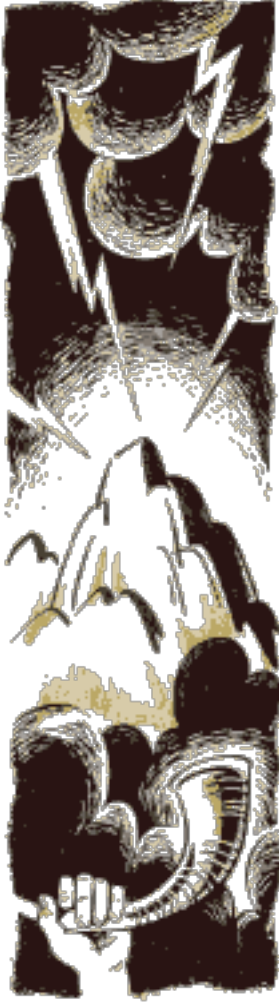


GOD GIVES LAWS TO HIS PEOPLE



NOW that the Hebrews were out of the land of Egypt and separated from other people, it was necessary for them to know what was right and what was wrong for them to do. So God gave them his Law. That is, he told them just how they should behave themselves as proper servants of his. It was more than two months after they left Egypt, however, before God gave the Hebrews his Law. Before this they had some very hard experiences.

After they crossed the Red Sea they were in what the Bible calls a “wilderness.” It was much like a desert. There were only certain places where they could find water, and there was no food. Yes, the Hebrews simply had to trust the Lord, didn’t they? In one place they found water, but it was bitter, and oh, how they complained to Moses!

It seems that every time things didn’t go exactly to suit the Hebrews they blamed Moses for it. They would forget that it was God who had brought them out of Egypt and that he was taking care of them. Well, God told Moses how to make the water sweet, which he did, and the Israelites were happy

for awhile.

They had brought some food with them from Egypt, but soon that food was gone, and again they blamed Moses. But Moses was very patient and he would always find out from God what to do. And God always knew what to do.

And what do you suppose God did about the food shortage? He caused food to drop right down out of the sky! Wasn’t that wonderful?

The Israelites called it manna. It came in little white lumps, like great big snowflakes. It was sweet, and very good to eat. The Hebrews had to gather the manna every day, as it wouldn't keep for two days, except at the end of the week. Then they could gather enough for two days, and it would last them over the Sabbath. Yes, the Hebrews had many wonderful experiences, and they didn't have any reason to doubt that God loved them and that he would take care of them. But they did doubt, and ever so many times they blamed Moses for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. That should be a good lesson for us. Let us never, never doubt God! As I started out to say, it was necessary that the Israelites be told what to do and what not to do. If one were alone in the world, it wouldn't make so much difference what he did, because if he did wrong, he would be the only one to suffer. Even then it would be best to do right, and it is always right to love God and do whatever will please him. It is never right to do wrong.

There were thousands and thousands of the Israelites out there on the desert together, and if they didn't do the right things, they would be in trouble all the time, wouldn't they? So God gave them a Law which told them just what to do, and how to get along with each other so they would be happy and he could bless them. God gave his people the Law at Mount Sinai, or Mount Horeb, as it is sometimes called. It was a wonderful Law. Moses received it from God up in the mountain, and when he told the people about it, they said, "All these things will we do."

The most important thing in the Law was that they were never to serve other gods. That was very important, because from now on they would be meeting people who served other gods. Of course there is really only one true God, but the heathen nations have what they call gods. Some think the sun is a god, and others think the moon is a god. Some have a fish god, and some have gods of wood, and gods of stone. These are no gods at all, really!

The God who made the sun and moon and stars, the God who made us, is the only real God. He was the God who gave such wonderful promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was the God

who delivered the Hebrews from their bondage in Egypt. Surely it was the very best thing for the Hebrews that they should love their God, and do all that he wanted them to do.

He is our God, too, and he wants us to obey him, because it will be good for us. Let us always remember that God wants us to obey him because it is good for us to do so. And besides, it makes God very happy when we do the things which please him.

It was also important that the Israelites should do the things that would be best for one another. You see, boys and girls, sometimes when we do just as we please it may injure someone else, and that would be wrong, wouldn't it? Oh, I know, sometimes we may think we have no liberty, that our fathers and mothers are too strict with us. But we will eventually learn that there is only one way to be really happy, and that is to be obedient, both to our parents and to God.

The Israelites had a very hard time out there in the wilderness; but it would have been much, much worse if they had all done just as they pleased. So God's Law told them just what they should do, and what they shouldn't do. When they were obedient to that Law they got along very well. They were to love one another, and were not to be jealous of the good things enjoyed by others.

They were told not to steal what belonged to others. That is something we should always remember. We must not think we have a right to take what belongs to someone else just because we want it very badly. That would be wrong, because it would be robbing someone else of what belonged to him. You see everything that God asks us to do is for the benefit of all, and if we obey his Law and try to make other people happy, we will be happy ourselves. You just try to make others happy, and see if it won't make you happy, too. Yes, when God gave his Law to the Israelites he even told the children what they should do. And what do you suppose that was? Why, they were to honor and obey their parents. That is the right thing to do even now. No one likes a boy or girl who is disobedient to his father or mother. When fathers and mothers try to please God,

and their children obey them, then, you see, the children are obeying God too, and God is very much pleased.

It was long ago when God gave his Law to the Israelites, then they had no governments such as we have. We think that the people who make laws for us are very wise. But, do you know, the Law which God gave to Moses, and which Moses gave to the Israelites, was better than any of our laws today? As a matter of fact, our very best laws are copied right from the Bible. Isn't that wonderful? That means, you see, that God was very wise, wiser than all the wise people who have ever lived. No matter how wise people may think they are, they cannot make laws as good as those God gave to Moses for the Israelites.

QUESTIONS

- How did the Hebrews know what was right for them to do, and what was wrong?
- Who made the laws which Moses gave to the Hebrew people, and what did one of these laws say about children?

Dawn Bible Students Association