

The Golden Legend or Lives Of The Saints
Compiled by Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, 1275
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HERE NEXT FOLLOWETH THE HISTORY OF MOSES, WHICH IS READ IN THE CHURCH ON MID-LENT SUNDAY

Caxton added this life to his edition of the Golden Legend, but it was not a part of Voragine's original.

These be the names of the children of Israel that entered into Egypt with Jacob, and each entered with their household and meiny. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulon, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher; they were all in number that entered seventy. Joseph was tofore in Egypt. And when he was dead and all his brethren and kindred, the children of Israel grew and multiplied greatly, and filled the earth.

THE OPPRESSION OF THE HEBREWS

Then was there a new king upon Egypt which knew nothing of Joseph, and said to his people: Lo! and see the people of Israel is great, and stronger than we be, come and let us wisely oppress them, lest they multiply and give us battle and fight with us and drive us out of our land.

Then he ordained provosts and masters over them to set them awork and put them to affliction of burdens. They builded to Pharaoh two towns, Pithom and Raamses. How much more they oppressed them, so much the more they increased and multiplied. The Egyptians hated the children of Israel and put them to affliction, scorning and having envy at them, and oppressed bitterly their life with hard and sore labours of tile and clay, and grieved all them in such works.

The king of Egypt said to the midwives of the Hebrews, of whom that one was called Shiphrah, and that other Puah, and commanded: When so is that the time of birth is, and that ye shall do your office in helping in the birth of children, if it be a manchild slay him, if it be a maid-child keep it and let it live.

The midwives dreaded God, and did not as the king commanded them, but reserved and kept the men-children. For whom the king sent and said: What is the cause that ye reserved and kept the men-children?

They answered: There be of the Hebrews women that can the craft of midwives as well as we, and ere we come the children be born.

God did well therefore unto the midwives, and the people grew and were greatly comforted. And because the midwives dreaded God they edified to them houses. Then Pharaoh commanded to his people saying: Whatsomever is born of males cast ye into the river, and what of women keep ye them and let ye them live.

THE BIRTH OF MOSES

After this was a man of the house of Levi went out and took a wife of his kindred, which conceived and brought forth a son, and he saw him elegant and fair, and hid him three months, and when he might no longer hide him, took a little crib of rushes and wickers and pitched it with glue and pitch, and put therein the child, and set it on the river, and let it drive down in the stream, and the sister of the child standing afar, considering what should fall thereof.

And it happed that same time, the daughter of King Pharaoh descended down to the river for to wash her in the water, and her maidens went by the brink, which then, when she saw the little crib or fiscelle [basket] she sent one of her maidens to fetch and take it up, which so fetched and brought to her, and she saw therein lying a fair child; and she having pity on it said: This is one of the children of the Hebrews.

To whom anon spake the sister of the child: Wilt thou, said she, that I go and call thee a woman of the Hebrews that shall and may nourish this child?

She answered: Go thy way.

The maid went and called his mother, to whom Pharaoh's daughter said: Take this child and nourish him to me, and I shall give to thee thy meed and reward.

HIS LIFE WITH THE DAUGHTER OF KING PHARAOH

The mother took her child and nourished it, and when it was weaned and could go [walk] she delivered it to the daughter of King Pharaoh, whom she received and adopted instead of a son and named him Moses, saying that "I took him out of the water." And he there grew and waxed a pretty child.

And as Josephus, *Antiquitatum*, saith, "This daughter of Pharaoh, which was named Termuthe, loved well Moses and reputed him as her son by adoption, and on a day brought him to her father, who for his beauty took him in his arms and made much of him, and set his diadem on his head, wherein was his idol. And Moses anon took it, and cast it under his feet and trod on it, wherefore the king was wroth, and demanded of the great doctors and magicians what should fall of this child. And they kalked [made astronomical calculations] on his nativity and said, 'This is he that shall destroy thy reign and put it under foot, and shall rule and govern the Hebrews.' Wherefore the king anon decreed that he should be put to death."

But others said that Moses did it of childhood [because he was just a child] and ought not to die therefore, and counselled to make thereof a proof, and so they did. They set tofore him a platter full of coals burning, and a platter full of cherries, and bade him eat, and he took and put the hot coals in his mouth and burned his tongue, which letted [hindered] his speech ever after; and thus he escaped the death. {To the contrary,} Josephus saith that when Pharaoh would have slain him, Termuthe, his daughter, plucked him away and saved him.

HE FLEES TO MIDIAN AND MARRIES ZIPPORAH

Then on a time as Moses was full grown, he went to his brethren, and saw the affliction of them and a man of Egypt smiting one of the Hebrews, his brethren. And he looked hither and thither and saw no man. He smote the Egyptian and slew him and hid him in the sand. And another day he went out and found two of the Hebrews brawling and fighting together; then he said to him that did wrong: Why smitest thou thy neighbour?

Which answered: Who hath ordained thee prince and judge upon us? Wilt thou slay me as thou slewest that other day an Egyptian?

Moses was afraid and said to himself: How is this deed known and made open? Pharaoh heard hereof and sought Moses for to slay him, which then fled from his sight and dwelled in the land of Midian, and sat there by a pit side. The priest of Midian had seven daughters which came thither for to draw water, and to fill the vessels for to give drink to the flocks of the sheep of their father. Then came on them the herdmen and put them from it. Then rose Moses and defended the maidens and let them water their sheep, which then returned to their father Jethro. And he said to them: Why come ye now earlier than ye were wont to do?

They said that “a man of Egypt hath delivered us from the hand of the herdmen, and also he drew water for us and gave to the sheep drink.”

“Where is he?” said he. “Why left ye the man after you? Go call him that he may eat some bread with us.”

Then Moses swore that he would dwell with him. And he took Zipporah one of his daughters and wedded her to his wife, which conceived and bare him a son whom he called Gershom, saying, “I was a stranger in a strange land.” She brought to him forth another son whom he named Eleazar, saying, “The God of my father is my helper and hath kept me from the hand of Pharaoh.”

THE BURNING BUSH

Long time after this died the king of Egypt, and the children of Israel, wailing, made great sorrow for the oppression of their labour, and cried unto God for help. Their cry came unto God of their works, and God heard their wailing, and remembered the promise he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and our Lord beheld the children of Israel and knew [acknowledged?] them.

Moses fed the sheep of Jethro his wife's father. When he had brought the sheep into the innermost part of the desert he came unto the mount of God, Oreb. Our Lord appeared to him in flame of fire in the midst of a bush, and he saw the fire in the bush, and the bush burned not. Then said Moses, I shall go and see this great vision why the bush burneth not.

Our Lord then beholding that he went for to see it, called him, being in the bush, and said: Moses, Moses.

Which answered: I am here.

Then said our Lord: Approach no nearer hitherward. Take off thy shoon [shoes] from thy feet; the place that thou standest on is holy ground. And said also: I am God of thy fathers, God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob.

