

THE

NEW 2-20

TROWEL

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES

No. 4

*JOURNEY
INTO
FREEDOM*

*Studies 1 to 4 on
THE EXODUS*

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'THE TROWEL'

**THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEACHERS' QUARTERLY OF
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Journey Into Freedom

Studies on The Exodus

Grade 8 (Senior)

For scholars in 1st, 2nd and 3rd forms of Secondary School (i.e., age approximately 12+ to 15)—and, during the first half of the year including 4th form Secondary School pupils until Sunday School Examination.

Grade 9 (Advanced)

For scholars in 4th, 5th or 6th forms of Secondary School or those who have left school (aged approximately 16 to 18).

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JOURNEY INTO FREEDOM

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SENIOR/ADVANCED GRADE

Note: These studies are identified by numbered units, not by date, and are printed in booklets, each containing four or five units of the series. This enables them to be used by different groups according to the needs and circumstances pertaining at the time. The above dated arrangement is a suggested order of treatment to assist Sunday Schools using the studies as their Senior/Advanced Course.

Being Studies on THE EXODUS

| Reference | Date (1967) | Church Calendar |
|---|--------------|--------------------|
| Exodus 1 | July 9 | Trinity 7 |
| Exodus 2:1-22 | July 16 | " 8 |
| Exodus 2:23 to 4:17 | July 23 | " 9 |
| Exodus 4:18 to 6:13 | July 30 | " 10 |
| Exodus 6:14 to 10:29 | August 6 | " 11 |
| Exodus 11-12 | August 13 | " 12 |
| Prayer Book (Holy Communion) | August 20 | " 13 |
| Exodus 13:17 to 14:31 | August 27 | " 14 |
| Exodus 15:22 to 16:36 | September 3 | " 15 |
| Exodus 17 | September 10 | " 16 |
| Exodus 15:1-21 | September 17 | " 17 |
| { Exodus 20 and Catechism, the Ten Commandments } | September 24 | " 18 |
| | October 1 | " 19 |
| | October 8 | " 20 |
| | October 15 | " 21 |
| Exodus 32:1-10 | October 22 | " 22 |
| Exodus 17:8-13; 32:11-14 | October 29 | " 23 |
| Exodus 24 to 31 and 35 | November 5 | " 24 |
| Numbers 9:15-23; 13; 14 | November 12 | " 25 |
| | November 19 | " 26 |
| Numbers 20 | November 26 | Next before Advent |
| Numbers 21:1-9 | December 3 | Advent 1 |
| Numbers 27:12-23 | December 10 | " 2 |

These studies and the accompanying Study Sheets have been prepared on the basis of the Revised Standard Version. It is expected that group members will have that version. The Study Sheets and the distinctive loose-leaf filing system in its special Unit Pack have been designed for secondary school pupils. All leaders, including those of advanced level and more mature groups should possess a 'Trowel Senior Study File Pack' for additional information and guidance in the preparation of studies for the particular group.

JOURNEY INTO FREEDOM

(Studies on The Exodus)

● PRESENT INTEREST

The current conflict between Israel and her Arab neighbours gives these studies a good deal of present interest. Israel and Egypt, Sinai and the Red Sea, warfare and the movement of thousands of persons through this desert area have become the commonplace of newspapers, radio and television. Study leaders will therefore find an overall context of interest and information to support the suggested "Motivations for Study".

You will, of course, enlist this present interest in as many ways as possible. For example, the suggested project work on Ancient Egypt ought to incorporate an up-to-date section on Modern Egypt and Israel. This should be related to the modern Exodus of the Jews from Europe as they made, and continue to make, their own journey into freedom to Israel.

● HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

Principally, however, we are concerned with the **events and significance** of that ancient journey from slavery in Egypt into freedom in Canaan, the promised land.

— The Event

John Bright, in 'A History of Israel', says, "Of the exodus itself we have no extra-biblical evidence. But the Bible's own witness is so impressive as to leave little doubt that some such remarkable deliverance took place. Israel remembered the exodus for all time to come as the constitutive event that called her into being as a people. It stood at the centre of her confession of faith from the beginning, as witnessed by certain ancient poems (Ex. 15:1-18) and credos (Deut. 6:20-25; 26:5-10; Josh. 24:2-13) that go back to the earliest period of her history. A belief so ancient and entrenched will admit of no explanation save that Israel actually escaped from Egypt to the accompaniment of events so stupendous that they were impressed for ever on her memory." (Pages 111-112).

— The Date

The biblical and archaeological evidence is not definite enough for any final decision on this point. However, although some scholars favour a date as early as half-way through the 15th century B.C., the weight of evidence suggests that the exodus took place during the first three-quarters, probably the first half of the 13th century B.C.

It seems that the Hebrews must have been in Egypt at least in the reign of Sethos I (c. 1309-1290) and probably of Ramesses II (c. 1290-1224), under whom the rebuilding of Avaris (the old Hyksos

capital), renamed Raamses (cf. Ex. 1:11), meaning "House of Ramesses", was accomplished. Further, archaeological evidence requires us to place the conquest of Palestine late in the 13th century. Moreover, Israel's detour around Edom and Moab forbids a date before the 13th century, since these two kingdoms were not established till then. Although we cannot be certain, it would seem that Sethos I was the Pharaoh who began the oppression of Israel, and that Ramesses II was the Pharaoh in whose reign the Exodus took place.

● SCRIPTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The importance of the Exodus (literally "going out") for Scripture, and therefore for the Christian, is concisely expressed in these two quotations from 'God Who Acts' by G. Ernest Wright.

"At the centre of Israelite faith lay the great proclamation that the God of the fathers had heard the cry of a weak, oppressed people in Egypt. They had been slaves, but then freed by mighty acts which demonstrated God's power to the Egyptians and to the world. . . . This was a sign, a wonder, not to be explained by fortune or irrational chance, but solely by the assumption of a personal Power greater than all the powers of this world. This was a God who could make the forces of nature serve Him as well as the recalcitrance of the heart of Pharaoh. He was One who, for some reason had set His love on a defenceless people and had chosen them for His own." (page 44).

