**NOTES ABOUT THIS STUDY**

This study aid is simply that, an aid. We will not go into great depth or discussion of each section as doing so would require a huge volume. I will attempt to add material that I find especially important to grasp or uncommonly known. The goal is to enlighten you the student. My hope is that this will whet your appetite for further study on this great book of the Bible. There are a great many scholarly and insightful materials available on the book. I encourage you to read the passages suggested and associated with each section. Next, read any commentary or additional information provided with the section. Finally, answer the questions that are designed to challenge your understanding of the material.

Most importantly, **please note that there is a vast difference in the Scripture you will read and the words of commentary.** The commentary is not inspired but is based on my best interpretation of the material. I encourage each of you to be noble Bereans (no clue what this is? Read Acts 17:11) and weigh whether these things are true.

**LESSON 1 – INTRODUCTION & MOSES’ EARLY LIFE**

**Reading: Ex 1:1 – 2:22**

**Suggested Related Passages:**

The Pentateuch

This semester we begin a study of the first five books of the Bible known as the Pentateuch. This term is also the same as the Torah which simply means law in the Jewish language. Hence, you should expect to cover a great deal of material that relates to the basic civil and religious foundations of the ancient Israelites. These passages form the national identity for the Jews and Israelites to this day similar to the way we as Americans would look to the Constitution and Declaration of Independence as some of our more famous founding documents. Obviously the major difference is that all other nations of the earth while formed by the will of God, this is the only nation in the history of the world that is formed as true theocracy serving the True God and formed directly by God’s command.

The Torah is comprised of the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The books of Exodus thru Deuteronomy essentially cover the time period of Moses’ life, approximately 120 years. During this time period, God will form an ethnic group of salves and make them a mighty nation of holy warriors prepared to conquer the Land. In completing this miraculous series of events, God gives shape and form to the many promises we studied in the book of Genesis. While we study these books, pay attention to the passages that make reference to the furtherance of God’s promises to the forefathers, references or types of Christ and the Church, and the way that God reveals a great deal more about His character than he did to the Patriarchs in the book of Genesis.

Exodus Introduction & Chapter 1

Exodus, the second book of both the Tanakh and our Bible, is named from the Greek word simply meaning going out, a hint about the major theme of the book. However, the Jewish name for this book is Sh’mot which is merely a reference to the first verse of the book which form a continuous bridge to the previous book of Genesis. In the larger sense Exodus is a type of historical parable, real historical events about the establishment of the Israelite nation that are indicative of a higher, heavenly meaning that won’t be revealed for thousands of years from the viewpoint of Moses. In this way, the words we find here have real meaning for our lives and our understanding of God.

The first seven verses form the previously mentioned bridge to the book of Genesis and set the stage for the rest of the events. The book reminds us that 70 people of the household of Israel/Jacob went down to Egypt. Additionally, the book tells us that Joseph and all the original Patriarchs died, but according to prophecy, the Israelites thrived in Egypt. In fact, the land was full of Israelites giving the impression that it was as common to see an Israelite in Egypt as it was to see an Egyptian.

However the stage is really set in verse 8 which introduces us to the main protagonist of the book, the king of Egypt known only as Pharaoh. This ruler was not familiar with Joseph and was apparently unfamiliar with why the Israelites, an ethnically different group than native Egyptians, were receiving such a favorable treatment. Yet, he judges them to be a threat to national security should Egypt ever be attacked. In order prevent any rebellion, Pharaoh sets them to hard labor building store cities in the land of Egypt. However, this hard labor and spreading of the Israelites in the land failed to stem the tide of the growing Israelite population.

Seeing that his efforts were failing, Pharaoh spoke with two Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, and commanded them to kill any male children born to Hebrew women. However, these women “feared God” and disobeyed the command of Pharaoh. When asked by Pharaoh why they did not kill the male children, the women explained that Hebrew women give birth before they could arrive. Because of their courage, God gave the midwives households of their own. However, Pharaoh seeing this commanded that all Israelite sons be cast into the Nile.

Exodus Chapter 2

Against this backdrop of death, we introduced to the now unnamed Levite characters of Amram and Jochobed who have a daughter named Miram. Jochobed is pregnant again, but this time with a boy. Although the rule of Egypt is that this child would be met with death, there was something outwardly amazing about their son Moses. The Bible rarely comments on people’s physical appearance, but when it does, it often signifies someone of special importance such as Joseph and David. Stephen in Acts 7:20, indicates that Moses was “lovely to God” (Young’s Literal Translation). It was clear to his family that God had chosen this child for a special purpose.

In order to fulfill whatever God’s purpose might have been and to save her son, Jochobed places Moses in an ark in the Nile. This is both reminiscent of Noah and forward looking to further salvations by water, even up to thousands of years later. Miram watched the events from afar. Pharaoh’s daughter, while bathing in the Nile, finds the young Moses and has compassion on him. In fact, Moses’ outward appearance might have been life-saving. Miram, seeing the compassion of Pharaoh’s daughter, suggests that she find someone to nurse the child. Miram of course finds her mother, Jochobed to nurse her own child.

Moses in the first roughly 40 years of his life grows as a member of the Egyptian court. However, he was not unaware that he was a Hebrew by birth as some popular movies have suggested. Instead, the Bible merely says that on one occasion, Moses visits his brothers and sees an Egyptian striking an Israelite. In response Moses strikes the Egyptian which kills him. It seems apparent based on the wording that this was not murder, but rather an unintentional manslaughter. Yet, the next day Moses sees two Israelites fighting and stops the fight.

However, the Israelites here denounce the leadership of Moses saying that he is neither their prince nor judge. This type of foreshadowing is common in the Bible. Moses is of course destined to be both their chief and judge, yet he is not ready to be the effective leader to bring about God’s promises. Additionally, God has deemed it is not yet time to bring up the Israelites out of the land of Canaan. Consider the myriad of factors that God controls including potential nations they may face in the desert, the population of Israel, the land of Canaan itself. All of these factors God is preparing for a very specific time when God deems it the best to bring out the Israelites.

But fearing Pharaoh, Moses flees to nearby Midian. Pharaoh also hearing of these actions, seeks to kill Moses. In the long tradition of his fathers, Moses finds a well in the land Midian and comes across the daughter of Reuel also known as Jethro, a priest of Midian. He aids her in getting water from the well and fends off some shepherds. As a reward for his kindness, Reuel invites Moses to his house who obviously impresses Reuel. Moses lives in his house and is given Zipporah, his daughter as a wife who bears Moses a son named Gershom meaning “sojourner or stranger”.

**Questions:**

1. What factors of Moses’ upbringing make him well suited to be a future leader of the Israelite? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. It is significant that Moses goes to become a shepherd in the desert. How does this period in Moses’ life make him a well suited leader of the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. The Israelites cry out to God because of their suffering. It is obvious that God hears their cry, yet it is also evident that He doesn’t respond immediately. Why is this? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. It is recorded that Moses is placed in an ark and saved through water. This happens as many other children are perishing through water. In your own words, how is this very similar to the story of Noah? I am especially interested in what you believe the spiritual significance of both of that event and this event implies. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What water events are coming up later in this book that Moses’ salvation in the Nile is pointing towards? What is the spiritual significance there? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 2 – MOSES SENT TO DELIVER ISRAEL**

**Reading: Ex 2:24 - 7:13**

**Suggested Related Passages:**

Moses is called to be a Savior

We begin today’s lesson with two great pieces of news for God’s people. The Pharaoh who had persecuted the Israelites and sought Moses’ life has died. Also, God remembers His covenant with the Patriarchs and takes notice of the groaning of the Israelites. It is not that God has simply forgotten His promises, but rather, God is bringing all things to a particular point in time which will be best to bring up the Israelites and make them a unified nation. These events will unfold beginning in today’s lesson in earnest by a stark change in the life of Moses.

Moses has spent approximately forty years in the land of Midian in the household of Jethro, his father-in-law. He has been transformed from a member of the royal court, to a lowly shepherd in the desert lands of Midian. He comes to Horeb which is called in verse 1, the mountain of God. It is on this mountain that Moses sees a great display of God’s power in the form of a bush that is burning, but not burned up.

The conversation between Moses and God is amongst the most important passages in the Old Testament for a number of reasons. First, God identifies himself as the God of Moses’ father, but this is not a reference to Amram. Instead, God is the God of the patriarchs who are forefathers to Moses meaning Moses is of their line both biologically and through their shared faith. This makes Moses a modern day heir to the same promises of God. Additionally, God informs Moses that it is through him, God will bring about the salvation of the Israelites.

However, Moses cannot understand how he (Moses) can bring these events about. His time away from the Israelites, the potential hatred for him in the Egyptian court, and his previous rejection by his Israelite brethren seem to make Moses a poor choice to bring about this salvation. Yet, God says that He will be with Moses. Still Moses needs some assurance of exactly how he should identify the God that brings up the children of Israel from Egypt. Moses asks of God a great question that has not previously been asked in all of recorded human history, “What is your name?” In response, God identifies himself with the four letter response YHWH, sometimes known as Yahweh and later rendered as Jehovah in Greek. Our current modern Bibles render this word as LORD. It is here for the first time that God reveals His proper Name to mankind which has never been used before.

Furthermore, YHWH reveals to Moses exactly the plan for bringing out the Israelites. He is to gather the elders of Israel to inform them of the coming redemption. These men are now ready to heed the voice of Moses. However, YHWH promises Moses that Pharaoh will not heed his voice, but instead, God will conquer the land of Egypt for the Israelites and cause them to leave Egypt with the same spoils as if they had gone to battle with Egypt.

Yet again, Moses continues to object to YHWH’s plan because of his inclusion in it. Because the Israelites have not heeded the voice of Moses in the past, he is doubtful despite of God’s promises that they will heed him now. God in His graciousness gives Moses two miraculous signs regarding his rod becoming a serpent and his hand becoming leprous and pure again. As a final sign, Moses can take water from the Nile and cause it turn to blood on dry land. He also gives Moses his brother Aaron who was journeying to see Moses as a spokesman before the people.

The First Confrontation with Pharaoh

Chapter 5 begins with the first conversation between Moses and Pharaoh. And according to God’s command, Moses initially asks Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to go out and hold a feast to YHWH. Pharaoh’s question in verse 2 forms much of the basis for the rest of the events of the entire book of Exodus. Who is YHWH that a man like Pharaoh should let his slaves go? The rest of the book and much of the rest of the Old Testament is focused on answering Pharaoh’s question. Is YHWH the Creator God or is Pharaoh the son of a god and the gods of the Egypt superior?

Because Pharaoh is unfamiliar with YHWH and apparently unfamiliar with the God of Joseph (as a simple search through Egyptian history would have revealed), he refuses to allow the children of Israel to go out and serve YHWH. After all, Pharaoh was to be their god and he should not allow them to serve another god before him. These slaves could only be taken by force from his hand. In order to reassure their continue servitude, Pharaoh demands the same quota of clay bricks but takes away the straw necessary to make these bricks.

These actions greatly dismay the leaders of Israel who lay the effects of these actions squarely at the feet of Moses and Aaron. Moses cries out to God that He has failed to do as He promised. Yet, God in His patience further assures Moses of His coming deliverance. Furthermore, the phrase that is particularly key is in 6:7 where God says with great boldness and assurance, “I will take you as My people, and I will be your God.” This is a very important and oft repeated phrase in the Old Covenant terminology.

Confrontation #2

Beginning in chapter 7, Moses is once again told to confront Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go out to worship YHWH. Moses once again is hesitant to obey and still God provides encouragement to this hesitant leader. In fact, YHWH declares that He shall make Moses as God (the word El) in comparison to Pharaoh who thought himself to be a son of the gods (the elohim). They do come before Pharaoh who at this point demands to see a symbol of YHWH’s power that he should subject himself to YHWH. In response, Moses commands Aaron’s rod to become a serpent. Yet Pharaoh’s sorcerers come forth and do the same. However, Aaron’s rod swallows the rods of the sorcerers. Although YHWH’s power is shown to be greater than Pharaoh’s in this small contest, Pharaoh’s heart grows hard and would not bow to the name of YHWH as the elders of the Israelites had done.

**Questions:**

1. Do some research on YHWH. What are possible meanings of this name? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What position did Egypt hold in the world at this time in terms of might and power? What position did Pharaoh hold in terms of might and power in the world? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Who is YHWH and why should we submit our will to His? (This should be a personal answer that is specific to you. Who is YHWH to you? Not a canned response) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. The first part 7:5 mirrors very closely the same statement in 6:7. However, the intent is very different. How will Egyptians knowledge of YHWH be very different that Israel’s knowledge of YHWH? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 3 – PLAGUES**

**Reading: Ex 7:14 – 10:29**

A Conceptual View of the Plagues

We have come to one of most damaging and dramatic examples of God’s power ever displayed on the face of the earth. In fact, these events will become the gold standard to God’s prophets for thousands of years to call upon the Israelites to remember their deliverance by YHWH’s mighty hand. This is supernatural destruction through natural means that completely decimated the world’s most powerful nation. Can you imagine a combination of natural phenomenon that would completely destroy the infrastructure of our nation today?

However, there is a great deal of significance to each of the plagues themselves. Additionally, the plagues are more than just God’s attack on a nation holding His people captive. Instead, these plagues are an answer to the question Pharaoh posed back in Ex 5:2. The Creator God is responding by thundering forth that He alone is God, and is far superior to Pharaoh and to the gods of Egypt. These attacks are direct challenges to the Egyptian gods (see Ex 12:12).

Why deliver Israel in this manner? Why not simply come down in a single day and lead them out with fire and brimstone? Obviously these questions are loaded and the full answer only God knows. However, we see heavenly wisdom in God’s methods of deliverance. We see Moses and the Israelites trust in him as their leader develops over this period of time. We see God attacking a destroying false worship of false gods by casting down any idea that the gods of Egypt hold power. We see the Egyptian people and the people of Canaan fearful of the One True God, and these acts that should drive them to seek out and serve such a God who can deliver like this. This is summed up nowhere better than in Ex 9:15-16 which declares that there is none like God and that His Name would be declared throughout the land.

