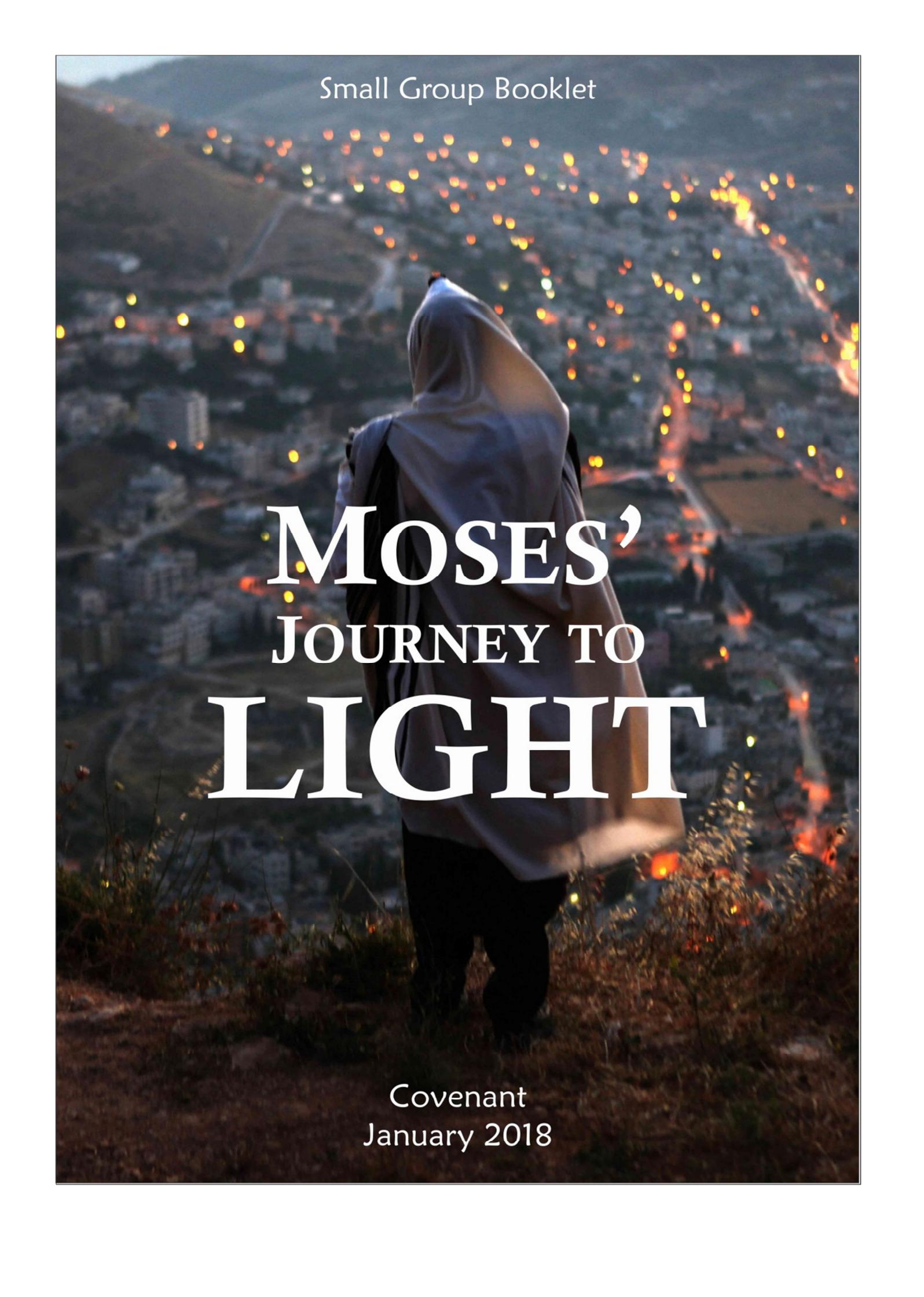


Small Group Booklet

A person wearing a white hooded robe stands on a grassy hillside at dusk, looking over a city. The city lights are visible in the background, creating a warm glow. The person is seen from behind, and the robe has a dark lining. The overall scene is peaceful and contemplative.

