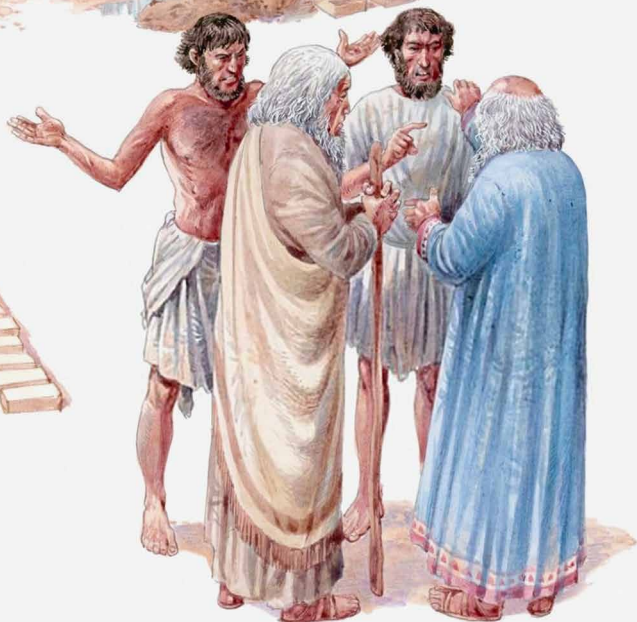


BIBLE STUDY SERIES

# MOSES AND THE MARK



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Larry Wilson

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## Foreward

Nothing excites me more than to discover deeper insight from the Scriptures. As I began to focus my study on prophecy, I was amazed how many well-known Bible stories have such profound end-time parallels. This is one of ten stories which were originally published in a monthly newsletter during the first ten months of 2002. Here are my reasons for republishing these stories:

First, I hope each booklet will be widely distributed because everyone needs to know that the Bible has never been more relevant and timely than right now! I realize many other Bible stories have end-time parallels, but I have chosen these particular stories because they are rich in content. As each story is placed into proper context, it is easier to understand *how* and *why* God's people will be tested during the Great Tribulation.

Second, I want you to have enough background information about the character in each story to feel as though you were there when the story took place. Understanding the tests, struggles, mistakes, and victories experienced by the characters should encourage and prepare us for the days ahead.

Last, I want you to know that faith in God means to submit to His demands and remain loyal to Him in the face of life-threatening adversities. If any concept stands out, I hope it is this: *Faith in God is much more than believing there is a God.* When people truly love God, their everyday actions will reflect a dedicated commitment to honor

His ways, which are distinctly different from the ways of this world. A faith-filled Christian often stands in direct opposition to what the world esteems;<sup>1</sup> therefore, honoring God is not always a pleasant experience.

The pressure to conform to the status quo explains, in part, why ancient Israel frequently apostatized.<sup>2</sup> Tragically, the priests of Israel failed to lead the people to understand that as a nation, they must be vigilant because mankind is inherently rebellious toward God.<sup>3</sup>

When the draw of our carnal nature is combined with the pressure to conform to the world's ways, serving God becomes a frustrating challenge and requires *patient* faith.<sup>4</sup> God understands our dilemma. This is why He preserved so many stories of faith in the Bible. Unless we examine and understand the failures and the victories of our forefathers, we will repeat their mistakes.

The Bible is clear: *Salvation comes through faith in God.* Given this sublime truth, I hope you will gain a new appreciation for the many aspects of faith as you read these booklets. Faith in God is so much more than intellectual assent to, or agreement with, an idea. Faith in God leads to adventure and fills your heart with peace and joy. True happiness springs from knowing and loving the great "I AM."

Larry Wilson, September 2020

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1 Romans 8:7

2 2 Kings 17:15

3 Ezekiel 22:26

4 James 1:3

# Moses and the Mark of the Beast

The life of Moses could be divided into three distinct segments of 40 years each. The first segment began with his birth and ended when he murdered an Egyptian taskmaster. The next segment began when Moses escaped from Egypt and ended when he returned to Egypt. The final segment of his life began with the Exodus and ended with his death just before Israel entered the promised land.

Except for his miraculous escape from death shortly after he was born, the Bible gives minimal information about Moses' first 40 years.<sup>1</sup> The Bible does not reveal how Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses nor does it provide additional insight about his time in Pharaoh's house. We do know, however, that when Moses grew to be a man, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.<sup>2</sup>

The reason Moses murdered the Egyptian taskmaster remains a mystery to me. Did Moses kill the Egyptian out of a sense of injustice or was Moses simply looking for a way to gain respect from his Hebrew brothers? Let's review the circumstances surrounding the slaying. One day Moses left the comforts of Pharaoh's palace to see for himself how his Hebrew brothers were fairing under

1 Exodus 1 and 2

2 Hebrews 11:24

the agony of slavery. He came upon an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave, and believing that no one was watching,<sup>1</sup> Moses killed the Egyptian and quickly buried the corpse in the sand. However, another Hebrew witnessed the event and word of the murder spread like wildfire through the Hebrew camp. Moses feared for his life and fled to the desert to escape Pharaoh's wrath.

For the next segment of 40 years, Moses lived in the desert as a fugitive. While working for minimum wage tending sheep in the hostile, desert environment, Moses discovered a patient faith in God and personal contentment, two essential elements of life. The stark surroundings of the desert, with its unforgiving lessons of survival taught Moses more about depending on the Lord than he could have ever learned while living in Pharaoh's palace. Moses also discovered the power and joy of love caring for the sheep. So, the first 80 years of his life prepared Moses for the final and finest segment of his life. His education in Pharaoh's schools and re-education in the desert combined in a unique way to forge Moses into one of the world's finest servant-leaders.