Moses then hid his face, and durst not look toward God. To whom God said: I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry of the hardness that they suffer in their works, and I knowing the sorrow of them am descended [consent] to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians, and shall lead them from this land into a good land and spacious, into a land that floweth milk and honey, unto the places of Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. The cry of the children of Israel is come to me, I have seen their affliction, how they be oppressed of the Egyptians. But come to me and I shall send thee unto Pharaoh that thou shalt lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Then Moses said to him: Who am I that shall go to Pharaoh and lead the children out of Egypt?

To whom God said: I shall be with thee, and this shall be the sign that I send thee. When thou shalt have led out my people of Egypt, thou shalt offer to God upon this hill.

Moses said unto God: Lo! if I go to the children of Israel and say to them, "God of your fathers hath sent me to you," if they say, "What is his name?" what shall I say?

Our Lord said to Moses: "*Ego sum qui sum*, I am that I am."

He said: Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel: "He that is, sent me to you," and yet shalt thou say to them: "The Lord God of your fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, hath appeared to me saying: 'This is my name for evermore, and this is my memorial from generation to generation.'" Go and gather together the seniors and aged men of Israel, and say to them: "The Lord God of your fathers hath appeared to me, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, saying: 'Visiting I have visited you, and have seen all that is fallen in Egypt, and I shall lead you out of the affliction of Egypt into the land of Canaan, Ethei, etc, unto the land flowing milk and honey,'" and they shall hear thy voice. Thou shalt go and take with thee the seniors of Israel to the king of Egypt, and shalt say to him: "The Lord God of the Hebrews hath called us; we shall go the journey of three days in wilderness that we may offer to our Lord God." But I know well that the king of Egypt shall not suffer you to go but by strong hand. I shall stretch out my hand and shall smite Egypt in all my marvels that I shall do amid among them. After that he shall let you go. I shall then give my grace to this people tofore the Egyptians, and when ye shall go out ye shall not depart void, nor with nought, but every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her hostess, vessels of silver and of gold, and clothes, and them shall ye lay on your sons, and on your daughters, and ye shall rob Egypt.

Then Moses answered and said: They shall not believe me ne hear my voice, but shall say, "God hath not appeared to thee."

God said then to him: What is that thou holdest in thine hand?

He answered: A rod.

Our Lord said: Cast it on the ground.

He threw it down and it turned into a serpent, whereof Moses was afeard and would have fled.

Our Lord said to him: Put forth thy hand and hold him by the tail.

He stretched forth his hand and held him, and it turned again into a rod.

{The Lord said:} *Do this, that they believe thee, that I have appeared to thee.*

And yet our Lord said to him, "Put thy hand into thy bosom," which, when he hath put in, and drawn out again, it was like a leper's hand. Our Lord bade him to withdraw it into his bosom again, and he drew it out and it was then like that other flesh.

"If they hear not thee and believe by the first sign and token, they shall believe thee by the second. If they believe none of the two ne hear thy voice, then take water of the river and pour on the dry ground, and whatsoever thou takest and drawest shall turn into blood."

Then Moses said: I pray the Lord send some other, for I am not eloquent, but have a letting [impediment] in my speech.

Our Lord said to him: Who made the mouth of a man, or who hath made a man dumb or deaf, seeing or blind, not I? Go, therefore, I shall be in thy mouth and shall teach thee what thou shalt say.

Then said Moses: I beseech thee Lord, said he, send some other whom thou wilt.

Our Lord was wroth on Moses and said: Aaron thy brother deacon, I know that he is eloquent. Lo, he shall come and meet with thee, and seeing thee he shall be glad in his heart. Speak thou to him and put my words in his mouth, and I shall be in thy mouth and in his mouth, and I shall show to you what ye ought to do, and he shall speak for the people, and shall be thy mouth, and thou shalt be in such things as pertain to God. Take with thee this rod in thine hand, by which thou shalt do signs and marvels.

MOSES RETURNS TO EGYPT

Then Moses went to Jethro his wife's father, and said to him, I shall go and return to my brethren into Egypt, and see if they yet live.

To whom Jethro said: Go in God's name and place.

Then said our Lord to Moses: Go and return into Egypt, all they be now dead that sought for to slay thee.

Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them upon an ass and returned in to Egypt, bearing the rod of God in his hand. Then our Lord said to Aaron: Go against [to] Moses and meet with him in desert.

Which [Aaron] went for to meet with him unto the mount of God, and there kissed him. And Moses told unto Aaron all that our Lord had said to him for which he sent him, and all the tokens and signs that he bade him do. They came both together and gathered and assembled all the seniors and aged men of the children of Israel. And Aaron told to them all that God had said to Moses, and made the signs and tokens tofore the people and the people believed it. They heard well that our Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had beholden the affliction of them, wherefore they fell down low to the ground and worshipped our Lord.

MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH

After this Moses and Aaron went unto Pharaoh and said: This saith the Lord God of Israel: “Suffer my people to depart that they may sacrifice to me in desert.”

Then said Pharaoh: Who is that Lord that I may hear his voice and leave [give leave to] Israel? I know not that Lord, nor I will not leave Israel.

They said to him: God of the Hebrews hath called us that we go the journey of three days in the wilderness and sacrifice unto our Lord God, lest peradventure pestilence or war fall to us.

The King of Egypt said to them, “Why solicit [disturb] ye, Moses and Aaron, the people from their works and labour? Go ye unto your work.”

BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW

Pharaoh also said, “The people is much; see how they grow and multiply, and yet much more shall do if they rested from their labour.” Therefore he commanded the same day to the prefects and masters of their works saying: “In no wise give no more chaff [straw] to the people for to make loam and clay, but let them go and gather stubble, and make them to do as much labour as they did tofore, and lessen it nothing. They do now but cry: ‘Let us go and make sacrifice to our God’; let them be oppressed by labour and exercised that they attend not to leasings [lies].”

Then the prefects and masters of their work said to them that Pharaoh had commanded to give them no chaff, but they should go and gather such as they might find, and that their work should not therefore be minished. Then the children were disperpled [sent out in various directions] for to gather chaff, and their masters awaited on them and bade them, “Make an end of your work as ye were wont to do when that chaff was delivered to you.” And thus they were put to more affliction, and would make them to make as many tiles as they did tofore.

Then the uppermost of the children of Israel came to Pharaoh and complained saying: Why puttest thou thy servants to such affliction?

He said to them: Ye be so idle that ye say ye will go and sacrifice to your God; ye shall have no chaff given to you, yet ye shall work your customable work and gather your chaff also.

THE LORD TELLS MOSES TO GO AGAIN TO PHARAOH

Then the eldest and the uppermost among the Hebrews went to Moses and Aaron and said: What have ye done? Ye have so done that ye have made our odour to stink in the sight of Pharaoh, and have encouraged him to slay us.

Then Moses counselled with our Lord how he should do, and said: Lord, why hast thou sent me hither? For, sith [since] I have spoken to Pharaoh in thy name, he hath put thy people to more affliction than they tofore, and thou hast not delivered them.

Our Lord said to Moses: Now thou shalt see what I shall do to Pharaoh. By {my}strong hand he shall let you go, and in a boistous [by my strong hand] he shall cast you from his land.