"The events of the Exodus, the wilderness wandering and the conquest are as important for the New Testament as for the Old. In Christ is the new exodus and the new inheritance. The major portion of the vocabulary used to express the saving work of God in Christ is drawn from the Exodus event: thus the words 'redeem' and 'redemption', 'deliver', 'ransom', 'purchase', 'bondage', 'freedom'. . . .

. . . the chief events of the Old Testament which furnish the pattern for the happenings in the New are the redemption from Egyptian bondage, the consecration of the people by covenant, and the gift of the inheritance." (page 63).

The perfect example of this truth is found in Colossians 1:13-14, where St. Paul writes: "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

These studies and study sheets are therefore issued in the prayerful hope that we may all continue and develop our own journey into the glorious freedom of the children of God as we prepare our studies and lead our groups into a deeper understanding of the events, meaning and significance of Israel's journey into freedom through the power of God.

Study 1

God's People Enslaved

AIM OF STUDY:

To commence the studies on The Exodus in such a way as will excite the members' interest and motivate them towards further studies in this series.

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Exodus 1, with reference to Genesis 46:1-7, 37-34; 47:1-12 and 50:22-26.

PLAN OF STUDY:

Canaan to Egypt

Family to Nation

Freedom to Slavery

Israelites Prospering

Israelites Suffering

Israelites Dying

METHOD OF STUDY:

Brief exposition, using time line.
A few prepared questions.

Personal reading.

Brief reports.

Personal reading.

Written answers to questions.

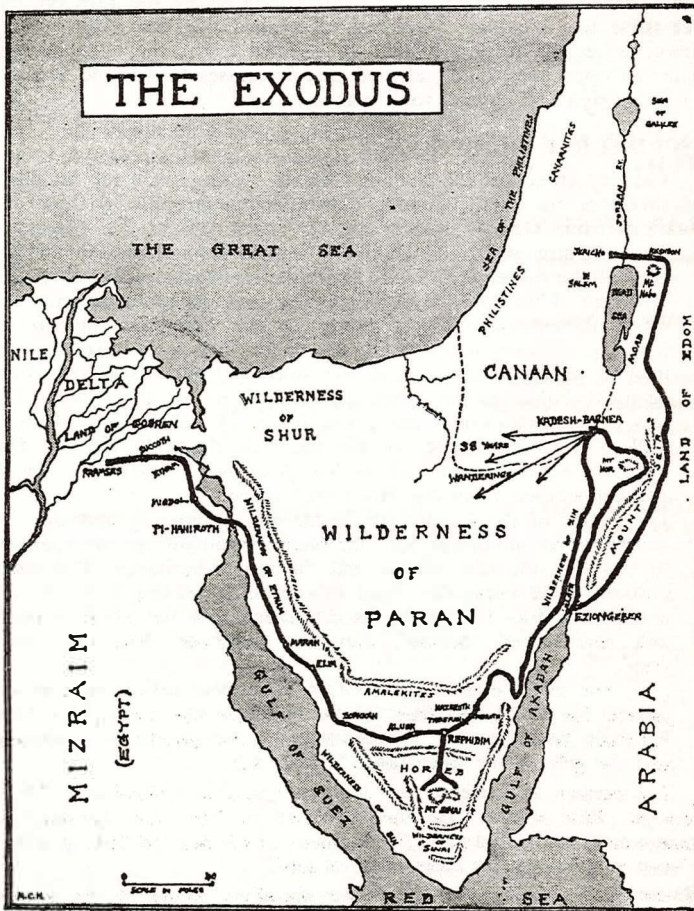
Brief comments by leader.

BACKGROUND TO STUDY:

(See also "Introduction to Exodus")

Verse 1. These are the names . . . Beyond these few words and the reference at the close of Genesis we know little of the family of Jacob after they came to Egypt. We learn however that they were fruitful and multiplied under the blessing of God and had considerable influence with the kings of Egypt. Many no doubt turned from the simple rural life in the land of Goshen — a fruitful and productive area in the north-east corner of Egypt — to take up a more settled life amidst the luxury of the cities of the Egyptians. Beyond any doubt it was during their stay in Egypt that they learned the useful and skilful arts later exhibited — the working of precious and common metals, carpentry, pottery, masonry as well as the more scientific methods of cultivation and irrigation of Egypt. Doubtless too, many would have been infected by the baleful influence of Egyptian worship, hitherto quite unknown to them, for the gods of Egypt were many, from the Nile itself and the sun, to frogs and beetles. Indeed there were those in Israel who actually took up the worship of these idols (see Joshua 24:14, Ezekiel 20:18, 23:3).

Verse 8. Now there arose a new king . . . In Joseph's day, the rulers of Egypt were an alien race known as the Hyksos — or Shepherd Kings (from "hyk", king, and "sos", shepherd). Like the Israelites them-



selves, these Hyksos were a nomadic people interested in a pastoral life and there was thus a close affinity between the two. Note how Joseph in Gen. 46:33 and 34 advised his brothers to tell Pharaoh that they were shepherds, a thing he would never have done had the king been the natural Egyptian ruler. These Hyksos to whom the 15th, 16th and 17th Dynasties are usually assigned, occupied southern Egypt and were constantly faced with the efforts of the natural princes of the land to expel them, a thing which they succeeded in doing under Ahmose (Aames or Amosis) about 1580 B.C. The new line of kings was therefore most hostile to this alien race of Hebrews so favoured by their rivals.

Verses 9-14: The Children of Israel had taskmasters set over them and they were forced to make bricks for the great treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses (remains of the great store rooms have been dug up by archaeologists in recent years). The bricks were made from red Nile mud mixed with chaff or straw and baked hard in the sun.

Verse 16. If it is a son: In this way the Hebrew race would die out, as the females were absorbed into Egyptian families.

MOTIVATION FOR STUDY:

The leader could introduce the subject of **slavery** by asking members such questions as: What is a slave? What work might a slave be expected to do? Why would you not like to be a slave?

Point out that slavery is officially outlawed in the modern world, e.g. the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Nevertheless, slavery is still openly practised in some countries, e.g. the Arabian Peninsula, and less openly in others, e.g. Communist nations or some parts of Africa.

In the ancient world, of course, slavery was an almost universal institution. Ask members to give a few examples, and so lead to the fact of slavery in ancient Egypt. If at all possible, show pictures* of slaves at work in Egypt, or at least a picture of the pyramids, as an example of a major public work built by scores of thousands of slaves in about 2600 B.C.