The Plagues Overview

The plagues in the order in which they happened and where they are recorded are as follows:

1. All the waters become blood in all the land
   1. Attack on Hapi, Tauret, Sepek, and other gods
   2. Magicians of Egypt could duplicate
   3. Lasted at least 7 days (before the next plague)
2. Frogs come up from the Nile on all the land
   1. Attack on Heqet (a frog god of resurrection)
   2. Magicians of Egypt could duplicate
   3. Pharaoh says he will let the Israelites go
   4. Moses allows Pharaoh to declare when the frogs would leave
   5. Pharaoh changes his mind
3. Lice on man & beast in all the land
   1. Unclear exactly who this attack was directed on exactly but many theories exist
   2. Magicians could not duplicate and declare it is the power of El (God)
   3. Pharaoh’s heart is hardened
4. Flies only on the Egyptian lands; NOT in Goshen
   1. The fly was supposed to give protection against disease according to Egyptian myths
   2. Pharaoh wishes to comprise by allowing worship in Egypt
   3. Pharaoh agrees to let the people go out but his heart became hard
5. Pestilence on the Livestock of the Egyptians only
   1. Attack on many gods of various animals (bulls and cows mainly)
   2. Pharaoh’s heart hardened
6. Boils on Egyptians
   1. Attack on the priests and magicians as well as possibly Sekhmet, Serapis, and Imhotep
   2. Magicians cannot even stand with Pharaoh before Moses because of the boils
   3. God hardens Pharaoh’s heart
7. Fiery Hail from the heavens
   1. Probably an attack on Nut, the mother sky goddess
   2. God actually tells the Egyptians how to spare themselves from this plague and indicates that some actually heeded this warning (9:20)
   3. Pharaoh actually admits to sin and his people’s wickedness; begs for relief
   4. Pharaoh’s heart is hardened again furthering his sin
8. Locusts on Egypt
   1. Attack on many gods that were protectors of the crops
   2. Moses declares the plague in front of Pharaoh’s court
   3. Pharaoh allows the men only to go out and worship God
   4. Pharaoh again declares his sin and God drives the locusts into the Red Sea
   5. God hardens Pharaoh’s heart
9. Darkness over the land
   1. Attack on Amon-Ra, the very important Sun god of Egypt
   2. Three days of completely darkness over the land
   3. Pharaoh allows them to go but they must leave their livestock to which Moses refuses
   4. God hardens Pharaoh’s heart
   5. Pharaoh declares that Moses will die if he sees the face of Pharaoh again

A Brief Word about Romans 9:14-26

There is a section of Paul’s great epistle to the Romans that addresses these very events that speaks to two Biblical truths. Romans 9 pictures God as a potter who makes us as people however he wishes. It is meant to illustrate that God’s Sovereignty is supreme in controlling the events of man. Pharaoh is built and raised up to be a vessel of God’s wrath to show His power so that the vessels of his mercy would be awed and glorify His name. At the same time, the Bible is very clear repeatedly that man is responsible for his sins. In fact, in the same book, Paul writes that all have sinned (3:23) and that the wages of sin are death (6:23), which implies that these are our deeds and we are earning death. These two things are no more contradictory than the basic concept that the Christ was both 100% God and 100% man. This from a mathematical standpoint makes no sense, yet it is the foundation of our Christianity. We may sense some tension in these beliefs yet clearly in the omniscient mind of God, there is no tension in any of these. We simply look to God’s Word in faith and declare God to be completely Sovereign and man to be completely responsible for his actions as Pharaoh clearly was.

**Questions:**

1. Was God just in annihilating Egypt with these plagues? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What parties is God doing battle with in these plagues? Would you say that God is a warrior? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it mean when Pharaoh hardens or God hardens Pharaoh’s heart? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is so dangerous about having a hard heart, especially when it comes to some sin in our lives? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. God had a specific purpose for each party involved in the plagues. Tell us what God was trying to show each of these parties in doling out these plauges:
   1. Pharaoh: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. Moses & Aaron: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. The Egyptian People: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   4. The Israelites: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 4 – The First Passover**

**Reading: Ex 11:1-12:28; 12:43-13:2**

**Suggested Related Passages: Lev 23:1-2, 4-8; 1 Cor 5:7; John 1:28-29; Is 53:6-7; 1 Pet 1:18-19**

Quick Preliminary Note:

We are covering the first Passover in this lesson as it fits the historical context of the Pentateuch as we are studying it. We will look at this first feast of Israel in this lesson in greater detail. We will look at the following feasts of Israel in lesson 15. Although we are studying this first observance of the Passover here, we will discuss common Jewish practices in observing this feast up to the time of Christ as this has great significance to the Biblical story overall. A healthy understanding of the meaning of this feast (and all the Israelite feasts) will turn what appears to be drab, meaningless regulations into the picturesque story of God redeeming His people and pointing “True Israel” to its future complete redemption from sin and death.

The Preparation for the Last Plague & Exodus

In Exodus 11, God is giving forewarning and final instructions to Moses about the coming final plague. This final plague will break the will of Pharaoh that not only will he allow the Israelites to leave, but he will drive them out of the land. Prior to these events, the Israelites were instructed to gather gold and silver from their neighboring Egyptians. The Egyptians complied with this request for two reasons given in Scripture: YHWH caused the Egyptians to favor the Israelites and Moses had become a very great figure in Egypt no doubt because of the devastation of the plagues. The people are taking these gifts as the spoils of war as YHWH has thoroughly defeated and embarrassed the gods of Egypt. As such, His people are entitled to come and take what the Lord has given to them as He will do many times in the Old Testament.

Then Moses comes before Pharaoh, seemingly unannounced in a great anger to foretell this curse upon the Egyptians. This plague would cause the deaths of all the firstborn of the Egyptians regardless if they were man or beast, from the poorest to the house of Pharaoh. However, YHWH would not strike the Israelites specifically for the reason of showing that YHWH has chosen this people as His people. Additionally, it would prove that these acts were the acts of The God and not random chance. Despite this provocative final announcement, God hardened the heart of Pharaoh so that “My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.”

The Passover

There are seven feasts to the Lord observed by Israel and this one is its first. This feast is the foundational feast upon which all the rest will follow. God resets the calendar for Israel to the month of Abib (or Nisan in the Greek NT) which roughly corresponds to our spring time (March – April). The Passover was observed beginning on the 14th of Abib, but the preparations began on the tenth by taking a spotless male lamb into the household and keeping it until the day of Passover. On the Passover at twilight, the whole congregation was to kill the lamb. Then, they would spread some of the blood on the doorways of their houses and eat the flesh of the lamb with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. When YHWH was to pass by that night, He would see the sign of the blood and “pass over” that house, sparing them from death. This feast was to be an everlasting ordinance throughout all the generations of the Israelites as reminder of God’s redemption. Additionally, it was meant to be a teaching point to future generations who would not remember these events.

What does it all mean?

The Passover is rich in symbolism and foreshadowing. In essence, the Passover points to the coming perfect Lamb of God, Jesus of Nazareth the Christ, who would be sacrificed to allow all of us to pass from death to life. Additionally, as this feast is the first feast in the Israelite calendar, this is the event that kicks off the redemptive calendar of YHWH. All of the rest of the feasts as we will study later will unveil and foreshadow YWHW’s future intentions to ultimately come and “tabernacle” with His people.

Yet, while that is in a nutshell the core of its meaning, we want to jump from the first Passover to the last Passover, or at least the last Passover that has any real meaning from God’s vantage point. Observe the following simple facts that connect the commandments given in our passages today with how they are perfectly fulfilled in Jesus:

* The lamb was to be taken in on the 10th and kept for four days during which time the Israelites would have inspected and made sure that the lamb was truly spotless and without fault.
* On the 10th of Nisan, Jesus would have entered Jerusalem wherein for four days He is inspected by the chief priests and elders, Pilate, Herod, and Annas the High Priest. At the end of that inspection period, Pilate declares, “I find no guilt in Him” **John 19:4**
* Exodus 12:6 reads that the whole assembly shall “kill it at twilight” as if there is only one lamb even though Moses has previously commanded a lamb for each household which makes the construction of the sentence odd.
* This prefigures the one Lamb that would be killed for the whole assembly (ekklesia or “church”) of Israel. Not only would he would he be killed **for** them, but He would be killed **by** them for their sins.
* The Passover lamb was to be killed at twilight which literally means between the evening. Hebrew days went from 6:00 pm to 6:00 pm the following evening. The period from noon to 6:00 pm was typically referred to by the Hebrews as the evening. Thus, twilight was roughly 3:00 pm and this was the specified time for the Passover lamb to be slaughtered for an evening meal.
* Christ died at the ninth hour of the day which is 3:00 pm. Thus, we can surmise that in Christ’s final moments, on the temple mount, the High Priest Annas is slaying the primary Passover Lamb for the nation of Israel.
* The Passover lamb was to be whole with no broken bones.
* Christ was whole with no broken bones at His death.

The parallels are many more than I have listed here and are completely astounding. It is impossible to ignore the plain evidence that all these events in human history point to a complete fulfillment in the death of Christ.

Additionally, we can’t conclude this lesson without mentioning that it is from the Passover meal that a new meal is instituted, the Lord’s Supper. The connections are evident based on the history of Israel. As Israel is redeemed from slavery and death in Egypt, so we are redeemed as Christians and make our exodus from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life, the kingdom of God’s own Son. Just like the Passover, the meal is a solemn observance (serious but not always sad) of the substitutionary nature of our Lamb in exchange for our own deaths. Finally, it is a memorial that is everlasting as the Passover was an everlasting covenant with the Israelites until God brought their covenant to an end due to their spiritual infidelity. Take heed! This solemn memorial is to be observed with the some rigor and preparation as the Passover was observed by the Jews in the years of Moses.

**Questions:**

1. Why is it important for us today to understand the feast of the Passover, especially as we don’t partake of it anymore? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What happened with the blood of the Passover lamb, and why did they do what they did with the blood? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. How is the blood of the Passover lamb very similar in effect to the blood of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What and how were the Israelites supposed to eat of in the Passover meal? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What passages discuss the Christ and his attributes as a lamb? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 5 – Death of the Firstborn to the Red Sea**

**Reading: Ex 12:29-42; 13:17-14:14**

**Suggested Related Passages: Romans 8:31-39**

Now it is time for the night of the Passover to come as we studied in our prior lesson. YHWH comes and strikes at every household in the land of Egypt, from those in the dungeon to those in the palace of Pharaoh. Even the livestock is stricken dead at the stroke of midnight. Whatever form this death took was noticeable or perhaps the Egyptians anticipated some dreadful night because of the proclamations of Moses. However, in the middle of the night Pharaoh calls for Moses and Aaron and agrees to a full surrender to the demands of YHWH. At great cost, Pharaoh and the Egyptians have paid a terrible price to find out “who is YHWH”.

Finally, the time of their sojourn in Egypt which had lasted 430 years has come to an end with the exodus. Just as Moses had foretold, the people made great haste to get out of the land of Egypt. They took with them their kneading bowls for bread which still lay unleavened from the night (thus, the feast of Unleavened Bread that we will discuss in a later lesson). The ragtag nation of slaves is declared the “armies of the Lord” in verse 41. This army is comprised of 600,000 men of fighting age which could put the group of Israelites at as many as two million people that had spawned from 70 individuals just 400 years ago. Although Egypt had been a place of deprivation for the Israelites, it had also served the purpose of incubating, protecting, and building the fledgling start of a new nation.

Geography, Travel, and Nation Building

Initially the people of Israel gathered and journeyed inside the land of Egypt from Ramses to Succoth. From there, the shortest distance to the land of Canaan follows a very highly traveled and well known trade route that follows the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It would seem logical that God would desire for them to follow this route right into Canaan. However, the Israelites instead turn south toward the wilderness for the express purpose of avoiding the Philistines in combat according to 13:17. We may find this interesting as this has been declared the armies of the Lord, and that YHWH had just single-handedly defeated the greatest superpower on earth.

However, the Lord is not interested in a quick fix for the children of Israel. He is looking to make a covenant and engage in nation-building. It takes time, trials, patience, and faith to convert a group of slaves into the nation of God’s chosen people. Although God could have stormed the gates of Canaan immediately and given the land to these weary Israelites, this is not the path that He has chosen. Instead, God is weaving an awesome fabric of prophetic shadow and foretelling about spiritual realities that will play out in generations to come, all the way up to our modern age. As these truths are revealed in the Word of God, we will have much more to say about God building a kingdom of people for Himself and what impact that has on our lives today in coming lessons.

Finally, we must discuss the way YHWH lead them on their travels for the entirety of the rest of our studies. He does so through the glory of His Shekinah Glory Cloud. The word “shekinah” literally means “to dwell”, and in this context we are talking about the very dwelling place of the Divine Presence. This is God come to down to earth, heaven intersecting with earth, and it is the first of a multitude of times we see it in the Old Testament. It appears as this magnificent cloud in the day and a fiery pillar at night. This is a picture of the Lord in His Chariot leading out his armies to battle. They follow wherever their king commands.

Coming to the Red Sea

YHWH commands that the children of Israel drive further into the wilderness and ultimately to a place where they are hemmed in by the Red Sea. He does this as Pharaoh has already forgotten who YHWH is and once again the Lord will show the Egyptians that He is YHWH (literally at the end of 14:4 saying “I am the I AM”). Pharaoh and his advisors come to the realization that their nationalized labor force is gone, and that they are merely wandering about aimlessly in the desert.