Yet said our Lord to Moses: I am the Lord God that appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in my might, and my name is Adonai, I showed to them not that {name}. I promised and made covenant with them that I should give to them the land of Canaan in which they dwelled. I now have heard the wailing and the tribulations that the Egyptians oppress them with, for which I shall deliver and bring them from the servitude of the Egyptians.

Moses told all these things to the children of Israel, and they believed him not, for the anguish of their spirits that they were in and hard labour.

Then said our Lord to Moses: Go and enter in to Pharaoh and bid him deliver my people of Israel out of his land.

Moses answered: How should Pharaoh hear me when the children of Israel believe me not?

Then our Lord said to Moses and Aaron that they both should go to Pharaoh and give him in commandment to let the children of Israel to depart. And he said to Moses: Lo, I have ordained thee to be God of Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt say to him all that I say to thee, and he shall say to Pharaoh that he suffer the children of Israel to depart from his land. But I shall enhard his heart, and shall multiply my signs and tokens in the land of Egypt, and he shall not hear ne believe you. And I shall lead the children of Israel my people. And shall show mine hand, and such wonders on Egypt, that Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.

Moses and Aaron did as our Lord commanded them. Moses was eighty years old when he came and stood tofore Pharaoh, and Aaron eighty-three years when they spake to Pharaoh.

THE PHARAOH CONTINUES OBDURATE

Then when they were tofore Pharaoh, Aaron cast the rod down tofore Pharaoh, and anon the rod turned into a serpent. Then Pharaoh called his magicians and jugglers and bade them do the same. And they made their witchcraft and invocations and cast down their rods, which turned in likewise into serpents, but the rod of Aaron devoured their rods.

Yet was the heart of Pharaoh hard and so indurate [hardened] that he would not do as God bade. Then said our Lord to Moses: The heart of Pharaoh is grieved and will not deliver my people. Go to him to-morn in the morning and he shall come out, and thou halt stand when he cometh on the bank of the river, and take in thine hand the rod that was turned into the serpent, and say to him: “The Lord God of the Hebrews sendeth me to thee saying: ‘Deliver my people that they may offer and make sacrifice to me in desert,’ yet thou hast no will to hear me. Therefore our Lord said {that} in this shalt thou know that I am the Lord: Lo, I shall smite with the rod that is in my hand the water of the flood, and it shall turn into blood. The fishes that be in the water shall die, and the Egyptians shall be put to affliction drinking of it.”

Then said our Lord to Moses: Say thou to Aaron: “Take this rod and stretch thine hand upon all the waters of Egypt, upon the floods, rivers, ponds, and upon all the lakes where any water is, in that they turn to blood, that it may be a vengeance in all the land of Egypt, as well in treen [wooden] vessels as in vessels of earth and stone.”

THE PLAGUES SENT ON EGYPT BY THE LORD

Moses and Aaron did as God had commanded them, and smote the flood with the rod tofore Pharaoh and his servants, which turned into blood, and the fishes that were in the river died, and the water was corrupt. And the Egyptians might not drink the water, and all the water of Egypt was turned into blood. And in likewise did the enchanters with their witchcraft, and the heart of Pharaoh was so indurate that he would not let the people depart as our Lord had commanded, but he returned home for this time.

The Egyptians went and dolven pits for water all about by the river, and they found no water to drink but all was blood. And this plague endured seven days, and whatsoever water the children of Israel took in this while was fair and good water.

This was the first plague and vengeance.

The second was that God sent frogs, so many that they covered all the land of Egypt, so many that all the land was full – the rivers, the houses, chambers, beds, that they were woebegone, and these frogs entered into their meat [food]. Then Pharaoh prayed Moses and Aaron that God would take away these frogs, and that he would go suffer the people to do sacrifice. And then Moses asked when he would deliver them if the frogs were voided [expelled], and Pharaoh said, “In the morn.” And then Moses prayed, and they voided all. And when Pharaoh saw that he was quit of them, he kept not his promise and would not let them depart.

The third vengeance that God sent to them was a great multitude of hungry horse-flies, as many as the dust of the earth, which were on men, and bit them and beasts. And then enchanters said then to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." Yet would not Pharaoh let them depart.

The fourth vengeance was that God sent all manner kind of flies and lice in such wise that the universal land of Egypt was full of all manner flies and lice, but in the land of Goshen were none. Yet was he so indurate that he would not let them go, but would that they should make their sacrifice to God in that land. But Moses would not so, but would go three days' journey in desert, and sacrifice to God there. Pharaoh said, "I will that ye go into desert, but not far, and come soon again, and pray ye for me." And Moses prayed for him to our Lord, and the flies voided that there was not one left. And when they were gone Pharaoh would not keep his promise.

Then the fifth plague was that God showed his hand upon the fields and upon the horses' asses, camels, sheep and oxen, and was a great pestilence on all the beasts. And God showed a wonder miracle between the possessions of the Egyptians and the possessions of his people of Israel, for of the beasts of the children of Israel there was not one that perished. Yet was Pharaoh so hard-hearted that he would not suffer the people to depart.

The sixth plague was that Moses took ashes out of the chimney and cast on the land. And anon all the people of Egypt, as well men as beasts were full of botches, boils, and blains and wounds, and swellings in their bladders, in such wise that the enchanters could ne might not stand for pain tofore Pharaoh. Yet would not Pharaoh hear them, nor do as God had commanded.

The seventh plague was a hail so great that there was never none like tofore, and thunder and fire that it destroyed all the grass and herbs of Egypt and smote down all that was in the field, men and beasts. But in the land of Goshen was none heard, ne harm done. Yet would not Pharaoh deliver them.

The eighth our Lord sent to them locusts, which is a manner great fly, called in some place an adder-bolte, which bit them and ate up all the corn and herbs [grasses] that was left, in such wise that the people came to Pharaoh and desired him to deliver, saying that the land perished. Then Pharaoh gave to the men licence to go and make their sacrifice, and leave their wives and children there still, till they came again, but Moses and Aaron said they must go all, wherefore he would not let them depart.

The ninth plague and vengeance was that God sent so great darkness upon all the land of Egypt that the darkness was so great and horrible that they were palpable, and it endured three days and three nights. Wheresoever the children of Israel went it was light.

THE TENTH PLAGUE

Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said to them: Go ye and make your sacrifice unto your Lord God, and let your sheep and beasts only abide. To whom Moses said: We shall take with us such hosties [sacrificial victims] and sacrifices as we shall offer to our Lord God. All our flocks and beasts shall go with us, there shall not remain as much as a nail that shall be

necessary in the honour of our Lord God, for we know not what we shall offer till we come to the place.

Pharaoh was so indurate and hard-hearted that he would not let them go, and bade Moses that he should no more come in his sight, “For when thou comest thou shalt die.”

Moses answered: Be it as thou hast said: I shall no more come to thy presence.

And then our Lord said to Moses: There resteth now but one plague and vengeance, and after that he shall let you go. But first say to all the people that “every man borrow of his friend, and woman of her neighbour, vessels of gold and silver, and clothes; our Lord shall give to his people grace and favour to borrow of the Egyptians,” and then {the Lord} gave to them a commandment how they should depart.