## **The Servant-Leader**

Being a servant-leader is difficult because the mindset of a servant and the mindset of a leader are opposite. The *authoritarian-leader* uses control, but the *servant-leader* uses love. The servant-leader exalts the welfare

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 2:12

and development of his or her subjects equal to that of the objectives.

In other words, the servant aspect of leadership is willing to miss objectives (or profits) to improve and develop the members of the group; whereas the authoritarian aspect of leadership is willing to sacrifice members of the group to meet objectives.

In practice, this balance is very difficult to manage and Moses often failed Jesus as a servant-leader. Remember the time he impatiently struck a rock to produce water when God had commanded him to speak to it?<sup>1</sup> That impatient act prevented Moses from entering the Promised Land. It is ironic that Moses had to flee from Pharaoh's palace because of an impulsive act and he also failed to enter the Promised Land due to his impulsive nature.

After Moses was away from Egypt for 40 years, God forced him to return. The Lord's anger burned against Moses because he resisted God's command at the burning bush!<sup>2</sup> Shortly after the burning-bush episode, Moses made the Lord so angry that the Lord was prepared to kill him. However, Moses' wife, Zipporah, saved him from God's wrath!<sup>3</sup> When Moses arrived in Egypt, he was a much different man than when he left. Moses had left Egypt with an attitude of a leader, but he returned

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1 Numbers 20:8-12

2 Exodus 4:14

3 Exodus 4:24

40 years later with an attitude of a servant. A tremendous difference lies between the egocentric attitude of the young Moses and the theocentric attitude of Moses at age 80. It took 40 years of tending sheep to transform Moses into a meek man. When he finally learned how to follow the Good Shepherd, God promoted Moses to be a shepherd of His people.

### **A Man Without a Country**

When Moses arrived back in Egypt after his 40-year-wilderness sojourn, he did not have the respect of the Hebrew elders. No doubt, some of the elders remembered Moses was a fugitive from justice. This made it necessary for God to use miraculous signs through Moses in the presence of the elders. Otherwise, the elders would have rejected Moses and the message he presented.<sup>1</sup> From our vantage point today, it is interesting that even after directing a miraculous exodus from Egypt with great displays of God's power, the people still did not respect Moses. The reason is, the carnal mind does not understand the spiritual mind. God used 40 years in the wilderness to transform Moses into a spiritual man. In the carnal world, leaders (politicians) must maneuver so important people constantly support them. If they didn't, they would lose their financial support. When Moses returned to Egypt, he did not promote himself to be a savior of the Hebrews, nor

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 4:30-31



did he seek followers or popularity. He did not arrive with an entourage of servants, nor did he command a mighty army prepared to defeat Pharaoh. Moses arrived in Egypt as a servant of God. Moses explained to the elders that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had sent him back to Egypt to lead Israel out of slavery. To verify Moses' claim, God worked several miracles through him.<sup>1</sup> After seeing the miracles, the elders believed.

## **Background**

The story of Moses offers several end-time parallels that are important to consider. Interestingly, the parallels found in the lives of Moses, Pilate, Saul, Esther, Gideon, Daniel, and others were recorded in the Bible for our benefit!<sup>2</sup>

For a point of reference, our background study on Moses should begin with Jacob – the great-great grandfather of Moses. Jacob had twelve sons and his favorite was Rachel's first born, Joseph. Remember, Jacob worked fourteen years to acquire Rachel from Laban.<sup>3</sup> When Joseph was seventeen, his envious brothers sold him to Midianite merchants for 20 pieces of silver. These merchants took Joseph to Egypt and sold him as a slave.<sup>4</sup> In spite of this great injustice, Joseph remained faithful to

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1 Exodus 4:29-31

2 1 Corinthians 10:11

3 Genesis 29

4 Genesis 37:28

God, and was wonderfully blessed through some very tough circumstances.

About 23 years after Joseph was sold into slavery, the king of Egypt released him from prison and promoted him to the position of Prime Minister. This sudden promotion occurred because God enabled Joseph to interpret a dream given to Pharaoh. The dream predicted seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. Through Joseph, God warned Pharaoh of an approaching famine. Pharaoh was so pleased to know the meaning of the dream he elevated Joseph to his new position. After seven years of bountiful harvests, the sun began to scorch the Earth. The famine was severe and widespread. When it reached Canaan about two years later, Jacob and his eleven sons ran out of food. In desperation, Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy provisions. Through a series of events, Jacob's sons discovered their little brother, Joseph, was the Prime Minister of Egypt. Imagine their great fear and panic! In one of the greatest acts of compassion ever recorded, Joseph forgave his brothers and insisted that his father and all of his brothers come to Egypt. Knowing the famine would last five more years, Joseph moved his father and brothers to the region of Goshen. The children and grandchildren of Jacob (Israel) flourished in Egypt.

One of Jacob's twelve sons, Levi, had a son named Kohath. Now, follow the genealogy – Kohath had a son

named Amram, and Amram was the father of Aaron and Moses. This Levi-Kohath-Amram-Moses genealogy is important to the story because Moses knew as a youngster that his generation – the fourth generation – was the generation scheduled to be freed from Egyptian slavery!

