I
n Lesson 1, we learned about a family that was very special to God. We learned of God’s promise to Abraham to make his descendants into a great nation. We learned that this same promise was passed down to Abraham’s son Isaac, and again to Isaac’s son Jacob. We left off last lesson after learning about the twelve sons of Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel).

**Joseph Sold**

Jacob loved his son Joseph more than any of his other sons. To show his love, he made Joseph a very fine coat of many different colors (Genesis 37:3). This caused Joseph’s brothers to envy and hate him.

One day, Joseph’s eleven brothers were in the fields feeding their father’s flock of sheep. Jacob sent Joseph to check on them. When the brothers saw Joseph, they decided to use it as an opportunity to get rid of him. After considering their options, they decided to sell Joseph as a slave to some Midianite traders who were passing by on their way to Egypt. On the way home, the brothers killed a goat and smeared Joseph’s coat in its blood. When they showed the coat to their father, they explained that a wild animal in the fields killed Joseph. This caused Jacob to mourn for many days.

When Joseph arrived in Egypt, Potiphar, an Egyptian captain, bought him. A great wrong had been done to Joseph. He did not deserve to be sold as a slave. However, Joseph realized a biblical principle that we can turn to in the New Testament and read about. I Peter 3:14 says, “But even if you should ________________ for ______________ sake, you are __________,” for “all things work together for __________ to those who __________ God” (Romans 8:28). Joseph knew that he had been wronged, but he also knew that God would not forsake him if he did not forsake God. We can turn back to Genesis to see how God dealt with Joseph: “The Lord was with __________, and he was a ______________ man” (Genesis 39:2). Joseph became so successful that Potiphar decided to put Joseph in charge of his entire household.

As time went on, Potiphar’s wife became attracted to Joseph, and attempted to be intimate with Joseph in a way that only a husband and wife should be. Because Joseph obeyed and feared God, he would not allow her to succeed. This angered Potiphar’s wife. The next time she tried to make advances on Joseph, she grabbed onto a piece of his clothing as he ran away. She ripped the piece off of him and kept it. She then went to her husband and made up a story that Joseph tried to be intimate with her, and she had some of his clothing to prove it. Potiphar believed his wife and became very angry with Joseph—putting him in prison.

Despite all of his trials, Joseph did not give up. He trusted God, and knew that God was testing him to see if he would continue to obey
Joseph was determined to not forsake God. Over two years after being put in prison, Joseph was called on by Pharaoh to interpret a dream. Joseph told Pharaoh that he did not have the ability to interpret dreams, but if it were God’s will, then God would work through Joseph to interpret it. Pharaoh explained his dream to Joseph by saying, “Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. Suddenly, seven cows came up out of the river, fine-looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt” (Genesis 41:17-19).

Joseph explained that the seven fine-looking cows represented seven years of prosperity for Egypt. However, the seven ugly cows represented seven years of severe famine for Egypt. He explained that Pharaoh should appoint a wise man over Egypt to make sure that during each of the good years, one-fifth of all the food in Egypt be stored for use during the seven years of famine. Pharaoh was impressed with Joseph’s wisdom, and saw that God was working with him. He appointed Joseph to be over Egypt to make sure this plan was carried out.

Joseph’s reliance on God paid off. Just like his great-grandfather Abraham, Joseph understood the law of cause and effect. He knew if he patiently waited for God to work out the situation, obeying God the whole time and not trying to have things work out his own way, then God would bless him. That is exactly what happened. Thirteen years after being sold as a slave by his brothers, Joseph became the second most powerful man in Egypt, next only to Pharaoh.

When the seven years of famine struck, none of the surrounding nations had food, since they did not store any during the seven years of prosperity. When others heard that Egypt had extra food, they traveled there to buy it. This also included Jacob. He sent ten of his sons to Egypt to get food. However, he did not send his young son Benjamin, out of fear that what happened to Joseph could also happen to him.

When they arrived and stood in line to get food, Joseph recognized his brothers. Although Joseph was very happy to see them, he decided not to reveal himself immediately. Instead, he spoke to them using a Hebrew translator, so that they thought that Joseph was an Egyptian. Joseph accused them of being spies. The brothers explained that they were merely part of a family of twelve
brothers and an aging father. Joseph was relieved to hear that after these many years, his father was still alive. He questioned where the other two brothers were. They explained that one was at home and the other one was dead. Joseph remained strong and was able to hold back his emotions. He told his brothers that he would believe their story if they returned home and brought their youngest brother to him. In the meantime, he was going to hold one of them in prison.

