

Cindy Bassett

# The Bible Corner



## The covenant

All was quiet below in the Hebrew camp as Moses slowly climbed the rugged mountain. Here and there in the sky, dawn was just beginning to cast its rosy hues. But there was still only a flicker of light to guide Moses on the path.

It didn't matter; he knew this place well. Here, on this very mountain, Moses had once lived a simpler existence, tending the sheep of his father-in-law, Jethro.

Just ahead, Moses saw the familiar spot where his mission had begun, and he sat down as if to contemplate its significance. Because of what had happened on the mountain, the lives of an entire nation of people, the Hebrews, had been changed forever.

Here, the Lord had first spoken to Moses, saying, "I certainly will be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve me on this mountain."

Moses bowed his head and thanked God, who had kept all His promises and would continue to lead the Hebrews to the Promised Land.

As he sat there in silence, Moses again heard the Lord call out to him, saying,

"Speak to the people, Moses, and tell them how I did everything for them in the land of Egypt. I released them from their bondage to Pharaoh and brought them here to me. If they promise to obey me and keep my covenant, then they will be a special treasure to me above all other people, for all of the earth is mine."

When the Lord had finished speaking, Moses returned to the Hebrew camp, now fully awake and bustling with activity. He called the elders and all of the people together and said, "It has been three months since God brought us out of our slavery in Egypt. All of this time, He has taken care of our every need as we journey through the wilderness to the new land God promised to us. The Lord would like us to be His own special people forever. But you must promise to obey and serve God in all that you do."

The entire assembly of people responded in agreement, "We will do everything that God asks of us."

So Moses climbed to the top of the mountain again and reported to the Lord the words of the people. And God told Moses: "In three days, I will show myself on this mountain in the form of a cloud, in sight of all the people. I will have a special message for them:"

On the morning of the third day, a thick cloud circled the mountain. Suddenly, the sky was streaked with lightning, and a great thundering roared above. Hearing a blast of trumpets, the Hebrews trembled with fear. Moses led the people to the foot of Mount Sinai, and then he ascended to the Lord.

God issued these laws to Moses as His covenant with the Hebrews:

I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves.

- 1) Worship no other god but me.
  - 2) Do not make for yourselves any images of false gods in any form, to worship in any way. For I am your God and I will not tolerate any rivals.
  - 3) Do not use my name for evil purposes, to swear to any falsehoods.
  - 4) Remember to keep the Sabbath as a holy day of rest dedicated to me. Six days are to be used for your work, but the seventh day is one of rest. For in six days, I made the heavens and the earth, and I rested on the seventh day.
  - 5) Honor and respect your mother and father, and I will give you a good, long life in your promised land.
  - 6) Do not commit murder.
  - 7) Do not commit adultery.
  - 8) Do not steal.
  - 9) Do not lie or accuse anyone falsely.
  - 10) Do not be envious of anything that your neighbor possesses, for I have blessed everyone.
- Moses announced the Ten Command-

ments to the people, who all promised to obey these laws in accordance with the covenant that God had made with them.

Early the next day, Moses wrote down in a book these laws for the people. He built an altar at the foot of Mount Sinai with 12 pillars around it, because there were 12 tribes of Israel.

After Moses had made a sacrifice to the Lord on the altar, as a symbol that the people accepted God's covenant, he read the laws to the Hebrews. And the people responded, "We solemnly promise to obey all of God's laws!"

**For discussion:**

1) What was the covenant that God made with the Hebrews on Mount Sinai? What covenant do we make with God when we are baptized?

2) God showed His presence to the Hebrews in the form of a cloud. How do we know that God is with us today?

3) What false gods do people make for themselves today?

**For further reading**

1) The story of the Ten Commandments is found in Exodus, Chapter 19-20:17. Moses teaches these laws to the people again in Deuteronomy, Chapter 5:1-22.

2) Jesus told His followers that all of God's laws are contained in two commandments in Matthew, Chapter 22:35-40.

3) The names of the 12 tribes of Israel are the 12 sons of Jacob, who was renamed Israel by God. Their names are found in Genesis, Chapter 35:23-26.

## Deafness

Continued from Page 6

deaf people cannot do instead of what they can do," said Father Fleming, when asked to comment on the hearing world. "Deafness is not a disability; it is a way of life." He explained that the term "disability" is something that alienates a person and sets him apart.

Frank Kimmes tells the story of a conflict he had with his boss at Kodak years ago, when he first started working. The conflict, which concerned Kimmes' deafness, was resolved when he told his flushed and embarrassed boss, "I'm not from outer space! I was born on this planet. I'm deaf, but it doesn't make any difference. Your shell and mine are the same."

McKenney-Dutille expresses her desire that

the hearing world develop a greater understanding of deaf people. "Bear with us, reach out to us, try to understand us," she implores us. "I don't look like I have a hearing problem. People forget that I have a hearing loss. I wish they wouldn't forget that I'm deaf. I wish they would talk louder; (I wish they would) keep their hands away from their faces. (They need to) remember who I am ... I am deaf."

In the vestibule of St. Mary's Church of

the Deaf in Rochester hangs a picture of a smiling Bishop Clark, wearing a button that perhaps best summarizes the message that deaf people want to relay to the non-deaf community.

The black button, indistinguishable against the backdrop of a bishop's black jacket save for the white letters, proclaims the message "Deaf and Bright."

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