And our Lord said to Moses: At midnight I shall enter into Egypt and the first begotten child and heir of all Egypt shall die, from the first begotten son of Pharaoh that sitteth in his throne unto the first begotten son of the handmaid that sitteth at the mill, and all the first-begotten of the beasts. There shall be a great cry and clamour in all the land of Egypt in such wise that there was never none like, ne never shall be after, and among all the children there shall not an hound be hurt, ne woman, ne beast, whereby ye shall know by what miracle God divideth the Egyptian and Israel.

Moses and Aaron showed all these signs and plagues tofore Pharaoh, and his heart was so indurate that he would not let them depart. Then when Moses had said to the children how they should do, they departed, and ate their paschal lamb, and all other ceremonies as be expressed in the Bible, for a law to endure ever among them. Which the children of Israel obeyed and accomplished. It was so that at midnight our Lord smote and slew every first-begotten son throughout all the land of Egypt, beginning at the first son and heir of Pharaoh unto the son of the caitiff [wretch] that lay in prison, and also the first begotten of the beasts.

Pharaoh arose in the night and all his servants and all Egypt, and there was a great clamour and sorrowful noise and cry, for there was not a house in all Egypt but there lay therein one that was dead. Then Pharaoh did do call [sent for] Moses and Aaron in the night, and said: Arise ye and go your way from my people, ye and the children of Israel, as ye say ye will. Take your sheep and beasts with you like as ye desired, and at your departing bless ye me.

THE EXODUS

The Egyptians constrained the children to depart and go their way hastily, saying: “We all shall die.” The children of Israel took their meal, and put it on their shoulders as they were commanded, and borrowed vessels of silver and of gold, and much clothing. Our Lord gave to them such favour tofore the Egyptians that the Egyptians lent to them all that they desired, and they spoiled and robbed Egypt.

And so the children of Israel departed, nigh the number of six hundred thousand footmen, besides women and children which were innumerable, and an huge great multitude of beasts of divers kinds. The time that the children of Israel had dwelt in Egypt was four hundred years.

And so they departed out of Egypt, and went not the right way by the Philistines, but our Lord led them by the way of desert which is by the Red Sea. And the children descended out of Egypt armed. Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, for he charged them so to do when he died. They went in the extreme ends of the wilderness, and our Lord went tofore them by day in a column of a cloud, and by night in a column of fire and was their leader and duke; the pillar of the cloud failed never by day, nor the pillar of fire by night tofore the people.

THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

Our Lord said to Moses, I shall make his heart so hard that he shall follow and pursue you, and I shall be glorified in Pharaoh, and in all his host, the Egyptians shall know that I am Lord. And anon it was told to Pharaoh that the children of Israel fled, and anon his heart was changed, and also the heart of his servants, and said: What shall we do, shall we suffer the children to depart and no more to serve us? Forthwith he took his chariot and all his people with him. He took with him six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots and wains of Egypt, and the dukes of all his hosts and he pursued the children of Israel and followed them in great pride.

And when he approached, that the children of Israel saw him come, they were sore afraid and cried to our Lord God, and said to Moses: Was there not sepulchre enough for us in Egypt but that we must now die in wilderness? Said we not to thee, “Go from us and let us serve the Egyptians”? It had been much better for us to have served the Egyptians than to die here in wilderness.

And Moses said to the people: Be ye not afraid, stand and see ye the great wonders that our Lord shall do for you this day. The Egyptians that ye now see, ye shall never see them after this day. God shall fight for you, and be ye [if you will be] still.

Our Lord said then to Moses: What criest thou to me? Say to the children of Israel that they go forth. Take thou and raise the rod, and stretch thy hand upon the sea, and depart it that the children of Israel may go dry through the middle of it. I shall so indurate the heart of Pharaoh that he shall follow you, and all the Egyptians, and I shall be glorified in Pharaoh, and in all his host, his carts and horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am Lord when I shall so be glorified.

The angel of God went tofore the castles [camps] of Israel, and another came after in the cloud which stood between them of Egypt and the children of Israel. And the cloud was dark that the host of Israel might not come to them of all the night. Then Moses stretched his hand upon the sea, and there came a wind blowing in such wise that it waxed dry, and the children of Israel went in through the midst of the Red Sea all dry foot; for the water stood up as a wall on the right side and on the left side.

The Egyptians then pursuing them followed and entered after them, and all the carts, chariots and horsemen, through the middle of the sea. And then our Lord beheld that the children of Israel were passed over and were on the dry land, on that other side. Anon {he} turned the water on them, and the wheels on their carts turned up so down, and drowned all the host of Pharaoh, and sank down into the deep of the sea.

Then said the Egyptians: Let us flee Israel; the Lord fighteth for them against us. And our Lord said to Moses: Stretch out shine hand upon the sea, and let the water return upon the Egyptians, and upon their chariots and horsemen.

And so Moses stretched out his hand and the sea returned in to his first place. And then the Egyptians would have fled, but the water came and overflowed them in the midst of the flood, and it covered the chariots and horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh, and there was not one of them. And the children of Israel had passed through the middle of the dry sea and came land.

Thus delivered our Lord the children of Israel from the hand of the Egyptians, and they saw the Egyptians Iying dead upon the brinks of the sea. And the people then dreaded our Lord and believed in him, and to Moses his servant. Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to our Lord: "*Cantemus domino magnificatus est*, Let us sing to our Lord, he is magnified, he hath overthrown the horsemen and carmen in the sea." And Miriam the sister of Aaron, a prophetess, took a timpane in her hand, and all the women followed her with timpanes and chords, and she went tofore singing *Cantemus domino*.

THE MIRACLE OF THE SWEET WATER

Then Moses brought the children of Israel from the sea into the desert of Sur, and walked with them three days and three nights and found no water, and came into Marah, and the waters there were so bitter that they might not drink thereof. Then the people grudged against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" And he cried unto our Lord, which showed to him a tree which he took and put into the waters, and anon they were turned into sweetness.

COMMANDMENTS

There our Lord ordained commandments and judgments, and there he tempted him saying: If thou hearest the voice of thy Lord God, and that thou do is rightful before him, and obeyest his commandments, and keep his precepts, I shall not bring none of the languors [diseases] ne sorrows upon thee that I did in Egypt. I am Lord thy saviour.

THE MANNA

Then the children of Israel came in to Elim, where as were twelve fountains of water, and seventy palm trees, and they abode by the waters. Then from thence went all the multitude of the children of Israel into the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, and grudged against Moses and Aaron in that wilderness, and said: Would God we had dwelled still in Egypt,

whereas we sat and had plenty of bread and flesh; why have ye brought us into the desert for to slay all this multitude by hunger?

Our Lord said then to Moses: I shall rain bread to you from heaven, let the people go out and gather every day that I may prove them whether they walk in my law or not; the sixth day let them gather double as much as they gathered in one day of the other.