OUTLINE OF STUDY:

CANAAN TO EGYPT

Refer to the time line on Study Sheet 1, and indicate that this great period of Pyramid building by slave labour (of which most group members will know something from school) took place about 2600 B.C. This was about 600 years before Abram left Ur

* (For suggested sources of illustrations see below in *Follow Up to Study*.)

to journey to Canaan, and nearly 1000 years before Joseph left Canaan to enter Egypt. But, although 1000 years had passed, slavery had not passed from Egypt. Ask for evidence for this last statement from our studies of Genesis. (Joseph had entered Egypt as a slave.) But Joseph had not remained a slave. Ask a few (previously prepared) questions to recall:

(i) that Joseph had risen to be Prime Minister of Egypt, and

(ii) that Joseph's whole family, that is, the family of Jacob, the descendants of Abraham, had also entered Egypt.

FAMILY TO NATION

The following passages should be read silently: **Genesis 46:1-7, 28-34; 47:1-12; 50:22-26** and **Exodus 1:1-7**. Different persons could read different passages, followed by quick reports so that all members would share the main points of all the passages.

Thus, with a **minimum of comment** establish quickly that this family of 70 persons grew, during a period of about 400 years (Exodus 12:40) to a total population of possibly two million. The family had indeed become a nation, "So that the land was filled with them" (Exodus 1:7) by about 1400 to 1300 B.C. (approximately).

FREEDOM TO SLAVERY

At this point, disaster struck the "People of Israel". Let all members read Exodus 1:8-14 carefully. Explain verse 8 from information given in the Background Notes, then ask members to answer these questions, which are also printed on Study Sheet Number 1, with space for the answers.

Israelites Prospering:

1. Why did the Egyptians fear the growth of the Israelites?
(E.g. Resentment and jealousy of their prosperity. Fear that this prosperity could lead to rebellion and even to the overthrow of Egypt.)

Israelites Suffering:

2. How did Pharaoh first try to reduce this growth and prosperity?
(E.g. by enslaving these unpopular "foreigners". By imposing hard labour.)

Allow sufficient time for all members to answer these two questions before receiving and checking answers. You may wish to add some

further comments based on the Background Notes for verses 9-14. If available, show a picture which illustrates the cruel nature of this slavery. (E.g. 'The Bible Story Magazine', No. 7, page 12.)

Israelites Dying:

Read verses 15 to 22 before asking questions 3, 4 and 5. If time is short, deal with these three questions orally, and leave members to write out their Study Sheet answers afterwards.

3. What savage order did Pharaoh now give?

(Israelite boys to be murdered.)

4. How did God frustrate this wicked purpose?

(Through the faithfulness of the Israelite midwives.)

5. What atrocity did Pharaoh now order?

(Baby boys to be cast into the Nile.)

Again allow time for answers to be given, then comment on the apparent hopelessness of the Israelites' plight and the despair into which they would naturally sink. The position was indeed appalling.

Yet the position was not, in fact, hopeless. Read Genesis 46:3 and 15:13-14 to the group, to recall the promises God had made for this, His people. Tell how within the nation of despairing slaves, there were still those who continued, despite all outward circumstances, to believe that God would honour His promise. These few longed and prayed for deliverance, encouraging one another with stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and waiting for the day when God would intervene on their behalf.

CONCLUSION

TO STUDY:

How that day was to come we will examine in next week's study, but for the present we need to notice the first of the many important parallels which the Scriptures provide between the experiences of Ancient Israel and those of modern Christians.

The Bible often compares the plight of those who have been physically enslaved (e.g. Israel in Egypt) with those who have been spiritually enslaved by sin (i.e. all mankind). The clearest expression of this is to be found in the Lord Jesus' words in John 8:34-36 which should be read by all members and then learnt as Memory Work for next week.

PRAYER:

(A paraphrase of the Collect for the 24th Sunday after Trinity.)

"O Lord, we ask that through Your bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the slavery of those sins which, by our weakness,

we have committed. Grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake." Amen.

FOLLOW-UP TO STUDY:

1. Study Sheet 1 is available. It includes: **Some Passages to Read, Some Questions to Answer, Some things to Do, A Passage to learn and A Prayer to Use** during the week.

2. Members could seek out reference or illustrative material towards a Group Project on The Exodus which would provide many opportunities for member-participation in the weeks to come. Possible sources of material include:

***'National Geographic Magazine'** (e.g. November, 1955, "Fresh Treasures from Egypt's Ancient Sands" or December, 1957, "Bringing Old Testament Times to Life.")

***'Life' Magazine** (e.g. November 26, 1956, "Egypt" since published as a separate book 'The Epic of Man', currently being advertised in 'The Reader's Digest' (June. 1967).

***'Bible Story Magazine'** (e.g. Numbers 4, 5 and 7).

***School library books or textbooks** on Ancient History.

***Bible Commentaries, Dictionaries, Atlases and Background Books** (e.g. those in the Sunday School library or the property of individual parishioners, etc.)

***Current newspapers and magazines** concerning the present conflict between Israel and the Arab world. These may (depending on events), provide very relevant contemporary motivations for this and succeeding studies on Exodus.

Order copies of Exodus (Revised Standard Version) now for your group. Available from the Christian Education Centre, 511 Kent St., Sydney. PRICE: 9c.

Study 2 God's Preparation of the Deliverer

AIM OF STUDY: To examine some of the qualities and training opportunities which Christian young people ought to seek, as revealed by God's preparation of Moses.

PASSAGE FOR STUDY: Exodus 2:1-22.

PLAN OF STUDY:

Motivation — "Leadership"

The Deliverer Faithfully Provided

The Deliverer Wonderfully Protected

The Faithful Parents'

Courage and Care

The Faithful Daughter's

Bravery and Quickness

The Pharaoh's Daughter's

Kindness and Help.

The Deliverer Patiently Prepared

— IN EGYPT

(i) Religious Training

(ii) Study and Learning

(iii) Identification with Israelites.

— IN MIDIAN

(i) Knowing himself

(ii) Knowing the land

(iii) Knowing God.

Conclusion.

METHOD OF STUDY:

Prepared questions.

