

***St. Nicholas Orthodox Church - Monongahela, Pa.***  
**Bible Study - Old Testament Heroes of Faith**  
**Session 2 - Moses**

*O Master who loves mankind, illuminate our hearts with the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our mind to understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, that we may overcome all carnal desires, entering upon a spiritual life and understanding and doing all things to please You. For You are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies, O Christ God, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and You all-holy, gracious, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.*

## I. INTRODUCTION TO THIS SERIES

The Holy Bible is God's word, through it He speaks directly to us. Its pages are full of His teachings on how we are to live our lives and how to be in a loving relationship with Him. The problem, (which goes without saying), is that His instructions are sometimes "easier said than done". How does a person live out His instructions? The challenges that people faced 2,000 or even 100 years ago are much different from today's circumstances. We need practical, real examples to show us how to put His words into action. For this reason God raises up holy men and women in every culture and generation to show us how it can be done. As the Bible says:

*Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you,  
consider the outcome of their lives and imitate their faith. (Hebrews 13:7)*

This study will examine the lives of leaders in the Old Testament who spoke the word of God to us and are examples of how to put His words into action. Despite the fact that thousands of years separate us from them there is much we can learn from the example of their lives.

## II. MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH – Exodus Chapter 3

The Book of Genesis continues the story of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Through the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50 we learn how his descendants settle in the land of Egypt and eventually suffer as slaves of the Egyptians. God hears the cries of His people...  
.....so begins the story of Moses.

In Exodus chapters 1-2 we learn about the birth of Moses who, although he is a Hebrew, is raised in the home of Pharaoh. One day Moses observes an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave. Moses kills the Egyptian and then flees to the wilderness.

- A. Why do you think God used the burning bush to get Moses' attention? What if He had simply begun speaking instead? What is the effect on Moses?

B. Why is the Holy Theotokos described as a “type” of the Burning Bush?

C. What is the good news in verses 7-10? What is the bad news?

D. How does Moses reply?

Is Moses more uncertain of himself or of God?

What kinds of emotions might Moses have been feeling?

E. What does God promise him in v. 12?

**For reflection:** How does knowing that God is “with you” affect your daily life?

F. Why does I AM describe God?

Read John 8:58-59 (p. 1441) How does Jesus take on that name for Himself? Which “Christian” sects reject this?

G. Can you recall some of the “I am” statements of Jesus?

**For reflection:** Which of Jesus “I am” statements are most meaningful to you?  
What has been a burning bush in my life?

H. Poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote:

*Earth’s crammed with heaven, each common bush aflame with God. Yet only he who sees takes off His shoes. The rest set round and pluck blackberries.*

What does she mean?

### III. THE PASSOVER - Chapters 11-12

God sends a series of plagues upon the Egyptians in order to convince them to set the Hebrews free from slavery.

- A. What is the last plague described in chapter 11?
- B. How would the Hebrews be preserved from this danger? (see 12:3-13)
- C. How does this story help you to understand the death of Jesus?

**From the Fathers:** “What then did Moses do? ‘Sacrifice an unblemished lamb’, he said, ‘and smear your doors with its blood’. What do you mean? Can the blood of irrational animals save one who expresses reason? ‘Yes’, he says. ‘Not because it is blood but because it prefigures the Master’s blood’.....that blood which lacked life and perception saved the men who had life, not because it was blood but because it was an anticipatory type of the Master’s blood”.

St. John Chrysostom

- D. What did God command the Hebrews to do so they might not forget what He had done for them? (see Exodus 12:24-28)
- E. What does Christ invite us to do to remember what He did for us? See 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 (p. 1563)

What does it mean *to remember*? In the original Greek: *anamnesis*

#### **IV. AT MOUNT SINAI – Chapter 19-24**

The Hebrews are freed from slavery in Egypt and after the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea (chapter 14) they are on their journey to the promised land. They arrive at Mount Sinai where God renews and elaborates on the covenant He made with Abraham.

- A. In v. 4-6 what does God promise? What must the Hebrews do?
- B. How do the people respond? (v. 7-9)
- C. How did God command the people to prepare for His presence among them?

Why was all this necessary?

D. How does He come among us today?

Is any preparation necessary? Why?

E. What did God require of Abraham when He made a covenant with him (see Genesis 17).  
In chapter 20, how is He more specific now with Moses and the Hebrews?

F. Moses received the law, written by the hand of God on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Passover.  
What is this feast called?

What does it preview in the New Testament?

G. Read Exodus 24:1-8. What do the Hebrews promise?

How is the covenant reaffirmed?

How is this like or unlike the New Covenant established by the Lord Jesus?

## V. THE GOLDEN CALF

A. How long is Moses on Mount Sinai away from the people? (see 24:15-18)

B. What do the Hebrews do in the meantime? Read Exodus 32:1-4

C. After waiting all this time for Moses, the Hebrews were: a. bored b. impatient c. weary of  
“being good” d. longing to worship e. confused and bewildered f. angry

D. Where could the Hebrews have learned to worship like this?

E. How did God respond to what the people had done (vv. 7-10)?

F. How did Moses argue for the defense of the people (vv. 11-14)?

G. What can you learn about Moses’ character from his decision to intercede for the people  
instead of agreeing with God to destroy them?

H. What makes God angry, based on this passage?

I. What is an idol? What causes idolatry (other than sin)?

J. What are some potential “idols” that people may be tempted to “worship” today?

***For reflection:*** God desires my undivided, wholehearted devotion. Am I wholly devoted to Him? Are there any “idols” in my life, anything that I “worship” other than God? Ask God to show me if there are. Yield your heart to Him today.

Do any of my actions make God angry? If so, confess them. Go to God with a repentant heart. Be encouraged that God is a patient God and slow to anger. Meditate on Jonah 4:2

*“You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.”*