# MOSES' JOURNEY TO LIGHT

Covenant  
January 2018



Covenant:

# MOSES' JOURNEY TO LIGHT

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>The burning bush</b>	<b>page 3</b>
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>The pillar of light</b>	<b>page 5</b>
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>A face on fire</b>	<b>page 9</b>

*All scripture is from the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible*

Moses is a central character in the Old Testament, and is also referred to 80 times in the New Testament. His life-story tells of a journey from darkness to light – from the darkness of murder to the light of God’s call at a burning bush; from the darkness of slavery in Egypt, to the pillar of light leading the people to freedom; from the darkness of wandering in a wilderness to the light of God’s presence on Mt Sinai.

As we prepare to renew our Covenant with God, we look at Moses’ journey to light. If Moses, a fearful, not always discerning leader, can become the God-anointed leader of a nation, surely we can also make a difference in this world? While there are times when life is dark and difficult, and some challenges seem too daunting, we are reminded that the light of God **“shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”** (John 1:5). What an amazing promise! May our journey with Moses over the next 3 weeks inspire us to hold to the light of life, and so become a light to our dark world.



**Pete & Nadja**

## The Biblical Story of Moses



Moses was born in Egypt to Amram and Yochebed (from the tribe of Levi). He had a sister named Miriam and a brother Aaron. His family were descendants of the Israelite people, who had found a home in Egypt. In time, because the children of Israel had grown numerically, their culture and way of life became a threat to their Egyptian hosts. The Egyptians enslaved them and put them to work.

Despite harsh treatment their numbers continued to grow and so the Egyptian Pharaoh ordered that all newborn male Hebrew children be killed. Moses' life was saved by his mother hiding him in the bull-rushes at the river, and the longing for a son by an Egyptian princess saving him from that river. For this reason he was given the name "Moses", derived from the Hebrew מֹשֶׁה, meaning to "to pull out/draw out" of water.

He spent 40 years in the Royal palace, living as a prince of Egypt. He witnessed the brutality meted out against his people, and killed an Egyptian while saving a Hebrew slave from a beating. Fearing Pharaoh's retaliation, Moses fled to the desert of Midian. He became the shepherd of a Midianite priest - whose daughter Zipporah he later married. While out tending sheep God spoke to him from within a burning bush, telling him that he had been chosen to lead God's people out of slavery. Moses did not believe he was up to the task and made numerous excuses to get out of it. God then appointed his brother Aaron to help him. Moses and Aaron went to see Pharaoh and informed him that the God of the Hebrews demand that his people be set free. When Pharaoh refused, God sent 10 terrible plagues on Egypt to persuade him to be obedient. Finally Pharaoh let the Israelites go, and Moses became the leader of undisciplined slaves escaping to freedom and their Promised Land.

They faced many obstacles on their journey to freedom: they were trapped at the Red Sea with the Egyptian soldiers chasing them; at stages they had no water or food; they were attacked by enemy tribes, and they argued with each other. But they saw God care for them: food was supplied daily, water was supplied from a rock, and they were led by a column of cloud and light. God provided the Israelites with 10 commandments - a code of law to regulate their social and religious lives. They also agreed to the conditions of a Covenant agreement between themselves and God. Moses died at the age of 120 years in Moab on the edge of the Promised Land.





# Week 1

## THE BURNING BUSH

Read Exodus 3 & 4:1-17

### Exodus 3:1-8 The Burning Bush

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey ...

Moses was tending his father-in-law's flock in Horeb (a mountainous part of the desert) when he saw a bush with flames of fire that didn't burn it up. **"When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." (Exodus 3:4)** And just in case this did not sink in, Moses is told - to take off his shoes as a sign that this was a place of prayer (responding with the cultural practice of the day). Saying "Here I am" becomes a life altering moment for Moses. His life would never be the same again.

**Q: For Reflection:** Think of a moment in your life when God confronted you and you said "Here I am". This might have been in church, or in a time of prayer, a book you were reading, a place of prayer, or simply in the circumstances of your life. Share this experience with the group. If you haven't yet said, "Here I am" to God, what is stopping you from taking the next step?

God sent Moses to Pharaoh to lead his people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. God said, **"I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12)**, but Moses was still fearful and made excuses. He felt inadequate and not up to this large responsibility. He was worried about what people might think and all the things that could possibly go wrong. He was so comfortable tending sheep – he had a very peaceful life, with little stress and conflict.

**Q: Are you like Moses?** Do you make excuses to avoid doing the things that you know you should be doing? Share with the group something you know you should do – and the excuses you have used to avoid doing it.