Pharaoh gathers his army and man’s his chariot to chase after the Lord’s army being lead out by the Lord in His Chariot of fire. Although it may seem obvious to us who will win another battle between these two kings and their armies, it was less obvious to the Israelites who were faced with the very real physical possibility of either death by the desert or death by the hand of Pharaoh. As Pharaoh draws nearer and nearer, the Israelites grow more afraid calling out to both Moses and to YHWH.

Herein lies the manifest wisdom and patience of God. This people, despite the awesome signs of the plagues, still fear the power of a Pharaoh who has just been utterly humiliated by their God. Their faith is not secure enough to take the Promised Land. God is both running and orchestrating the marathon of human history to develop this people, His people. Furthermore, Moses is still developing into the leader of Israel that God has called him to become. This occurrence gives Moses the opportunity to deliver some of the more stirring short speeches in the Bible in 14:13-14.

A Brief Point of Application

Moses’ short speech is as timeless as any if we simply replace the word “Egyptians” with any force that has opposed the people of God at any time in history. He demands courage: courage not in ourselves, but in faith rooted in the salvation that only comes at the Hand of an Almighty God. He accomplishes victory. He defeats our “Egyptians” so thoroughly that they never come to mind again. He fights for us so that we may have and hold our peace. These words eerily foretell the words of Paul in Romans 8:31-39. The LORD has always fought for His people and continues to do so today.

**Questions:**

1. What three items are specifically listed as the Israelites taking from the Egyptians? Also, what word is used in 12:36 to describe the act of the taking these things from the Eygptians? What does this word imply? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Whose bones went with the children of Israel out of Egypt? Why did they take him? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Now that you know that the pillar of cloud is a symbol for God’s Presence, what spiritual significance is there to 13:22? ­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do we learn about the Israelites right away from their reaction to the events surrounding them in 14:11-12? ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Conversely, what do we learn about Moses and his developing leadership in 14:13-14? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 6 – Crossing the Red Sea & Manna From Heaven**

**Reading: Ex 14:15-16:36**

**Suggested Reading: 1 Cor 10:1-4**

Red Sea Crossing

We ended last time with Moses telling the people to hold still and have faith in YHWH. YHWH immediately responds telling Moses to drive the people towards the sea. In order to give the people enough time to cross, the Angel of the Lord in the form of the pillar as discussed previously, stands between the Egyptian chariots and the Israelites. God parts the Red Sea and the Israelites march through on dry ground.

Seeing the seas part for the Israelites, the Egyptians charge forward anyways and prove that the Lord was determined to gain the complete victory over them. As they approach, God looks down and disables their chariots as they enter the Red Sea. As the Israelites finish crossing, the Lord causes the sea to return and drowns all the armies of the Pharaoh. The Israelites watch as Egyptian’s bodies wash up all along the shore.

Biblical significance of Water Crossing

Water is used repeatedly in both the Old and New Testament as a simultaneous symbol of both salvation and judgment. These two concepts are not opposed, but rather two necessaries faces of the same coin. In order for God’s people to be saved, there must be a necessary judgment and punishment of evildoers. However, this element is not merely limited to salvation/judgment, but it is also symbolic of a significant change. What goes into the water comes out of the water as something very different.

How pervasive is this element in the Bible? Here is a partial list:

1. Creation; from the formless void God parts the waters and creates dry land and the entirety of creation.
2. The Flood; the evil population of the Lord is washed away and a new faithful line of Noah is begun.
3. The Red Sea
4. The Jordan River; God rolls away the reproach of Egypt after passing through the water (Josh 5:9) and many other parallels
5. Elijah & Elisha cross the Jordan; a passing of the mantle of God’s Spirit from one to another
6. Namaan bathes in the Jordan; a leper is saved and cleansed of his leprosy in bathing in common water.
7. John’s Baptism
8. Our Baptism

And more…

Baptized in the Sea

In studying this lesson, we must examine the passage 1 Cor 10:1-4 which has direct application to these events, and particularly verses 1 -2. In this passage, Paul looks back at this group of people and speaks of their baptism into Moses, the cloud, and the sea. How should we understand this passage? Baptism means immersion, but often in the Biblical usage it means to be identified with. In our baptism, we are identifying with the death of Christ in hope and expectation to live with Him as He lives. This group of people was chosen to abide in the Law of Moses and received a baptism through the saving waters of the Red Sea. They were immersed in the cloud as they followed it and it protected them (more to say about this later). Hence, their hope and expectation was to be God’s chosen people and to receive the promises of their forefathers.

Yet, we should take warning in what Paul is saying 1 Corinthians. He is not merely calling to mind a historical fact to the church at Corinth. He is saying to them that despite their identification with Moses and baptism in the sea and cloud, God was displeased with this generation. Their end is told about in this passage because of their lack of faith and obedience.

Rejoicing & Faith

Immediately after this salvation, two things are accomplished in 14:31. First, the people feared YHWH and believed YHWH. This was the intended effect. As a conquering King, this God is to be feared more than Pharaoh and His promises are to be believed. He has done just as He has sworn. Second, the people began to believe in Moses. Previously the people were not ready to accept Moses as their chief, but now it is obvious that the very power of the Creator flows through the man Moses.

What is the natural reaction to salvation from God? Great singing, rejoicing, and worship. Hence, chapter 15 is a song sung by Moses and the Israelites in worship and rejoicing and recounting the miraculous acts of God. Furthermore, it foretells of their future victories over the likes of the Philistines, Edomites, Canaanites, and Moabites. Miriam, who is revealed here to be a prophetess, and the women go out and dance and sing songs of praise to God. This is the same as the women will do later for Saul and David as they crush their enemies later. It is the praise given to a great warrior as is our Lord.

Testing in the Wilderness

However, this new found faith in God is no faith at all until it has been tested and cultivated. Although the Lord has already proven Himself to be faithful and caring to such a degree that He will completely destroy nations, the Israelites still need to be brought to a higher level of understanding and faith. Hence, they are led into the desert to face trial.

First they face the trial of thirst. As anyone can imagine, it will not take very long (in fact, only 3 days) before this huge congregation needs a very large amount of water. That’s in short supply on the Arabian continent’s interior. God provides water miraculously in 15:23-25. He also gives them further promises of healing and health, and in doing so gives Himself a new name. He says that He is YHWH Rapha or the “I AM who Heals”. This is the Great Physician of not only the physical ailments, but spiritual ailments as well. It is the God who takes the bitterness of their spirit of slavery and turns it into sweetness in faithful servitude to Him.

Second, is the trial of hunger for bread and quail. Forty-five days after leaving Egypt, the whole congregation complains to Moses and Aaron at their lack of bread. However, the Lord hears their complaints and causes a sweet bread to rain down from heaven. The people of course named it “manna”, meaning “what is it?” They were given strict instructions to gather only enough for each day and only for six days. Additionally, God covers the camp with quail for meat. In this way, God tested their belief that He would continue to open up the heavens and rain down bread each day as He had before. God did continue to do so for forty years until they came to the land of Canaan.

**Questions**

1. How does baptism perfectly reflect the concepts salvation and change as we see above in this lesson? Use some passages from the New Testament that illustrate what baptism accomplishes? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What are some names or characteristics that are ascribed to God in the Song of Moses? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. The Israelites were lead into the wilderness to be tested. What other Biblical character was lead into the wilderness and what was the result of his tests? What does the result of his tests tell us about him? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. In Ex 15:25, it says that God tested the Israelites. What does this mean exactly? Does God still test His people today and how do you know? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What rules does God lay down for the gathering and storing of manna? What purpose do you think these rules have? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. God proves throughout history that He is faithful to His people. How has God been faithful to us today as Christians? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 7 – FROM WILDERNESS OF SIN TO MT SINAI**

**Reading:** Exodus 17 -18

**Suggested Reading:** 1 Cor 10:1-4; John 4:1-26

Water from the Rock

Today we find the Israelites once again in the wilderness. They have come to the land of Rephidim where there was no water to drink. Although God was still providing manna from heaven daily, they raise a complaint of Moses that apparently reaches a level of severity that the previous complaints had not. Moses was afraid that the people would actually stone him, and was being accused of purposefully leading them to a place where they would die of thirst. In fact, the name of the place became Massah and Meribah, meaning “Tempted” and “Contention”.

We begin to see a pattern and disposition of this people, and a great deal of irony. Perhaps no group of people in the history of man had seen God’s Hand so directly intervene in nature to provide for His people. Yet, they continued in their complete and utter lack of faith. We must consider the irony of a God who would rain down bread from heaven, but completely ignore the people’s physical thirst if they would but ask in faith.

Yet, Moses is instructed how to provide water for the people by God’s power. He strikes the rock of Horeb and water flows out of it so that all the people can drink. Again, we can turn to 1 Cor 10:4 and see more detail about this event and its spiritual significance. It says over there that the rock of Horeb follows them throughout the desert, and the people who drink of it drink a spiritual drink. This is one of many times that the New Testament refers to drinking a spiritual drink. John 4 talks about Christ providing a life giving water to the Samaritan women that wells up inside Him. It is no surprise then to find out that Paul identifies this Rock as Christ. He is the life giving water in the wilderness waste that provides life and growth. The Christ will be the Annointed One of God and King of Israel charged with protecting and providing for His people. Here, the pre-incarnate Christ fulfills that role pointing forward to His future protection, providence, and salvation of His people.

Battle at Rephidim

Amalek comes down to fight with Israel in the desert. Moses goes a top a nearby mountain along with Aaron and Hur. Joshua takes command of the Israelites who fought against Amalek. As long as Moses kept his hands above his head, Israel prevailed and eventually won the battle. For their attack, God places the Amalekites under the ban promising to completely wipe out their name in perpetual war with God’s people. Additonally, Moses builds an altar and names the altar YHWH Nissi, meaning “The LORD is my Banner.” This altar is the flag raised for victory on the mount in worship and declaration that YHWH has yet again won a mighty battle for His people over the warlike Amalekites.

Who is Hur though? He is mentioned here and there are a few possibilities. Obviously from the text, we can see that he is an assistant to Moses and Aaron. Jewish traditions disagree, but they shed some light on the topic. Later Rabbis would say that he was the son of Miriam making him the nephew of both Moses and Aaron. It is also possible that Hur is the son of Caleb who will come up later in the Pentateuch. Josephus believes that Hur is actually the husband of Miriam. In any event, it seems likely that Hur is possibly close family with Moses and Aaron.

Jethro Comes and Gives Advice

At this time Jethro returns to Moses and brings with him Zipporah and Moses’ two sons. They were no doubt kept in Midian to keep them safe from the events in Egypt. Jethro is greeted as a superior to Moses and is the noted priest of Midian. His exact position and knowledge of YHWH are not known; however, it does seem likely that Jethro had some knowledge of the true God but was not monotheistic (verse 11). In any event, Jethro’s knowledge and reaction to the plagues brought upon Egypt are the exact intent of God. Here is a faithful non-Israelite who sees the power of God and believes. In fact, he even comes prepared to make an offering to God.

Additionally, it seems that Jethro was full of wisdom. He aids Moses in setting up a system of judges and instructs Moses to ask God’s blessing upon this plan. This early system of judges is the earliest form of government for the Israelites outside of the traditional elders of the tribes. His respect and faithfulness is a blessing to everyone he comes into contact with. Additionally, Moses shows great deference to this man which is telling of Jethro’s character. He is a model for those who will find God from outside of the covenant nation of Israel.

Nation Building

As discussed in previous lessons, God is taking an ethnic group of slaves and making them into a nation. This takes patience and time. It also takes trials, and the wilderness serves as the great furnace by which God can test the mettle of His people. In the heat of the desert, God drives out the impurities and what will come out of the desert will be stronger and purer than what goes into the desert.

In this lesson and the last, we have seen God bring physical tests upon His people. They failed each time but the faithfulness of God overrides their lack of faithfulness. Additionally, we see another turning point as this people is now ready to face battle in the name of YHWH. There is progress but also regression. Yet at every turn we see God staying to true to His purpose. He will give a nation to the lineage of Abraham and bring about the blessing on all men.

**Questions:**

1. What New Testament passages can you find that directly assure us that God is aware of our physical needs and will work to fulfill them for us? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why do you think that the Israelites were so blind to God’s obvious providence in the desert when they became thirsty? More importantly, how can we avoid this type of mistake in our own lives? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. YHWH is given many names in the Old Testament that refer to His warrior like characteristics. However, we rarely think of God in this way. Is YHWH still a warrior today? Are there New Testament passages that speak to this aspect of God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What characteristics does Jethro advise the judges of Israel have in 18:21? How do each of these qualify that man to be a capable judge? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. What qualities does Jethro possess that are so impressive and would cause even Moses to recognize his greatness? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 8 – YHWH’s COVENANT WITH ISRAEL**

**Reading: Exodus 19 – 23**

**Suggested Reading:**

The Marriage Proposal & Beginning of a Nation

We have come upon on the most important moments in the entire Bible, and certainly the moment for which the entire book of Exodus has been driving towards. In Exodus 19, we see two events blended into one glorious, solemn, and happy occasion. First and foremost, this is the official founding of the nation of Israel and the completion of a major promise to the Patriarchs. We can and should view the meeting between God and the Israelites at Mount Sinai the same as we regard the writing of the Constitution of the United States. The words given here are the charter for a new theocracy.

Second, this is a marriage between God and His people. Christians are familiar with this terminology in regards to Christ and the Church. God gives His son a perfect bride, and the Bible ends in Revelation 19 recording the marriage feast between these two. However, earlier in history God joined Himself to the physical nation of Israel. How can God later join Himself to another bride? This bride will of course be unfaithful, and the prophets will repeatedly call their idolatry the same as harlotry giving God the right to put away the bride of Israel forever. In fact, the entire book of Hosea and Romans 7 is based on this very premise that God is divorcing Himself from the physical Israel.

