

Exodus - Commentaries by Mamma of Sophy

Sophy's Story on Exodus: Bible Talks for Boys and Girls, Moses Pleads With God for His People (32:19-35)

Chapter 21

Exodus 32:19-33:23

During the following day both Sophy and Arthur had often wondered why it was Moses had broken the tablets of stone and the end of the day found them both anxious to know more about it.

"Mother," began Arthur, "you promised you would tell us more about why Moses threw the tablets of stone on the ground and broke them. Now do please go on."

So Mother resumed her story.

"It was because the children of Israel had broken that law and Moses was very angry and grieved at the dishonor done to God's holy name. I think also that God put it into his heart to break the tablets of stone in mercy to His people, because if he had brought them into the camp in the midst of their sin, God would have found it necessary to destroy them. Moses saw the mountain on fire, and knowing how angry God was he thought he would not bring the law into the sinful camp to condemn them utterly. So he took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire, ground it to powder and put it in the water from the brook that flowed out of the mountain. Then he made the children of Israel drink it that they might taste the bitterness of sin.

"He said to Aaron, 'What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?' Aaron said, 'They said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him.' When Moses saw that the people were naked, for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies, he commanded them, saying, 'Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me.' All the sons of Levi went outside the camp to Moses. He said unto them, 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.' And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses and they killed about three thousand men that day."

"Oh, Mother!" exclaimed Arthur sadly. "Did they kill their own friends?"

"I'm afraid so, Arthur, for in this way Moses made them prove that they cared more for God's glory than for their nearest relatives. He said to the sons of Levi, 'Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.' To the people Moses said, 'Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord: peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.'

"He went up to the Lord and said, 'Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin — and if not, blot me, I pray Thee out of Thy book which Thou hast written.' This was putting himself in their place before God. But the Lord said, 'Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, Mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.'

"Then the Lord sent plagues upon the people, but because of His great mercy and the prayer of Moses, He forgave Aaron.

"Then God said to Moses, 'Depart and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it.' He told Moses He would send an angel before him to drive out the enemies and would bring them 'unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way.'

"When the people heard this sad news they mourned, and did not put on their ornaments. The Lord had said unto Moses, 'Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up in the midst of thee in a moment and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.' The children of Israel took off their ornaments by the mount Horeb.

"Then Moses took a tent and set it up outside the camp, a long way off. He called it the tent of the congregation and everyone who sought the Lord went outside the camp to the tent. Moses went out to the tent and all the people stood at the doors of their tents and looked after Moses until he had gone into the tent.

"I think the people thought of Moses now as the mediator going in to speak to God for them, for as soon as he entered the tent, the pillar of cloud came down and stood at the door where the Lord talked with Moses. When all the people saw the cloud, they rose up and worshipped every man at his tent door.

"How good it is to see that the people worshipped their own true God again! And it was there the Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man would speak to his friend. Then Moses went back into the camp and his servant Joshua stayed in the tent.

“Moses then said unto the Lord, ‘See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name and thou hast found grace in My sight. Now therefore, I pray Thee if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people.’ The Lord answered Moses, ‘My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.’

“When Moses still wondered if he had found grace in God’s sight he told Him not to carry them up unless His presence really would go with them. But God assured him with these words: ‘I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight and I know thee by name.’

“Moses must have been very thankful to find the Lord so good to him again, and His goodness made Moses wish to know Him still more for he said, ‘I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory.’ And the Lord said, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.’ But God told Moses He could not allow him to see His face but told him where to stand while His glory passed by. He also told him that when He had passed by, He would remove His hand so Moses could see His back parts, though he could not see His face. A sinner could not see the face of God and live; but after He has passed by, we see the beauty of His ways. It is all different now since the Lord Jesus has come and died upon the cross; now those who are redeemed by His precious blood look back and rejoice in the love, the mercy and the goodness of God shown to them.”