Review the original promise that God gave to Abraham many years earlier: **“Then the Lord said to him, ‘Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.’”**<sup>1</sup>

### **The Fourth Generation**

Hopefully, you have read the Bible account describing how God miraculously used Pharaoh’s daughter to rescue baby Moses from the river and adopt him.<sup>2</sup> Growing up in the palace of Pharaoh and learning about his miraculous rescue at birth could put all kinds of ideas in a young man’s mind. I am sure that as Moses grew into manhood, he probably concluded that he was a man

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 15:13-16

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 2

of destiny. Moses could easily have concluded that God had chosen him to deliver Israel from Pharaoh's control and lead His people into Canaan to inherit the land God promised Abraham. I believe these ideas were possible because at that time, Moses was the only Hebrew in the world who was not a slave. Moses also could have been aware that he belonged to the fourth generation, and that God had promised Abraham the fourth generation in Egypt would return to Canaan and inherit the land! These thoughts may have led Moses to conclude he was the one who would set his people free.

However, one pivotal problem for Moses was that the slaves had no respect for him. They lived in the ghetto of Goshen and every day they endured terrible suffering as slaves. Conversely, Moses had lived in Pharaoh's palace and enjoyed the best luxuries money could buy. No matter what Moses thought, and though he refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter,<sup>1</sup> the other Hebrews did not regard him as one of them! Moses probably sensed this alienation and set out to prove to his kinsmen that he really identified with them and their suffering. This strained relationship and the desire to be accepted may have been the motivation for killing the Egyptian. However, the murder was a rash decision and it did not enamor Moses to his people. In reality, his action ultimately proved to everyone that he was neither smart nor prudent.

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 11:24-25

The very next day, when Moses realized that his own people had no interest in mounting an insurrection against Pharaoh by following his example and Pharaoh would sentence him to death for unlawfully killing an Egyptian, Moses decided it was in his best interest to disappear. His grand illusion of delivering the Hebrews from slavery simply evaporated as he fled into the isolation of the desert to save himself from certain death.

### **God's Object Lessons**

God did not need Moses to deliver His people from slavery. God could have exercised any one of thousands of options to deliver His people. This brings up an interesting point about faith. I believe Moses was like Abraham. Moses wanted to deliver his people from slavery, but God's larger plans for the Exodus included several object lessons between Himself and Pharaoh. Of course, Moses did not know about God's larger picture and his finite view of God's plans led to his failure. This is always the human problem. Remember the case of adultery between Abraham and Hagar? Abraham and Sarah schemed to fulfill God's plan by violating their marriage covenant. Moses attempted to fulfill God's magnificent plans by killing an Egyptian. Like Abraham, Moses sincerely believed in God, but both men failed because they would not wait for God to resolve the situation!

Moses violated God's law by killing the Egyptian and consequently, he had 40 years of solitary isolation! As a fugitive in the harsh setting of a desert prison, Moses learned submission and total dependence on God. Moses discovered the practical meaning of faith and learned how to wait so that God could fulfill His higher purposes. Waiting for God is one of the most difficult lessons to learn.<sup>1</sup> When God determined that Moses' spiritual life had reached a satisfactory level of maturity, He called Moses to do a special work for Him and Moses submitted to God's plan.

### **Moses Before Pharaoh**

It is quite possible to read a passage in the Bible and overlook some essential issues. People who have studied the Bible at length know what I mean. Words are a means to convey thoughts and thoughts are the language of the Spirit! I would like to illustrate this by presenting Pharaoh's point of view in his response to Aaron and Moses. Of course, I have speculated about some of the details; however, I have conscientiously tried to keep the added information consistent with the historical setting.

One morning as Pharaoh was sitting on his throne overseeing the business of his expansive kingdom, his court secretary informed him that two Hebrews—Aaron and Moses—were present and wanted to speak with him. The

<sup>1</sup> James 1:4

king was pleased. Pharaoh had heard rumors about the two men and he wanted to confront them!

Ordinarily, slaves were denied access to Pharaoh since they belonged to the lowest order of Egyptian culture. In Pharaoh's government, lieutenants who managed slaves reported to governors who oversaw the day-to-day operations of the kingdom. If any lieutenant or governor allowed the king to suffer loss, Pharaoh executed or publicly humiliated them. Such was his harsh, but highly effective, management style. Pharaoh wanted to meet with Aaron and Moses because he had received reports they had convinced slaves to rest from their labor on the seventh day of the week. Rebellion is perilous for any king; but Pharaoh was, for the moment, more curious than furious at this recent development among the slaves. He was intrigued by what was going on.

So, Pharaoh invited these two elderly men into his court. Evidently, he did not know about Moses killing the Egyptian 40 years earlier. Had he known, Moses would have been arrested on the spot as a fugitive from justice. Pharaoh had heard rumors that Moses had supernatural powers and could perform miracles, and he wanted to see Moses to verify if the rumors were true.<sup>1</sup>

Pharaoh also knew about the prophecy, circulating among the slaves, which their God had given that stated

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 4:29-31

Abraham's descendants would serve as slaves in Egypt for 400 years.

According to rumor, the slaves believed their 400 years of slavery were about to end. The timing of these reports and the notoriety surrounding Moses aroused Pharaoh's curiosity.

As Aaron and Moses approached the elevated throne, Pharaoh looked down on the two men. They were humble and polite; not arrogant or hostile. They respectfully bowed before the king and after expressing appreciation for the audience, they presented a small demand of their God. Notice that God did not demand from Pharaoh something that would destroy his nation's economy. God merely demanded a three-day leave of absence. **"Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: "Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness."'"**<sup>1</sup> Pharaoh was not prepared to hear a demand from two slaves. No doubt, he reacted much like any king would have.

Kings typically have huge egos and they give the *demands*. Pharaoh did not expect such sheer boldness from Aaron and Moses in making a demand of him. He expected these two slaves to grovel. After all, they were talking to the Pharaoh of Egypt. Even more, as a matter of court etiquette, a person does not demand something

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 5:1



of a sovereign. Even Esther humbly asked her husband, King Xerxes, to spare her life and the lives of her people from annihilation.<sup>1</sup> And she was the queen!

