



The Story of Salvation

Chapter 10 - A New Generation Is Needed



**Numbers 13; 14; 21:4-9; 24:17; 27:18-23;
Deuteronomy 18:15; 34:1-8**

Opening Prayer:

Lord God, we know that the human heart is a stubborn thing, and we confess that we are often guilty of words and deeds which we know to be wrong. Therefore, fill our hearts with Your Holy Spirit as we learn from Your Holy Word, that we may grow in faith and be able and willing ever to do and to speak what is pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

SETTING OUT FROM SINAI TO CANAAN

At Mount Sinai the Israelites remained almost a year. During that time the Tabernacle was built, and all arrangements were perfected toward instituting the righteous life of God's people in accordance with divine directions. Toward the close of the year's stay at Sinai, God commanded Israel to celebrate the Passover, and then one day the pillar of cloud rose from resting on the tabernacle and Israel resumed the march. The cloud led northward into the Wilderness of Paran toward the boundary of Canaan.

A DISASTROUS FAILURE

Camping at the southern border, God offered them the opportunity to take possession of the land without delay. Yahweh said to Moses, "Send men to search the land of Canaan. Send one ruler from every tribe." So Moses, following the command of Yahweh, sent spies who were elders of each of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying to them, "Go up through the country into the hills and see what the land and people are like."

After examining the land for 40 days, they returned carrying large clusters of grapes, pomegranates, and figs and reported that it was indeed a good country—"a land flowing with milk and honey," confirming that Yahweh's promises regarding the country were true. But, they added, the inhabitants were giants, and the Israelites could never defeat them.

Joshua and Caleb, two of the spies, urged the people to go up and take the land. "We can do it," they said, "for Yahweh is with us. He will bring us into this land and give it to us, as He promised. So do not fear the people of the land, and do not rebel against Yahweh." However, the report of the other spies had scared the people so thoroughly that they lacked courage and refused to move. When Moses pleaded with them not to rebel against Yahweh, they picked up stones to kill him. They wanted to choose another leader and go back to Egypt.

Suddenly the glory of the Lord filled the air above the tabernacle. A hush fell upon the camp. And God spoke to Moses: "How long will this people provoke and despise Me? I will strike them with a pestilence ("a deadly or destructive epidemic, plague, disease"), disinherit them, and make of you a greater and mightier nation."

Again Moses pleaded in prayer with the Lord to pardon the iniquity (sins) of the people according to the greatness of His loving kindness. The Lord answered that He would pardon the people, according to the request of Moses. However, Yahweh said that for their faithlessness, those who saw His glory, signs, and mighty deeds in Egypt and the wilderness and yet had provoked and not listened to Him ten times, they would not see the land which God swore to give to their fathers except, however, Joshua and Caleb, because they had been faithful. So Yahweh commanded that all those twenty years old and older would die in the wilderness because they grumbled against Yahweh, and the people would wander in the wilderness forty years, the same number as the days in which they explored the land. The men who searched the land and made the evil report about it died by a plague before Yahweh, but Joshua and Caleb lived.

When the people heard that God had sentenced them to die in the wilderness, they changed their minds. Now they wanted to go up and take the country. Moses warned them not to try it, for God would not be with them. Still they went, only to be utterly defeated.

A NEW GENERATION

It was a hopeless generation. God could not do anything with them. The slave drivers in Egypt had so completely ruined their courage that it could not be rebuilt. Though they had seen the mighty works of God with their own eyes, they did not trust in Him. A different people were needed to do God's work as He led them into the Promised Land. There was only one thing to do. They would have to stay in the wilderness until everyone was dead who was twenty and over when they left Egypt. This way, while the children grew up in the hardships of the wilderness, they would learn to trust in God alone, relying on His presence with them to be their strength, and thus be toughened to meet danger with courage. This wilderness wandering was God's school to raise up a new generation with a different outlook and a new understanding of the work to which God had called Israel.