Then said Moses and Aaron to all the children of Israel, “At even ye shall know that God hath brought you from the land of Egypt, and to-morn ye shall see the glory of our Lord. I have well heard your murmur against our Lord, what have ye mused against us? What be we?” And yet said Moses, “Our Lord shall give you at even flesh for to eat and to-morn bread unto your fill, for as much as ye have murmured against him; what be we? Your murmur is not against us but against our Lord.”

As Aaron spake to all the company of the children of Israel they beheld towards the wilderness, and our Lord spake to Moses in a cloud and said: I have heard the grudgings of the children of Israel. Say to them: “At even ye shall eat flesh and to-morn ye shall be filled with bread, and ye shall know that I am your Lord God.”

And when the even was come there came so many curlews [quail] that it covered all their lodgings, and on the morn there lay like dew all about in their circuit [the area of the encampment]. Which when they saw and came for to gather, it was small and white like to coriander. And they wondered on it and said, “Mahun,” that is as much to say, “What is this?” To whom Moses said: This is the bread that God hath sent you to eat, and God commandeth that every man should gather as much for every head as is the “measure of gomor,” [=5.1 pints] and let nothing be left till on the morn. And the sixth day gather ye double so much, that is two measures of gomor, and keep that one measure for the Sabbath, which God hath sanctified and commanded you to hallow it.

Yet some of them brake God's commandment, and gathered more than they ate and kept it till on the morn, and then it began to putrify and be full of worms. And that they kept for the Sabbath day was good and putrified not. And thus our Lord fed the children of Israel forty years in the desert. And it was called Manna. Moses took one gomor thereof and put it in the tabernacle for to be kept for a perpetual memory and remembrance.

A WATER MIRACLE

Then went they forth all the multitude of the children of Israel, in the desert of Sin in their mansions and came to Rephidim, where as they had no water. Then all grudging they said to Moses, Give us water for to drink.

To whom Moses answered: What grudge ye against me, why tempt ye our Lord?

The people thirsted sore for lack and penury of water saying: Why hast thou brought us out of Egypt for to slay us and our children and beasts?

Then Moses cried unto our Lord saying: What shall I do to this people? I trow within a while they shall stone me to death.

Then our Lord said to Moses: Go before the people and take with thee the older men and seniors of Israel, and take the rod that thou smotest with the flood in thy hand, and I shall stand tofore upon the stone of Oreb, and smite thou the stone with the rod and the waters shall come out thereof that the people may drink. Moses did so tofore the seniors of Israel and called that place Temptation, because of the grudge of the children of Israel, and said: Is God with us or not?

THE WAR WITH AMALEK

Then came Amalek and fought against the children of Israel in Rephidim. Moses said then to Joshua: Choose to thee men, and go out and fight against Amalek to-morrow. I shall stand on the top of the hill having the rod of God in my hand.

Joshua did as Moses commanded him, and fought against Amalek. Moses, Aaron. and Hur, ascended into the hill, and when Moses held up his hands, Israel won and overcame their enemies, and when he laid them down then Amalek had the better. The hands of Moses were heavy; Aaron and Hur took then a stone and put it under them, and they sustained his hands on either side, and so his hands were not weary until the going down of the sun. And so Joshua made Amalek to flee, and his people, by strength of his sword.

Our Lord said to Moses: Write this for a remembrance in a book and deliver it to the ears of Joshua; I shall destroy and put away the memory of Amalek under heaven.

Moses then edified [built] an altar unto our Lord, and called there on the name of our Lord, saying: The Lord is mine exaltation, for this is the hand only of God, and the battle and God shall be against Amalek from generation to generation.

JETHRO VISITS WITH MOSES

When Jethro the priest of Midian, which was cousin of Moses, heard say what our Lord had done to Moses and to the children of Israel his people, he took Zipporah the wife of Moses, and his two sons, Gershom and Eleazar and came with them to him into desert, whom Moses received with worship and kissed him. And when they were together Moses told him all what our Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel, and all the labour that they endured and how our Lord had delivered them. Jethro was glad for all these things, that God had so saved them from the hands of the Egyptians, and said: Blessed be the Lord that hath delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and hath saved his people; now I know that he is a great Lord above all gods, because they did so proudly against them.

And Jethro offered sacrifices and offerings to our Lord. Aaron and all the seniors of Israel came and eat [ate] with him tofore our Lord.

The next day Moses sat and judged and deemed the people from morning unto evening, which, when his cousin saw, he said to him: What doest thou? Why sittest thou alone and all the people tarry from the morning until evening?

To whom Moses answered: The people came to me demanding sentence and the doom of God; when there is any debate or difference among them they come to me to judge them, and to show to them the precepts and the laws of God.

Then said Jethro: Thou dost not well nor wisely, for by folly consumest thy self, and the people with thee; thou thy might, thou mayst not alone sustain it, but hear me and do there after, and our Lord shall be with thee. Be thou unto the people in those things that appertain to God, that thou tell to them what they should do, and the ceremonies and rites to worship God, and the way by which they should go, and what work they shall do. Provide of all people wise men and dreading God, in whom is truth, and them that hate avarice and covetise, and ordain of them tribunes and centurions and deans that may in all times judge the people. And if there be of a great charge and weight, let it be referred to thee, and let them judge the small things; it shall be the easier to thee to bear the charge when it is so parted. If thou do so, thou shalt fulfil the commandment of God and sustain his precepts, and the people shall go home to their places in peace.

Which things when Moses had heard and understood, he did all that he had counselled him, and chose out the strongest and wisest people of all Israel and ordained them princes of the people, tribunes, centurions, quinquagenaries, and deans, which at all times should judge and deem the people. And all the great and weighty matters they referred to him, deeming and judging the small causes. And then his cousin departed and went into his country.

THE GREAT THEOPHANY

The third month after the children of Israel departed out of Egypt, that same day they came into the wilderness of Sinai, and there about the region of the mount they fixed their tents. Moses ascended into the hill unto God. God called him on the hill and said: This shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and to the children of Israel: “Ye yourselves have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, and how I have borne you on the wings of eagles and have taken you to me. If ye therefore hear my voice and keep my covenant, ye shall be to me in the reign of priesthood and holy people.” These be the words that thou shalt say to the children of Israel.

Moses came down and gathered all the most [oldest] of birth, and expounded in them all the words that our Lord had commanded him. All the people answered: All that ever our Lord hath said we shall do.

When Moses had showed the people the words of our Lord, our Lord said to him: Now I shall come to thee in a cloud that the people may hear me speaking to thee, that they believe thee ever after.

Moses went and told this to the people, and our Lord bade them to sanctify the people this day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready the third day: The third

day our Lord “shall descend tofore all the people on the mount of Sinai. And ordain to the people the marks and terms in the circuit [boundary-markers encircling the encampment]. And say to them: ‘Beware that ye ascend not on the hill ne touch the ends of it. Whosoever toucheth the hill shall die by death, there shall no hand touch him, but with stones he shall be oppressed and with casting of them on him he shall be [killed]; whether it be man or beast, he shall not live.’ When thou hearest the trump blown then ascend to the hill.”