### **Pharaoh's Response**

Pharaoh must have smiled or winced at their foolishness. He looked at them for a couple seconds, gathered his thoughts, and rose to his feet. He answered their demand with two simple statements. First, he denigrated the God of Israel. **Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go.'**<sup>2</sup> As a man-god, Pharaoh believed that he had higher authority than the God of Israel. Before you condemn the pompous king, ask yourself if you have ever stood in Pharaoh's sandals. Have you ever defended a belief that you thought to be true, only to learn later that it was dead wrong? Among the religions of the world, which has the greater God? Is Allah greater than Jehovah? Is Buddha greater than Jesus?

Of course, your answer to these questions will depend on your beliefs about God. Pharaoh worshiped the sun-god, Ra, and he was convinced his god was superior to the God of Israel. The Egyptians believed that Ra appointed Pharaoh himself to rule over Egypt, and Pharaoh believed that Ra had divinely empowered him to

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<sup>1</sup> Esther 7:3

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 5:2

be Egypt's king. Pharaoh truthfully answered: **“I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go.”** Pharaoh faced the bearers of God's demand and bluntly stated that he would not obey the demand. His response was as direct as a human being can get – no weasel words from Pharaoh. In his defense, Pharaoh's response reflected his religious beliefs. From his point of view, Ra, was superior to Israel's God because the Hebrew nation was subservient to Egypt. If the God of the Hebrews was greater than Ra, then let Him deliver them from his hand! Now, be honest. If you were in Pharaoh's sandals that day, would you have granted a couple million slaves time off for a religious service lasting three days after two elderly men, speaking for the God of captives, demanded it?

Although Pharaoh has been dead for a long time, his words and attitude live on. The carnal response of the human heart remains unchanged when brought face-to-face before God's sovereign will: “Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?” God did not offer to negotiate with Pharaoh. Instead, God confronted Pharaoh with a direct order, **“Let my people go.”**

### **The Fear of the Lord**

**“Then they said [to Pharaoh], ‘The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God, or he may strike us with plagues or**

**with the sword.”**<sup>1</sup> Moses and Aaron were caught between their fear of the Lord and their fear of Pharaoh. They wanted to be sure the king knew they were not requesting a three-day leave of absence simply as a ploy to escape Pharaoh’s dominion.

Rather, they were presenting a demand that the Lord their God had given to them. Moses and Aaron tried to reason with Pharaoh and told him the Hebrews needed to make atonement for their sins with their God or their God might destroy them! During centuries of slavery in Egypt, the Hebrews had largely ignored God because remaining faithful to a God who permits His children to be held captive in a depressing situation that has no apparent end is very difficult. So, God told Israel through His servant, Moses, that His people must atone for their sins, as a precondition for being delivered from slavery. In other words, before they receive the gift of freedom from slavery (sin), people or nations must first become right with God, then submit to God’s demands.

During the Great Tribulation, God will confront the people of Earth with a direct order, **“Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. *Worship him* who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.”**<sup>2</sup> Moses and Aaron were to Pharaoh what the 144,000 will be to the

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1 Exodus 5:3, insertion mine

2 Revelation 14:7, italics mine

world during the Great Tribulation. God will empower and send His servants throughout the world to proclaim the everlasting gospel. The gospel of Christ commands everyone to worship the Creator. This means that we should structure our lives to incorporate the Ten Commandments, which includes His seventh day Sabbath. God's point-blank declaration will produce a similar response to that of Pharaoh in many people. They will say, **"Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?"**

To be honest, I do not think Pharaoh gave their response any thought. He wanted to get down to business. Standing before him were two men who had caused a big administrative problem. Pharaoh said, **"Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!"**<sup>1</sup> The king had heard that Moses and Aaron were the instigators of a Sabbath-rest rebellion and he ordered them to stop resting on the seventh day and get back to work. This is quite a story.

It started when Moses notified the Hebrew elders that God required the Hebrews to rest from their labors on His holy day, the seventh day of the week, as another precondition for deliverance from slavery. Each slave was excited to hear that deliverance was at hand. Everyone welcomed a day of rest from their labors. So, the elders gave the word and the slaves began to keep God's seventh day Sabbath by resting from their labor.

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 5:4, italics mine

Can you imagine the response of the task masters when they went to work as usual and found no slaves to do the work? So, Pharaoh's lieutenants immediately responded by requiring the slaves to produce the same quota of bricks in six days as they had been producing in seven. As far as the lieutenants were concerned, this requirement ensured the same level of production each week as before. The slaves did not complain, even though the observance of Sabbath meant extra hours of work each day – doing the work of seven days in six.

### **Reasons for the Work Stoppage**

Scholars have debated whether the work stoppage caused by Moses and Aaron was so the Children of Israel could observe of God's seventh day Sabbath. Even though Exodus 5 does not explicitly say the slaves rested on the seventh day of the week, I believe they did for the following reasons.

1. From Creation to the time God gave the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai, a period of about 2,500 years, the only day set aside for rest was God's Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.<sup>1</sup>
2. Before God spoke the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, He tested Israel to see if they would obey Him by observing His seventh day.<sup>2</sup> This test proves two things. God's seventh day was holy before God gave

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 16:4

the Ten Commandments.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, God required Israel to observe His Sabbath before He gave the Ten Commandments.