God was not defeated by Moses' struggle to be obedient – or by his excuses! He gave him the support he needed. He gave him a miraculous stick to persuade people of God's presence, and sent his brother Aaron as a spokesman: **“He shall speak for you to the people... And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs.” (Exodus 4:16&17)** As with Moses, God never asks us to do something without equipping us for the task.

**Q: Where have you seen Gods helping hand in your life?** Share your gratitude for someone who has assisted you when you were struggling to achieve something. Now ask for help in achieving something that you have been putting off doing.

Are you ready to be no longer yours but God's: to freely go where he leads? We will make this promise on Covenant Sunday. Spend time in prayer asking God to open your eyes to the things that have stopped you from growing. Face the fear, take the risk, jump into his embrace, and follow where he leads.



Listen to **“Waiting here for you”** by Martin Smith as you contemplate what God is saying to you in this, your burning bush moment. (<https://youtu.be/-8d80ok40TQ>)



## Daily Devotions:

Sunday: John 3:20

**Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.**

Prayer: God please help me face the things that I am scared to bring out of the darkness into the light.

Monday: Romans 8:15

**The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to child. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’**

Prayer: Daddy, with you I do not have to fear, please help me cling to you in faith.

Tuesday: I John 4:18

**There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.**

Prayer: I am perfect in you; please fill me up with love overflowing.

Wednesday: Ephesians 6:19

**Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.**



Prayer: God, please help me to fearlessly go out and tell the world about you.

Thursday: Luke 12:5

***But I will show you whom you should fear: fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.***

Prayer: Dear Jesus, please help me discern the things that are not from you and to cut them out of my life.

Friday: 2 Corinthians 5:11

***Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.***

Prayer: God, you know me and what I can do with you, please help me to see it too.

Saturday: Romans 13:3

***For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended.***

Prayer: When I am afraid I like to play deaf, please open my ears and heart to your message so that I can do the right thing.

Romans 10:17 "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."



## Week 2

### THE PILLAR OF LIGHT

Read Exodus 13:17 – 22

**Exodus 13:17-22 Pillars of Cloud and Fire.** When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle. Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here." And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

The Israelites left Egypt and travelled via Succoth to Etham. They found themselves on the edge of the Wilderness of Shur. It is here that they found a beacon of light to guide them through this unknown, difficult and barren wilderness.

At the point of facing a barren wilderness, God gave them a pillar of cloud and fire to lead them. **“By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light (Exodus 13:21).** When we face our own moments of “wilderness” and struggle in life, remember that God provides guidance through the barren moments. God is always with us on our journey, we needn’t despair.



**Q:** Think of a moment when you looked at a wilderness in your own life, and discovered that there was light in the darkness. Share with the group.

God lit Israel’s path, showing them the way, and protecting them from their enemies. Exodus 14:24 tells of this pillar of fire protecting the Israelites from harm: **“the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic”**. In time the Israelites learned to keep their eyes fixed on the pillar of light instead of gazing fearfully at the dark shadows cast by their enemies.

We too need to learn to move our eyes away from the fearful darkness that threatens our lives, to see the light of God guiding us in truth and righteousness. It is easy to stay the course when things are going well, but we need to be able to discern the right thing to do when our faith is challenged by a dark wilderness. Moses says to the people **“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance of the Lord will bring you today” (Ex 14:13)**. No matter what we go through, God has a plan and it is always one of deliverance.

**Q:** Do you have a story about God’s protection in difficult times?

God’s deliverance does not always look like the realization of our wishes. God did not prevent the Israelites from wandering in the wilderness. Instead God accompanied them in this very tough period of their lives. In the same way we will find ourselves wandering in dark wilderness places. Such places can make us plead for God to release us into more comfortable circumstances. This will not automatically occur, as God might have other purposes in leading us through the difficult experience, rather than whisking us out of it. The Good News is, however, that the light of God’s presence will not abandon us in the difficult moments: as the Psalmist reminds us: **Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me (Psalm 23:4).**



Listen to “Chris Tomlin - Whom Shall I Fear” as you contemplate God’s protection in your life.  
(<https://youtu.be/qOkImV2cJDg>)



## Daily Devotions:

Sunday: 2 Corinthians 4:4

***The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.***

Prayer: Dear God, please open my eyes to see your light in your word and in this world.