The Proposal (19:1-24 & 20:18-21)

The Israelites journey to the mountain of God where His presence is displaying itself through fire, smoke, lightning, and earthquakes. God’s very Presence is having a physical effect on the earth that testifies to all in attendance with whom it is they are entering a special covenant. God offers a proposal to these people offering to be their God on the condition that they keep the requirements of His covenant. In exchange, they will be a special treasure to God, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. While these words are merely a summary proposal with no details of what His covenant entails, all the people agree to the conditions of the covenant.

Although this is a new kingdom with YHWH as its king, not everyone is allowed directly into the Presence of the King. There are restrictions that are made upon the people as to who is allowed to come up to the mountain. In fact, God’s holiness demands that both man and beast stay away from His mountain while He holds court. Moses has to come up and down the mountain multiple times to warn the people. Additionally, we learn something of the holy nature of God when it comes into contact with sinful man. In verses 22 those sinful men who would “break through” the barriers, God will “break out” against them and cause them to die.

However, the Israelites are greatly afraid of the Presence. The sound of YHWH’s voice booming from the mountain was so great, that they believed they would die if they continued to hear it. Few passages convey to us with such detail God’s power, and the thought of hearing something so loud or so powerful is nearly beyond comprehension. The people beg Moses to speak with God directly. Their fear of this power underlines the fact that this people knew they could be completely destroyed in an instant by a God of this magnitude. This appreciation for God’s power and admonition by Moses to not fear but essentially drink the scene in serves a stark reminder to the people that they should not sin.

The Decalogue (20:1-17)

The Ten Commandments which are also known as they Decalogue, form the basis of the treaty between God and His new people. They take the form of an ancient suzerain treaty that we find in many other documents of that day. This form relates how a superior King has done such actions for a vassal king (seen in verse 2), and this forms the basis for why the vassal nation should serve the King. Faithfully abiding by the commands of the King will result in His blessing; refusal to obey results in cursing which we will see detailed later.

These commandments are often laid out in two sets of five, or sometimes a set of four and then a set of six. There are multiple ways of categorizing them with no exact right answer. The first four include: the preeminence of God, prohibition on images and idols, keeping the name of YHWH, and remembrance of the Sabbath. These are often categorized under the first great commandment of loving God as they all relate to a respect for God’s Person and His laws. The next command, to honor father and mother, is seen as a transitional command that relates both to God and to man. God was their father and was to be given due honor the same as we would give our earthly fathers. The next five are prohibitions against murder, adultery, stealing, false testimony, and covetousness. All of these deal primarily in the second great command, loving our fellow man.

Other Commands (20:22 – 23:33)

Exodus then goes on to give us a multitude of other commandments that fall into several broad groups: laws about altars to God, laws regarding slavery, injury and criminal law, property laws, a section of various laws for all the people on a wide variety of topics, and finally a short section on holy days including the Sabbath. We will discuss these in greater detail in a later class. However, it is important to note that God’s intention was for His people to be a well-organized nation of laws. Religious command and civil command descended from the same authority. The Law is very detailed and is a guiding light towards how a benevolent God would like for His society to operate.

Finally, this section also ends on a promise and a further command. The promise is that YHWH would bring them into the Land of Promise by His power. He is sending ahead His Angel who has the very name of God in Himself which equates this being with God. In other words, God Himself will drive out the existing Canaanite nations. Since He is driving them out, they should not make any treaties with anyone because they will be a snare for idolatry.

**Questions:**

1. What do we learn about God’s holiness based on the last half of Chapter 19? How is this very different from our relationship to God today in the New Covenant? Is there anything that is the same? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is a theocracy and do we still live in a spiritual theocracy today? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does God mean in 20:5 when He says, “visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and fourth generations”? How does this shape your understanding of God showing loving-kindness to others in the last half of that verse? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Interestingly enough, the Old Testament gives specific rules allowing for slavery. Yet, this slavery is very different than what we think of as slavery. How is the slavery allowed for in this passage actually geared towards setting men and women free? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. YHWH’s warning at the end of today’s lesson is very telling about the other nations and idolatry. It proves to be exactly accurate. What applications should we make from this today? Are there passages that discuss these applications in the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 9 – COVENANT ACCEPTED, BROKEN, AND RENEWED**

**Reading: Exodus 24, 32 – 34**

**Suggested Reading: Heb 9:16-22; 2 Cor 3:13-14**

Ratification of the Covenant

The chronology of the events at Mt Sinai can be a little difficult to understand. However, we do know that at least at a preliminary level, Israel has already agreed in principle to a covenant relationship with YHWH. Additionally, they have already been given some level of detail about the nature of God’s covenant laws. However, here we see more of a ceremony that resembles that ratification of a treaty between two groups. The events of chapter 24 begin the covenant relationship between God and His people.

Skipping over verse 1 momentarily, in 24:2-8 Moses gives a greater detail of the covenant to the people. **All the people with one voice** agree to follow these commands. In order to seal this agreement and show their subservience to God, burnt offerings are offered on twelve altars for each tribe. This is significant as each tribe is agreeing to the covenant, and each tribe is represented in their offerings. Additionally, Moses takes blood from the offerings and sprinkles it on the people and reads the covenant to the people again. They again repeat that they will obey the words of the covenant.

Before moving on, we should note that there is great significance to the sprinkling of blood mentioned here. The Hebrews writer refers to it in detail in Heb 9:16-22 which sheds tremendous light on this passage. First and foremost, for a covenant of this nature to take effect, there needed to be cleansing and death. The blood of the bulls and goats as a propitiation accomplishes both in our text. While we cannot go into great detail here about this, you should make the mental note that there is much in the book of Hebrews that can greatly enhance your understanding of these events.

Now that the covenant has been ratified by the people, God will sit and eat a meal with His people. This was very common between a King who had conquered and taken for himself a vassal people. They would often eat a meal of celebration ratifying their new relationship. God invites Moses, Aaron and his two oldest sons, and seventy elders of the Israelites to come up part way on the mountain. There it is revealed that they saw God and ate and drank in His presence. They viewed him through a sapphire pavement. This group of representative people was invited to come closer into the Presence of God and dine with Him in a meal of communion, a very important symbol for us still today.

At the close of the meal, Moses was invited to come into the closest contact with God to receive the law on stone tablets written by the finger of God. Aaron and Hur were left in charge of the people and settling disputes. However, Moses lingered on the mountain for 40 days while the people were left to which the awesome power of God as a fire on the mountain.

Covenant Breaking

However, it would not be long before things derail completely from God’s design. Most are familiar in some sense with the story of the golden calf. Israel, fearing Moses gone forever, demands a symbol of God’s power. Aaron acquiesces and creates a golden calf that is supposed to symbolize the power of YHWH that they see displayed on the mountain before them. A feast day is called for and the people sin greatly in supposed “worship” to YHWH and this calf.

YHWH sees all of this flagrant sin at the foot of His mountain, and His anger burns because they have turned “aside quickly” from the covenant. YHWH informs Moses that it is His intent to consume the entire people in an instant. In a moment of brilliant leadership and great faith, Moses pleads with God to remember His covenants and honor His name but not consuming the people. Although YHWH, does not destroy His people, Moses comes down in great anger. The people’s sin carries with it grave consequences. The Levites who pledge their loyalty to YHWH are charged to go through the camp and kill 3,000 people. Also, the following day, God punishes them with a plague in their midst.

So great is the sin of Israel that God no longer will allow Himself to be among His people. He directs His people to go up to the Land, but they must go without Him in their midst. Additionally, Moses pitched his tent which was the tent of meeting outside the camp of Israel. At this tent, God’s Presence in the form of His Shekinah Glory Cloud was seen there. It is also told to us that YHWH spoke to Moses face to face as a friend as God dwelled in Moses’ tent as a guest.

Covenant Renewal & Reconciliation

Again, in the last half of chapter 34, Moses intercedes on behalf of the Israelites. He pleads with God to go with them or not bring them up at all into the Land. In one of the most dramatic scenes in the Bible, Moses is allowed to witness the Presence of God pass by him. Here he sees God in a way that almost no man has ever been entreated to see God. Additionally, we should take note in 33:19 and 34:6-7 of how God announces His own Presence. This is how God chooses to reveal Himself to man. Upon seeing this great scene, Moses quickly worships and asks forgiveness for his people’s sin.

Immediately following this, YHWH recognizes His covenant again with an awesome statement in 34:10 promising miraculous deeds on the Israelites behalf. YHWH then reaffirms several commands regarding holy days and avoiding idolatry. Moses again spends 40 days in the presence of God on the mountain receiving the covenant again on new tablets of stone. God’s glory caused Moses’ face to shine to such a degree that the Israelites were afraid of Moses.

**Questions:**

1. There is great emphasis on God being with His people in this entire section. This dwelling among the Israelites is foreshadowing the way God will dwell with His people in the Church. What New Testament passages speak of how God will dwell with us? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. The Israelites eat a meal in communion with the Lord. In what ways does this meal parallel the Lord’s Supper or does it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Moses is confirmed in today’s lesson as one of the great leaders of all time. What actions/speeches does Moses give that show his tremendous leadership? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Moses is also referred to as a type of Christ, or the Annointed One to come to the Israelites. What characteristics does Moses display that makes him a great foreshadowing of the Christ? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Read Ex 32:27-28, Acts 2:40-4, and 2 Cor 3:6 (particularly the last phrase). How are these three passages interrelated? What is it teaching us about our covenant with God today? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. Now Read 2 Cor 3:7-18. Write down as many comparisons between our covenant and the Israelites covenant as you can in this passage in the space below. Also, as bonus question, are our faces veiled or unveiled and do our “faces shine” or not?

**LESSON 10 – THE TABERNACLE SPECIFICS**

**Reading: Exod 25 – 27; 30:1-10; 30:17-31:11; 35:4-38:31; 39:32 – 40:38**

**Suggested Reading:**

We are going to cover a very broad range of items in the tabernacle, around the tabernacle, and the tabernacle itself. Each one has specific meaning, and we could spend significant time on each one. However, we will not be able to in any great detail. I will simply mention each one and mention some significance of the item. I would strongly encourage you to look into these as not simply tedious items from the Old Law, but rather, significant items that mirror some aspect of God and His true dwelling place in Heaven where we are going.

We will cover these items in the order they present themselves as one would enter the Tabernacle to worship:

Offerings (25:1-9, 35:4-9, 35:20-29, 36:2-7)

You will recall that when the Israelites left the Egyptians, they plundered them taking great wealth. They have been lugging that great wealth through the desert. God calls upon them to willingly given whatever they please for the effort of giving God a dwelling place among them. These included fine jewelry and stones, spices, and items useful for construction or garments. Their hearts were turned toward giving. The people gave so much they were actually told to stop giving.

The Outer Court (27:9-19, 38:9-20)

The outer court made a linen barrier between the camp of God which was in the center of the camp of the Israelites. This likely was a white linen barrier that would have stood out in the camp. The door to the tabernacle was a gate of blue, purple, and red that signified the way into the dwelling place of YHWH. This barrier indicated a separation between the dwelling place of God which not just anyone could enter at any time.

The Altar for Burnt Offerings (27:1-8, 38:1-7)

The altar was a portable wood altar in the outer court. It was overlaid in bronze and had a bronze grate with a box below for catching the ashes. On each corner was a horn of bronze, and it stood approximately 5’ to 6’ in height. This altar will be the primary place for which Israelites will come to atone for sin and make peace with their God. Its place was fixed in the outward courtyard as you come in the gate. This indicates that before one can approach closer to God, you must come with blood in your hands to cleanse the worshipper. It is the first object and is first in importance when offering acceptable worship.

The Laver (30:17-21, 38:8)

Just beyond the altar of burnt offering, there was a bronze laver made specifically from bronze mirrors from the women serving at the tent of meeting. The obvious purpose of the laver was for washing. This too related to cleansing that was necessary to approach God. Before any and all offerings were made, the priests were required to wash with water from this laver. It is doubtless a foreshadowing of baptism together with the altar of burnt offering. Here the priest of God is made clean before entering His wonderful house.

The Tabernacle (26:1-37, 38:21-31)

Finally, we come to the tabernacle itself which merely refers to a tent, or portable dwelling place. This was the home of God and the place that all Israelites could look to and see a visible reminder that YHWH dwells literally among them as the tabernacle was always in the middle of the camp when the Israelites moved. Although it was made with the finest materials including gold and fine linens of royal colors, it was still essentially a large waterproof tent. Yet, the interior glory of that place was a constant reminder to the priests who entered that their God was the King, inferior to none in majesty, splendor, and wealth.

Furthermore, it was of the exact pattern that Moses was show on the mountain that is copy of the dwelling place of God in Heaven (Heb 9:24). Just as there were three “holiness zones” on the mountain, there are three holiness zones when it comes to the tabernacle grounds. The people were allowed to gather at the foot of the mountain, just as the people were allowed to enter the temple gate outside the tabernacle proper. We also learned that a further select few of 70 elders and Aaron’s household were allowed to go part way up the mountain in Ex 24; just so, only the priests may go part way into the house of God into the first room, the Holy Place. Finally, only Moses was allowed to ascend to the peak of the mountain and see God; only the High Priest was allowed to “ascend” to the final room in the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies or Holiest Place where the Presence dwelt.

Table of Showbread (25:23-30, 37:10-16)

As we enter the tabernacle, there are a few fixtures in the front room. First the table of showbread upon which there are 12 fresh loaves placed. It was overlaid in pure gold and come with its own pitchers and bowls that were of pure gold. The picture here is that God’s house is a house of bread, of eating and fullness. In His dwelling, no one goes hungry and His table is never wanting for food.

The Lampstand (25:31-40, 27:20-21, 37:17-24)

The Lampstand was a seven branched solid gold ornamental piece meant to light the interior of the tent which would have otherwise been quite dark. It had ornaments of flowers and almonds graven into it. Additionally, the seven-fold nature of the lampstand indicates perfection, the perfection of God’s light filling the interior. Furthermore, it is a foreshadowing of God’s very Presence which is often indicated with a flame of fire, and this very lampstand is pictured in Rev 1:12 when Jesus appears to John. These lights like God’s light is never to go out.