3. God demands that His subjects observe His Sabbath day, as written in the fourth commandment, because worshipping God cannot be determined by reason, customs, traditions, or culture. True worship is joyful submission to God's demands. The Ten Commandments are not ten suggestions; the Ten Commandments are ten laws. Some scholars argue that Sabbath observance was an idea codified in the Ten Commandments to benefit the children of Israel. If this argument were true, why did God declare the seventh day of the week to be "holy" (set apart) to Adam and Eve?<sup>2</sup>
4. The word Pharaoh used suggests that Moses and Aaron led Israel to Sabbath from their labors. In Exodus 5:5, Pharaoh said to Aaron and Moses "You make them rest from their labor" (KJV) and "You are stopping them from working." (NIV) This verse indicates two things: First, Pharaoh appropriately charges Aaron and Moses for causing the Israelites to cease their labor. Think about this. Did Aaron and Moses cause Israel to rest from making bricks to agitate Pharaoh or did the slaves submit to the Sabbath rest because it

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 2:1-3

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 2:1-3

was God's holy day? Second, the Hebrew word used by Pharaoh is shabath (Strong's #7673). He said, "You make them shabath." This is the same word God used in Genesis 2:2 when He rested from His creative work on the seventh day. Furthermore, the Hebrew word for "Sabbath" in the fourth commandment is a derivative of shabath — the word Pharaoh used.

The combination of these four points indicates that the Hebrews were not honoring God's Sabbath day as they knew God had commanded, and He told Moses that they must worship Him by keeping His Sabbath day holy if they wanted to be delivered.<sup>1</sup> So, the slaves obediently began to rest on the seventh day. Allegiance to God's demand put Israel in direct opposition to Pharaoh's demand! This is exactly what God wanted and the end-time parallel to this story will be no different.

When it comes to worshiping God – faith, obedience, and deliverance are inseparable. It is impossible for a person knowingly to defy God's sovereignty and simultaneously enjoy God's favor. Moses informed the Hebrew elders that Israel must prove its faith in God to be delivered from slavery. Their first step in faith was to rest on God's Sabbath. Israel had to submit to God's higher authority to be delivered from slavery. God tested Israel's faith because His higher law conflicted

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<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel 20:7-8

with Pharaoh's lesser law. The distinct end-time parallel should be obvious.

### **Pharaoh Becomes Mean**

**“That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the people: ‘You are no longer to supply the people with straw for making bricks; let them go and gather their own straw. But require them to make the same number of bricks as before; don’t reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, “Let us go and sacrifice to our God.”’”<sup>1</sup>**

After Aaron and Moses departed, Pharaoh reacted hatefully to their visit. God knew this was coming. Pharaoh became mean because he had no intention of losing control of the slaves. Notice how the carnal heart operates: Selfishness is all about getting and gaining, not losing.

Ego is all about being in control, not losing control. The threat of loss produces anxiety and anger in the carnal heart. Aaron and Moses pressed Pharaoh's big red panic button, and his immediate response was to inflict a great deal of pain on his slaves. Pharaoh's response did not surprise God who knew this was coming.

### **Living by Faith**

Please, understand three aspects of living by faith. First,

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 5:6-8



faith in God is much more than believing something about God is true. Agreeing with truth is different from living by faith. Even the demons know certain truths about God and tremble.<sup>1</sup> Faith in God means obedient submission to God's will at any cost.

Second, a life of faith is a life of testing. God's law is higher than man's law and He seriously tests faith when we are caught between doing right (as man decrees) or right (as God decrees) – especially when the penalty for violating either law is severe. Daniel demonstrated this when he was lowered into the lion's den. He violated the king's law and was expected to die in the lion's den.<sup>2</sup> Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego also demonstrate this point. These men were prepared to die for honoring God's law and violating the king's law.<sup>3</sup>

Many misunderstand what it means to have faith in God. God's law demands a level of righteousness no human can achieve. The good news of the gospel is that God has eliminated our condemnation if we are willing to live by faith in Christ Jesus. This does not mean that God has eliminated His law. Instead, it means that God will cover our imperfections with Christ's righteousness if we are willing to submit to His laws that are above all other laws.<sup>4</sup>

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1 James 2:19

2 Daniel 6

3 Daniel 3

4 Romans 7 and 8

The third component of living by faith concerns ignorance. Ignorance is no excuse for disobedience in man's laws. You may drive 65 mph on a highway, honestly thinking that it is the speed limit. Not until an officer stops and tells you that the speed limit is 55 mph and writes a speeding ticket, do you realize your error. When it comes to God's law, ignorance does not lessen the consequences of sin, but ignorance does cancel the guilt. In this regard, God is much more generous than man because He knows our heart. God will not under any circumstance pardon a person who lives in a defiant state of disobedience.<sup>1</sup> God confronted Pharaoh with the sovereignty of a higher King and his stubborn defiance eventually brought about condemnation and destruction.

At first, Pharaoh was ignorant of God's sovereignty. He honestly believed that the God of the Hebrews was a lesser God than his god, Ra. However, when the evidence of God's superiority became overwhelmingly apparent, Pharaoh's ignorance did not give way to submission. Instead, it became open defiance. Pharaoh's experience translates into a powerful end-time parallel. Currently, billions of people are ignorant of God's demands on the human race. During the Great Tribulation, God will present His demands in the clearest of terms to all mankind. Some people will submit to God's demands,

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 10:26-27

but a large majority will make the transition from ignorance to defiance.

### **Countermeasures**

To counteract what he thought to be the religious nonsense spread by Aaron and Moses, Pharaoh imposed his authority on the slaves to painfully remind them of his sovereignty. Pharaoh demanded more work from the slaves than they could produce and his demands translated into immediate suffering.