The brothers were distressed, because they knew that Jacob would not want to send Benjamin. When they arrived home, they explained to their father everything that had happened. At first, Jacob would not allow Benjamin to go, but they eventually ran out of food again. They needed to go back to Egypt to get more. This time, Jacob allowed Benjamin to go.

**Jacob Moves to Egypt**

After his brothers arrived back in Egypt, Joseph eventually could not hold back any longer. With great emotion, he made his identity known to them. Many years had passed since they sold Joseph to slavery—and they were astonished at the great power that he had in Egypt. Joseph was able to forgive his brothers for selling him into slavery.

Turn to Genesis 45 to see Joseph’s remarkable statement to his brothers: “But now, do not therefore be ______ or ______ with yourselves because you sold me here; for ______ sent me before you to preserve life” (verse 5). Continue in verse 8: “So now it was not _____ who sent me here, but _____; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ______ throughout all the land of ______.” Remarkable! Instead of being angry with his brothers for selling him as a slave, he was able to recognize that it was God’s will that he go to Egypt, and preserve life by becoming a ruler of Egypt and saving enough food during the prosperous years. Most people in the same situation would have blamed the brothers, and would have considered themselves great for obtaining so much power. Not Joseph. He saw that this was God’s plan all along, and he was merely the person that God worked with to fulfill it. All the greatness that Joseph had obtained in Egypt was not because of anything that he had done—but because of God!

Joseph desired greatly to see his father again. He asked his brothers to go back to Canaan and bring his father with them to live in a part of Egypt called Goshen. Jacob was overcome with joy when he heard that Joseph was still alive. Jacob and his sons left Canaan and moved to Goshen.

In Genesis 48, we read that as Jacob got closer to death, he knew it was time for him to pass down the blessing that he had received from Isaac. Instead of blessing his firstborn, he blessed Joseph’s two sons—Ephraim and Manasseh. By blessing his grandchildren, Jacob adopted them as his own sons so that they would also take part of the great blessing given to Israel.

Notice what Jacob said in verse 19 when he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh: “[Manasseh] also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.” Jacob was recalling years earlier when he was blessed and was told by God, “Be fruitful and multiply; a ______ and a ______ of ______ shall proceed from you” (Genesis 35:11).

God does not break His promises. The beginning of the fulfillment of this promise started with Ephraim and Manasseh. They did grow into a great nation and company of nations that exist today. The descendants of Ephraim grew into the British Commonwealth (which includes such countries as England, Canada and Australia.) Manasseh grew into the great nation of the
United States of America. Many of you live in one of these nations, and the reason that they have so many physical blessings is because of the promise that God made to Abraham over 3,000 years ago. God does not break His promises.

**Israel Taken into Slavery**

In the years following Jacob’s death, his descendants lived in Egypt and became large in number. As the Israelites grew, the Egyptians felt threatened by them and forced them into slavery. Hard times had now come upon Israel. However, God would not forsake His chosen people. He had a plan to eventually free Israel from their captivity. God works on His own timeline and, as we will see, He wanted Israel to learn some lessons before He freed them.

In Lesson 1, we saw that God’s government is structured from the top down, with God the Father and then Jesus Christ as the two Beings with the most authority. God then has one human leader whom He uses to lead His people. By the time God was ready to free Israel from Egyptian captivity, they had grown to at least 2 or 3 million people. God would need a very special person to be able to successfully lead all these people. This person’s name was Moses.

Moses was born after Israel was taken into slavery by the Egyptians. At that time, Pharaoh had a plan to stop the growth of Israel. He decided to kill all the newborn Hebrew boys! Moses’ mother tried for three months to hide Moses from the Egyptians, but eventually realized that it was too dangerous. So she made a basket and put Moses in it, then placed the basket in the Nile River. She trusted that God’s will would be done, and that the child would find safety. Moses was discovered in the river by the Pharaoh’s daughter—who took Moses as her own child. This meant that Moses was raised with a life of privilege, receiving a good education and living very comfortably. Despite this, Moses was unhappy that his fellow Hebrews were being treated brutally as slaves. One day, Moses observed an Egyptian taskmaster beating a Hebrew slave. This made Moses so angry that he tackled the Egyptian to the ground and began fighting with him. The taskmaster died from his wounds. Afraid that the Pharaoh would find out, Moses fled from Egypt.