Moses went down to the people and sanctified and hallowed them, and when they had washen their clothes he said to them: Be ye ready at the third day and approach not your wives. When the third day came, and the morning waxed clear, they heard thunder and lightening and saw a great cloud cover the mount, and the cry of the trump was so shrill that the people were sore afraid. When Moses had brought them forth unto the root of the hill they stood there. All the mount of Sinai smoked, for so much as our Lord descended on it in fire, and the smoke ascended from the hill as it had been from a furnace. The mount was terrible and dreadful, and the sound of the trump grew a little more and continued longer.

Moses spake and our Lord answered him. Our Lord descended upon the top of the mount of Sinai, even on the top of it, and called Moses to him, which when he came said to him: Go down and charge the people that they come not to the terms of the hill for to see the Lord, for if they do, much multitude shall perish of them. The priests that shall come let them be sanctified lest they be smitten down. And thou and Aaron shall ascend the hill. All the people and priests let them not pass their bounds lest God smite them.

Then Moses descended and told to the people all that our Lord hath said. After this our Lord called Moses and said: I am the Lord God that brought you out of Egypt and of thralldom. And gave him the Commandment first by speaking and many ceremonies as be rehearsed in the Bible, which is not requisite to be written here, but the ten commandments every man is bounden to know.

And ere Moses received them written, he went up into the mount of Sinai, and fasted there forty days and forty nights ere he received them. In which time he commanded him to make many things, and to ordain the laws and ceremonies which now be not had in the new law. And also as doctors say, Moses learned that time all the histories to-fore written of the making of heaven and earth, of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and of Joseph with his brethren. And at last delivered to him two tables of stone, both written with the hand of God which follow.

HERE FOLLOW THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF OUR LAW

The first commandment that God commanded is this. “Thou shalt not worship no strange ne diverse gods.” That is to say, thou shalt worship no god but me, and thou shalt not retain thine hope but in me, for who that setteth principally his hope on any creature or faith or belief in any thing more than in me, sinneth deadly. And such be they that worship idols, and make their god of a creature; whosoever so doth, sinneth against this commandment. And so do they that overmuch love their treasures, gold or silver, or any other earthly thing that be passing and transitory, or set their heart or hope on any thing by which they forget and leave God their creator and maker which hath lent to them all that they live by. And therefore ought they to serve

him with all their goods, and above all things to love him and worship him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength, like as the first commandment enseigneth [teaches] and teacheth us.

The second commandment is this, that “thou shalt not take the name of God in vain,” that is to say, thou shalt not swear by him for nothing. In this commandment our Lord commandeth in the gospel that thou shalt not swear by the heaven ne by earth ne by other creature. But for good cause and rightful a man may swear without sin, as in judgment or in requiring of truth, or without judgment in good and needful causes. And in none other manner without reason by the name of our Lord and for nought. If he swear false wittingly he is forsworn, and that is against the commandment and sinneth deadly, for he sweareth against his conscience, and that is when he sweareth by advice and by deliberation, but a man should swear truly and yet not for nought or for any vain or ill thing, ne maliciously. But to swear lightly without hurt or blame is venial sin, but the custom thereof is perilous and may well turn to deadly sin but if he take heed. But he then that sweareth horribly by our Lord, or by any of his members, or by his saints in despite, and blasphemeth in things that be not true, or otherwise, he sinneth deadly, he may have no reason whereby he may excuse him. And they that most accustom them in this sin they sin most, etc.

The third commandment is that “thou have mind and remember that thou hallow and keep holy thy Sabbath day or Sunday.” That is to say, that thou shalt do no work nor operation on the Sunday or holy day, but thou shalt rest from all worldly labour and intend to prayer, and to serve God thy maker, which rested the seventh day of the works that he made in the six days tofore, in which he made and ordained the world. This commandment accomplisheth he that keepeth to his power the peace of his conscience for to serve God more holily. Then this day that the Jews called *Sabbath* is as much to say as *rest*. This commandment may no man keep spiritually that is encumbered in his conscience with deadly sin, such a conscience can not be in rest ne in peace as long as he is in such a state. In the stead of the Sabbath day which was straitly kept in the old law, holy church hath established the Sunday in the new law. For our Lord arose from death to life on the Sunday, and therefore we ought to keep it holily, and be in rest from the works of the week tofore, and to cease of the work of sin, and to intend to do ghostly works, and to follow our Lord beseeching him of mercy and to thank him for his benefits, for they that break the Sunday and the other solemn feasts that be stablished to be hallowed in holy church, they sin deadly, for they do directly against the commandment of God aforesaid and holy church, but if it be for some necessity that holy church admitteth and granteth. But they sin much more then, that employ the Sunday and the feasts in sins, in lechery, in going to taverns in the service time, in gluttony and drinking drunk, and in other sins, outrages against God. For alas for sorrow I trow there is more sin committed on the Sunday and holy days and feasts than in the other work days. For then be they drunk, fight and slay, and be not occupied virtuously in God's service as they ought to do. And as God commandeth us to remember and have in mind to keep and hallow the holy day, they that so do sin deadly and observe and keep not this third commandment. These three commandments be written in the first table and appertain only to God.

The fourth commandment is that “thou shalt honour and worship thy father and mother, for thou shalt live the longer on earth.” This commandment admonisheth us that we be well ware to [be careful not to] anger father and mother in any wise. Or who that curseth them or set hand

on them in evil will, sinneth deadly. In this commandment is understood the honour that we should do to our ghostly and spiritual fathers, that is to them that have the cure of us, to teach and chastise us, as be the prelates of the Church, and they that have the charge and cure of our souls, and to keep our bodies. And he that will not obey to him that hath the cure over him when he enseigneth and teacheth him good that he is bound to do, he sinneth grievously and is inobedient, which is deadly sin.

The fifth commandment is that “thou shalt slay no man.” This commandment will that no man shall slay the other for vengeance, ne for his goods, or for any other evil cause, it is deadly sin. But for to slay malefactors in executing of justice or for other good cause, if it be lawful it may well be done. In this commandment is defended the sin of wrath and hate, of rancour and of ire. For as the Scripture saith: Who hateth his brother is an homicide when it is by his will, and he sinneth deadly; and he that beareth anger in his heart long, for such ire long holden in the heart is rancour and hate, which is deadly sin, and is against this commandment. And yet sinneth he more that doth or purchaseth [contrives] shame, villany or hurt to another wrongfully, or counselleth or helpeth to grieve another for to avenge him. But wrath or anger lightly past without will to noy [hurt] or grieve any other, is not deadly sin.

The sixth commandment is, “thou shalt not do adultery,” that is to say, thou shalt not have fleshly company with another man's wife. In this commandment it is forbidden and defended all manner sin of the flesh which is called generally lechery, which is a right foul sin and villainous. How be it that there is some branch of it that is not deadly sin, as oft movings of the flesh that may not be eschewed, which men ought to restrain and refrain as much as they may. And this cometh oft times by outrageous drinking and eating, or by evil thought, or foul touching, for in such things may be great peril. And in this commandment is defended all sin against nature, in what manner it be done in his person or other.