Pharaoh's lieutenants controlled the slaves through a very clever scheme. Hebrew elders were appointed over family work groups. Whenever a group failed to meet its quota, the elders were publicly beaten while their family watched. This brutality controlled the Hebrews. It was too much for sons and grandsons, daughters and granddaughters, to see their fathers beaten when production was inadequate, so they worked *like slaves* to meet their quotas.

Pharaoh imposed his demand on the Hebrews the very day that Moses and Aaron presented God's demand to the king. What a knee jerk reaction! Consider the developing dilemma: God demanded Sabbath rest as a precondition for deliverance, and Pharaoh demanded greater work but the same quotas from the slaves. In addition to producing the same quota of bricks as before, they now had to gather the straw — an impossible demand!

This meant the elders of each family would be beaten regularly since the quotas could not be met. Suddenly, God's Sabbath became a nightmare. How could the slaves spend Sabbath with any peace of mind knowing that Sabbath rest would produce ruthless beatings? Even if the slaves did not observe the seventh day Sabbath rest, they now had to gather straw to make the bricks. This chore was not required of them before Moses came to town. So, the workload reached a new high and their despair reached a new low. Their hopes of deliverance were crushed by intense suffering.

### **Leave Us Alone Moses!**

A group of elders went to Pharaoh's court and with one voice they begged him to be reasonable and lighten the workload, because it was impossible to fulfill. The Bible says, "The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told, 'You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day.' When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, and they said, 'May the Lord look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.'"<sup>1</sup>

Aaron and Moses must have felt terrible. A demand presented to Pharaoh had turned life for the Hebrews upside down. Of course, God foreknew these events would oc-

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 5:19-21

cur. However, I believe He wanted to demonstrate for future generations several key parallels about Pharaoh's carnal heart. People can joyfully declare allegiance to God when there is no contest between the laws of men and the laws of God. Keeping God's Sabbath rest is a joy when there is no threat of persecution. However, sooner or later, God's sovereignty collides with the world's governments. The Bible says there was war in heaven over the issue of God's sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> The struggle for supremacy is the essence of the battle – whether the battlefield is the human heart, the court of Pharaoh, or in heaven. The battle to control human loyalty has never been more intense than it is right now, and most people are unaware that it is even going on! The devil knows that his days are short and he is working overtime to keep the minds of people dull with the distractions and cares of life. The devil has lured young people into sexual immorality, and pacified “pew warmers” with entertainers who have no knowledge of God's coming wrath. The day when God suddenly steps into the affairs of the human race to reveal His sovereignty is almost here. On a single day, life on Earth will change!<sup>2</sup>

God is about to send a series of devastating judgments on the earth. His 144,000 spokespersons will announce his will to Earth's inhabitants during the seven trumpet judgments of Revelation. Revelation predicts that most

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1 Isaiah 14 and Revelation 12

2 Revelation 8:2-5

men and women will respond like Pharaoh: “I do not know the Lord and I will not obey.” When Moses saw the elders being beaten because they could not meet their quota of bricks, **“Moses returned to the Lord and said, ‘Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all.’”**<sup>1</sup>

Moses had presented God’s demands before Pharaoh just as God instructed. Imagine how Moses must have felt when he saw the painful beatings. No wonder Moses cried to the Lord, **“You have not helped your people! You are killing them with the rod of Pharaoh!”** If only Moses had understood that this was exactly the situation the Lord wanted. **“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country.’”**<sup>2</sup>

It took ten plagues to ravage Egypt before Pharaoh’s rebellion temporarily softened. Pharaoh’s behavior should hold special meaning for those who study Bible prophecy, especially those who want to understand the use of *Sodom* and *Egypt* in Revelation 11:8. Notice the text: **“Their bodies [the two witnesses] will lie in the public**

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1 Exodus 5:22-23, italics mine

2 Exodus 6:1

**square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified.”** Consider why the Bible refers to Sodom and Egypt in Revelation 11.

These two entities, Sodom and Egypt, describe the mindset of the wicked at the time of the seventh trumpet, which marks the close of the offer of salvation.<sup>1</sup> When the seventh trumpet sounds in heaven, God will have separated the people of Earth into two groups—sheep and goats. God will mark those who have chosen to follow Him with His seal. Others who have rejected the Holy Spirit will have chosen the mark of the beast. The latter group will have the same defects in their character as the ancient inhabitants of Sodom and Egypt. Sodom represents a class of people who cannot discern right from wrong. The Sodomites were inebriated with sexual immorality and they vigorously promoted their degenerate ways. The consciences of the Sodomites and the inhabitants who lived in the cities around Sodom were calloused as if burnt by a hot iron. As a result, God’s patient forbearance with them ended and He burned Sodom, Gomorrah, and several adjacent cities to the ground with a meteorite shower of burning hail.<sup>2</sup>

Egypt, on the other hand, represents a class of people who defiantly refuse to submit to God’s authority. Like

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1 Revelation 11:15-19

2 Genesis 13:13; 19:24-29

Pharaoh, Egypt represents a group of people who will refuse to render obedience to almighty God, even after they have heard His demands! The terms, Sodom and Egypt, represent a time when divine forbearance with the wicked will have no redemptive effect. When God's subjects have reached that condition, God can do no more to save them. Therefore, God will destroy the wicked, just as He did in Pharaoh's day. Think about this: A monarch is not sovereign as long as rebellion exists! This is why God will ultimately destroy sin itself!<sup>1</sup>

God's purposes and actions are always manifold. In a spiritual sense, this means that God *kills several birds with one stone*. His ways are always higher and grander than our earthly solutions. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."<sup>2</sup> God is the Master Designer and Moses' story has many lessons and parallels for you and me.