THE WATER OF MERIBAH

The forty years of desert wandering with which Yahweh had threatened to punish the people when they had refused to enter the Land of Promise passed. A new generation had replaced the old one, which was "overthrown in the wilderness" (1 Cor. 10:5). It was not as stubborn as the men and women who were fathers and mothers when they left Egypt, and yet these children of theirs were far from being saints themselves. Three instances are of special interest.

The children of Israel came to the Desert of Zin and stayed near Kadesh. When there was no water for the people, they quarreled with Moses and Aaron. "It would have been better if we had died when our brethren died before Yahweh!" they said. "Why did you make us come out of Egypt to this evil place? Why have you brought the whole congregation of Yahweh into this wilderness so that we and our cattle should die here? This is no place to plant seeds and grow figs, vines, or pomegranates. There isn't any water to drink."

Moses and Aaron went out of sight to the assembly into the tabernacle and fell on their faces. The glory of Yahweh appeared to them. "Take the rod and gather together the assembly," Yahweh said to Moses. "You and your brother Aaron will speak to the rock while they watch; it shall give forth enough water for the community and all their animals to drink."

So Moses took the rod, as Yahweh commanded. Moses and Aaron gathered the people together before the rock, and he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels. Must we fetch water of this rock?" Then Moses lifted up his hand and hit the rock twice with his rod. Water came out abundantly, and the people and all their animals drank.

Then Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you didn't trust Me and rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah¹, you will not bring this congregation into the land that I have given them."

Then the children of Israel traveled from Kadesh around Edom to Mount Hor. Here Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, "Aaron shall be gathered to his people. He shall not enter the land that I have given to the children of Israel because he rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar, his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor, strip Aaron of his garments, and put them on Eleazar. Aaron shall die there."

So Moses did as Yahweh commanded. Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. When the people saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days. In general, the ceremonies of mourning were observed only seven days, but this was to honor the memory of a great man in Israel.

¹ Meribah means "contention, strife, quarreling."

THE BRASS SERPENT

From Kadesh, Israel had intended to march through the country of the Edomites and then northward to the Jordan River, which they would then cross to enter the Promised Land. But the king of the Edomites would not permit them to pass through his country. The hostile attitude of the Edomites—the Edomites, being descendants of Esau (Edom), still harbored the old hatred against the people whose ancestor was Jacob—compelled the Israelites to turn southward into the hot, dry, desert, through a most desolate region along the eastern arm of the Red Sea.

The people were very discouraged and so they complained again, as usual. The diet of manna was too monotonous (lacking in variety) and the hardships too severe. They spoke against God and against Moses. They wondered why they couldn't have been left to die in Egypt, where they now imagined life had been better, even in slavery.

For their complaining God let poisonous snakes overrun the camp, and many died from their bites. For the first time the people came to Moses and confessed that they had sinned. They asked him to pray that God would spare them. Moses did pray and God commanded him to make a serpent of brass, fasten it to the top of a high pole and lift it up in the middle of the camp. Then he should announce that whoever was bitten by the snakes should look up at the brass serpent and he would be healed. During these agonizing weeks the people received a practical training in faith.

The brass serpent was a symbol of Christ. Jesus would later say, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up [namely on the cross]; that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." (John 3:14-15)

THE STAR OF JACOB

The final event of note came after the children of Israel had been saved from the serpents. Israel had come north on the east side of the Dead Sea, had defeated the Amorites by God's blessing, and had made camp on the east side of the Jordan River within the borders of the Moabites. Balak, the king of Moab, was terrified at the coming of Israel because they were such a large group of people and because of reports of their past victories over other nations. So Balak sent for a soothsayer (one who practices magic, or a prophet) by the name of Balaam. The king offered Balaam money and riches if he would curse the Israelites, for then they could be defeated. The pagan belief was that the soothsayer, by the help of magic, could compel the gods to do what he demanded of them.

