

The Life of Moses

• Lesson Six •

Israel Is Taught to Rely on God

1. Israel is taught to rely on God's guidance
2. Israel is taught to rely on God's protection
3. Israel is taught to rely on God's deliverance

Worship

Read hymn 257:1 from *Christian Worship*.

L: My soul, now bless your Maker! Let all within me bless his name

G:Who makes me a partaker of mercies more than I dare claim.

L: Forget him not whose meekness still bears with all your sin,

G:Who heals your every weakness, renews your life within,

L: Whose grace and care are endless

G:And saved you through the past,

L: Who leaves no sufferer friendless

G:But rights the wronged at last.

Prayer: Dear Lord, often we mistrust your guidance. We blame you when we are led to walk along ways that seem difficult and filled with suffering. Forgive us for those thoughts. Through our lesson today, help us know your wisdom, love, and power. Instill in us the confidence that nothing is impossible for you. Amen.

Introduction

“Deny Jesus Christ or die!” Probably no one has ever said that to you, but thousands of Christians over the centuries have heard that threat. Many chose the latter option. To depart and be with Christ is better by far.

The threat of imminent, forceful death may not be an immediate concern for us. Still, we do face daily challenges. What challenges your faith?

An unarmed Israelite nation confronted the most powerful army of the day. Moses provided the solution to the challenge. Thirty-five hundred years later, the solution to faith's challenges remains the same for the people of God: stand firm in the Lord!

Studying God's Word

Death had just run rampant among the Egyptians. All the Egyptians' firstborn sons had died in the Lord's tenth plague, exactly as God said it would happen. Pharaoh and his people were in anguish. But unbelievably, Pharaoh hardened his heart yet again!

Israel is taught to rely on God's guidance

Read Exodus 12:31-33; 13:17-22

1. What command did Pharaoh give Moses and Aaron? (12:31,32)
2. Why didn't God lead his people through the Philistine country? (13:17)
3. How did God guide the Israelite nation? (13:21,22)

His Word in My Life

God used a pillar of cloud and pillar of fire to lead Israel. What is the Christian's guiding light today? What implications does this have for you

Some Christians mistakenly think God guides them by their feelings, which at times seem overwhelming. What problem does such thinking cause?

God still guides us by the light of his Word. Yet numerous matters arise in our lives about which God hasn't spoken. In these cases he has left it to us to decide and told us to use our sanctified Christian common sense and judgment. When this is the case, is God still guiding us?

God led his people with a pillar of cloud and of fire. His light goes before us also, "a pillar of fire shining forth in the night."

Israel is taught to rely on God's protection

"Oops, I made a mistake!" Not many hours passed before Pharaoh again experienced a change of heart. The Lord knew this would happen.

Read Exodus 14:4-14

1. What two reasons prompted Pharaoh to change his heart? (verses 4 and 5)
2. Put yourself in Israel's shoes. How would you feel seeing the Egyptian army marching boldly toward you as you stood hemmed in by the Red Sea?
3. What did Moses tell the Israelites to do? (verses 13 and 14)
4. Martin Luther prayed to God each morning, "Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things." Why should all of us pray such a prayer?

His Word in My Life

The Lord has promised us his protection. Yet Christians get robbed, get hurt around the house, and die in car accidents. How do you reconcile God's promise with these realities of life?

As the powerful Egyptian army approached, Moses said to the Israelites, "Be still." That must have been difficult for God's people. Discuss times in which you might want to do something but the best thing you can do is "be still."

We are confident that God will protect us. Why then don't we throw all caution to the wind and be more daring in life?

God had called Israel to himself and made them his own special people. Yes, they were hemmed in, and it seemed as if they would be slaughtered by the Egyptian army. But would God bring them into the wilderness only to destroy them? No. Nor has he called us to be his own dear children only to allow us to fall into the hands of Satan. God “fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us.”

Israel is taught to rely on God’s deliverance

Millions of Israelites were trapped between a rock and a hard place—the Egyptian army and the Red Sea. The Israelites complained. But God had everything in control.

Read Exodus 14:15-31

1. What two miracles are recorded in this section?
2. You would think that when the Egyptians saw the Red Sea divide before Israel, they would finally realize that God was on Israel’s side. Why did they insist on going into the sea after them? (verse 17)
3. What did Israel learn when they saw what happened to the Egyptian army? (verse 31)

His Word in My Life

Can you describe a time in the history of your church when it encountered such a great problem that it seemed the congregation would go out of existence? How did God deliver your church

Or, when you think of the time of your death, does it seem that death is too great a problem for the Lord to solve? How does this story help us when we face seemingly insurmountable problems?

Many elderly and some younger Christians anxiously await the day when the Lord calls them home. What would you say to a Christian who felt this way?

Israel had their back against a wall. But that’s where the Lord wanted them. Only then could they witness his love and power in action. God sometimes puts us where he wants us—in a hopeless situation. Then we also have the chance to see him in action. Yes, even in difficulties we say with the hymnist, “Forward we travel from light into light.”

Summary: God’s ways are always right. He directed Israel in such a way that their faith was strengthened and their enemies were destroyed. He guides us on paths that lead in the same direction.