Leader's brief exposition.

Members' own recollection.

Personal reading.

Discussion and leader's comment.

Personal Reading.

Exposition and answering of questions.

Evaluation of material.

BACKGROUND TO STUDY:

Verse 1. A man . . . Levi: Moses' parents were Amram and Jochebed (Ex. 6:20). They probably lived near Zoan (Tanis), where the Hyksos kings had dwelt, and where, we find from a recent discovery, the Pharaoh liked to establish his court. It was on a branch of the Nile, at the one place which was free from crocodiles and therefore safe for bathing. Remains of mud huts similar to those probably used by the Hebrews have been found nearby.

Verse 10. She named him Moses . . . : The actual derivation of the name *Moses* is uncertain. Possibly it is an Egyptian name meaning

"son". It may also be connected with the Hebrew *mashah* and signify "drawing out". It may perhaps be a play upon words having an element of both — i.e. "a son drawn out of the water."

Verse 12. He killed . . . : Moses realised he was not the true son of Pharaoh's daughter and his sympathies lay with his own people. The Egyptian, buried in the sand without embalming, had lost all hope of immortality, according to the beliefs of his own religion.

Verses 15-22: Under earlier Pharaohs, mines had been opened in the Sinaitic Peninsula, and the western areas were still occupied by the Egyptians. Moses presumably fled to the south-eastern area, where he found this body of Midianites under the authority of a priest-ruler known variously as Jethro (Ex. 3:1), Reuel (Ex. 2:18), or Hobab (Judges 4:11). These Midianites were evidently Kenites — descendants of Abraham by Keturah — and Moses takes up his abode with them, marrying one of the seven daughters, Zipporah, by whom he had two sons, Gershom (stranger) and Eliezer (God is my help).

MOTIVATION FOR STUDY:

Begin by letting the group look briefly at material on Egypt which has been brought today by any members. Go on to ask:

(1) "What sort of boy or girl do you look for when you have to elect a leader?" Let the group discuss the qualities they consider essential for leadership (e.g. in class captains, school prefects, sports captains, etc.) Receive suggestions, then ask:

(2) "How would these qualities be obtained by the leader?" to draw attention to the twin factors of (i) **natural abilities or characteristics** and (ii) **training or experience**.

Finally, ask (3) "Is it only leaders of whom this is true?" to establish that such qualities are important, not only in the lives of "leaders", but also in the lives of those who, like most of us, are "followers".

Explain that today we have the opportunity to begin a valuable study of the "leader" qualities we ought to seek for ourselves. We may do this by observing closely both the natural characteristics of, and the training received by, the leader whom God had chosen to deliver His people Israel.

OUTLINE OF STUDY:

THE DELIVERER FAITHFULLY PROVIDED

Posing the question "Why did the Israelites need a leader to deliver them?" will enable group members to recall the apparent hopelessness of the Israelites' plight — subject to savage

slavery and ultimately to the murder of all male children. Further connect this with today's motivation by pointing out that the Israelites had no leaders to whom they could look for any hope of deliverance. So carefully were they watched and controlled by the Egyptians that, even if they had thought of doing so, they could never have selected and trained a revolutionary leader. (If desired, compare with conditions in many dictator-controlled lands today.)

But what the Israelites could not do for themselves (or lacked the courage and will to do), God was willing to do in fulfilment of His promise. Refer again to Genesis 15:13-14. Pharaoh was certain that his cruel policies would effectively control and limit the enslaved Israelites, but Pharaoh (like many modern men and women) reckoned without God, who, having promised, would most surely keep and perform His promise. (Compare with God's promises in our Baptistal Covenant.)

THE DELIVERER WONDERFULLY PROTECTED

By this stage, most members of the group will have realised "what is coming next", so **let them tell what they know** of the circumstances surrounding the birth and protection of the baby Moses.

Only then should the leader get the group members:

- (i) to check their recollections by reading Exodus 2:1-9;
- (ii) to learn about some background they may not know; and
- (iii) to consider briefly some important teachings which arise.

The Faithful Parents' Courage and Care.

Both husband and wife, Amram and Jochebed (see Exodus 6:20), were of the tribe of Levi and both had apparently remained faithful in their devotion to "the God of their Fathers", even though the religion of many of their fellow Israelites had become corrupted by the spectacular idolatry practised by the Egyptians. Actually Jochebed's very name spoke of faith in God, for it means "the glory of the Lord".

One point often overlooked is the wonderful co-operation of the other children in the family in keeping such an important secret, particularly as Aaron was only three years old, while Miriam was probably about 12 at this time. God was certainly granting this babe special protection!

Comment: God had given Amram and Jochebed their parental love, their faith and courage in risking their own lives by keeping the child (contrary to Pharaoh's orders) and in believing God would protect the

child. He also gave Jochebed her ingenuity in devising this way of hiding their baby. God was indeed active on the Israelites' behalf through these faithful parents.

The Faithful Daughter's Bravery and Quickness.

Notice her loving, watchful care of her baby brother and her willingness to risk her life by standing guard over a baby Hebrew boy whom the law had condemned to death. We cannot help marvelling at the self-control and calm confidence which the girl showed in approaching the princess in order to keep the child in the care of his mother, even if it were on someone else's behalf. She risked her life because Eastern princesses could be very fickle and she could easily be accused of assisting in an act of violation of the law.

Comment: Surely it was only her faith in God that made her so quick-witted, brave, calm and composed under such strain and anxiety.

The Pharaoh's Daughter's Kindness and Help.

We may wonder whether the princess saw through the plan Miriam suggested at once or later on, as the baby grew up to look rather like his nurse! In any case, the princess was willing to risk her father's displeasure by disobeying his edict and rearing his Hebrew babe as her own son. Little did she know how God was overruling in her life for the protection of the future deliverer of His people from bondage. He, as sovereign Lord of the Universe, is able to bring "good out of evil" and turn even the wrath of man to praise Him (Psalm 76:10).

THE DELIVERER PATIENTLY PREPARED

— IN EGYPT

Let members of the group read Exodus 2:10 and Acts 7:20-22, then offer a **brief exposition, drawing on the following material**, to emphasise the thoroughness of the training which Moses received for his leadership task.

(i) Religious Training.