The Altar of Incense (30:1-10, 30:34-38, 37:29)

God prescribed a specific blend of incense that is to be made for His worship alone. No other Israelite was allowed to make this blend for any other use. It too was overlaid in gold, and incense was burned every morning and at twilight. This sweet smelling aroma would rise before God to make peace with Him. Furthermore, it would have given a cloudy smoke that would have filled the interior of the tent that would have been potent enough to hang in the air. We see these same pictures in the book of Revelation in the throne room of God where he is satiated by incense which are the prayers of the saints.

The Ark of the Covenant (25:10-22, 37:1-9)

Most of us are somewhat familiar with a picture of the magnificent ark of the covenant as it has been portrayed in many movies. Its solid gold overlaid box and golden rods were crowned with two cherubim with outstretched wings facing each other. This place was called the Mercy Seat, the place where God would come and dwell in his man made “heaven replica”. This of course is the crowning piece of all that Moses was given to make, and it is here that the High Priest would come once a year on the Day of Atonement to make propitiation for the sins of all the congregation, at the Mercy Seat of God. Additionally, it is this ark that is chariot of God which He rides into battle before the people as they take the land of Canaan.

The Oil (30:22-33, 37:29)

We now move into other holy items used in conjunction with these places. In these passages, there is a specific and expensive prescription given for making a holy anointing oil for which all these things that were holy to God were supposed to be anointed. Additionally, Aaron and his sons were to be consecrated with this oil, but no one else should make or use this oil for any other purpose. After their cleansing and washing, the High Priest would be covered in this royal mix as a blessing of being holy consecrated to God.

The Work of Building (31:1-11, 35:10-19, 35:30-36:1, 36:8-38)

In order to perform all these exact specifications, the Israelites needed extremely talents builders, perfumers, and artisans of all types. There were certain people whom God endowed with wisdom and such skill for building His house. It no doubt was a daunting task, but it was a magnificent achievement that these men worked with their hands to create. Not only were these men given talents, but their heart was stirred to create these works for their God.

Setting it all up (40:1-38)

In the final chapter, at the Israelite New Year the tabernacle and all the previous items we have discussed were completed and set up. All was done exactly as YHWH had commanded Moses on the mountain. This is a magnificent achievement for this group of people. Yet clearly, their heart was turned to God to do this great work after their sin in regards to the golden calf. As a reward for their dedication, sacrifice, and obedience, God comes and fills the tabernacle with his Shekinah glory cloud. Although He had threatened to not go up to the land with them, now there is the obvious sign both day and night that God dwells among His people.

**Questions:**

1. Why do you suppose God was so specific about the commands for His house? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is all this supposed to symbolize to the people? What lessons were they supposed to learn when the average Israelite looked at the Tabernacle? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Pick out any three items and give its mirror compliment in the New Covenant or in the New Testament.
   1. First Item:
   2. Compliment in NT:
   3. Second Item:
   4. Compliment in the NT:
   5. Third item:
   6. Compliment in the NT:
4. Read Hebrews 9:23-28. The writer is trying to illustrate and persuade Jewish Christians of certain truths about the New Covenant compared to the Old Covenant. In your own words, what is he trying to tell them? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 11 – PREISTHOOD SPECIFIED AND CONSECRATED**

**Reading: Ex 28-29; 39:1-31; 40:9-16; Lev. 8**

**Suggested Reading:**

Jobs in the Kingdom of God

There are three jobs that exist within the kingdom of God: prophet, priest, and king. A prophet speaks for God. A priest mediates between God and His people. The king rules the people. Today’s lesson will center on the priests, and mainly on the high priest of God. These are the individuals that represent God to the people and the people to God. Additionally, they serve as ministers in the house of God and are consecrated to Him. This role is of vital importance to the functioning of the theocracy, and was endowed with great honor.

Their Garments (28:1-43 & 39:1-43)

In Ex 28:2, Moses is directed to make “holy garments for Aaron… for glory and for beauty.” There were special garments that indicated the reigning High Priest. He was to be as royalty amongst the people because of his honored position in the kingdom. This is the most important job in the kingdom, and determined whether or not the entire congregation would be cursed or blessed. As such, God desired them to be dressed in such a way that reflected the importance of their position.

First, the priests were to be equipped with an ephod. The ephod was a linen garment of royal colors with two very important shoulder onyx stones. The 12 tribe’s names would be engraved on these stones which the High Priest would wear. They were memorial stones, but a memorial of what? They were a reminder to the man wearing the ephod that he carried the weight of the entire house of Israel before God on his shoulders. It was up to him to bring them cleansing and blessing in a right relationship with God continually.

Second, the High Priest wore a breastplate made of gold. This breastplate also had 12 different stones each inscribed with a name of an Israelite tribe. Additionally, over his heart was a pouch for the Urim and Thummim, from which the High Priest would determine the will and judgment of God. These sat over his heart. Ex 28:29 reminds us that not only would Aaron’s descendants bear the weight of Israel on his shoulders, but would keep their well-being on his heart near the place where he would discern the judgment of God. This is perhaps foreshadowing of the day when God will put His laws and judgments into the heart of each one of His people.

Finally, the High Priest was crowned with a royal turban. It is lined with golden bells and pomegranates sounding everywhere he goes in the house of God and reminding the people outside who is inside serving God on their behalf. Finally, there was a golden insignia placed on Aaron’s forehead that read, “HOLINESS TO YHWH”. It was reminder to all who saw him that, this man was consecrated to God’s work and was to be foremost in his life and on his mind.

The Consecration (29:1-37, Lev 8)

Here, YHWH lays out some very specific procedures for the initiation of Aaron and his descendants as High Priests. These actions would consecrate them for service as the High Priest of God. This passage is duplicated in all the above references, but actually takes place in its chronological sequence in the Leviticus passage. We will examine the events immediately following this in the next lesson.

Aaron and his four sons (Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar) come with Moses to the door of the tabernacle with offerings to God. The first offering is a bull as a sing offering, and then two rams and a basket of unleavened bread. Aaron and his sons are completely washed at the laver, and Aaron is girded with the garments of the High Priest. Additionally, he is anointed with oil as well as the entirety of the tabernacle and its items. The sin offering is made for Aaron with Moses performing the role of the priest doing the sacrifice according to the law of the sin offering. Following the sin offering, the first ram is offered as a burnt offering to God according to the law of the burnt offering. The second ram is a ram of consecration, and as opposed to the prior sacrifices, the blood of this ram is placed on Aaron and his sons directly. Finally, the wave offering or heave offering is performed on the basked of unleavened bread which is waved before YHWH. And concluding the ceremony, Aaron and his sons are to eat the flesh of the ram offering at the door of the tabernacle and stay for seven days inside the tabernacle. There they will “keep the charge of YHW so that you may not die” (Lev 8:35).

**Questions:**

1. The breastplate is made of 12 stones with the tribes of Israel written on them. What other famous item in the New Testament is very similar in description to this? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does the phrase “HOLINESS TO YHWH” mean that was inscribed on the High Priest’s turban? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Zech 14:20-21 seems to refer directly back to this phrase from the prior question. Do your best to interpret what the prophecy there is saying by using this clear reference to the High Priest’s turban. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Lev 8:14 refers to Aaron and his sons placing their hands on the sin offering. What does this action symbolize? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 12 – WORSHIP BEGINS**

**Reading: Lev 9-10; 24:10-23; 26:1-46; Numbers 7:1-89; 9:1-14**

**Suggested Reading:**

Leviticus 9 & 10

After seven days staying in the Tabernacle courts, on the eighth day Moses comes to Aaron to declare that YHWH is coming to present Himself to Aaron. In order to get ready, Aaron must offer sin offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings nearly identical to the process Moses had done to consecrate Aaron. However, now Aaron will be conducting these rituals for the first time. Aaron and Moses go into the tabernacle and come out together. As they come out YHWH’s Glory Cloud appears in the Tabernacle grounds and consumes all that still on the altar from the burnt offering prompting all the people to worship YHWH.

However, immediately after this, Nadab and Abihu each took a censer and put the holy incense in it with “strange fire”. YHWH immediately killed them by sending fire out again from His Cloud to burn Nadab and Abihu, and then reminded Aaron through Moses that “By those who come near Me, I must be regarded as holy.” What happened here exactly? Lev 16:12 commanded the fire for burning incense was to come directly from the fire on the altar for burnt offering. That altar had just been light by God’s own fire, which was to be kept kindled day and night forever. A similar command with similar wording as to what happened here is given in Ex 30:9. There are many other things we might surmise about the situation, but the only thing we know for sure is that the fire they used and the procedure for burning this incense was not followed according to the Law.

It would be the normal reaction of their father, Aaron, and their brothers, Eleazar and Ithamar, to grieve. However, they are still completely dedicated to YHWH and wearing their holy garments anointed with oil. Because of this, they are forbidden from grieving. Instead, Aaron’s first cousins come and carry out the bodies making them unclean so that Aaron may not be unclean on this day.

However, the complications for the day are not over. Aaron and his remaining sons are directed to now take the each of the offerings and to eat of them as their portion in the Tabernacle grounds. The goat of the sin offering was not eaten as was directed but was instead burnt up. This was not to the letter of what God had commanded to be done, and Moses was angry with Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Aaron responds that because of the events of the day, he could not have partaken of his portion of this offering with a joyful and thanksgiving heart as God would have commanded him. Instead, Aaron seeing the difficulty of fulfilling the law to the exact and his inability to keep it in Spirit, Aaron made a choice. It appears that Moses and God were satisfied with this.

Leviticus 10 is a very difficult passage to understand. In the first half, God righteously and quickly condemns Nadab and Abihu for following the wrong procedures in His worship. In the second half, Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar are given leniency when they do not follow the procedures of the law to the exact. How do we understand these two passages that occur back to back? Certainly we learn two lessons. First, God demands that everything be done according to His specification; those laws are important to obey. Second, God demands that all worship be done with a right heart; if they cannot be done with a right heart, it would be better that they were not done at all (Is 1:10-15).

Leviticus 24:10-23

Sometime after these events, a man who is half Egyptian and half Israelite is among the congregation of Israel. In fighting with another Israelite, he cursed YHWH and blasphemed the name YHWH. This serious offense was brought before the attention of Moses. As such, he was stoned to death outside the congregation by all the congregation. Furthermore, YHWH declares in this section a teaching that is often misused, an eye for an eye. Yet, God is not declaring the right for petty vengeance, but rather a command to Israel in determining punishment for those would break His laws. Additionally, we learn that the name of YHWH is to always be revered and treated as the name above every name.

Leviticus 26

This chapter is the roadmap of the history of Israel with three distinct sections. In the first section, God reminds His people that they are not fall prey to idolatry, and to keep the Sabbath and Tabernacle. If they do this, God’s blessing will manifest itself in every respect (verses 3-13). However, in the second section, if they disobeyed God’s will, He will punish them with every sort of punishment using very colorful and sometimes apocalyptic language (verses 14-39). In the final section, God reminds them of His covenant faithfulness if they return to Him. He will always remember His covenant and not cast them aside (verses 40-46). In reading this chapter, we can get a quick snapshot of the rest of the Bible and the history of what will happen to the Israelite people.

Numbers 7

We will not spend a great deal of time on this section. However, it should be noted that the leaders of the Israelites made great offerings for the service of God’s Tabernacle. These were given to the Levites for contribution to their work. Additionally, they gave generously for offerings of all kinds. Each leader of a tribe gave a gift for 12 days running. In total, the wealth that was given included: 12 silver platters, 12 silver bowls, 12 gold pans, 36 young bulls, 72 rams, 72 lambs and associated grain offerings, 72 goats.

Numbers 9:1-14

Another interesting legal quandary arises in this section. It is time once again for the second Passover to be kept in the first month on the fourteenth day as required by Law. However, as could certainly happen, people were dying as normal in the desert of Sinai. This made their relatives and those who assisted in the burial unclean when it was time to observe this feast. This was a great concern, and the issue was brought before Moses. Yet, YHWH ruled that the importance of keeping the feast outweighed any issue of uncleanness or those on a faraway journey.

**Questions:**

1. We don’t often think of God’s worship as serious business as the Israelites would have done at this time. In realistic steps, how do we begin to think more soberly about times we gather as God’s people to worship Him? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. God is obviously serious about His worship. It is interesting that the prohibition against drinking comes immediately after the sin of Nadab and Abihu in Lev 10:9-11. What do you think God is trying to teach? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Read again Lev 10:19 and then read 1 Cor 11:27-29. Is there any connection or lesson we might learn here? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. We have seen repeatedly the YHWH demands great respect for His name and great biblical characters are concerned for the name of YHWH. Why is this? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. There are several occasions in today’s lessons where there a legal difficulties in keeping the Law. How are these difficulties approached and what wisdom should we learn from this if we have trouble understanding or applying some portion of what God has instructed us today? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 13 – SOLDIERS AND LEVITES ORGANIZED; SIGNALS FOR THE CONGREGATION**

**Reading: Num 1-4; 6:22-27; 8:5-26; 9:15-10:10**

**Suggested Reading:**

Camping & Moving

In the first two chapters of Numbers, YHWH commands a census be taken of His armies. This army would comprise any male age 20 and above who can fight. Additionally, men are chosen to be leaders of the army for each tribe. The following is a table of the armies from the most populous to the least:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Judah | 74,600 |
| Dan | 62,700 |
| Simeon | 59,300 |
| Zebulun | 57,400 |
| Issachar | 54,400 |
| Naphtali | 53,400 |
| Reuben | 46,500 |
| Gad | 45,650 |
| Asher | 41,500 |
| Ephraim | 40,500 |
| Benjamin | 35,400 |
| Manasseh | 32,200 |

All told God’s Army consisted of 603,550 men which would have been a large fighting force dwelling the desert of Sinai. The Levites are not considered a part of the army as they are segregated for YHWH’s work.

