

**Topic****Untitled #1**

## ● I ISRAEL: THE PEOPLE OF GOD

## ● A ABRAHAM

- 1 When he is introduced in the Bible, Abraham is a pagan worshipping many gods
  - a) The true God intervenes into his life
  - b) God called him to leave all and follow God's guidance
    - (1) God's call entailed a much more dramatic challenge than the call would require today
      - (a) A person received his identity from his family, his clan,
      - (b) People lived in a communal, not an individual, culture
      - (c) And a family offered its members
        - [1] Protection
        - [2] Home, shelter -- all the married brothers lived together in one home, all the male kin in one village
        - [3] Food
        - [4] Education
        - [5] Livelihood -- generations of people worked at the family's trade
        - [6] Social life
        - [7] Religious life
    - (2) God offered Abraham
      - (a) Land
      - (b) And a posterity
    - (3) Genesis 12:1
      - (a) Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country. From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation:"
- 2 Abraham became an example of faith for later generations
  - a) After having an experience of a strange God, he was asked to leave all and follow God's directions
    - (1) [CHART]
    - (2) He had no idea of where the journey would lead
    - (3) Nor had he any idea of where the journey would end
  - b) Later, when he and his wife had passed child-conceiving age, he was asked to believe that he would father a great nation
    - (1) Genesis 15:1
      - (a) After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."
      - (b) 2 But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?"
      - (c) 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."
      - (d) 4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars--if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."
      - (e) 6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

TopicUntitled #1

- c) Still later, God asked Him to sacrifice the miraculous male heir God had provided and still believe in the promise of a vast posterity
  - (1) Genesis 22:1
    - (a) *Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."*
    - (b) *2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."*
- 3 The Abraham story contains lessons for us today
  - a) God is calling us to set off into the unknown leaving the only thing we know: ourselves
    - (1) God promises us security and a meaningful future
    - (2) He promises us escape from chaos
  - b) God is calling us to trust that we, too, can produce a vast nation
    - (1) Despite all the limitations of our lives: age, vocation, education
    - (2) Despite any and all hardships that may occur during our lives
  - c) God is calling us to be willing to sacrifice all that seems necessary in order to follow His guidance, trusting only in God
- 4 God freely covenants with Abraham, enters an agreement, forms a contract with him
  - a) This covenant reflects election, selection, grace, not reward
  - b) The same humble conclusion remains true for us
    - (1) God binds Himself to us
    - (2) He binds Himself freely
    - (3) He comes in response to our need, not our merit
- 5 Yet Abraham remains a real person in real life and in the Bible stories about him: the Bible allows his warts to show
  - a) He deals harshly with his first son, Ishmael and the child's mother, Hagar
    - (1) Genesis 20:14
      - (a) *So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.*
      - (b) *15 And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. 16 Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bow shot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.*
    - (2) He exiles the two because of his wife's jealousy -- Abraham was henpecked!
    - (3) The Bible offers no excuses for Abraham's cold conduct towards his own child
      - (a) The Bible allows its heroes to have feet of clay
      - (b) This honest portrayal allows us to identify with these Biblical heroes; they remain real
  - b) He passes his wife off as his sister to save his own skin on a journey into Egypt
    - (1) Genesis 12:10
      - (a) *Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land. 11 When he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "I know well that you are a woman beautiful in appearance;*