If Moses had been taken straight to the palace, he would have grown up as an Egyptian, in thought, culture and also in religion. He would have worshipped idols and strange gods and would have despised the Hebrews, as did the Egyptians. However, Jochebed, as his official nurse (and with all her mother-love), would tell him from his babyhood the stories of the one true God and His dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, etc., and of His promise to deliver His people from their bondage, while the very atmosphere of his home would speak of the Presence of God in the faith and prayer life of his parents.

We do not know how old Moses was when he left his humble Hebrew home (opinions vary from 2 to 12 years) and was accepted into the royal Egyptian palace as the adopted son of the princess, but we may assume that if he was still very young, his nurse, Jochebed, would have frequent access to him in the palace, and thus be able to continue his **religious training in the Hebrew faith**. It must have been from her that he gained a knowledge of and a love for God and for the race of Hebrew slaves with whom he was later willing to identify himself. She no doubt continued to pray that God would keep Moses faithful to the foundation religious principles and beliefs she had instilled into his young mind.

(ii) Study and Learning.

(It would be good if one of the group could, by prior arrangement, give some of this material as a brief lecturette on "Education in Ancient Egypt".)

Being in such a privileged position in Egypt, Moses was well schooled and tutored in "all the wisdom of the Egyptians", as we read in Acts 7:22. In this way Moses was given the best education available at that time, for Egypt ranked first among the nations for culture and wisdom. His language study included Egyptian and Hebrew, the latter probably being taught him by his mother. His other subjects would probably include history, politics, astronomy, geometry, medicine, physical science, arithmetic, surveying, architecture and engineering, for we know that the Egyptian libraries to which he would have access contained extensive information on these subjects. Some may know which reveal something of the great literary activity of the time. Picture of the Tel-el-Armana tablets which archaeologists have uncovered and Moses pursuing his **studies in Egyptian learning** in the great cities with their avenues of temples, palaces, sphinxes, colleges and other magnificent buildings. As a prince he would obtain noble and refined manners and a regal bearing, which would enable him later to stand unashamed before the Egyptian king and seek the release of his countrymen from slavery. From the school and college he probably returned to the Egyptian court and received training in statesmanship, warfare and leadership (remember he was a possible future Pharaoh!) — all most valuable and essential preparation for the work God had for him to do.

Comment: It is truly an evidence of God's providential care and guidance that Moses, alone of all this race of Hebrew slaves, was given these opportunities of education and experience which were so necessary for his later role as Leader and Law giver of the Israelite nation. How thankful he must have been later on, that he had not wasted his time at school and in the palace, but had studied and worked well, even though he did not know what the future held for him.

The group should, with varying degrees of prompting, be able to see relevant applications for their own situations.

(iii) Identification with Israelites.

Read Exodus 2:11-15a and Hebrews 11:24-26. Admit freely the impulsiveness and quick temper which this incident reveals, but ask what **positive** characteristics are also evident, e.g.

- a hatred of injustice;
- pity and compassion for the oppressed;
- a willingness to forgo his own self-interest in order to defend the interest of others.
- a desire to see the Israelites keep the peace between themselves.

These are desirable qualities which we all ought to seek. But, for the present, Moses' experience was proof of the fact that good intentions are not enough. (Another valuable lesson for us all.)

Point out that Moses apparently expected the people to welcome him as their leader and rescuer, but they may have been suspicious or envious, and in any case his action was hasty and before God's appointed time, because God still had a different course of training for Moses to undergo before he was ready for the task — a further 40 years' period of patient preparation.

— IN MIDIAN

Explain the reason for Moses' fear (v. 14). It was not just the death of the Egyptian, but his failure to embalm his body which would rob the soul of the slain man of any hope of entering heaven. Moses had thus cut himself off from his Egyptian heritage and was now forced not only to flee from Egypt, but also to abandon the Israelites for whom he had given up all, in order that he might be their defender and deliverer.

On a map show Moses' flight to the south-east of the Sinaitic Peninsula. Let the group read verses 15-22, and comment on the chivalrous, courteous behaviour which Moses showed — and the wonderful reward he received!!

Point out that Moses was to spend the next 40 years(!) working as a shepherd in this area. It was here in the quietness and solitude of the wilderness that Moses learnt lessons he could never have learnt in the splendour and sinfulness of the Egyptian court.

Give the group the three headings which follow in **bold type**, and invite them to think out comments appropriate to each heading which would have been true of Moses' experience as a shepherd in the

wilderness and would have been an essential preparation for his coming work. (Some guiding thoughts have been given with each heading.)

Knowing himself: He had time for prayer, meditation and self-examination. He had learnt **humility** — he realised his own insufficiency and inability to do any great work for God. He learnt **patience** — the necessity of awaiting God's time for doing God's work.

Knowing the land: As a shepherd he became acquainted "with every valley, plain, gorge, hill, and mountain of the whole (Sinai) region; with its population; with every spring and well and with all the resources of every kind offered by any spot, an education of supreme importance, fitting him to guide his race when rescued from Egypt." (Geikie's 'Hours with the Bible', vol. ii p. 114.)

Knowing God: Although Moses must have been tempted to doubt God during these 40 years as an exile wandering round the foot of Sinai and to think that surely he would have done more for the Israelites had he stayed in Pharaoh's court, he did not doubt God's will and wisdom, and in the quietness came to know God in a very real way.

CONCLUSION TO STUDY: End what will probably be a lengthy study by asking members to summarise what they have learned for their own lives from the example of Moses and the training which God had thus far given him.

PRAYER: (Built around the Collect for the day.)
"O God, whose never failing providence orders all things in heaven and earth; we humbly ask You to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us those things which are profitable; teaching us to take full advantage of all the training You provide, so that we may be patiently prepared to do the work You have planned for us." Amen.

FOLLOW-UP TO STUDY: 1. Study Sheet 2 is available. It includes Passages to Read, A Passage to Learn and a Prayer to Use, as well as an interesting exercise in "translating" some Egyptian writing.

2. Some groups might write the first scene of a play on "Exodus", making use of the speeches recorded in the text of Scripture and expanding the conversational side of the action. If further scenes are composed in succeeding weeks, the best dramatised version of the narrative could be selected (perhaps by the Rector, Superintendent or special adjudicator) and then prepared for presentation by the whole class before the rest of the school as a Review lesson or for a Parents' Day or Display.