Sophy's Story on Exodus: Bible Talks for Boys and Girls, Golden Calf, The (30:17-32)

Chapter 20

Exodus 30:17-32

“The next thing God told Moses to make was a laver of brass, a sort of large basin, which was to be placed in the court between the tabernacle and the altar. Here Aaron and his sons were to wash their hands and their feet whenever they went into the tabernacle or near the altar to offer sacrifice to the Lord: for their service must be holy and their walk holy.

“They were to wash their hands and feet in order to come near to God. It was an act which showed that they could not come near to God as priests if their hands were not clean to do holy service and their feet to walk in holy ways. Sophy, did you ever hear of the Lord Jesus washing His disciples’ feet when He was going away from them?”

“Yes, Mother,” answered Sophy, “but what was that for?”

“Well, dear, it was because He knew what a wicked world it was where they were to walk. He told them they could not have any part with Him if He did not wash their feet.”

“And did He wash their hands, too, Mother?”

“No, He didn’t. The Lord Jesus meant to show them their walk would need daily cleansing: but that He Himself had finished the work He came to do by being the one great sacrifice for sin. No more would their hands need to offer the sacrifices of bulls and goats, which sacrifices were another type of the Lord Jesus in His death for us.

“It is His work, not ours; if we sin we may confess our sins to Him and that is like having our feet washed. We are not happy when we sin but when we confess our sins He makes us happy again.

“The Lord also gave Moses directions about making the holy anointing oil to anoint the tabernacle and everything belonging to it. The children of Israel were never to make any like it nor put it upon a stranger (Aaron and his sons were the only ones to be anointed), because it was intended to be a figure of God’s Holy Spirit. He told Moses that it should be made with incense of sweet spices some of which were to be beaten small and laid up before the Lord in the most holy place. It was to be holy to the Lord.

“Moses was not to make this himself. The Lord chose Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, whom He filled with the spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge, and in all kinds of workmanship to work with gold, silver, and brass. He taught him how to cut precious stones and to carve timber, too. God showed Moses how to make these figures of the true things which were in heaven. He chose other men to help Bezaleel, among whom was Aholiab of the tribe of Dan.

“These men loved God, and I think that is one of the reasons God chose them and gave them wisdom to serve Him. And now, you remember that God had spoken a great deal to Moses upon Mount Sinai.

“When He had finished speaking to Moses upon Mount Sinai, the Lord gave him the two tablets of stone on which was the law, written with the finger of God. You also remember that Aaron became impatient waiting for Moses and went down to the people.

“When Moses came down with the tablets of stone, he heard music and saw the people dancing in the camp. But it was not for God, but they were dancing around a golden calf.”

“A golden calf?” exclaimed Arthur. “Where did they get that, Mother?”

“Well, Arthur, you remember that the children of Israel were troubled because Moses was gone so long. They did not have faith for themselves and did not understand why Moses did not come back. The people came to Aaron and told him to make gods to go before them. Aaron was afraid of them so told them to break off their earrings and bring them to melt and make into a golden calf. He said, ‘These be thy

gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' The people offered sacrifices to it and sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

"This was very wicked and sad, for you remember that the first two commandments that God wrote on tablets of stone were that they should have no other god but the living God and that they should not make a graven image. Before they had even received it from Moses they had broken the first commandment.

"God knew what the people were thinking and doing for He knows everything. He knows all our ways, too, doesn't He? We should be happy to have it so.

"He had said to Moses, 'Go, get thee down: for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto.'

"God called the people, 'Moses' people' instead of His own because they had forsaken Him. However, Moses would not let God give them up, so he still called them God's people. Though they were very wicked, he loved them because of all God had done for them. He did not want to be made great himself. He thought of all he had learned in the mount about God's thoughts and love for them and it made him feel that they were very dear to God in spite of all their wretchedness. So Moses prayed to the Lord, his God: 'Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people.' Moses reminded Him of all His promises to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Israel. The Lord did repent of the evil which He thought to do to His people.

"And God listened to his prayer, and blessed His servant who cared more for God's glory than for his own. When he came down to the camp he thought of what was due to the holy God whose great name had been dishonored. When he had finished speaking to God, he turned and went down with the two tablets of stone in his hand. They were written on both sides. They were the work of God and the writing was of God.