TopicUntitled #1

- (b) 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; then they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account."
  - (2) Conclusions
    - (a) The man of faith failed to believe on some occasions
    - (b) And the man of faith was a coward!
- 6 Faith
  - a) Not believing about God
    - (1) It is not accepting a bunch of truths as valid
      - (a) From the Bible
      - (b) Or from creeds
      - (c) Examples of what "faith" is not
        - [1] Accepting as true that creation was accomplished in 7 days
        - [2] Or accepting as true that "Jesus is Lord and Savior"
    - (2) This kind of faith, "faith about," does not save us!
      - (a) We can accept teachings as true and be miserable as "hell"
      - (b) Many believe about but they have no inner serenity, no peace, no salvation now
  - b) But believing in Jesus
    - (1) Example of the "chair"
      - (a) I can know all the scientific statistics regarding the chair
        - [1] And I accept all these as true
        - [2] I can accept as certain that it will hold my weight
        - [3] My mental acceptance does me no good if I'm tired
      - (b) Relief comes from sitting in the chair
        - [1] Intense knowledge "about" is not needed for relief, for salvation
        - [2] Committing self to, in, the chair is the only thing important for relief, for salvation
      - (c) We commit ourselves to, believe in, Jesus
        - [1] As "Savior" -- we don't try to save ourselves, to make ourselves good
        - [2] As "Lord" -- we realize Jesus can and does offer us all we need for salvation
    - (2) Faith: committing one's self to Jesus
      - (a) Trusting in the love He gives us
      - (b) Trusting that we are lovable -- able to be loved
        - [1] Not as a result of our own efforts
        - [2] But solely because God loves us, gives us His love
- B THE REMAINING PATRIARCHS: ISAAC AND JACOB
  - 1 These remaining patriarchs are not important because of any dramatic actions they performed
    - a) Note the fact that Jacob's name was changed to "Israel," one who "Wrestles with God"
    - (1) Genesis 32:24
      - (a) Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail

TopicUntitled #1

against him. He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.

- (b) 26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"
- (c) 27 So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." 28 And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."
- b) Jacob had twelve sons, each the ancestor of a tribe
- 2 The "Israelites" of the OT
  - a) They were sons of Jacob
    - (1) Jacob was a son of Isaac
    - (2) Isaac was the son of Abraham to whom the promises were made
  - b) All inherit the promises made to Abraham because they are the "seed of Abraham;" that is why they are God's People
- 3 The "Israelites" of the NT
  - a) Mark 3:31
    - (1) Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you."
    - (2) 33 And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" 34 And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."
  - b) Sonship in the NT is based upon "doing the will" of the Father
    - (1) It is not just being a blood descendant as it was in the OT
    - (2) The "Will of the Father" must not be misunderstood
      - (a) It does not consist primarily in obeying laws
      - (b) It consists in letting God love and save us
      - (c) The Father sends Jesus to love and save us
        - [1] Letting Jesus love us; letting Jesus save us -- that is the will of the Father
        - [2] And, then, serving others with this love -- that is also the will of the Father
- C ELECTION
  - 1 All through the OT God elects, freely selects, the wrong people
    - a) The cheating son, Jacob - the younger son
      - (1) Genesis 27:18
        - (a) So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" 19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."
      - (2) God seems to be rewarding dishonesty
      - (3) And, far worse according to the cultural values of the time, God seems to be accepting a serious threat to the stability of the family and clan
        - (a) Normally, the blessing and inheritance passed to the eldest son -- the entire family, clan, recognized this
        - (b) Any violation of this procedure threatened all family and clan harmony

TopicUntitled #1

- b) David -- youngest child of Jesse
  - (1) 1 Samuel 16:11
    - (a) And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here."
    - (b) 12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!"
    - (c) 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.
- c) Solomon: (1) younger son of David and (2) the son of an adulterous mother
  - (1) 2 Samuel 11:1
    - (a) It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabat. But David remained at Jerusalem.
    - (b) 2 Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold.
    - (c) 3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheeba the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4 Then David sent messengers, and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house.
  - (2) 2 Samuel 12:24
    - (a) Then David comforted Bathsheeba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him.
- 2 Election is not based upon merit or upon anything within us
- 3 It always remains a free choice of God
  - a) To us it will always appear mysterious
  - b) Even to the people called, elected, it will always seem odd, strange
- 4 People (and groups) are elected to serve! For purpose, for mission! (To be "apostolic")
  - a) They were not elected to celebrate status!
  - b) Israel was called to be God's light to the nations
    - (1) To show the world what obeying God can accomplish amongst a people, (not amongst individuals within the people)
    - (2) To make others want to accept this same God so that their lives as a people might be as harmonious and blessed as was Israel's
- c) The Book of Jonah shows the purpose of election,
  - (1) The book reveals how Israel, both before and after the exile, lost its sense of its being called by God to be His light to the world
    - (a) Jonah, (Israel,) wanted the pagan nations punished
    - (b) Jonah, (Israel,) felt smug and superior to these pagan nations
    - (c) In reality, they should have felt humble and grateful and contrite
      - [1] Humble for the mystery of their election
      - [2] Grateful for the sacredness of their mission as light to the world