### **Summary of End-Time Parallels**

1. The sovereignty of God is a truth; however, man's awareness of this fact is ever evaporating. Lessons learned yesterday are forgotten tomorrow. Unless we are careful, we minimize God's power in our lives. Like young Moses and Abraham, we take matters into our own hands and dishonor Him. The prob-

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 55:9



lem with fallen humanity is that we always try to assume God's prerogatives. To compensate for this sinister process, God creates real-life dramas from time to time which remind us of His sovereignty. Remember how King Nebuchadnezzar vainly believed he was sovereign over Earth? After living like an animal for seven years, he finally conceded that God was sovereign. On the other hand, Pharaoh refused to acknowledge God as sovereign even after He decimated Egypt with ten horrible plagues! Pharaoh went to his death in the middle of the Red Sea because of his defiant stubbornness. Pharaoh's experience proves that rebellion can encompass a person's heart so completely that he or she will never submit to God. The truth remains, however, that no sooner is knowledge of God's authority established on Earth than it begins to evaporate again.

When God created the seventh day, He had His reasons for doing so. God imposed His Sabbath rest test on the Hebrews to show His sovereign power to the Hebrews and Egyptians. It is a mystery that so many people do not want to rest on God's Sabbath, offering a dozen reasons for not observing it. When God demanded that His Sabbath be observed as a precondition for deliverance, the Hebrews initially complied. When Pharaoh learned that the Israelites threatened his sovereignty, he implemented

pain and torture. The slaves were trapped between two great powers and the penalty for defying either power was severe!

During the Great Tribulation, God will present His Sabbath rest to the people of Earth with the force of law. God's 144,000 servants will explain how God's seventh day Sabbath is not a suggestion or an option; it is the fourth commandment of God's law. Like Pharaoh, the world does not currently submit to God's law or honor His day of rest.

A great conflict will erupt over the issue of worship. Bible prophecies reveal how this conflict will occur. God will initiate the Great Tribulation with a series of destructive judgments. Because these coming judgments will be overwhelming and catastrophic, killing nearly two billion people, survivors will suddenly wake up to the reality there is a living God and He is angry with man's behavior. The religious and political leaders of the world will unite and impose sin-less laws upon mankind to appease God so His judgments will cease. Eventually, these laws will include laws mandating that God be worshiped, but these laws will directly oppose God's law. God has ordained this contest to force all people, like the Hebrews of old, to choose between two conflicting laws. If people obey the laws of men, they will

receive the seven bowls of God's wrath.<sup>1</sup> If people obey God's law and honor His seventh day Sabbath, governments of the world will persecute, imprison, or execute dissenters for rebellion. This is the coming contest. The story of Moses offers an end-time parallel for God's people so our faith in God is strengthened for this eventuality.

2. Remember, God demanded the Hebrews observe His Sabbath as a precondition for deliverance. God sent this demand through Moses because He wanted to demonstrate man's rebellion by confronting Pharaoh, the most powerful man on the earth. Also, God wanted to teach these Hebrews their first lesson in faith—the importance of trusting God's leading at any cost or suffering. Finally, God would use Israel and their deliverance as an object lesson for generations to come. Unfortunately, Pharaoh's persecution destroyed the faith of most Hebrews. They lost confidence in Moses and God. So, God sent them a message of hope: **“Therefore [Moses], say to the Israelites: ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will**

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 16

***know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.’*** Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and harsh labor.”<sup>1</sup>

Did you notice the last sentence? The Hebrews murmured against almighty God and refused to go along with God’s plans. If the Hebrews could have known all that we now know, they would have rejoiced at God’s words! However, no murmuring, faithlessness, discouragement, and bitterness can shut out God’s promises and purposes.

There is an end-time parallel here. God placed the Hebrews in a tough situation to test their faith and He showed them that they had no faith. Unfortunately, they did not catch the vision and they gave up! Most of the Hebrews went back to work on Sabbath because they lacked faith in God. These same people died in the wilderness because they never overcame their lack of faith.

Believers in Christ are the Hebrews now. We are the children of God! This end-time parallel is so powerful. During the Great Tribulation, God will once

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 6:6-9, insertion and italics mine

again place His Sabbath rest in direct opposition to man's laws. Everyone who wants to be delivered from the bondage of sin must submit to God as a precondition to being set free! He will cause our faith to be severely tested to see where each of us will stand! Salvation comes through faith. When people deliberately and intentionally choose to suffer because of their faith in God, He makes their faith pure, like gold. This refining process produces the type of people who will inherit the earth made new! God says, **“This third [the remnant] I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’”**<sup>1</sup>

3. This study of Moses and the Exodus gives us one final unexpected parallel. For thousands of years, slaves have been marked with tattoos or brands. To see their effects on the skin, do a search in your favorite browser. A person cannot remove or lose a brand or tattoo. It is not transferable. Even as late as World War II, Hitler tattooed millions of prisoners in concentration camps. The reason for marking slaves is simple. The owner-slave relationship is permanent. Children born of slaves are also slaves. Normally, a slave is never freed because ownership

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<sup>1</sup> Zechariah 13:9, insertion mine

never ends. This is the ugly power of slavery (sin). I believe Pharaoh's adult slaves were marked with tattoos or brands. This mark prevented any possibility of escape from Egypt, for no one would dare be associated with any property belonging to the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Did God forbid the Hebrews from wearing tattoos because they were no longer slaves? He said, **“Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the Lord.”**<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the reason behind this command is that God's people are never slaves, because they are always free to exercise the power of choice. God did not want His people to deface their bodies with markings associated with slavery. The Lord said, **“I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.”**<sup>2</sup>