Additionally, they were to camp in a specific arrangement everywhere they went. Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were to camp on the east side of the Tabernacle. These would protect and be nearest to the entrance of the Tabernacle. They broke camp first and were the first to head out from the Israelites. On the south, Reuben, Simeon, and Gad camped together. They followed the first group. After this group, the Tabernacle and the Levites would break camp and follow these first six tribes with the ark in the middle of the entire group. On the west, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin would camp. They would follow the ark and the Levites. Finally, to the north were Dan, Asher, and Napthali. These would be the last to break camp and follow all the rest.

The Israelites followed the Cloud of YHWH throughout the desert. It would settle over the Tabernacle and the Israelites would remain wherever it settled. However, when it lifted up and moved, the Israelites would move to wherever the cloud sent them. Num 9:22, gives us the hint that on occasion they would move often. At other times, they would stay in place for a very long time.

The Levites

Then, following the first census, YHWH commands a census of the Levites. The Levites were dedicated to God, but were also given over to the command of Aaron and his lineage. Addtionally, God had taken the Levites as a substitute for taking the firstborn of all the males in the congregation. The Levites were organized by house from the sons of the man Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The Gershonites were 7,500 males, and they were charged with caring for the Tabernacle itself and setting up the grounds. They were to be ruled by the house of Ithamar. The Kohathites were 8,600, and they were charged with caring for all the holy items within God’s Tabernacle. Additionally, they carried the holy items but were to be careful not to touch them. They were ruled by the house of Eleazar. Finally, the Merarites were about 6,200, and they were charged with carrying the structures and pillars of the tabernacle under the authority of Ithamar.

Before the Levites could actually serve in their given capacities, similar atonement had to be made as was made for Aaron. In Num 8:5-26, it is recorded the very familiar procedures and offerings. The Levites were taken from among the Israelites as a substitute offering instead of the firstborn of Israel. They were claimed when God passed over them in the land of Egypt. As they were claimed by God, God reserved the right to give them over to the house of Aaron.

**Questions:**

1. Why do you suppose that God ordered the taking of a census? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did YHWH say that He had the right to claim the firstborn of Israel, both man and beast? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. How were the Levites organized, and what were their duties by household? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Of what family within the tribe of Levi did Moses, Miriam, and Aaron descend? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. The High Priest was given a special blessing specifically for the Israelite people in Num 6:23-26. What did this blessing accomplish according to verse 27? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 14 – LAWS ON PRIESTS AND SACRIFICES**

**Reading:** See below in the Lesson Text & Review as needed

Sacrificial Law

1. Law of the Burnt Offering (Lev 1; 6:8-13; 8:18-21)
   1. Offerings were bulls, rams, doves or pigeons with no defect; wholly consumed by YHWH
   2. The purpose was to show devotion to YHWH as a voluntary act of worship; also served as atonement for unintentional sin
   3. YHWH consumed the entire sacrifice
   4. The priest’s portion was the skin of the animal
   5. The worshipper had no part of the sacrifice
2. Law of the Grain Offering (Lev 2; 6:14-23)
   1. Offerings were of grain, fine flour, oil (olive most likely), incense, baked bread, always had salt with the offering, but never had any leaven or honey
   2. The purpose was to show devotion to YHWH and thankfulness for His provision
   3. YHWH consumed the entire portion if it was an offering from priest; if it was from another man, the priest was allowed to take a “memorial portion” which is thought to be a handful
   4. The priest’s portion was to be consumed only in the tabernacle courts as it was holy
   5. The worshipper had no portion
3. Law of the Peace Offering (Lev 3; 7:11-34)
   1. Any animal of the heard without defect; could also be of bread
   2. The purpose was an act of thanksgiving and desired communion with YHWH; was also synonymous with vows and freewill offerings
   3. YHWH consumed the fatty portions of the offering
   4. The breast meat was for the High Priest; the right thigh would go to the priest conducting the sacrifice on behalf of the worshipper
   5. The worshipper’s portion varied depending on the type of peace offering
      1. Thanksgiving offerings: all the rest was to be eaten with none left over
      2. Vow & Freewill: could be eaten over the next couple of days; any left on the third day was to be completely burned
4. Law of the Sin Offering (Lev 4; 5:1-13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17; 16:3-22)
   1. Several options existed for the offering that differed depending on the sinner
      1. Young bull for the High Priest or the whole congregation (but not on the Day of Atonement); in this case the book was sprinkled in front of the veil and put on the altar of incense
      2. Male goat for a prince or elder and the blood was put on the altar of burnt offering
      3. Female goat for a common person and the blood was put on the altar of burnt offering
      4. Two Doves or pigeons for the poor and the blood was put on the altar of burnt offering; there are two animals here because a mandatory burnt offering was made in conjunction with the sin offering
      5. 1/10 Ephah of fine flour for the very poor
   2. The purpose was a commanded atonement for a specific unintentional sin
   3. YHWH consumed the fatty portions
   4. The priest’s portion also depended on the identity of the sinner:
      1. If the atonement was being made for the High Priest and the nation, then all ashes were taken outside the camp
      2. If the atonement was for others, the remainder was eaten in the tabernacle courts
   5. The worshipper had no part
5. The Trespass Offering (Lev 5:14-19; 6:1-7; 7:1-6)
   1. The offering here was always a ram
   2. The purpose was a commanded atonement for unintentional sin that required restitution; additionally, there was a 20% penalty valued in silver shekels by the priest
   3. YHWH consume the fatty portions
   4. The priest’s portion was everything else but it must be consumed in the tabernacle courts
   5. The worshipper had no part

In addition to these offerings, the priest would daily offer a lamb in the morning and a lamb in the evening. On the Sabbath, there are two lambs offered in the morning service. Additional offerings were made on the holy days, but these will be covered in more detail in the following lesson.

There is a typical order to these offerings. First before the worshipper can draw near, the offering for sin or trespass must be offered. Then, there was a burnt offering that was offered. Finally, the peace offering or grain offering is offered which gives the worshipper the opportunity to come near to YHWH and have a meal with Him.

Laws of the Priests (Lev 21:1-22:33; Numbers 10:8-11, 18:1-32)

There are many laws that relate to the priests. In fact, the book of Leviticus really bears its name from the Greek Septuagint title which meant “that which pertains to the Levites”. Even the Talmud referred to Leviticus as “the Law of the Priests”. This book is really synonymous with instructions largely given to priests about how to live, do their jobs, and generally be a chosen tribe amongst the chosen people of YHWH. Obviously we cannot cover their regulations in great detail, and I would encourage you to go back and briefly review lessons 10-12.

The passages Lev 21 & 22:1-16 as well as Numbers 10:8-11 are some the passages that give direct instruction to how a priest was to live his life. There are special regulations on caring for the dead, who he can marry, who may serve in the work of the tabernacle, and several other ordinances. In general, all the passages are directed at keeping the priesthood holy. Perhaps the best verse is the end of 21:7-8 which says, “… for the priest is holy to his God. Therefore you shall consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I YHWH, who sanctify you, am holy.”

The passage of Numbers 18:1-7 and Lev 22:17-33 specifically details how the priests are to do their work in YHWH. Their work was the most serious as it determined the entire nation’s standing before God. As such, they were responsibility for evaluating all the offerings to be made to YHWH. The worshipper depended upon the priest to conduct these offerings exactly as YHWH commanded for the worshipper’s service to YHWH to be accepted. This is exactly why the offenses of the sons of Eli in 1 Samuel 2 are extremely serious.

Finally, in reward for their diligent service, the Levites and priests were allowed great compensation for their work. Numbers 18:8-32 record how the offerings given were for the support of priests. Additionally, the Jewish people were commanded to tithe of all they have. Thus, 10% of the riches of the entire nation of 12 tribes went to the full time support of one tribe. If the Israelites were faithful to the commandments of God, the Levites would have been among the wealthiest in the land despite having no allotted lands. Their great reward symbolized the serious nature of their occupations.

**Questions**

All the offerings in some way prefigure a perfect single offering in Jesus. What elements of the burnt offering prefigure Christ’s sacrifice? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In the above text, we mention an order that typically comes with completing these sacrifices. How is that fulfilled in the Christian? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What’s the difference between a sin offering and a trespass offering? When is each appropriate? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

All Christians are priests today in the kingdom of God. Does YHWH allow priests to eat from sacrifices today? What New Testament passages support your position? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 15 – LAWS REGARDING HOLY DAYS, FEASTS, AND CLEANLINESS**

**Reading: Several passages in text below**

Feast Days and High Holy Days to YHWH

In Gen 1:14, God creates the heavenly bodies to determine the seasons and times. Additionally, they are for “signs” which is the Hebrew word “oth”. This word when parsed out into its Hebrew characters literally means “the leader nailed to a cross.” In our previous Genesis lessons, I mentioned that we would discuss how the lights of the heavens would be a sign pointing toward the coming of the Christ to be sacrificed on a cross. This fulfillment is in the feast schedule of the Israelites.

There are seven high holy feast days declared by YHWH in the OT. The primary text that governs their times and purposes in Lev 23. However, their ultimate purpose is a dress rehearsal for the coming ultimate salvation to be found in the new covenant age. Each time one of these feasts is celebrated, the Israelites are announcing a coming of something more significant than their covenant which implied that the Jewish age would close and “the age to come” would follow.

The first feast is the feast of the Passover which we covered in great detail in lesson four. I would encourage you to go back and study it. However, we should mention a few points by way of reminder. Remember that this feast kicked off the year for Israel. Additionally, it mirrored the future sacrifice of Christ as the ultimate Passover. Similarly, this kicks off the redemptive calendar of God in the first century AD.

The second feast is the feast of the Unleavened Bread. On the 15th of Nisan, this feast began and lasted for seven days. There were really very few regulations, but amongst the most emphasized is the fact that no leaven was to be found amongst the Israelites in these days. The Israelites left in great haste after the first Passover and before the completion of the days of the Unleavened Bread, their enemies were drowned in the Red Sea. This feast prefigures our hastened deliverance from our own Egypt, the kingdom of sin and death.

The third feast is the Feast of the First Fruits. Note that this feast did not begin its observance until the Israelites entered the land. The first fruit was offered at the same time as a burnt offering, a meal offering, and a drink offering. Also it is important to note that there is no exact date given for this feast except that it was to be done on the day after the Sabbath, a Sunday. This exactly pre-figures the first fruit being harvested in the new covenant age, Christ’s resurrection from the dead which also occurred on a Sunday.

The fourth feast is the Feast of Pentecost. We are most familiar with this day because of Acts 2 occurring on Pentecost. It is also called the Feast of Weeks as it is exactly seven weeks from the First Fruits and was a high Sabbath with a number of offerings made as detailed in Lev 23:15-22. You will recall that in Acts, Jesus was with the disciples for 40 days, and in the ten days before Acts 2, they chose a 12th Apostle. Thus when Pentecost came, there were 12 Apostles that symbolized a new beginning of Israel. The Feast of Weeks symbolized the beginning of the summer wheat harvest. Just as the Israelites would begin to harvest their wheat, YHWH began to harvest souls with the Apostles.

The first four feasts take place in the spring and summer months. Then there is a period of four months before the next feast. This indicates a short interval of time between this and the next event in YHWH’s redemptive calendar. However, after this would be three feasts that conclude the redemption of God’s people. The next feast is the feast of trumpets. This feast is celebrated on the first day of the seventh month and was marked by blowing of trumpets. Additionally it was a high Sabbath in which there was no work to be done. It was marked by watchfulness as two witnesses would report back to the High Priest that there was a New Moon beginning the seventh month (the Jewish calendar was partially lunar). What does this feast prefigure? Countless Old Testatment and New Testament passages mention that the coming of the Christ would be preceded by the blowing of trumpets (Matt 24:31, 1 Cor 15:52, 1 Thess 4:16). Many would be watching for it, even though there was a general idea of when it was coming but without specificity.

The sixth feast is the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) which deserves greater treatment than I can give here. However, on the tenth day of the seventh month, there is again a high Sabbath day, solemn fasting, and offerings made by the High Priest where he would enter the Holiest place to come in direct contact with the Ark of the Covenant. In the Old Covenant, the nation’s sins were covered over for another year. Yet, in the second coming of Christ, all sins are truly atoned for. The veil of the temple not made with hands is flung open. We all come into the very presence of YHWH where the High Priest has already entered.

Finally, we end with the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles. In this feast, Israel is commanded to dwell in tabernacles outside the city on the fifteenth of the seventh month. It is a seven day rest and festival of offerings to YHWH. All the crops have been harvested and brought into the barn. This is the accomplishment of the New Covenant. All the saints are delivered to YHWH and He dwells among them in harmony as they abide in the Son. This is the accomplished state of the end of Revelation. It is the point at which the entire Bible is driving, YHWH among His people in an unhindered state by regulation, sin, or uncleanliness.

Cleanliness

Speaking of cleanliness, we’ll end this lesson with a brief discussion on cleanliness. Much of cleanliness dealt with the food regulations of the Israelites. Other portions dealt with items that were declared unclean defiling persons ceremonially. We should note that cleanliness was often associated with purity and uncleanliness did not necessarily mean someone had sinned. In fact, many normal events of life and regular bodily functions defiled people that were often beyond their control. Rather uncleanness typically refers to ceremonial uncleanness and therefore ineligible to stand in service to YHWH, particularly among the priests.

Many people will note that some of these requirements were great because of their physical health benefits. While that is true, that is not the primary purpose of God’s ruling on what is clean and what is not clean. What is the purpose? It seems that God wanted His people to be holy and distinct from other cultures as YHWH is distinct and holy, different and apart from all other “gods”.