**Moses Called**

Many years later, while Moses was tending sheep in the land that he fled to, he came across a burning bush. This bush got Moses’ attention because, even though it was on fire, it would not burn up. Moses approached the bush, when suddenly he heard a voice from it say, “Moses, Moses.” The voice then told him to take off his sandals because he was in the presence of God, and the ground that he was standing on was holy ground—set aside by God for a special purpose! Moses was astonished. Imagine how you would react if God were speaking directly to you! Moses kneeled down because he was afraid to look at the bush. God explained to Moses that He had seen the oppression of Israel in Egypt, and He was now going to use Moses to free them from Egypt and their slavery. Moses was very hesitant to accept the job for which God had chosen him. He came
up with many excuses, but eventually realized that he was dealing with God—and God would not take “no” for an answer.

Exodus 2:24 says, “So God heard [Israel’s] groaning, and God remembered His [agreement] with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.” God cannot break His promises. He promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that Israel would become a great nation. He knew that they could not become a great nation if they were in slavery.

Although God was going to free them from slavery, we will see that He still wanted Israel to learn important lessons about relying on and trusting in Him. This is important understanding. Those who serve and obey God must realize that God desires the best for us. This sometimes means correcting us—teaching us a lesson. The Bible speaks of the correction that we receive from God. Just as our human parents will correct us if we do something wrong, our heavenly Father will also correct us if we do not obey Him.

Turn to Hebrews 12 and fill in the blanks of verse 11: “Now no chastening [correction] seems to be ____________ for the ____________, but ____________; nevertheless, afterward it yields the ____________ ____________ of ____________ to those who have been ____________ by it.” Although it does not seem pleasant to be corrected—either by a human parent or by God the Father—if we are able to learn from (be trained by) this correction, then we will be closer to obtaining God’s righteousness because we will learn the importance of obeying His commands. It is important to remember that God corrects us because He loves us, and He knows that the only way we will be happy is if we follow His Way.

In regard to Israel, God was dealing with millions of His people who had been in Egyptian slavery for many generations. During that time, they were unable to obey God like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had. In fact, over the generations, many had forgotten God’s Way. They had not kept the Sabbath for a long time. God knew that He would have to do more than just free Israel from Egypt. He would have to show Israel the importance of relying on Him and obeying Him. This was a large-scale national correction because He wanted all the people of Israel to know and obey His Way again.

When Moses first went to Pharaoh and asked that all the Hebrews be let go, Pharaoh refused. Because of Pharaoh’s refusal, God sent plagues on the Egyptians. In fact, 10 different plagues in total had to be suffered by Pharaoh and the Egyptians until he changed his mind and finally freed them.
For the final plague, God made it known that He was going to send an angel to kill all the first-born children and animals in Egypt—except for those whose families had the blood of a lamb sprinkled on their doorposts. Such people would be passed over by God. God told Israel that on the same day every year, they were to do the same thing, so that they would remember when God delivered them from Egypt.

Your parents still observe this special day every year. It is called Passover, and it occurs the evening before the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Passover is now observed in a spiritual way, as we remember the shed blood of Jesus Christ—our Passover Lamb.

**Israel Free Again**

That night, all the firstborn in Egypt, including Pharaoh’s own son, were killed—except for those who were Hebrew. Pharaoh had finally had enough. Egypt had suffered from nine plagues already, and this 10th plague was too much for him to bear. He called Moses and Aaron (his brother who acted as his spokesman, since Moses spoke with a stutter). He said to them, “Rise and go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the Lord as you have said” (Exodus 12:31). That night—the night after the Passover—Israel left Egypt. Each year we remember this evening on the Night to Be Much Remembered.

Pharaoh had one more change of heart before Israel saw the last of him. Israel had been traveling a few days when Pharaoh decided he wanted to try to capture them again. God had a purpose for this. He wanted all the Egyptians to see the true power of God, so they would know who the only true God is. God caused Pharaoh to want to chase Israel. The Egyptian army caught up with the Israelites at a spot where
they were surrounded by large mountains, the wilderness, and the Red Sea. They had nowhere to run! Would their freedom be over already? Some certainly thought so. But Moses trusted in God, and told the people not to be afraid, because the Lord was going to deliver them (Exodus 14:13).

At that moment, God spoke to Moses and told him to stretch out his hand over the Red Sea and divide it in two. Moses did, and the water divided in two, so that there was dry land on the bottom to allow the Israelites to cross to the other side. Once they reached the other side, the Egyptian army was part way though the sea and God allowed the division to disappear, so that the water drowned the army. God did deliver Israel, and now they truly were free from their Egyptian slavery—after many years in captivity!

