** If you live faithfully, that expansion goes on and on. And even more exciting, **the power to exercise that faith increases as you make the choice in faith to submit, to obey.**
7. Don't believe the lie that says that when you are submissive to God, you are losing your agency. On the contrary, **submission is the choice to be lifted toward the light, toward freedom, and toward expansion.**
8. **The degree of your expansion will be proportional to the degree of your submission.**