**Questions:**

Leviticus 23 starts with the phrase “holy convocation”. What does the word convocation mean in the original Hebrew? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Why would God proclaim feast days in the first place for the Israelites to celebrate? What does Leviticus say? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If a man or woman was unclean, did the man or woman sin causing this uncleanness? On the opposite end, if a man or woman did sin, were they unclean? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What are some animals that Israelites could not eat? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What was the process for dealing with leprosy in Israel? How did they cure leprosy? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 16 – LAWS REGARDING VOWS, JUSTICE, RELATIONSHIPS**

**Reading:**

Vows:

Vows were a more common occurrence in the Israelite society compared to ours. In fact, we would compare it to our modern day contracts. You may not have had a chance to examine many contracts in your life, but they are extremely complex and written in language less common than what we would normally use. Why is this so? Contracts are this way because those making agreements have frequently sought any number of ways to remove themselves from what they were contractually agreeing to do. This is the default position in our society today.

However, what does YHWH command of His people in the Old Covenant? It is laid out no better than in Duet 23:21 and following which says, “*When you make a vow to YHWH your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for YHWH your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you. But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you. That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to YHWH your God what you have promised with your mouth*.” Was this admonition limited to vows made to YHWH? Obviously not. First, vows made to another individual in the Israelite society often carried YHWH as witness and party to the vow. Second, the Old Testament prohibited lying and defrauding your neighbor in any number of forms.

Additionally, there are other texts that govern the specific carrying out of vows. Leviticus 27 in its entirety is about the valuation and careful carrying out of vows. Numbers 6 pertains to the vow of the Nazirite which is a vow that any Israelite person (man or woman) may take for a limited period of time. These vows also were very serious in nature and carried specific, detailed actions that were required of the parties.

Justice

YHWH is exemplified in His many traits of which one is justice. He is pictured over and over again as a just Judge who determines right and wrong. Furthermore, YHWH lays out specific case law for the Israelites to determine justice and how they may treat each other and the non-Israelites dwelling in their midst. Although there are many sections of the Law that we could dwell upon to exhibit these cases, we will focus on just a few.

Leviticus 19 in large part deals with God’s provision and justice for certain members of society. He gives an allotment of the harvest for the poor. He prohibits lying and cheating. YHWH protects the disabled like the deaf and the blind. Leviticus 25:23-55 is another passage that deals largely with property law. Included in this law are normal parameters, but also some extraordinary law like laws about slavery. However, the Law was not meant to keep its adherents poor or slaves, but clearly gave provision to make them free.

Relationships

Following on the heels of the Law regarding justice is Law regarding relationships. Obviously when we think of this concept of the Law, our minds immediately go to our relationship with everyone in the community. The overarching law concerning these relationships is also found in Leviticus 19 in verse 18 which says, “*… you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am YHWH*.” All other commands regarding our relationships with our fellow man flow out of this centralized command.

Yet, YHWH does go ahead and give further details regarding particular relationships. Many of these regard marital law and sexual prohibitions. These are particularly important then as they are now, because they often affect the individual family units that make up the people of God. For instance, all of Leviticus 18 details prohibitions against all kinds of inappropriate sexual relations including homosexuality, bestiality, incest, and adultery. These defile the land and the inhabitants of the land. Duet 24:1-4 details out the specific laws regarding how to conduct a divorce appropriately, regulations that would become greatly abused in later days. Duet 25:5-10 details out how to deal with a widow who has no children and providing children so that no house from Israel would be cutoff.

**LESSON 17 – FROM MOUNT SINAI TO KADESH**

**Reading: Num 10:11-12:16**

**Suggested Reading:**

In all this time, the people have stayed near Mount Sinai. However, now on the 20th day of the second month of the second year, the Israelites are going to begin their journey to the Land. They went out according to the very process that God had prescribed. Moses asks his brother-in-law, Hobab, to accompany the Israelites and come to Canaan with them. Presumably, Hobab as well as Ruel had seen all the miracles in the desert and were most likely convinced of the power of YHWH. Yet, Hobab refuses to leave Midian, but does agree to aid the Israelites as they go through the wilderness as he was familiar with the territory.

Despite all YHWH’s wonderful acts, the people again begin to grumble against God. God sends a fire that began on the outskirts of the camp killing people. What were they grumbling about? We are told that they were craving some other food, specifically meat, besides the manna from heaven. Apparently, their grumbling was so intense, that Moses makes a rather desperate plea to God to relieve himself from their tiresome ways.

Yet, God is greatly displeased with the people in essentially saying that they were better cared for in Egypt than by God in the wilderness. God instructs Moses to bring 70 elders before Him, and He will place the Spirit upon them which rested upon Moses. Also, since they wanted meat, God declared that they would eat meat for a whole month until it become loathsome. However, again Moses displays some lack of faith at the staggering amount of food that would be required to feed all the people for a month. God rebukes Moses for his lack of belief as Moses had seen far greater acts than this simple feat.

Moses goes out and informs that people of God’s decision to bring them meat, and to recruit the 70 elders of Israel. All but two came forth most likely to the Tabernacle grounds to receive the Spirit. These prophesied before YHWH. There is some ambiguity in the language about whether these men only prophesied here at this occasion, or another possibility is that from this time forward they did not cease to speak prophetically. The language can be rendered either way. Yet, the two men in the camp of the Israelites received the Spirit anyways and also began to prophesy. This was viewed as an affront to Moses’ leadership as Joshua pleaded with Moses to forbid them. However, Moses would not wishing that everyone could prophesy.

A great wind stirred up and brought quail from out over the Red Sea. Tire quail caught up in the wind, flew down to the earth and fluttered about the camp of the Israelites for a day’s journey (maybe some 20 miles in all directions). Not only that, but the quail were roughly 2’ to 3’ deep in all these directions. The people went out to gather the quail that YHWH had provided only to be struck with a great plague because of their lack of faith and grumbling.

However, it was not only the common Israelite people that were caught up in the grumbling. Aaron and Miriam grumbled against Moses because he had married a Cushite woman, a person most likely despised by the Israelites. Aaron and Miriam reasoned amongst each other that they were both blessed of God to be prophets, and that this put them on par with Moses. However, YHWH rebukes them in front of Moses at the Tabernacle saying that His revelations to Moses were very different than His revelation to them. As punishment, Miriam is struck with leprosy on the spot in the holy place and next to Aaron the High Priest. Yet Moses intervenes in prayer on behalf of his sister to save her life. Yet still, because of her uncleanness, she is cast out of the camp of the Israelites for seven days. During this time, the Israelites held their place waiting for Miriam to be restored to the camp.

**Questions:**

1. When we read the words of the Israelites in 11:4-6, who are they insulting? Likewise, when we wish to return to our own Egypt of sin, what are we saying to the God who leads us? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. There is a great deal in these chapters about Moses as the leader. What do you think of Moses’ speech to God in 11:11-15? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why would Joshua want Moses to forbid these two men for prophesying in the camp of Israel in 11:28? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do we learn about prophecy in general in 12:6-8? What do we learn that was so special of Moses? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. We often credit Moses with writing most if not all of the Pentateuch. Do you think Moses wrote 12:3? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is God referring to shaming Miriam in 12:14? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
7. Who determines what we have physically in this life? When we complain about how much we have or do not have, what are we really saying? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 18 – SPIES VIEW THE LAND**

**Reading: Numbers 13-14**

**Suggested Reading:**

In the last lesson, after the incident with Miriam, the people of Israel have come to the wilderness that is Paran. From here, God instructs his Moses to send out spies to view the Promised Land. These spies were to be leaders from each tribe of the children of Israel. Amongst this group is Moses’ assistant, Joshua (who is also called Hoshea) and has already featured prominently in the main stories of the book of Exodus from the time of Mount Sinai. Amongst this list of men, we will also recognize the name of Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, who will feature prominently going forward and into the book of Judges.

The primary focus of their investigation would be to answer several questions. First, what are the quality and quantity of the people living in the land? Second, what is the quality of the land itself and its agriculture? Third, are their cities that are defensible in battle or do they live in open communities? They were to go in through the southern dry area of the Negev and go up toward the hilly country which is more the central of the land of Canaan. Additionally, they were to bring back fruits of the land as evidence of the produce they saw.

The spies are successful in viewing the land undetected by the Canaanites. This most likely was a dangerous mission as we find out that the Canaanites are in fear of the Israelites looming on their borders. They would have been on the lookout for Israelites moving through their lands. Scriptures point out two primary things they found: fruit and the descendants of Anak. They did gather grapes, pomegranates, and figs from the area around the Valley of Eschol (meaning cluster) as it was harvest time for these fruits.

After forty days, the spies returned from their journey and gave a report before Moses, Aaron, and all the people. In showing the fruit of the land, the spies verified that the land was as bountiful as God had promised for many years. However, the cities were fortified and had dwelling in their midst the sons of Anak, Amalekites whom the Israelites had already fought, Hittites, and other nations living in their borders. These names particularly stood out because these nations were already well known for their military prowess.

It appears from the dialogue that the people made audible noises of discouragement. Caleb of Judah had to quiet the people and then encouraged his brothers with great confidence they would take the land. However, the other men immediately said that they should not go up because of the fortresses and the giants (Nephilim) that were there. Furthermore, they said the land devours its inhabitants contradicting their previous statements of its abundance.

Great fear seized the Israelite people from the report of the other spies. That fear eclipsed any faith they might have had in YHWH, and they began to immediately blame Moses and Aaron (and by extension YHWH too) for bringing them up from Egypt only to die by the sword in Canaan. One statement that particularly will come back to haunt the Israelites is in 14:3 stating that their children would become slaves to the inhabitants of that land. So severe was their loss of faith, that they wanted to appoint a new leader to replace Moses and return them to Egypt. They would run from the God who redeemed them from Egypt only to put themselves back into slavery and reject God’s redemption.

Moses and Aaron upon hearing their complaints which lasted all night, fall flat on their faces. Joshua and Caleb tear their clothes and plead with the people using logic mixed with faith. Surely the God who brought them so far through the desert would not fail to give them the Land now? They admonish not only should the Israelites not be afraid, but in fact the inhabitants of the land should be afraid of them. In a dramatic scene, it appears that the Israelites are ready to stone the four of them when God appears at the Tabernacle.

YHWH appears and openly threatens to wipe out the entire congregation and start back with Moses as a new Abraham to begin His nation. However, Moses once again saves the entire congregation by calling upon God to have honor for His name so the Egyptians do not blaspheme. Additionally, the Canaanites will not fear YHWH either because they will presume He is too weak to bring the Israelites in. Finally, Moses calls upon the YHWH’s own description of Himself to exercise his great patience and lovingkindness on this people.

**Questions:**

1. Why do you suppose God sent out spies into the Land? God did not need their intel, but what purpose did you suppose it served? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why is it ironic that the Israelites complain that their children would become slaves to the Canaanites? Who ends up conquering the Canaanites? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. This passage says much about the relationship between faith and fear. Describe how one impacts the other. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. God redeemed Israel from the hand of Pharaoh. What does this mean? What does it mean when the Israelites want to go back to be under the hand of Pharaoh? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. God redeems Christians from slavery to sin. Sometimes, Christians declare their preference to be enslaved by sin. What does this say to God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 19 – WILDERNESS WANDERING**

**Reading: Num 15:32-36; 16:1-17:13; 20:1-21:35**

**Suggested Reading:**

Brief Note

In today’s lesson we will be discussing some well-known stories to many Christians about certain events that occurred after Israel’s failure to take the Land. Notice in each story the common traits of Moses and of the Israelites, and God’s response to each. These events are included as warnings to each of us about how we conduct ourselves in this life.

Sabbath Breaker

Our text begins with a simple story of a man gathering firewood on the Sabbath. You will recall that keeping the Sabbath holy was a basic command included in the Ten Commandments. When he was found doing this, he was taken in to custody. YHWH then ruled that this man was to be stoned outside the camp for his sin. All the people gathered and carried out the sentence.

Korah and the Rebellion

Korah, a Levite of the Kohathites, along with Dathan, Abiram, and On (all of whom were Reubenites) gathered some 250 leaders of the Israelites to rebel against Moses and Aaron. Their primary charge was that they had set themselves up as more holy than the rest of the congregation as YHWH from their reasoning dwelt in the midst of their congregation. Moses seems both sorrowful and enraged by their actions, and sets up a “contest” to see whom YHWH has chosen as holy. Each man of this group was to take a censer and burn YHWH’s incense upon it at the Tabernacle door. Furthermore, Moses rebukes these Levites who probably figured prominently among the 250 men, for grasping even further than what God had allowed even though He had chosen the Levites as His tribe. As a last insult, when Moses calls to speak with Dathan and Abiram, they do not go up to speak with Moses; instead, they accuse Moses of failing to bring them into Canaan.

The following day, the contest ensued with each Levite man represented at the Tabernacle. YHWH initially speaks to Moses and Aaron desiring to destroy the entire nation. However, Moses persuades YHWH to only destroy those who had sinned directly in the rebellion. At God’s instruction, Moses leaves the Tabernacle to go out to the congregation and warn them to move away from the tents of Dathan and Abiram. After cursing them, the ground immediately opens and swallows all of their belongings and families. At the Tabernacle, fire from YHWH immediately consumed the 250 men offering incense against YHWH’s wishes in a scene very similar to the incident with Nadab and Abihu who committed a similar sin.

As a warning against future rebels, Eleazar was directed to gather the censers with the incense offered by the rebels. YHWH ruled that the censers themselves were holy as they were offered to Him; however, the men were not holy. As such, these golden censers were added onto the altar specifically as reminder that God had declared specifically who is holy to come near and offer incense to him.

Yet, this warning did not work. On the following day, a large group of Israelites confronted Moses and Aaron for *causing* the deaths of Korah and those Levites. Once again, YHWH desires to kill the entire congregation and sends a plague that immediately breaks out among them. Moses quickly has Aaron take incense and holy fire from the altar and stands in the middle of the congregation where the plague was spreading. Aaron quickly became the dividing line between those who were dying and those who were being spared. Still the plague had quickly killed 14,700 people.