But God came to Balaam and said, "You shall not go with them or curse the people. They are blessed." So Balaam said to the messengers of Balak, "Go back to your land, for Yahweh refuses to give me permission to go with you." When the messengers reported back to Balak, he sent more messengers and riches to persuade him. Balaam answered, "Even if the king gave me his palace full of silver and gold, I could not go against the word of Yahweh, for something great or something small." But, the glitter of gold dazzled his eyes and captured his heart, so Balaam invited the messengers to stay the night, and he hoped to persuade Yahweh to permit him to do Balak's bidding. That night God came to Balaam and in anger said to him, "Go with them, if you do not want to listen to Me. But say only what I tell you." So Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

God was very angry because Balaam went, so the angel of Yahweh stood in the way opposing him. Balaam was riding on his ass, and his two servants were with him. The ass saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the way, his sword drawn in his hand, so the ass turned aside and went into a field. Balaam beat his ass, trying to turn her back on to the road. The angel of Yahweh then stood in a path between two vineyards, with a wall on each side of the path. When the ass saw the angel of Yahweh, she squeezed herself into the wall, crushing Balaam's foot. Again he beat her. The angel of Yahweh went further and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either right or left. When the ass saw the angel of Yahweh, she fell down under Balaam. Balaam became so angry that he beat the ass with his staff.

Then Yahweh gave Balaam's ass (the animal) the miraculous ability to talk, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me three times?" Balaam replied, "You mocked me. If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you." The ass said to Balaam, "Am I not the animal you have always ridden on? Have I ever been in the habit of doing these things?" "No," said Balaam. Then Yahweh opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel standing in the way, his sword drawn in his hand, and Balaam bowed his head and fell flat on his face.

The angel of Yahweh said to him, "Why have you beaten your ass three times? I went to stand in your way because you are opposing me. Your donkey saw me and turned. If she hadn't turned, I would have slain you." Balaam replied to the angel, "I have sinned. I didn't know that you stood in the way. I will go back now." But the angel of Yahweh said, "Go with the men, but say only the words that I tell you to say." So Balaam went with the messengers of Balak.

The next morning Balak took Balaam up to one of the high places so he could see most of the people. After making burnt offerings, Balaam spoke words that Yahweh told him to speak. He said, "Balak brought me here to curse Jacob. But now shall I curse those whom God has not cursed? These people shall live alone, and no one will be able to count them." Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought here to curse my enemies, and you have blessed them." Balaam replied, "I must speak only what Yahweh has put in my mouth. God is not a man who can lie or break promises. I have received a commandment to bless, and I cannot reverse it."

At two other places Balaam blessed Israel. At Peor he said, "*There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel who shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Sheth. Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion*" (Numbers 24:17). *It was a prophecy of the coming Savior. This prophecy continued to live among the astronomers of the East until the day the Magi were led by the star of Bethlehem to the newborn Savior. (Epiphany)*

A NEW LEADER APPOINTED

Moses knew that God would not permit him to lead the people into the Promised Land. He had forfeited the right when he disobeyed God and struck the rock instead of speaking to it that it give water, as God had commanded (Exodus 17/Numbers 20). He was provoked by the people beyond endurance, and this disobedience was almost insignificant compared to the repeated rebellions of the people. Still, if God should teach the people obedience, He could not overlook disobedience on the part of his chosen leader, Moses.

At God's command, Moses appointed Joshua to be the new leader. Then he wrote the laws in a book and commanded that the book be read to all the people every seventh year. With solemn words he urged the people to be faithful to God, and in a mighty song he spoke of God's goodness to His people. In particular he admonished the people to remain true to Yahweh and to keep His commandment, pointing out both the blessings and the curse that would follow upon either obedience or disobedience (Deuteronomy 28). Above all, however, he did not fail to tell them that in God's own time that Great Prophet would come who would proclaim the most glorious message of salvation through His fulfillment of the Law in the sinners' stead and by atoning for their sins.