Study 3 God's Presence with the Deliverer

AIM OF STUDY: To help members understand more about the results of a personal encounter with God in Christ.

PASSAGE FOR STUDY: Exodus 2:23 to 4:17.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| PLAN OF STUDY: | METHOD OF STUDY: |
| Motivation — Where do we meet God? | — Sub-groups of three or four. |
| God Remembers His People | — quick questions, reading, leader's exposition, and sub-group discussion. |
| God Reveals His Presence | — written answers to questions. |
| | — private study of passage. |
| | — oral questioning and discussion. |
| | — dramatic reading and leader's exposition. |
| God Reassures His Servant | — Leader's exposition. |
| | — Group study (time permitting). |

BACKGROUND TO STUDY: Verse 1. **Horeb, the mountain of God** — Horeb is an adjective meaning dry, i.e., desert. So Horeb — Sinai (the names are interchangeable) was "the desert mountain".

Here, at a later date, Moses was to meet with God and to receive the Law. The traditional Mt. Sinai is **Jebel Musa** (Moses' mountain), rugged and forbidding, near the southern tip of the Sinaitic Peninsula.

Verse 2. The bush was burning:

While it is true that a parched bush might easily catch fire in the scorching desert sun, it is quite possible that it was not actual fire that Moses saw. Many explanations have been attempted for this experience. A very interesting one is found in Louis Golding's 'In the Steps of Moses the Law-Giver'. "He tells how, near Sinai, he saw a pillar of air and sand whirled into the sky over an acacia tree which 'went up in flames', so that 'every thorn was a spit of fire' as the sun suddenly came from a bank of cloud and lit it with its gleams. It really seemed that the 'bush was burning yet it was not consumed'. Then the cyclone hurtled along one of the wadis and the tree was left arid and lonely once more." (Quoted from 'Patriarchs, Judges and Kings', by Bernard R. Youngman.)

We do not know what actually did happen, but whatever it was it must have been a wonderful sight.

Verse 5. Put off your shoes:

A sign of respect for God's presence. In the East, even today, sandals are always removed when entering a house, temple, church, etc.

The miracles given as a sign to Moses:

Moses is the first man recorded in the Bible as having worked miracles. The only times when miracles are reasonably frequent in the Biblical record are critical times in the history of God's people: (a) during the period of the Exodus; (b) in the lives of Elijah and Elisha, contending against the apostasy of the kings; (c) surrounding the life of Christ and the foundation of the Christian Church.

MOTIVATION FOR STUDY:

Today's study could be introduced by forming groups of three or four to discuss and list the various situations where people may meet God.

After three or four minutes, receive reports and write them up on the blackboard (or equivalent). Make as little comment as possible at this stage, beyond agreeing that there are many places and ways where men may meet God, some of which seem quiet and gradual, while others seem spectacular and sudden. Ask members to suggest the names of persons who had sudden, spectacular meetings with God, whether:

(a) **Outside the Bible** — (A vast range, but, for example, Wesley, Newton, Luther, etc.) or

(b) **In the Bible** — (Suggestions should include Abraham, Jacob, Saul of Tarsus and Moses.)

Now explain that today we will study closely the detailed account we have of Moses' personal encounter with God, so that we may come to understand more of what it means to meet God ourselves.

GOD REMEMBERS HIS PEOPLE

OUTLINE OF STUDY:

Use a few quick questions (e.g., What did we learn about Moses last week? How was God preparing Moses for his leadership task? What was the position of the Israelites at this stage?) to recall the previous two studies, then ask all members to read **Exodus 2:23-25**. Explain carefully that "God remembered" does not mean that He had hitherto forgotten the Israelites, or only now become compassionate towards their sufferings. God had, in fact, been suffering with His people throughout their slavery for He "**knew their condition**" all along, and wanted to deliver them. But He had been waiting for the **right time**, when they would bring their need to Him in prayer, and be willing to obey Him, and follow the deliverer whom He had chosen.

Now let the same sub-groups of three or four spend two or three minutes (**no more**) answering the question:

"What do these verses tell us about the conditions on which God will meet us?"

Receive answers (e.g., Believe in Him, Be willing to trust Him, Be willing to obey Him, Be prepared to wait for God's time and to follow the Lord Jesus). Appoint a recorder to note these answers, refer to one or two New Testament verses if necessary (e.g., Hebrews 11:6, Romans 6:16, James 1:3) and go quickly on to the main **section of the study**:

GOD REVEALS HIS PRESENCE

N.B. The following approach is based on the twin assumptions that most members of any Senior group will already be aware of the "Burning Bush" appearance but equally that few members will have analysed the teachings it offers for us.

First, let all members write answers to these questions on a ruled sheet in their Study File.

- a) What did Moses see?
- b) What did Moses hear?
- c) What did Moses do?
- d) What did God tell Moses he was to do?
- e) How did Moses react?

Depending on the group, members may want to work from memory, or more likely, by reference to Exodus 3:1-10. Either way, the leader will be able to discover how much they remember, or can discover about the **facts** of the occasion before discussing the **meaning** of those facts. Take two or three answers to each question, invite comments from any member, and ensure that difficulties (if any) concerning the **burning bush** are cleared up — see background notes.

Secondly, ask all members to consider what this passage tells us about meeting God. Allow time for thought (and possible re-reading of 3:1-10), then call for answers, which the recorder should again note down. Possible answers would be along these lines:

- (1) God is willing and wanting to reveal Himself to man. Man must therefore be ready to receive God's self-disclosure.
- (2) God lays down conditions regarding the way we approach Him. Man must therefore approach properly, i.e., reverently.
- (3) God may meet man anywhere — even when working in a "desert". Man must therefore not try to limit God to any particular time, place or situation. God may, and will, speak to man wherever and whenever He chooses — if only we will listen and obey!

Thirdly, make use of a dramatic reading of verses 10 to 15. The leader could act as narrator, one half of the group could read the words of Moses, and the other half the words of God. Make sure everyone is reading from the same translation (preferably R.S.V.) and allow a moment or so for everyone to look over their "lines" before reading aloud.