"Moses was very angry with the people so he threw down the tablets of stone and broke them before the eyes of the people."

"O dear," interrupted Arthur. "What did Moses do that for?"

"I think Moses was right," said Mother, "for it showed that he knew God's mind about His law and about the people's sin. He cared more for God's honor and holiness.

"But I see you are both yawning; perhaps I shall try and explain that more to you tomorrow evening. You can think about it in the meantime. Now it is bedtime, and you must get your sleep."

Sophy's Story on Exodus: Bible Talks for Boys and Girls, Flight of Moses, Forty Years in Midian, The (2:11-25)

Chapter 2

Exodus 2:11-25

The following evening at bedtime found Sophy and Arthur again in their favorite spot on the sofa, waiting for Mother to sit down with her Bible.

"Mother," asked Sophy, "why did Pharaoh's daughter call Moses a Hebrew child?"

"The other nations called the children of Abraham Hebrews," explained Mother, "because they came from the other side of the river Euphrates, and because they spoke a language which they did not understand.

"No doubt Moses' mother told him about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and about God's promises to them and how Pharaoh wanted to kill the boy babies, for when he grew to be a man, by faith he finally refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He said he would rather suffer with God's people than to enjoy all the riches and pleasures of Egypt.

"Though Pharaoh's daughter was very kind to Moses, he did not forget what he had been taught by his own mother. He believed in the true God and had faith that God would fulfill His promises to the children of Israel. When he was about forty years old he decided to visit them. He felt very sorry for them when he saw how they were treated by the Egyptians who had made them their slaves.

"One day Moses saw an Egyptian beating one of the children of Israel. He looked around to see if anyone could see him. When he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid his body in the sand."

"Oh, Mother," exclaimed Arthur, "that was wicked of Moses, wasn't it?"

"Yes, Arthur, it was. I think though that Moses thought he was doing right, but he should have asked God what he should do. He thought his brethren would understand that God meant to use him to save them from the Egyptians, but they did not understand because they did not have faith in God as Moses did.

"Another day Moses saw two of the Hebrews fighting and spoke to the one who was to blame. He became very angry and said to Moses, 'Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?' Moses was afraid when he realized that

someone had seen him kill the Egyptian. The king finally heard about it and was very angry with Moses and tried to kill him, but Moses escaped and became a poor stranger in the land of Midian.”

“But, Mamma, since Moses was so rich and so wise, why didn’t he stay with Pharaoh’s daughter and try to make the king kind to the children of Israel?” inquired Sophy.

“It was because Moses had faith that God would save them from Pharaoh in His own way,” replied Mother. “He felt he would be happier to suffer affliction with God’s people than to have all the pleasures of Egypt.

“When Moses came to Midian, he sat down by a well. The priest of Midian had seven daughters who came to get water for their father’s flocks. The shepherds usually drove the women away but Moses interfered this time and helped them water their flocks. Moses had many things to learn of God’s ways, that it was not all by might and by power, and so God put it into his heart to wish to be a deliverer. He taught him how He had taken care of him when Pharaoh had ordered all the boy babies to be killed. He meant to make Moses His servant in little things as well as great ones.

“When the women went home, their father was surprised to see them so soon and asked the reason. They told him how an ‘Egyptian’ had helped them water their flocks. Their father had them go back to invite Moses home with them. Moses accepted the invitation to live with Jethro, the priest of Midian.

“In time Moses married Jethro’s daughter Zipporah. They had a son whom they called Gershom which means stranger, for Moses said, ‘I have been a stranger in a strange land.’

“All this time the children of Israel were at their hard work in Egypt. But after awhile this king of Egypt died. The children of Israel still sighed because of their bondage, though. God heard their groaning and remembered His covenant with Abraham and with Isaac and with Jacob. He looked upon the children of Israel and had respect for them. Though He had promised Joseph He would take them back to the land of Canaan, He had to make them feel the hard bondage of Egypt so that they might be glad to leave it altogether, and that they might wish to go to live in the promised land, to be a God-fearing people and to remember His wonderful deliverances which He wrought for them.”