**Israel Learns God’s Way**

Before long, the Israelites forgot the awesome power that God had shown them. They soon started to complain to Moses that there was no food in the desert. They told Moses that in Egypt they had plenty of food, and they accused Moses of bringing all of Israel into the desert to starve. What the Israelites forgot was that it was not Moses who had brought Israel out of Egypt—it was God. Regardless, God did have a solution. He told Moses that a type of bread called manna would fall from heaven every day. God did not want the people to gather more bread than they needed for that day, because He wanted them to learn to *always* trust God for their needs—*day after day*. The exception to this would be on the sixth day of the week. On this day, the people were to gather twice as much food so that they would have enough to last them through the Sabbath.

There were some who did not trust God, and decided to gather more than they needed for the day. The next morning, their bread had worms in it and had an awful odor. And, just as God promised, those who went out to look for bread on the Sabbath could not find any. But those who had gathered twice as much on the sixth day had bread for the Sabbath.

God now had the task of teaching His chosen people how to live His way of life. When Israel reached Mount Sinai, God called Moses to the top of the mountain. There, God wrote on two tablets the Ten Commandments, by which Israel was to live. He made an offer to Israel that if they would obey His commandments, He would be their God. Turn to Exodus 19 and fill in the blanks to better understand the agreement (or covenant) that God proposed: “Now therefore, if you will indeed ________ My _________ and keep My ______________, then you shall be a ______________________ to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a ______________ of priests and a ________ ____________” (verses 5-6).

In Exodus 20, you will find the Ten Commandments that Israel was to obey. Become familiar with these, because your Bible memory assignment for this lesson will be to name all Ten Commandments. All of Israel answered God, saying that they would do whatever He commanded.

God allowed Israel to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before He finally led them to the same land that He had promised Abraham hundreds of years earlier (Genesis 12:1-2, 5; 13:15), a land “flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:8). During those 40 years, Moses acted as a judge for the people of Israel. Whenever
there was a dispute, they would bring it to Moses. Moses eventually appointed elders under him to deal with smaller matters, so that all his time would not be consumed by making judgments. This shows how God’s government works. God the Father is at the top, with the Word taking direction from the Father. Below Him was Moses, who took orders directly from the Word of the Old Testament, who later became Jesus Christ. In turn, Moses gave orders and instructions to his elders. God uses this structured form of government (from the top down) in order to prevent chaos and confusion.

The elders and Moses knew that they must respect the decisions that were made by God because they were made out of love and concern for them and for all of Israel.

It is for this same reason that God commands everyone to honor their fathers and their mothers. Your parents are responsible for you and, therefore, have authority over you. The decisions that they make are for your own good, and are made because they love you. In turn, they are receiving direction about how to be good parents from the Church, which receives instruction from God. If you don’t respect and obey your parents’ decisions, then you are not only disrespecting them, but you are disrespecting God, and you will cause chaos and confusion in your household.

Moses never did reach the Promised Land. Just as Israel was close enough to see it, God told Moses: “This is the land that I gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now I will give it to your descendants, and although I have allowed you to see it, I will not allow you to cross over into it” (Deuteronomy 34:4). At the age of 120, Moses died just as Israel was about to enter the Promised Land. Before Moses died, he laid his hands upon a man named Joshua, who then became the new leader of Israel. Israel called their leaders “judges” since they would make judgments on all the various situations that arose.

Israel entered into the Promised Land and, during the period of the judges, they fell into a pattern. Israel would forget the great power that God had shown them, and they would disobey God’s commands because they would allow their carnal nature to get the best of them. When this happened, God would remove their material blessings, and the people would complain to their leader. Things eventually got so bad that the Israelites would cry out to God for help. God would help them and then, for a time, they would obey God again. However, as time went on, they would fall back into disobedience, and the pattern would continue. The same thing happened when they were wandering in the desert before entering the Promised Land.

**Israel Demands a King**

During the days when Samuel was the judge of Israel, the people wanted a king like all the other nations around them. They did not realize that God was their King, and that He was much more powerful than all of the human kings on Earth. This upset Samuel, so he prayed to God about it. Turn to I Samuel 8:7 to read God’s answer to Samuel’s prayer: “And the Lord said to Samuel, ‘[Obey] the voice of the people [and their request for a king] in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have _______________, that I should not ___________ over them.’”

By asking for a human king, Israel rejected God as King over them. Therefore, God warned Israel and told them that their king would act out of greed, and would make their lives more difficult. He also said that He would not hear the cries of the people when they complained about their king, since they had rejected God as their ruler (verse 18). Yet, Israel still wanted a king.