Monday: Hebrews 4:7

***God again set a certain day, calling it ‘Today’. This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.***

Prayer: Jesus, please help me hear your voice today. Help me to too look for the little subtle messages you send.

Tuesday: Proverbs 11:14

***Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.***

Prayer: God, I am so glad that you are on my side to guide me through the darkness. Please let the light of your Good News make a difference in this world.

Wednesday: Psalm 25:4-5

***Make me to know your ways, O LORD teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.***

Prayer: Dear God, sometimes I wonder what has to happen before I listen and obey. Please help me to make the right choice every time.

Thursday: 2 Thessalonians 1:4

***Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.***

Prayer: God, please help us to be a church that perseveres in faith through the darkness of this world.

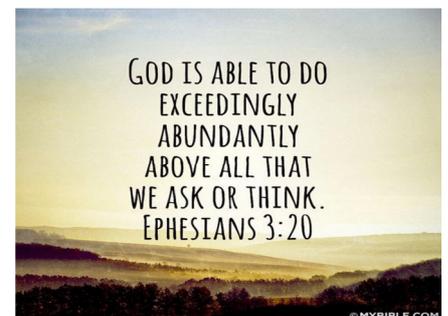
Friday: Psalm 31:3

***For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me.***

Prayer: Jesus, please heal me from my brokenness and fear that makes me disabled, and lead me in your will.

Saturday: Philippians 2:14-16

***Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.***



Prayer: Jesus, help me be one of your brightest stars – a light for others to follow.

**Challenge for the week:** read through the Covenant Promise below. Methodist people celebrate an Annual Covenant service. Decide today that you will be there and will make the Covenant Promise.



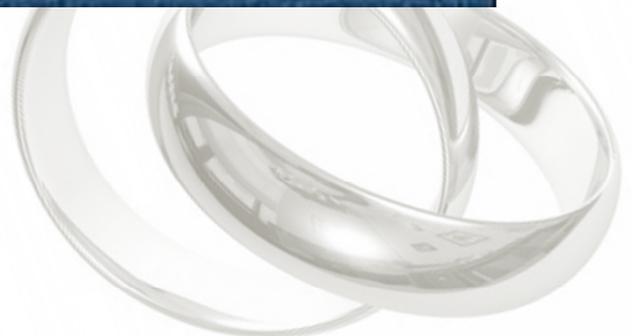
## THE COVENANT:

*On Covenant Sunday we renew our Covenant with God!  
Are you ready?*

*Please read the Covenant Prayer carefully so that you can commit to each line.*

*Lord God, Holy Father, since you have called us through Christ to share in this gracious Covenant, we take upon ourselves with joy the yoke of obedience and, for love of you, engage ourselves to seek and do your perfect will. We are no longer our own but yours.*

**WESLEY'S COVENANT PRAYER (MODERN)**  
I AM NO LONGER MY OWN, BUT YOURS, GOD.  
PUT ME TO WHAT YOU WILL, RANK ME WITH WHOM YOU WILL.  
PUT ME TO DOING, PUT ME TO SUFFERING.  
LET ME BE EMPLOYED FOR YOU OR LAID ASIDE FOR YOU,  
EXALTED FOR YOU OR BROUGHT LOW FOR YOU.  
LET ME BE FULL, LET ME BE EMPTY.  
LET ME HAVE ALL THINGS, LET ME HAVE NOTHING.  
I FREELY AND HEARTILY YIELD ALL THINGS TO YOUR  
PLEASURE AND DISPOSAL,  
AND NOW, O GLORIOUS AND BLESSED GOD, FATHER, SON AND  
HOLY SPIRIT,  
YOU ARE MINE, AND I AM YOURS.  
SO BE IT.  
AND THE COVENANT WHICH I HAVE MADE ON EARTH,  
LET IT BE RATIFIED IN HEAVEN.  
AMEN.





# Week 3

## A FACE ON FIRE

Read Exodus 24:1-18

& 34:27-35

**Exodus 34:29-35 The Shining Face of Moses** When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the people of Israel came near and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Moses reads from the Book of the Covenant, reminding the people that they are in a special relationship with God. They are chosen by God as God's Covenant People. This requires them to obey the Ten Commandments, and as a consequence the Angel of the Lord would go ahead of them and lead them to their Promised Land (Exodus 23:20-23). **And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do."** (Exodus 24:3).