The seventh commandment is that “thou shalt do no theft.” This commandment forbiddeth to take away other men's things whatsoever they be, without reason, against the will of them that owe or make them. In this commandment is defended ravin [rapine], usury, robbery, and deceit, and beguiling other for to have their havoir [possessions] or good[s]. And he that doth against this commandment is bound to make restitution and yield again that he hath so gotten or taken, if he know to whom he ought to render it. And if he know not, he is bounden to give it for God's sake, or do by the counsel of holy church. For who retaineth wrongfully and without reason other men's goods against their will, sinneth deadly, if he pay not where as he oweth, if he know where and be in his power and hath whereof. And if he know not let him do by the counsel of holy church, and whoso doth not so, sinneth against this commandment deadly.

The eighth commandment is that “thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” In this commandment is forbidden that no man shall lie wittingly, for whoso lieth doth against this commandment. And also that he forswear not him in judgment, ne make no leasings [lies] to annoy ne grieve another, nor he ought not to missay ne speak evil of others in intention to impair his good name and fame, for it is deadly sin. Against this commandment do they that say evil of good men behind them, and backbite them, and do this wittingly by malice, which is called detraction. And also they that accuse some of their folly, or hearken by manner of

adulation or flattering, when they that men speak of be not present. They that do thus and say such words do against this commandment, for they be all false witnesses.

The ninth commandment is that “thou shalt not desire the wife of thy neighbour, nor shalt not covet her in thine heart.” That is to say, thou shalt not consent to sin with her with thy body. This commandment defendeth to desire to have company with all manner women out of marriage, and the evil signs that be without forth make men for to draw them to sin, as the evil words of such matter, or the foul and evil attouching, kissing, handling and such other. And the difference between this commandment and the sixth aforesaid is that, the sixth commandment forbiddeth the deed without forth, and this forbiddeth the consenting within forth; for the consenting within forth to have company with a woman that is not his by marriage is deadly sin, after the sentence of the gospel that saith: “Who that seeth a woman and coveteth her in his heart, he hath now sinned in his heart and deadly.” This is to understand of the consenting expressed in his thought.

The tenth commandment is that “thou shalt not covet nothing that is, or longeth to, thy neighbour.” This commandment defendeth [forbids] will to have things that belong to other men by evil reason or wrongfully. In this commandment is defended envy of other men's weal, of other men's grace or welfare. For such envy cometh of evil covetise [covetousness] to have such good or such grace or fortune as he seeth in other. And this covetise is when the consenting and thought be certainly one, then it is deadly sin. And if there be any evil movings without will and consenting of damage or hurt of other, this is not deadly sin. If he sin herein it is but venial sin.

These be the ten commandments of our Lord, of which the three first belong to God, and the seven other be ordained for our neighbours. Every person that hath wit and understanding in himself, and age, is bound to know them and to obey and keep these ten commandments aforesaid or else he sinneth deadly.

THE GOLDEN CALF

Thus Moses abode in the hill forty days and forty nights and received of Almighty God the tables with the commandments written with the hand of God; and also received and learned many ceremonies and statutes that God ordained, by which the children of Israel should be ruled and judged. And whiles that Moses was thus with our Lord on the mount, the children of Israel saw that he tarried and descended not, and some of them said that he was dead or gone away, and would not return again, and some said nay; but in conclusion they gathered them together against Aaron, and said to him: Make to us some gods that may go tofore us, we know not what is befallen to Moses.

Then Aaron said: Take the gold that hangeth in the ears of your wives and your children, and bring it to me. The people did as he bade, and brought the gold to Aaron, which he took and molt it and made thereof a calf. Then they said, These be thy gods, Israel, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt.

Then the people made an altar tofore it, and made great joy and mirth, and danced and played tofore the calf, and offered and made sacrifices thereto. Our Lord spake to Moses, saying:

Go hence and descend down, thy people have sinned whom thou hast brought forth from the land of Egypt. They have soon forsaken and left the way which thou hast showed to them. They have made to them a calf blown [formed by inflation?], and they have worshipped it, and offered sacrifices thereto, saying: These be thy gods, Israel, that have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.

Yet said our Lord to Moses: I see well that this people is of evil disposition. Suffer me that I may wreak my wrath on them, and I shall destroy them. I shall make thee governor of great people.

Moses then prayed our Lord God saying: Why art thou wroth, Lord, against thy people that thou hast brought out of the land of Egypt in a great strength and a boisterous hand? I beseech thee, Lord, let not the Egyptians say that their God hath locked them out for to slay them in the mountains. I pray thee Lord that thy wrath may assuage, and be thou pleased and benign upon the wickedness of thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob thy servants, to whom thou promisedst and swaredest by thyself saying: I shall multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and the universal land of which I have spoken I shall give to your seed, and ye shall possess and have it ever.

And with these words our Lord was pleased that he would do no harm as he had said unto his people; and Moses returned from the mount, bearing two tables of stone, written both with the hand of God. And the scripture that was in the tables were the ten commandments as fore be written. Joshua hearing the great noise of the children of Israel said to Moses, "I trow [believe] they fight beneath," which answered and said, "It is no cry of exhorting men to fight, ne noise to compel me to flee, but I hear the noise of singing." When he approached to them he saw the calf and the instruments of mirth, and he was so wroth that he threw down the tables and brake them at the foot of the hill, and ran and caught down the calf that they had made, and burnt and smote it all to powder, which he cast into water and gave it to drink to the children of Israel.

Then said Moses to Aaron: What hath this people done to thee that thou hast made to sin grievously?

To whom he answered: Let not my lord take none indignation at me, thou knowest well that this people is prone and ready to sin. They said to me, "Make us gods that may go tofore us; we know not what is fallen to this Moses that led us out of Egypt." To whom I said, "Who of you that hath gold give it me; they took and gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and thereof came out this calf."

And then said Moses: All they that be of God's part and have not sinned in this calf let them join to me; and the children of Levi joined to him, and he bade each man take a sword on his side and take vengeance and slay every each his brother, friend, and his neighbour that have trespassed.

And so the children of Levi went and slew thirty three thousand of the children of Israel. And then said Moses: Ye have hallowed this day your hands unto our Lord, and ye shall be therefore blessed.

The second day Moses spake to the people and said: Ye have committed and done the greatest sin that may be. I shall ascend unto our Lord again, and shall pray him for your sin. Then Moses ascended again, and received afterwards two tables again, which our Lord bade him make. And therein our Lord wrote the commandments.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

And after, our Lord commanded him to make an ark and a tabernacle: in which ark was kept three things. First the rod with which he did marvels, a pot full of manna, and the two tables with commandments.

THE ROD OF AARON

And then after Moses taught them the law; how each man should behave him against other and what he should do, and what he should not do, and departed them into twelve tribes, and commanded that every man should bring a rod into the Tabernacle. And Moses wrote each name on the rod, and Moses shut fast the tabernacle. And on the morn there was found one of the rods that burgeoned and bare leaves and fruit, and was of an almond tree. That rod fell to Aaron.