TopicUntitled #1

- [3] Contrite for their failure (before the exile) to carry out the mission
  - (2) The same errors have certainly been true of Christians often, of Catholics often
  - d) The wonder of election challenges us to be on guard against the danger of smugness
    - (1) The mystery of election can aid us to avoid this danger
    - (2) It can help us remain grateful for our status
- D PREDESTINATION
  - 1 Romans 8:28
    - a) *We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*
    - b) 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.
  - 2 God elects some while others He condemns
    - a) He seems to have done this before He created any of them
    - b) Being damned before our creation, independent of our actions, doesn't seem **fair to us**
  - 3 In the passage, God is dealing with nations, not with individuals
    - a) Mediterranean peoples thought socially, not individually as we do
      - (1) The group came before the individual in their thinking
      - (2) Israel of the OT and the spiritual Israel of the NT called to be God's "Light to the World" was not a reference to individuals but to a People
      - (3) Individuals are called to become part of the people
        - (a) But it is as a people that witness is to be offered to the world
        - (b) God blessed this people
          - [1] With His **guidance**
          - [2] With His **protection**
          - [3] And with His **laws**
            - [a] These guidelines were not seen as restrictive rules
            - [b] Rather they were seen as guidelines for a healthy, peace-filled society
    - b) Other nations were left to the "wrath of God"
      - (1) As nations they don't experience the harmony that should result from an awareness that God has selected and is loving them
        - (a) As proof of this lack of love from God, they don't have the guidance of His commandments to show them how to live together as a nation in harmony
        - (b) Their **communal lives, therefore, are marked by strife, by chaos**
      - (2) Israel was intended to stand out as different -- so is the Church
        - (a) Each was offered God's help to do this -- they receive His grace through worship
        - (b) Each was offered God's guidance, -- they receive the gift of God's laws
        - (c) Living His guidance aided by His help should make them a community of harmony and order

TopicUntitled #1

- c) The Israelites (both Old and New) have been elected, called, to a ministry on earth
  - (1) They have been called to be magnets drawing all other peoples to the God who so blesses them
    - (a) Election, then, involves more than "being," "being special"
    - (b) It involves doing, living, witnessing
  - (2) The quote from Romans refers to the here and now
    - (a) It does not refer to eternal judgment, blessing and curse in Heaven and Hell
    - (b) We must remember that concepts of these did not exist for almost all of the OT period
    - (c) Such a concept does exist, of course, in the NT -- and Romans is written for a NT community
    - (d) But, the NT deals with God relating with people now
- 4 A problem does remain
  - a) The Bible offers twin truths that to us seem to conflict with each other
    - (1) (1) God is in control of everything
    - (2) (2) We are free
  - b) The Bible teaches both as true
    - (1) Biblical thought accented God's control but also accepted our freedom
    - (2) We accent our freedom but also accept God's control
  - c) Our only resolution is to accept both as truths resulting from our own experiences
    - (1) We experience God's loving Providence
    - (2) And we experience the reality of our freedom since we are made in the image of God
- E ISRAEL; THE PEOPLE OF GOD
  - 1 "Exodus"
    - a) The term refers to a series of events that formed the people "Israel"
      - (1) The term "Exodus" includes everything from the call of Moses to the covenant formed at Sinai
      - (2) Israel: A mob becomes a people, unified by the events they experience
      - (3) This event becomes the pattern for interpreting everything that happens in the past, present, and future of Israel
        - (a) All that happened before the event was interpreted according to this pattern
          - [1] God's relations with Adam, Noah, and Abraham were all seen as covenants
          - [2] God freely bound Himself to bless or protect each of them
        - (b) All that happened after the event was also interpreted according to this pattern
          - [1] The 40 years in the wilderness
          - [2] The conquest
          - [3] The time of the judges
          - [4] The kingdom
            - [a] Its division
            - [b] The fall of both the northern and southern kingdoms
      - (c) The expectation of a future "Messiah"