When the reading is ended, comment on the fact that God had already told Moses that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but, particularly as all the so-called gods in Egypt had names, Moses asks what he is to tell the Israelites is the Name of the God who appeared to him and commissioned him as their leader and deliverer. The Name God gives in reply is more a revelation of God's Own Nature. The Name, quite unlike any of the names of the idols and heathen gods, speaks of the eternal and unchanging Nature of the One and only God. He is from eternity unto eternity — the same yesterday, today and forever.

It therefore follows that those things we have so far noted concerning our approach to God, and His approach to us, will be just as valid today as they were in Moses' day, for our God is One whose very Name testifies to His unchangeable character, purpose and faithfulness.

GOD REASSURES HIS SERVANT

This, of course, was exactly the message which Moses needed, just as we would in equivalent circumstances. Explain that our study now "changes direction" slightly to show how this revelation of God's Presence was a further stage in that preparation of Moses which we began studying last week.

The passage just read together (verses 10-15) not only revealed that **God had not changed**; it also revealed that **Moses had changed!** Let one member read Acts 7:25 to recall the confidence and self-assertion of the 40-year old Moses in Egypt, and another member read Exodus 3:11 to discover the humility and hesitancy of the 80-year old Moses in Midian. It seems that Moses had grown both older and wiser!

Unfortunately, however, that humility passed easily into doubt, and doubt into disbelief, as Moses felt overwhelmed at the thought of going to Pharaoh and asking for his people's freedom. Let a third member read verse 12. Here was God's call to trust Him, with a promise of success, for Moses was told he would worship God on that same mountain after he had delivered the people out of Egypt. Even so, Moses found it hard to believe — a very human characteristic which all members should be able to appreciate.

At this point, the leader will need to vary his procedure according to the time available. If time is short (as it probably will be) cover the remaining points in a **very brief** exposition of 3:13 to 4:17, as outlined here. If more time is available allow the sub-groups of three or four to study 3:13 to 4:17 and report back their "difficulties" and "answers".

In all cases, leave enough time to deal adequately with the **Conclusion**, which returns to the main thought of the Study.

What difficulties did Moses raise? What answer did God give?

The people will ask who sent me? "I am that I am"

(3:13)

The people will not believe me.

(4:1)

The signs — Rod

— Leprous hand

— Water to blood

"I am not eloquent" (4:10)

Aaron, his brother, would act as spokesman.

Comment briefly that:

(i) by this test of faith God had further prepared Moses for his important task,

(ii) despite his understandable reluctance, Moses nevertheless did obey God,

— two points of obvious application to our lives.

CONCLUSION

TO STUDY:

Refer again to the blackboard list of "situations where we may meet God" which resulted from the introductory discussion.

Then ask the recorder to read out the comments compiled during the study concerning the ways in which we meet or encounter God. Compare these two lists and comment briefly if **necessary**.

Finally, point out that for man today, such meeting with God takes place as people are confronted with the claims on their lives of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who loves them and has given Himself for them to be their Saviour from sin.

Moses met God by the burning bush in Midian.

Saul met Him in the blinding light on the Damascus Road.

The Philippian gaoler met Him in the midst of an earthquake.

John Newton met Him in a storm at sea.

John Wesley met Him in a Bible Study.

Always the encounter or meeting will be on the basis of God's Self-Revelation in the Scriptures, the written Word in which we meet the Living Word, the Son of God. Always there must be a response of repentance, faith and obedience as the person realises in his own heart that God is speaking to him in a personal encounter.

PRAYER:

The collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

"O God, who has prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love towards Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.

Study 4

God's People in Despair

AIM OF STUDY:

To show that, although discouragement is a common human experience, yet God is willing and able to deliver us.

PASSAGE FOR STUDY:

Exodus 4:18 to 6:13.

PLAN OF STUDY:

Motivation

The Deliverer Returns

The People Worship

The Pharaoh Refuses The People Suffer The People Despair

The Deliverer Discouraged

METHOD OF STUDY:

- Extended discussion on Disappointment and Discouragement.
- Leader's exposition.
- Group reading and brief exposition.
- **Dramatic reading** with comment and discussion.
- Personal reading. Leader's comments.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY:

5:1 Pharaoh: Not the Pharaoh from whom Moses had fled (2:23) but probably his son. This king lived mainly at Tanis or Zoan on the Nile near the borders of Goshen.

5:1 Hold a feast unto me in the Wilderness: A sincere and reasonable request. Had Pharaoh been willing to release Israel entirely, Moses would have sought that. God, knowing Pharaoh's reaction, wishes to emphasise his obstinacy and hardness of heart.

We may assume Israel had not been able to sacrifice in Egypt because animals were sacred to the Egyptians.

5:7 Straw to make bricks: Bricks were made from red mud from the Nile mixed with chopped straw and left to bake hard in the sun. They were sometimes stamped with the name of the reigning king. Bricks have been taken from buildings erected by the Israelites where the changes mentioned here can be seen, the lower courses show the usual process with straw binding, in the middle courses there was stubble and grain pulled up by the roots and in the upper course there is no binding material at all.

MOTIVATION FOR STUDY:

N.B. The examples you use, and the response you get from this motivation will be a test of the knowledge you have of your group members, and the degree to which you enjoy their confidence. Therefore think hard and pray earnestly about this matter throughout the week, so that the Holy Spirit may indeed guide your thoughts and speech.

The study should be commenced by raising the subject of **Disappointment**. The leader might well do this by quoting an example from his (or her) own experience, or else from some local circumstance which would be well known to all members. Then invite suggestions from members, e.g., failure to be chosen in a sporting team, or to be elected as a school prefect, or to attain some office in a club.

Next, point out that we sometimes experience such serious disappointments as lead to **Discouragement**, particularly if the disappointment results from an unexpected set-back; e.g., last-minute defeat in a vital match in which victory seemed secure, or, worse still, failure to win a much-needed scholarship.

Others may suggest the discouragement which results from a seeming inability to satisfy the expectations of parents or teachers — an experience which is commonly reported by adolescents in such terms as a "my parents, don't understand. Nothing I do pleases them" . . . etc.

Still others may suggest the spiritual discouragement which results from periods of difficulty; e.g., when prayers do not seem to be answered, or Bible reading seems less meaningful, or some sinful habit cannot be mastered, or we lose the first "freshness" which followed some high peak in our spiritual experience (e.g., conversion, or attendance at a mission, or our confirmation, etc.).