THE PEOPLE'S CONSTANT GRUMBLING

And after this, long time, the children desired to eat flesh and remembered of the flesh that they ate in Egypt, and grudged against Moses, and would have ordained to them a duke for to have returned into Egypt. Wherefore Moses was so woe that he desired of our Lord to deliver him from this life, because he saw them so unkind against God. Then God sent to them so great plenty of curlews that two days and one night they flew so thick by the ground that they took great number, for they flew but the height of two cubits. And they had so many that they dried them hanging on their tabernacles [booths] and tents. Yet were they not content, but ever grudging, wherefore God smote them and took vengeance on them by a great plague, and many died and were buried there.

MIRIAM AND AARON'S PREJUDICE AGAINST ZIPPORAH

And then from thence they went into Hazeroth and dwelt. After this Miriam and Aaron, brother and sister of Moses began to speak against Moses, because of his wife which was of Ethiopia, and said: God hath not spoken only by Moses, hath he not also spoken to us?

Wherefore our Lord was wroth. Moses was the humblest and the meekest man that was in all the world. Anon then, our Lord said to him, and to Aaron and to Miriam: Go ye three only unto the tabernacle.

And there our Lord said that there was none like to Moses, to whom he had spoken mouth to mouth, and reprov'd Aaron and Miriam because they spake so to Moses, and being wroth, departed from them. And anon, Miriam was smitten and made leper and white like snow.

And when Aaron beheld her and saw her smitten with leprosy, he said to Moses: I beseech the Lord that thou set not the sin on us which we have committed follily, and let not this our sister be as a dead woman, or as born out of time and cast away from her mother, behold and see, half her flesh is devoured of the leprosy.

Then Moses cried unto our Lord, saying: I beseech thee Lord that thou heal her.

To whom our Lord said: If her father had spit in her face should she not be put to shame and rebuke seven days? Let her depart out of the castles seven days, and after she shall be called in again. So Miriam was shut out of the castles seven days, and the people removed not from the place till she was called again.

THE PEOPLE'S RELUCTANCE TO ENTER CANAAN

After this our Lord commanded Moses to send men into the land of Canaan that he should give them charge for to see and consider the goodness thereof, and that of every tribe he should send some. Moses did so as our Lord had commanded, which went in and brought of the fruits with them, and they brought a branch with one cluster of grapes as much as two men might bear between them upon a colestaff. When they had seen the country and considered by the space of forty days they returned and told the commodities of the land, but some said that the people were strong, and many kings and giants, in such wise that they said it was impregnable and that the people were much stronger than they were. Wherefore the people anon were afeard, and murmured against Moses and would return again into Egypt.

Then Joshua and Caleb, which were two of them that had considered the land, said to the people: Why grudge ye and wherefore be ye afraid? We have well seen the country, and it is good to win. The country floweth full of milk and honey, be not rebel against God, he shall give it us, be ye not afeard.

Then all the people cried against them, and when they would have taken stones and stoned them, our Lord in his glory appeared in a cloud upon the covering of the tabernacle, and said to Moses: This people believeth not the signs and wonders that I have showed and done to them. I shall destroy them all by pestilence, and I shall make thee a prince upon people greater and stronger than this is.

Then prayed Moses to our Lord for the people, that he would have pity on them and not destroy them, but to have mercy on them after the magnitude of his mercy. And our Lord at his request forgave them. Nevertheless our Lord said that all the men that had seen his majesty, and the signs and marvels that he did in Egypt, and in desert, and have tempted him ten times, and not obeyed unto his voice, "shall not see ne come into the country and land that I have promised to their fathers, but Joshua and Caleb, my servants, shall enter into the land, and their seed shall possess it." Moses told all this unto the children and they wailed and sorrowed greatly therefore.

WATER FROM A STONE

After this the people removed from thence and came into the desert of Sin; and there Miriam, sister of Moses and Aaron, died, and was buried in the same place. Then the people lacked water and came and grudged against Moses, and yet wished they had abided in Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron entered into the Tabernacle and fell down to the ground low, and prayed unto our Lord, saying: Lord God, hear the clamour of thy people, and open to them thy treasure, a fountain of living water, that they may drink and the murmuration of them may cease.

Our Lord said to him then: Take the rod in thy hand, and thou and Aaron thy brother, assemble and gather the people and speak ye to the stone, and it shall give out water. And when the water cometh let all the multitude drink and their beasts.

Moses then took the rod as our Lord bade, and gathered all the people tofore the stone and said to them: Hear ye rebels and out of belief; trow ye not that we may give you water out of this stone?

And he lift up his hand and smote between the stone, and water came and flowed out in the most largest wise, in such wise that the people and beasts drank their fill. Then said God to Moses and Aaron: Because ye have not believed me and sanctified my name tofore the children of Israel, and given to me the laud, but have done this in your name, ye shall not bring this people into the land that I shall give to them. And therefore this water was called the water of contradiction, where the children grudged against God.

ELEAZAR SUCCEEDS AARON

Anon after this, by God's commandment, Moses took Aaron upon the hill, and despoiled him of his vesture, and clothed therewith his son Eleazar, and made him upperest bishop for his father Aaron. And there Aaron died in the top of the hill, and Moses descended with Eleazar. And when all the multitude of people saw that Aaron was dead, they wept and wailed on him thirty days in every tribe and family.

THE BRASS SERPENT

After this the people went about the land of Edom, and began to wax weary, and grudged against our Lord and Moses, and said yet: Why hast thou led us out of the land of Egypt for to slay us in this desert and wilderness? Bread faileth us, there is no water, and our souls abhor and loathe this light meat [food].

For which cause God sent among them fiery-serpents, which bit and wounded many of them and slew also. Then they that were hurt came into Moses and said: We have sinned, for we have spoken against our Lord and thee; pray for us unto God that he deliver from us these serpents.

Then Moses prayed our Lord for the people. And our Lord said to him: Make a serpent of brass and set it up for a sign, and whosoever be hurt, and looketh thereon and beholdeth it, shall live and be whole.

Then Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it up for a sign, and when they that were hurt beheld it they were made whole.

THE DEATH OF MOSES

After this when Moses had showed to them all the laws of our Lord, and ceremonies, and had governed them forty years, and that he was an hundred and twenty years old, he ascended from the fields of Moab upon the mountain of Nebo into the top of Pisgah against Jericho, and there our Lord showed to him all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and the land of promise from that one end unto that other. And then our Lord said to him: This is the land that I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, "I shall give it to thy seed." Now thou hast seen it with thine eyes, and shalt not enter ne come therein.

And there in that place died Moses, servant of our Lord, as God commanded, and was buried in the vale of the land of Moab against Beth-peor. And yet never man knew his sepulchre unto this day. Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eyes never dimmed, ne his teeth were never moved [dislodged]. The children of Israel wept and mourned for him thirty days in the fields of Moab.

Joshua the son of Nun was replenished [filled] with the spirit of wisdom; for Moses set on him his hands, and the children obeyed him as our Lord had commanded to Moses. And there was never after a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, which knew and spake to God face to face in all signs and tokens that God did and showed by him in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh and all his servants.

The [iconography of Moses](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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