TopicUntitled #1

- (4) Thus the NT sees the Death and Resurrection of Jesus as a New Exodus -- as establishing a new covenant, a new pact between God and us
- b) Moses
  - (1) He was the instrument God used to free people
    - (a) God, not Moses, frees the people
    - (b) Moses is simply the tool God chose
    - (c) Because of his role in this determining moment in the history of the people, he became the most respected person in later Jewish religious tradition
  - (2) His call begins with a dramatic experience of God: The Burning Bush
    - (a) God revealed to him His, God's, own personal name,
      - [1] Exodus 3:1
        - [a] 1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
        - [b] 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.
        - [c] 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up." 4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."
        - [d] 5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."
        - [e] 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.
        - [f] And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'
      - [2] There are several different interpretations offered for God's name
        - [a] We don't have to understand the name
        - [b] We need to experience the God who "is"
          - {1} The God who "who is" real
          - {2} The God "who is real and who is acting in our lives"
    - (b) He is commissioned by God and sent to Pharaoh
      - [1] In the Biblical tradition, God never just "appears" to people
        - [a] He allows them to experience some facet of His Love
        - [b] But he also always commissions them -- gives them some mission
          - {1} Exodus 3:7
            - {a} The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.
            - {b} 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land



TopicUntitled #1

flowing with milk and honey--the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

- {c} 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.
  - {d} 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."
- [2] Moses, the great leader, is a reluctant hero
  - [a] He tries to refuse his mission and have God send his brother Aaron instead
  - [b] Exodus 4:10
    - {1} Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."
    - {2} 11 So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?"
    - {3} 12 "Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."
    - {4} 13 But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send."
    - {5} 14 So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses,
  - [c] All the heroes of the Bible have feet of clay
    - {1} They were real people before their call
      - {a} Moses was married to a pagan woman
      - {b} He received his call in the Wilderness area of Midian
    - {2} They remain real people after their call
      - {a} He tries to refuse God's call after God appeared to him
      - {b} Even when God promised to be his mouthpiece, he refused his call
- c) The 10 Plagues
  - (1) Ten great signs were offered to Pharaoh
    - (a) [CHART]
    - (b) The Biblical understanding of the actions we call "miracles" was very different from our understanding of the term
      - [1] We see them primarily as dramatic actions
      - [2] The Bible saw them as signs, as validations God was acting in and through this event
        - [a] The dramatic nature of the event was not of the essence of the miracle
        - [b] The essence of the miracle consists of both the action and the self revelation of God
  - (2) Pharaoh's "heart was 'hardened'"
    - (a) Exodus 4:21
      - [1] And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go."
    - (b) Exodus 7:13

TopicUntitled #1

- [1] And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.
- (c) The word "Heart" when used in the Bible must be understood according to the meaning it had at the time it was used, not according to the meaning it has today
  - [1] The Hebrew understanding of the word "Heart" was very different from our understanding of it
    - [a] The "Heart" was not primarily thought of as the organ of feeling, of loving and hating
    - [b] Rather it was seen as the organ of thinking
  - [2] Remember:
    - [a] God inspired the Biblical message for them, not for us, using their cultural ideas.
    - [b] We must translate the message God offered the original author into the thoughts and words of our culture if we are to have a similar experience of God
- (d) Therefore, a "hardened heart" is a "closed mind!"
  - [1] This is the great Biblical sin!!!!!!
  - [2] Pharaoh had a closed mind!
    - [a] Exodus 11:10
      - {1} So Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land.
      - [b] He remained blind to the signs (miracles) God offered him so that he would free God's people
  - [3] The Pharisees also had closed minds
    - [a] Mark 3:5
      - {1} And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.
      - [b] They remained blind to the signs (miracles) Jesus offered them so that they would understand that God appointed Him to be the Savior, the Christ of His people, Israel, and of all peoples
  - [4] Surprisingly, on some occasions, the disciples whom Jesus personally chose and taught had closed minds!
    - [a] Mark 6:48
      - {1} He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them,
      - {2} 49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."
      - {3} 51 Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed. 52 for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.
      - [b] They remained blind to the sign (the feeding miracle) that Jesus offered them so that they would understand that He was the Son of God appointed to be the Savior, the Christ of His people, Israel, and of all peoples