Sophy's Story on Exodus: Bible Talks for Boys and Girls, Israel's Bondage and the Birth of Moses (1:1-22)

Chapter 1

Exodus 1:1-2:10

It was evening; supper was over and the toys had been put away. The favorite hour had come for two happy, intelligent-looking children as they climbed up alongside Mother, who, with Bible in hand, had taken her usual place on the sofa. Sophy and her little brother Arthur were always eager for one of Mother’s bedtime Bible stories.

Mother’s last story from the book of Genesis was about the death of Joseph and of how God had said He would surely visit the children of Israel and bring them again into the land of Canaan, as He had promised Abraham.

“Now, Mother,” said Sophy eagerly, “do tell us more about the children of Jacob. How long did they stay in Egypt?”

So opening her Bible to the first chapter of Exodus, Mother began:

“From the time that God gave the promises to Abraham until the children of Israel left Egypt was about four hundred and thirty years. After Joseph and all his brothers were dead, the number of their children became great and they were very strong. The good king Pharaoh died and another king arose who did not remember what Joseph had done for Egypt. When he saw that the children of Israel were getting to be so numerous he began to be afraid that if there were to be a war that they would join with the enemy against his people. In order to keep them from doing that, the king made the children of Israel his servants and set taskmasters over them to make them work and, to build cities where the king might keep his treasures.”

“What was that king’s name, Mother?” asked Arthur.

“He, also, was called Pharaoh, as all the kings of Egypt were in those days, Arthur. But he was not like the good king Pharaoh who was kind to Joseph, for he was very cruel to the children of Israel. He made them work very hard with mortar and bricks to make fine buildings for the Egyptians. However, the more unkind the Egyptians were to them, Arthur, the more they increased in number and the stronger they became.

“Then Pharaoh thought of a very wicked plan. He told the nurses to kill all the newborn boy babies but to save the girl babies. The nurses feared God though, so they saved the boy babies, too. This made Pharaoh very angry, but God blessed the nurses because they feared Him more than the king of Egypt. Now Pharaoh thought of another way to carry out his scheme. He ordered the Israelites to throw every newborn son into the river.

But there was a man of the house of Levi who married a daughter of Levi. They had a baby boy who was a beautiful baby and they just couldn’t throw him into the river. They had faith in God so were not afraid of the king’s command. What do you think they did? They hid him for three months, but after that they thought he was too big to be hidden any longer.”

“Did they ask God not to let the king find him, Mamma?” inquired Sophy.

"I dare say his parents did ask God to take care of their little son, Sophy. There is a great river in Egypt called the Nile, and quantities of bulrushes grow along its banks. The poor mother gathered some of these rushes and made a basket, which was called an ark, covered it with pitch and slime and put her little baby in it. Then she left it floating among the rushes at the edge of the river."

"Oh, the poor baby!" exclaimed Arthur. "Wouldn't he cry when left all alone?"

"Yes, he did, Arthur," replied Mother. "His sister stood afar off, watching to see what would happen to him. What do you think did happen to him? I will tell you. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the river. As she walked along she saw the little ark among the bulrushes, so she sent her maid to bring it to her. When she looked in and saw the baby, he was crying. She felt sorry for him and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.' The little baby's sister came up to Pharaoh's daughter and said to her, 'Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for thee?' Pharaoh's daughter said, 'Go.' So she went and told her mother how Pharaoh's daughter had found the baby. I think Pharaoh's daughter thought what a nice kind nurse the mother was, though she did not know she was the baby's real mother. She said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.' So the mother took the child and raised him. Then she took him back to Pharaoh's daughter. He became her son and she called him Moses because she drew him out of the water."

"Did he live in a palace like a little prince?" Sophy asked.

"Yes, he did, and he was taught all the learning of the Egyptians for they were the most educated people of the world in those days. Moses was very clever and very strong, for he was mighty in words and in deeds. But that is all for tonight. You must go to bed now."

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