Here we find the roots of our Christian faith. We are people of the New Covenant. This new relationship with God is rooted in the teachings of Jesus: God has loved us since our conception, and has chosen us to be his beloved – and in response we agree to live our lives according to the teachings of Jesus. The challenge of the story of Moses is whether we are able to echo the words of the children of Israel at Mount Sinai: **"All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do."**

**Q: Do you remember the promises you made at your Confirmation/Baptism?** See if the group can reconstruct them.

Moses then goes up the mountain into the cloud. We are told that **"The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it"** (Exo 24:16). As we saw last week, the light of God leads Moses – this time up the mountain. Much takes place in the next ten chapters of Exodus: joy, betrayal, anger, contrition and reconciliation. We read of Moses' joy at being in God's presence, the

betrayal by Israel of God as they erect a golden calf, anger and frustration on the part of Moses at the weakness of the people he leads, contrition from everybody at their sin, and reconciliation with God and one another.

These people of God are familiar to us today. We too live with this cycle of joy in serving God, our selfish wandering away from God's values, anger/betrayal/frustration, and confession and restoration of our Covenant relationship with God.

**Q: Do you have things in your life that need to be changed as you made your promise at the Covenant Service?** Decide on some light-reflecting action you want to accept into your life for 2018.

Moses comes down the mountain after spending time with God. We are told that **“the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God” (Exodus 34:29)**. Another way of putting this is that the light of God shone out of him and was evident to the people around him: **“the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining” (Ex 34:35)**. This resonates with the words of Jesus, who challenges his followers to **“let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Mat 5:16)**. So the invitation of our Covenant relationship with God is to become a light in our world. Just like Moses, the light of God can shine through us so that it is visible to all who meet us.

**Q: What are you going to do to ensure you keep this Covenant promise?** What actions will you take to stand firm / be the light?



Listen to **“Learning to be the light”** by Newworldson as you contemplate what your next step will be as you become the light.  
([https://youtu.be/0OpzyAG\\_yxc](https://youtu.be/0OpzyAG_yxc))



### Daily Devotions:

Sunday: **Matthew 5:14-16**

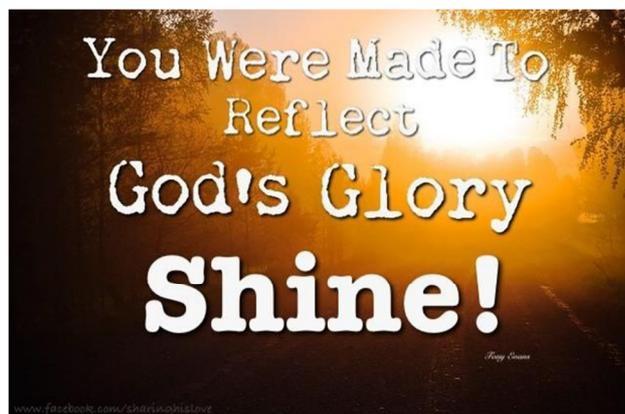
**‘You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.**

Prayer: Dear God, your will be done, put me where I need to shine.

Monday: **Ezra 9:8**

**‘But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage.**

Prayer: I thank you Lord for making my yoke light and my heart shine with your love.



Tuesday: Psalm 27:1

***The LORD is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?***

Prayer: With you, my God, I can face anything that comes my way.

Wednesday: Psalm 56:13

***For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life.***

Prayer: Thank you for saving and loving me. Please help me be life giving wherever I go.

Thursday: Proverbs 20:27

***The human spirit is the lamp of the LORD that sheds light on one's inmost being.***

Prayer: No matter what we think and do, we cannot escape your searchlight in our lives.

May I live up to your expectations of me, dear Lord.

Friday: Isaiah 8:19

***The darkness turns to light. When someone tells you to consult mediums and spirits, who whisper and mutter, should not a people enquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?***

Prayer: Dear God, it is easy to try and find solace in the world, and it's comforts. Help me to always seek you first.

Saturday: 2 Thessalonians 3:5

***May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.***

Prayer: Lord, direct my heart to you!



# SOURCES CONSULTED

[www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com)  
[www.reformedworship.org](http://www.reformedworship.org)  
[www.christnow.com](http://www.christnow.com)  
[www.thoughtco.com](http://www.thoughtco.com)  
[www.notablebiographies.com](http://www.notablebiographies.com)

IMAGES: Google Images  
BIBLES: Life Application Bible, Serendipity Bible



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