TopicUntitled #1

- [c] Since the disciples represent the Church, their inclusion amongst those with hardened hearts must be a warning to us
  - {1} The threat of closing our minds (and lives) to God will always exist in the Church
  - {2} We fail to understand that Jesus is
    - {a} *Our Christ -- we still try to save ourselves*
    - {b} *The Son of God -- that the love we experience in our daily lives is our God Himself*
    - {c} *The Son of Man -- that Jesus saves us by serving us with His Love, not by using His powers to change our world*
- [5] To capture in modern English the Biblical word used, some translations now interpret and substitute "mind" where the original texts say "heart"
- d) **Passover**
  - (1) **Exodus 12:3**
    - (a) "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.'
    - (b) 4 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb.
    - (c) 5 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.
    - (d) 7 'And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two door posts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. 8 'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night, roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.
    - (e) 13 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.
  - (2) The Hebrews were warned to prepare carefully for this most sacred meal
    - (a) They were to kill a lamb, pour its blood on their door, and to share its meat
      - [1] To understand the sign, we must remember that "blood" was and is symbolic of life, not death
      - [2] The Hebrews were to protect themselves from death by using a sign of life
    - (b) The Angel of death then passed over all these homes protected by life
    - (c) Jesus makes concrete this symbolism in our hearts and lives
      - [1] He protects us from true death by covering us with His blood, His life,
      - [2] He covers, fills, us with His Spirit -- a Spirit that has conquered death by His resurrection
      - [3] His Love (symbolized by and in Jesus' blood, Jesus' life) protects us from death (all or any area of ourselves not knowing love)
  - (3) Pharaoh first releases, then relents, and finally pursues the freed Hebrews with his army and, most feared of all, his chariots

TopicUntitled #1

- (a) Exodus 12:29
  - [1] At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well.
  - [2] 30 Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.
  - [3] 31 During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. 32 Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me."
  - [4] 33 The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country.
- (4) The Hebrews escaped through the Sea of Reeds — not the "Red Sea" — the sea, itself, is not identified
  - (a) Exodus 14:21
    - [1] Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.
    - [2] 23 The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.
  - (b) The water divided -- God used a natural agent: a strong, hot wind
    - [1] The wind "drove the sea back"
      - [a] Note: the Bible did not say that the wind "parted the waters"
      - [b] The "parting" was our interpretation of the event
    - [2] And the wind dried the ground so that the people were not bogged in a mire
  - (c) The Egyptians pursued and were drowned
    - [1] Exodus 14:24
      - [a] During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. 25 He made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving....
      - [b] 26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen."
      - [c] 27 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing towards it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. 2
      - [d] 28 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.
      - [e] 29 But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.
- e) The Journey in the Wasteland Area, — a better description of the area than implied by the word "desert"
  - (1) [CHART]
  - (2) God miraculously fed the Israelites in the wasteland

**Topic****Untitled #1**

- (a) God provided them with the mysterious "Manna" -- which they later understood to be a bread from Heaven
  - [1] Exodus 16:2
    - [a] In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron.
    - [b] 3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat round pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."
    - [c] 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions."
- (b) And, on at least one occasion, God provided them with a superabundance of fowl
  - [1] Exodus 16:7
    - [a] "And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what are we, that you complain against us?"
    - [b] 8 Also Moses said, "This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD."
    - [c] 9 Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.'"
    - [d] 10 Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.
    - [e] 11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"
    - [f] 13 So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp.
- (3) God also guided them during their sojourn in the wasteland
  - (a) Exodus 13:21
    - [1] And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.
- f) The Sinai Covenant
  - (1) God took the initiative and formed a covenant with Israel
    - (a) Exodus 24:1
      - [1] Then he said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, 2 but Moses alone is to approach the LORD; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him."
      - [2] 3 When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do."

TopicUntitled #1

- [3] 4 Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel.
- [4] 5 Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. 6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar.
- [5] 7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." 8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."
- (2) The people, (not individuals,) accepted the entire "Law "
  - (a) And "The Law" referred to far more than just Ten Commandments
  - (b) The term refers to the whole "word" God has spoken -- it's more accurate to say **"The Teaching," "The Instruction,"** than to say **"The Law"**
    - [1] Both of these words more accurately reflect the true meaning of "Torah"
      - [a] They translate the Hebrew word used in the Biblical text
      - [b] They describe the combined contents of the 5 books
    - [2] The term refers to all that God teaches by word and by action
      - [a] In His words recorded in these books
      - [b] And through His deeds recorded in these books
- (c) The Two Stone Tablets
  - [1] Exodus 24:12
    - [a] Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."
  - [2] Exodus 31:18
    - [a] And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.
  - [3] Exodus 34:1
    - [a] And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke.
    - [b] 2 "So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. 3 "And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain."
    - [c] 4 So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.
  - [4] Not the tablets the way we picture them
    - [a] With half the 10 Commandments on each side
    - [b] Instead