Whatever examples arise, it is essential that the leader guide the discussion in such a way that **no member is "put on the spot"** and that all members realise that experience of Disappointment and Discouragement are common to all people. Help members realise that no one is exempt from this, not even group leaders! (Remember that many young persons imagine that they, and they alone have such deep disappointments and discouragements. You will be able to exercise a real pastoral ministry by assuring them to the contrary!)

Finally, do not be alarmed if this introductory discussion takes rather more time than usual. Such an event will be proof of the relevance and value of the discussion to your group, and will make the remainder of the study so much the more meaningful. When you judge the time is right, suggest that we can gain valuable insights into this common human experience by resuming our study from Exodus.

THE DELIVERER RETURNS

OUTLINE

OF STUDY:

Recall that we left Moses on a spiritual (and physical!) peak after his encounter with God at Sinai. But Moses could not remain there. In obedience to God's command he had to come down from the mountain and get on with the job, just as we are called upon to do after any "mountain top" experience in our spiritual lives.

Tell **very briefly** of Moses' courteous request to Jethro for permission to leave the household, Jethro's willing consent and Moses' departure with his family (verses 18-20), bearing in his hand "the rod of God". Then mention the happy reunion of the two elderly brothers, both of whom were acting in obedience to the revealed will of God (verses 27-28). Comment, in passing, on the favourable picture of Moses we form from these glimpses into his family relationships (a subject to which we return in a later study).

THE PEOPLE WORSHIP

Let the group read 4:29-31 and picture the joyful scene as the brothers first call a meeting of the elders of Israel. Imagine the surprise, gratitude, relief and joy with which this long sought news would be received. Small wonder that "the people believed . . . bowed their heads and worshipped". The mood of this occasion could perhaps be captured by the group reciting aloud (where practicable) the **Benedictus** from Morning Prayer. You would, of course, need to remind members that the Benedictus was first uttered at the time of Jesus' presentation in the Temple, but the song does fit this Exodus situation very well.

Convey to the group the excitement of the Israelites as Moses and Aaron set out to interview the great Pharaoh. How they would be building up their hopes and living in expectation of an early deliverance!

At last the hour has come! We see two men of noble bearing, although clad in humble shepherd garb, seeking and gaining an audience with the mighty Pharaoh of Egypt. Imagine the buzz of gossip and amazement which would soon go round the Egyptian court, as the news spread that this was none other than Moses, the 80-year-old Hebrew who had been brought up as an Egyptian prince and had been obliged to flee from the father of the present Pharaoh 40 years before. How would Pharaoh receive their request?

THE PHARAOH REFUSES THE PEOPLE SUFFER THE PEOPLE DESPAIR

The passage which follows (5:1 to 6:13) is ideally suited to a dramatised reading, by which the message and mood of the Scripture

may be conveyed by the very words of Scripture. It would probably be best to:

(1) Let all members read 5:1 to 6:13 silently, from the Revised Standard Version.

(2) Answer any direct questions, or accept any direct comments from members. (For example, some groups may comment on the connection between this passage and the well-known spiritual, 'Go Tell it on the Mountain', popularised by Peter, Paul and Mary!)

(3) Comment briefly, if desired, on —

(a) **the reasonableness of the request** to go a three-day journey to offer sacrifice, as they could not offer animal sacrifice in Egypt. Pharaoh's rejection of such a moderate request would inevitably lead to a stronger demand, later;

(b) **the obstinacy and pride of Pharaoh** who refused to take any notice of the God of the Hebrews, whom he did not know or even acknowledge;

(c) **the unreasonableness of the demand** for the same number of bricks without the provision of straw made the burden unbearable (10-14). It is very interesting and significant that archaeology has provided us with proof of the accuracy of this record in Scripture, because bricks were discovered in ancient Egyptian building and are now in the British Museum which show this change in the making of the bricks from chopped straw to "stubble" or reeds and rushes and anything that could be found.

(4) Apportion reading parts between the members. Probably best done with different members, or groups of members, depending on the number present, to read the words of:

(a) The narrator (various references).

(b) Moses (verses 1a, 3, 22-23 and 6:12).

(c) God (5:1b and 6:1, 2-8, 10).

(d) Pharaoh (verses 2, 4, 5, 7, 8a, 9, 17, 18).

(e) The people (verse 8b).

(f) The taskmasters (verses 5:10, 11, 13, 14, 19).

(g) The foremen (verses 15-16, 21).

THE DELIVERER DISCOURAGED

When the dramatic reading has been concluded, let the group read silently again over 5:20 to 6:1 and 6:9-12. Comment briefly on the appalling plight of the Israelites. No wonder they despaired and turned on Moses. How surprised, bewildered, disappointed and dis-

couraged Moses must have felt! He had come back to deliver his people from slavery and now their slavery was worse than ever. Far from getting better, his people's plight was going from bad to worse—and he was getting the blame! If his own people would not listen to him, how could he expect Pharaoh to do so? With his people deep in despair, experiencing the worst horrors of slavery, no wonder Moses became discouraged.

**CONCLUSION
TO STUDY:**

Recall the introductory discussion. If Moses could suffer such setbacks, who are we to grumble at our lesser disappointments? Equally, if Moses could become so discouraged, and the Israelites so despairing, we should not be surprised that our faith often seems unequal to the temptations to disbelief and discouragement.

End the study by teaching the memory verse, I Corinthians 10:13 (R.S.V.), which should have been previously prepared on a chart or set of flash cards.

**FOLLOW-UP
TO STUDY:**

1. Study Sheet 4 will further develop the subject of this study, using material drawn from John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress'.
2. The dramatic readings used in the study could be adapted quite easily to form the third scene of a Senior Play on "Exodus".

PRAYER:

(Adapted from a prayer in the Litany.)

"O God, our merciful Father, who does not despise the sighting of a penitent heart, nor the desires of those in need; Mercifully assist the prayers we offer when disappointed and discouraged. Graciously hear us, O God, that the evils which the devil or men work against us may be brought to nothing, so that we, Your servants, being hurt by no temptation, may evermore give thanks to You, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.

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