When Pharaoh's firstborn was killed during Pass-over night, he finally came to the point of temporary

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1 Leviticus 19:28

2 Exodus 6:6-7

submission. He allowed Moses and the children of Israel to leave Egypt at sunrise. To commemorate this marvelous deliverance, God instituted an annual memorial of the event. He told the Israelites, **“This [annual] observance [of Passover] will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that this law of the Lord is to be on your lips. For the Lord brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand.”**<sup>1</sup> Another interesting parallel is that observing Passover (the day their freedom began) was like a sign on the hand or forehead. This statement may reflect the fact that Pharaoh’s slaves wore a sign (a tattoo or brand) on their hands or foreheads indicating their status. I believe a Hebrew foreman probably wore the mark on his forehead, while the rank-and-file slaves wore their status on their hands.

The parallel is that the mark of the beast will be a tattoo or a brand that will be worn on the right hand or on the forehead! **“It [the Antichrist, the lamb-like beast] also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the [Antichrist, the lamb-like] beast or the number of its name.”**<sup>2</sup>

1 Exodus 13:9, insertions mine

2 Revelation 13:16-17, insertions mine

4. Each person will face a question of survival. As the issue of survival becomes all-consuming, the human solution will stand opposing the divine solution. Our ways are often contrary to God's ways, because God's ways are not like our ways. For example, the Bible makes it clear that a severe famine will occur during the Great Tribulation and food supplies will be scarce. So, in the face of death, does hunger justify stealing? The juxtaposition between starvation and stealing forces each of us to take a hard look at the principles we sincerely maintain. If we answer *yes* to the question that hunger justifies stealing, then our principles are no different from the principles of thugs who currently roam and loot the world. They steal because they do not have all they want and do not trust God to provide for their needs. Do not stop there – take the question one step further. Does hunger justify killing? If we answer *yes*, then we are no different from Moses whose impulsive act killed the Egyptian. Submission to God means submission to God's control of the situation – and in some cases this means submission, even to death. Remember the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace? An important truth to consider is Calvary proves that Jesus would not participate in wrong doing (unrighteousness) to sustain His own life and neither should those who honor Him!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 4:1-11



The Great Tribulation is just before us, so ponder these words from Revelation 13:10: “**‘If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.’ This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.**” The last sentence of this text is directed at God’s people during the Great Tribulation and it indicates that many of God’s people will be imprisoned without justification.

Also, many of God’s people will be killed without justification. So, get ready children of God. This world is full of injustice and soon, it will be directed our way! God’s Word has declared the course of coming events so our faith in God might remain steady. God’s people need patient endurance and faithfulness! God knows the future and He already knows the outcome for each of us. Obviously, we do not know how our particular future will unfold, but that is not our concern. Our concern is to remain faith-full to God and the principles of His kingdom today – even to the point of death!

When the devil radiantly appears on Earth during the fifth trumpet, he will masquerade as almighty God. He will establish a new world order and install himself as king of kings and lord of lords. Those who unite with his government can conduct commerce: survival buying and selling.<sup>1</sup> Anyone who refuses to unite with the dev-

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 13:17

il's one-world government will be killed. The permit to conduct business will be a physical mark on the hand or forehead. This "proof of membership" in the new world order requires no electricity or computers. This form of identification will work in any village on this planet.

Satan's foremen will wear the name the Antichrist assumes on their foreheads; rank-and-file members will wear the evil number 666 on their right hands. To survive, people will submit to the devil's demands rather than submit to the authority of God!

When Jesus comes in clouds of glory, two groups of people will be on Earth: People who chose to receive the mark of the beast and people who are free of Satan's bondage. When Israel finally entered the Promised Land after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, the new generation did not bear the marks of slavery on their bodies. They were truly free! On the other hand, the adults God miraculously delivered from Egypt died in the wilderness. Even though they were freed of Pharaoh's slavery by God's mighty power, they never did escape the bondage of their carnal rebellion against God. This is a profound lesson from Moses' story: Our escape from the bondage of sin is only possible through a patient faith that produces total submission to God's demands.

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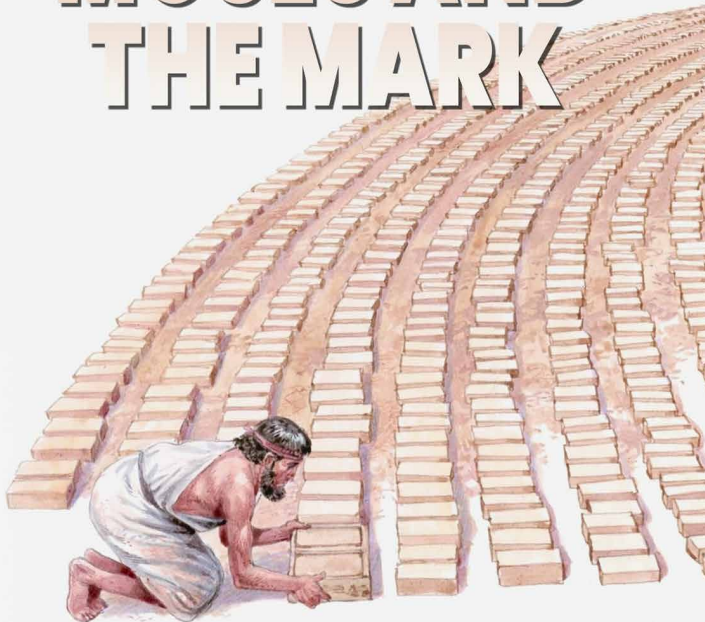
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