TopicUntitled #1

- {1} Whatever the people thought was the basis of the pact uniting this people with God was recorded exactly the same on both tablets!
  - {2} It was traditional for covenants to be carved in duplicate
    - {a} One copy was kept by the lord
    - {b} The other by the vassal of the ruler
  - {3} Of course God has no need to keep a copy, but the traditional covenant pattern is observed
- g) The Wilderness: Israel remained "40 years" (in an area a little like the Wichita Wildlife Refuge)
  - (1) [CHART]
  - (2) We must remember that the use of numbers in the Bible is usually symbolic!
  - (3) "40" is a number that symbolizes an entire generation
    - (a) Numbers 32:11
      - [1] 'Because they have not followed me wholeheartedly, not one of the men twenty years old or more who came up out of Egypt will see the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob-- 12 not one except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they followed the LORD wholeheartedly.'
      - [2] 13 The LORD's anger burned against Israel and he made them wander in the desert for forty years, until the whole generation of those who had done evil in his sight was gone.
  - (b) Of those who left Egypt, only two (Joshua and Caleb) entered the Promised Land
  - (c) Even Moses, Aaron, and Miriam do not enter
    - [1] Aaron was the brother of Moses and the first High Priest
      - [a] Exodus 27:21
        - {1} "In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which is before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. It shall be a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.
    - [b] His clay feet:
      - {1} Making the golden calf
        - {a} Exodus 32:2
          - ((1)) And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."
          - ((2)) 3 "So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron.
          - ((3)) 4 And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"
- {2} Grumbling against Moses
  - {a} Numbers 12:1
    - ((1)) Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had

TopicUntitled #1

- married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.
- ((2)) 2 So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. <sup>3</sup>  
(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)
  - [2] Miriam was the sister of Moses
    - [a] And she was also a prophetess
      - {1} Exodus 15:20
        - {a} Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.
        - {b} 21 And Miriam answered them: "Sing to the LORD. For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"
      - {2} Scholars believe the song of Miriam is among the oldest parts of the Bible
    - [b] Her clay feet: grumbling with Aaron against Moses
  - 2 "Miracles"
    - a) For us a miracle is a sudden action contrary to a Law of Nature
    - b) In the Bible, it's an action that reveals God, a "sign"
      - (1) It need not necessarily go against any Law of Nature
      - (2) The "plagues" could all have had a natural cause
      - (3) Something similar to the misfortune described in each plague is experienced on occasions in Egypt as the result of a natural phenomenon
      - (4) It is possible the miracle was not in the event, but in the timing
    - c) Why does God work miracles?
      - (1) God acts because He loves the person on whom or for whom He acts
        - (a) Miracles are signs of this love
        - (b) We must go behind the sign to discover and experience God
          - [1] Not to experience the "power" of God which could only scare us
          - [2] But to know the loving compassion of God which should fill us with awe
      - (2) Too many people only look at the sign like the crowd did at the feeding in John
        - (a) John 6:26
          - [1] Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."
          - [2] 27 "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."
        - (b) The people wanted an earthly king who would satisfy all their human cravings
          - [1] They wouldn't have to work!
          - [2] This "king" would provide them with everything
          - [3] All the while their hearts were starving -- and still would be starving if their human needs alone were satisfied



**Topic****Untitled #1**

- [4] Far worse, they missed seeing that Jesus had been repeating actions only God could perform -- feeding His people in the wilderness
- (c) Christians today can echo this error in their own walks of faith
  - [1] Some Catholics stop with experiencing the separate Sacraments, not going behind the sign to uncover a deeper understanding of the enduring mystery of Jesus
  - [2] Some Protestants stop at experiencing the words of the Bible texts, not going behind the word to uncover a deeper understanding of the enduring mystery of Jesus
  - [3] Both groups miss what each sign, each Sacrament, each Biblical text communicates: differing experiences of the God who saves us