A PROPHET LIKE MOSES, BUT GREATER

One more prophecy of the promised Christ was added during this period. It was spoken by Moses. "*Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of Yahweh your God.*" [Deuteronomy 18:15-16a]

Moses did a threefold work in Israel. He proclaimed God's word to the people: he was an intercessor (mediator/ middleman) between God and the people, and he was a leader and a ruler. Thus Moses served as a "prophet, priest and king" for Israel. So Christ not only preached God's Word, but He is God's Word (John 1); Christ is the ultimate and final mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), and Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16). The book of Hebrews also describes, in detail, how Jesus is the great high priest, prophet and king of Israel.

THE DEATH OF MOSES

Then one day a lonely old man went from the plains of Moab and walked up the mountain of Nebo overlooking Jericho and the Promised Land. He was on his way to meet God to be with Him forever. We can almost imagine him turning and casting one last, lingering look at the camp of the people he had loved so dearly and led. At the top of the mountain God met him and in a grand view showed him all the Promised Land. God said to Moses, "This is the land that I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to your descendants. I have allowed you to see it, but you shall not go there."

So Moses, the servant of Yahweh, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Yahweh. He was 120 years old. God buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, but no one knows where his grave is, for Israel should not be tempted to commit idol-worship at the grave of their beloved and great leader. However, in the camp the children of Israel wept and grieved thirty days for Moses.

Joshua succeeded Moses as leader of Israel, as Yahweh had commanded. Joshua was filled with wisdom because Moses had laid his hand upon him and blessed him. The children of Israel did as Yahweh commanded them through Moses and listened to Joshua. But, from then until the One whom Moses had prophesied about, there was not a prophet like Moses in Israel who had known Yahweh face-to-face.

CATECHETICAL CONNECTION:

As the head of the family should teach it in a simple way to his household

THE SEVENTH PETITION

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.

Luther. (2017). [Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation](#) (p.22). St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House.

PRAYER FOR THE CLOSE OF DAY: *Lutheran Service Book p. 298*

Reading for the Next Chapter - Ch. 11 "From Joshua to Samuel":

- ➔ Joshua 3-6, 8-12, 24; Judges 1, 21; Ruth; 1 Samuel 1, 3-4, 7, 19
- ➔ 4th Commandment

“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”

LSB 702 (TLH 394)



1 My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Cal - va - ry,
2 May Thy rich grace im - part Strength to my faint - ing heart;
3 While life's dark maze I tread And griefs a - round me spread,
4 When ends life's tran - sient dream, When death's cold, sul - len stream



Sav - ior di - vine. Now hear me while I pray; Take all my
My zeal in - spire! As Thou hast died for me, Oh, may my
Be Thou my guide; Bid dark - ness turn to day, Wipe sor - row's
Shall o'er me roll, Blest Sav - ior, then, in love, Fear and dis -



guilt a - way; O let me from this day Be whol - ly Thine!
love to Thee Pure, warm, and change - less be, A liv - ing fire!
tears a - way, Nor let me ev - er stray From Thee a - side.
trust re - move; O bear me safe a - bove, A ran - somed soul!

Text and tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2021 Concordia Publishing House.

✠ **Prayer for the Close of Day** ✠

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and peace at the last.
Amen.

It is good to give thanks to the Lord,
to sing praise to Your name, O Most High;

To herald Your love in the morning,
Your truth at the close of the day.

Apostles' Creed

**☐ I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.**

**Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace;
Your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which You have prepared in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal You to the nations
and the glory of Your people Israel.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Continued on the back →

Visit our dwellings, O Lord, and in Your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of Your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Lord's Prayer

**☩ Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Then go to sleep at once and in good cheer.

Acknowledgments

Close of the Day from Lutheran Service Book

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®),

copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2021 Concordia Publishing House.