And so a man named Saul was appointed king. Just as God had warned, Saul eventually
acted out of greed and did not do a good job of being king. He did not obey God’s commandments, and so God decided to punish Saul by removing him as king and replacing him with a better king. Even though Israel had rejected God, He was merciful and guided their king. We will learn in later lessons that God did eventually punish Israel for its disobedience by sending it back into captivity.

God chose a young man named David to be the new king of Israel. David trusted God with all his heart. In fact, when Israel was at war with the Philistines, David was willing to go out and fight Goliath—a giant man who could easily destroy any normal-sized person. But David knew God would be with him if he would trust God. God was with him, and he was able to defeat Goliath.

David was a good king. He obeyed God’s laws and so God made a special agreement with him. He promised David that his descendants would continue to reign over Israel forever and ever (II Samuel 7:16). He also said that the next king—David’s son—would build a temple for God. God did not break His promise. David’s throne still exists on Earth today. It is the very throne that Jesus Christ will return to when He sets up God’s government on the whole Earth—a government that will last forever and ever.

**Solomon’s Wisdom**

As King David grew older, he realized that he was soon going to die. He wanted to be sure that he provided his son Solomon with advice about being king over Israel.

Turn to I Kings 2 and fill in the blanks to see David’s advice to Solomon: “I go the way of all the earth; be ________, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the ________: to walk in His ________, to keep His ________, His ________, His ________, and His ________, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may ________ in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in ________ with all their ________ and with all their ______’—He said, ‘you shall not lack a man on the throne of ________’” (verses 2-4).

David understood the law of cause and effect. He knew God promised that his descendants would remain on the throne of Israel if they followed God’s Way. David knew that if Solomon did not follow God’s Way, then the effect would be that Israel would reject God. I Kings 3:3 says, “And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David.” This pleased God so much that He appeared to Solomon in a dream and said that He would give Solomon anything he wanted. Solomon knew that his father had ruled Israel in a way that was pleasing to God, and that this is why God blessed Israel. Considering this, Solomon asked God for wisdom. He knew he had been given an important job, and he wanted to make sure he would do it right. He knew he would only succeed if he relied on God. In fact, the wisdom that God gave to Solomon made him the wisest man to ever live!

Solomon was able to use this wisdom to write the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 3:5 shows how well Solomon understood this: “Trust in the ________ with all your
and lean not on your own ___________________." Solomon knew that when humans do what they think is right, it often is not what God says is right. We will later spend an entire lesson looking at the Proverbs.

Sadly, Solomon did not use all his wisdom properly. When he got older, he gave into human lust, and took for himself seven hundred wives. This is very wrong in God’s eyes, as marriage is to be between one man and one woman. Many of Solomon’s wives were not even Israelites, so Solomon began to worship the false gods and idols of his wives’ nations. This teaches us that we need to make sure we never stop obeying God. Even if we feel as though we are doing many things right, we must realize how easy it is for us to fall—just as Solomon did.

Interestingly, there is another important lesson we can learn about how God deals with us. You see, when David was alive, he also broke God’s Law by taking a woman who was not his wife. So what is the difference? Why did God deal favorably with David, but remain angry with Solomon? Because David repented. He confessed his sin to God, and asked God to forgive him. He told God that he had made a mistake, but he still wanted to live God's Way and obey Him. And he did not commit such a sin ever again.

Although the book of Ecclesiastes indicates that Solomon may have later repented before he died, God told Solomon that He would tear the kingdom of Israel away from him. But how could God do this? Didn’t God promise to David that his descendants would remain on the throne forever? Turn to I Kings 11:11-13 and, in the blank below, explain how God would take away the kingdom from Solomon without breaking His promise to David:

The one tribe that God left to Solomon’s son Rehoboam was the tribe of Judah. A man named Jeroboam ruled the rest of the tribes of Israel. In Lesson 3, we will learn how the split of Israel occurred, and we will learn of some of the kings who ruled both Judah and the rest of Israel.
BIBLE MEMORY: The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20)

Directions: Find all the words listed. Use the unused letters to fill in the mystery scripture below, which reminds us of how merciful God is. Note: Small words (for example, sin) cannot be found entirely in another word (Sinai).

Word Search

Promised Land

Moses

Angel

Blessing

Correct

David

Egypt

Ephraim

Exodus

Honey

Israel

Joseph

Judge

King

Lamb

Love

Solomon

Sons

Manasseh

Commandment

Promised Land

(Psalm 103:17)