The Rod of Aaron Buds

YHWH, growing tired of the near constant rebellion, instructs each tribe to bring their leader’s rod to the Tabernacle. Additionally, Aaron’s rod was put amongst the other rods. They were put inside the Tabernacle overnight. On the following day, Moses retrieved the rods, and all the congregation saw that Aaron’s rod had become living, producing buds of almonds and blossoms. YHWH’s rod was placed inside the Tabernacle as a testament against any further rebellions. Additionally, because of the events, the Israelites were terrified of the Tabernacle as it seemed any who approached the holy place were dying.

Water at Meribah & Important Deaths

Once again, the Israelites came to a place where there was no water. They grumbled again against Moses and Aaron, and again faulted them with the failure to lead them to the land of Canaan. Moses was instructed to go with Aaron, take the blooming rod, and speak to a rock that will bring forth water. Moses, obviously greatly wearied from their rebellions, goes out and strikes the rock. Water comes forth for the whole congregation. However, Moses and Aaron are rebuked by God for failing to treat YHWH as holy before Israel. Their punishment was to die before entering the Land.

The question has long been asked, what was the fault of Moses? Obviously he struck the rock when God commanded that Moses should speak to it. However, YHWH seems to rebuke Moses for a lack of faith; yet that doesn’t match up with the facts of the story. We need to read into the situation to get a hint of the possible answer. YHWH says that Moses’ lack of faith stemmed from the fact that Moses did not treat YHWH as holy. There are many possibilities as to exactly what happened and how this occurred, but YHWH simply lays this judgment at the feet of Moses. There is also not a hint that Moses or Aaron disagreed or complained about the judgment either.

Finally, we should also note that both Miriam and Aaron die in chapter 20. Miriam dies and is buried at Kadesh. She was likely very old as she was Moses’ older sister. Additionally, Aaron dies nearby on Mount Hor. Aaron’s priestly robes are given to Eleazar on Mount Hor, and then it seems that YHWH causes Aaron to die on the mountain. The entire nation mourned his passing for 30 days.

International Relations & War

During this same time, the Israelites were near Kadesh and needing to go through the lands of Edom. Edom, which was a brother nation to Israel, would not allow them to come through even with a long list of concessions. In fact, they put their army along the border to ensure that the Israelites would not come through. Israel did not pass through their lands, but this disrespect is noted by the Israelites and YHWH.

Additionally, the king of Arad who reigned over the southern Negev heard that Israel was near his border. He attacks the Israelites and manages to take some of them captive. However, Israel makes a covenant with YHWH to put this group of Canaanites under the ban which devoted all their plunder to YHWH. After making the vow, Israel completely destroys them, and the place where they were destroyed was called Hormah, meaning “utter destruction”.

Finally, it is also recorded that Israel made war with Sihon king of the Amorites. This Sihon had captured cities from the Moabites. The Israelites destroyed these Amorites and dwelt in the former cities of the Moabites during this time of their wandering. This land actually is set aside for Rueben in the divison of the land. Also, they went to war with Og king of Bashan who appears to be a giant according to Duet 3. This time YHWH instructed Israel to completely destroy Og who reigned over 60 cities that were highly fortified.

The Bronze Serpent

Finally, we will look at the story of the bronze serpent. Once again the Israelites complained against God and Moses even going so far as to demean the very bread God was providing them from heaven. Scripture states that YHWH sent fiery serpents which bit the people and they were dying. In order to save the people, YHWH had Moses create a bronze serpent on a pole. All anyone had to do to live was look to the bronze serpent.

Obviously, this bronze serpent is a metaphor for so many things in the Bible. First and foremost, it is symbolic of Christ who would similarly be nailed to a cross and lifted up (John 3:14-16) so that all who would look on Him in faith would live having been bitten by the Serpent. The parallels to the ultimate story of YHWH’s struggle with Satan, the fiery serpent, are uncanny. However, in later years as recorded in 2 Kings 18:4, the Jewish people were worshipping the fiery serpent as an idol as opposed to the symbol of power and salvation it represented. Similarly, we are reminded that even the symbols and forms of Christianity can become idols, disconnected from the true underlying power they represent.

**Questions:**

1. We have seen rebellions against Moses and God throughout many lessons. In today’s lesson or even prior lessons, what sins do you see the Israelites committing that lead them to outright rebellion? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Korah cast glances at his kinsmen, Moses and Aaron, with covetousness, a difficult sin to define sometimes. What does this mean? How do we guard against covetousness in our own lives? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why **exactly** was Moses not allowed to enter the Promised Land? Read that account closely in Numbers 20. What actions or inaction do you think Moses is rebuked for in verse 12? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Obviously the bronze serpent was not magical. What saved the lives of the Israelites who looked at it? How does that work exactly? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. There are several pictures that YHWH is trying to illustrate or foreshadow in the bronze serpent. Name as many as you can think of here: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
6. What symbols of Christianity have become idols or even “good luck” charms completely disconnected from their meaning? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 20 – BALAK & BALAAM; SIN AT PEOR**

**Reading: Num 22-25; 31**

Balaam & Balak

As you will recall from our last lesson, the Israelites have now faced several different peoples in battle and been victorious, particularly against the Amorites. Their victories and their growing reputation as a vast nation camped just beyond the Jordan causes a great stir among the surrounding nations. As you may recall from your study of Genesis, the Moabite people came to be from the incest of Lot and his daughters after they fled from Sodom and Gomorrah. This makes them a cousin nation to the Israelites who had come to dwell in this same area. Additionally, the people of Midian lived in the same region nearby Moab. They are of the line of Abraham from his wife Keturah, another cousin nation to both the Moabites and the Israelites.

The Moabites and Midianites greatly feared for their security as well as the availability of resources in the area. Balak, king of the Moabites, consults with the elders of Midian and to have Balaam, a seer or diviner, come and curse the Israelites so that the Moabites could defeat Israel in battle. The elders of both nations are sent as representatives with a fee that was common to give to seers for their services.

But who is this Balaam? Judging from the text, it appears that he was a greatly well-known prophet that lived near the Euphrates River, a great distance from Moab. Yet, his reputation for his ability to bless and curse (obviously prophetically) was well known amongst nations far away. The implications of such persons as Melchizedek and Jethro who seem to be familiar with YHWH but live apart from the covenant nation of Israel can be overwhelming and hard to understand. Yet, it is obvious from the Old Testament that God did not completely cut Himself off from relationships with people across the ancient near East despite the fact that Israel was God’s chosen people to fulfill His covenant of salvation with mankind.

Is Balaam like these other two men who might have served YHWH in some way, or is he simply an enchanter like the famous witch at Endor? The text is not clear and there are arguments for either interpretation. On the one hand, the text reads in several places that Balaam expects to receive a vision from YHWH and is a faithful prophet when he does receive such visions. On the other hand, passages like 24:1-2, make it seem as though Balaam engaged in some form of sorcery to receive such visions on a normal basis that is wholly inconsistent with YHWH’s other prophets.

In either case, these elders and princes journeyed far and most likely paid a handsome price to receive the blessing of Balaam. Balaam asks them to stay with him in his house that night assuming that YHWH would come to him in a vision. YHWH comes and instructs Balaam to not curse the Israelites as they are blessed. Balaam rejects the elders. However, Balak is undeterred and sends even greater princes with promises of great honor if Balaam comes to curse the Israelites. Balaam’s answer in 22:18-19 is a mixed bag of faith mixed with greed. In response, Balaam understands that he must obey the word of YHWH; yet, it seems the promise of great honor and riches was enough of a temptation to cause Balaam to appeal to YHWH once more on the answer he had already been given. YHWH instructs Balaam to go with the men, but to only speak the words given him.

Balaam’s Donkey

However, YHWH was angry with Balaam and sent the Angel of YHWH to stand against Balaam in his path. Balaam was riding his donkey, and the donkey saw the angel in the path with a sword drawn. On two separate occasions, the donkey seeing the danger ahead drove off the path to avoid certain death for his master. Finally, with nowhere left to turn, the donkey merely lay down and refused to go further. Balaam was enraged with his animal and began to beat the donkey with his staff. YHWH then caused the donkey to speak causing Balaam’s eyes to be opened seeing the Angel before him. Balaam realized his sin and offered to repent by returning to his house. However, YHWH’s plan involved Balaam going ahead with the men of Moab.

Balaam’s prophecy

After arriving in the land of Moab, Balak and Balaam as well as many princes ascended to a high place where seven altars are built to call upon YHWH as Balaam looks out over the Israelites in the valley below. This process is repeated three times, each time with a successive and even greater prophetic blessing upon the Israelites. The third time actually includes two completely separate prophecies. Although we cannot examine each in detail, we should mention a few key elements of each prophecy.

In the first prophecy which can be found in 23:7-10, Balaam draws attention to the fact that Israel is holy and set apart from the other nations. In other words, it was clear that this people were very different from the nations around it which is perhaps another reason why they were feared and hated. Additionally, we see a fulfillment of the promise to the Patriarchs as Balaam declares that the number of this people is as dust, calling us back to a metaphor of sand on the seashore. Finally, Balaam points to his own death as coming at the hand of Israel as we shall see later.

In the second prophecy found in 23:18-24, Balaam declares the immutability of God’s decree and promises regarding Israel. God is not a man that He would either lie or change his mind about His plans. Furthermore, the shout of “the King” is among them, even comparing the people to lions ready to prey on the nations around them.

Finally, in the last place, Balaam is overcome by the Spirit and offers up a third and fourth blessing in chapter 24. In the third blessing, Balaam declares that the dwelling place of the Israel is lovely because it is planted and watered by YHWH and further implies that their dwelling place is also the dwelling place of YHWH. The king of Israel will be greater than Agag (either prophetically speaking of the king of the Amalekites which Saul/Samuel will conquer or that Agag is the title of the Amalekite king even in that day) and that they will be victorious over their enemies.

In the final prophecy, Balaam declares that he will make known what will happen in the latter days not just to Israel but to other nearby pagan nations. This is a common expression and points toward the time of the end or the last days of the New Testament. Hence, we should be looking for Messianic prophecy as the time of the latter days will be the latter days of the Jews. We do not have to read too far into the prophecy to see the clear declaration of the coming of the Messiah, God’s Anointed one. He is the “Star of Jacob” and a “Scepter” that will break in pieces the other nations where he will have dominion.

Sin with Midian at Peor

The Israelites stayed in this region a long time and began to intermarry and commit harlotry with the women of Moab and Midian. This brought in the sin of idolatry to the camp of Israel. YHWH told Moses to hang the sinners in the camp and also sent a plague amongst the Israelites killing 24,000. The plague was only halted when Phinehas, son of Eleazar speared Zimri, a leader of the Simeonites, and his wife Cozbi, a daughter of the leaders of Midian. Because of this, the line of Phinehas was blessed to keep the High Priesthood in his line of Aaron’s descendants.

Additionally, chapter 25 ends with the command to attack Midian in response to Midian’s attempt to “seduce” Israel after its idols. However, this attack is not actually recorded until we get to chapter 31. In that chapter, 12,000 men are recruited to go to war with Phinehas. They killed all the males and the five kings of Midian. Additionally, it appears that Balaam was still among them and was killed in the battle. Yet, the officers kept alive all the women. Moses was angry with them as it was the women who caused the seduction. Moses declared that they go through the camp and kill all the male children and any woman who was not a virgin.

Finally, the chapter ends with a detailed account of the division of the spoils of war. Essentially, it was split evenly amongst those who went to war and the rest of the congregation. However, YHWH declared a tribute to Him from both halves. Yet, the tribute was greater from those who had not gone to war. In this way, YHWH cared for His people, enriched them, and brought judgment on the nearby nation of Midian that sought to pull Israel away from its God.

**Questions:**

1. Why is God angry with Balaam after He specifically told Balaam to go with the men from Balak? What implications do you think this has for us when we pray for things from God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. In what way is Balaam actually a good prophet when he receives a vision from God? What phrase does he continue to utter to Balak and Balak’s messengers about what he can and cannot say? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it mean in chapter 25 that certain men were joined to Baal of Peor? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Many people will look at a passage like 31:17-18 and declare that the God of the Old Testament was cruel or that even this reflects very poorly on YHWH. What would you say to people who make assertions based on passages like this? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 21 – OTHER EVENTS AT THE PLAINS OF MOAB**

**Reading: Num 26-27; 32-36**

A Second Census

You may recall back in Lesson 13 and at the beginning of the book of Numbers, God ordered a census be taken of the fighting men of Israel. In chapter 26, God again orders a census, and the writer of Numbers is careful to note that this census occurs after the plague which killed 24,000 from last class. In essence, this is the group of people who will inherit the Promised Land after their parent’s had refused to enter out of fear and lack of faith. The following is a chart comparing the two censuses that are taken:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tribe** | **First Census** | **Second Census** | **Difference** |
| Judah | 74,600 | 76,500 | 1,900 |
| Dan | 62,700 | 64,400 | 1,700 |
| Simeon | 59,300 | 22,200 | (37,100) |
| Zebulun | 57,400 | 60,500 | 3,100 |
| Issachar | 54,400 | 64,300 | 9,900 |
| Naphtali | 53,400 | 45,400 | (8,000) |
| Reuben | 46,500 | 43,730 | (2,770) |
| Gad | 45,650 | 40,500 | (5,150) |
| Asher | 41,500 | 53,400 | 11,900 |
| Ephraim | 40,500 | 32,500 | (8,000) |
| Benjamin | 35,400 | 45,600 | 10,200 |
| Manasseh | 32,200 | 52,700 | 20,500 |
| Totals | 603,550 | 601,730 | (1,820) |

There are a few interesting notes that are recounted in the census. It notes that the families of Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up completely in the desert during Korah’s rebellion. However, Korah’s children did not die. Additionally, looking at the census data above, you will notice that Simeon greatly decrease in number while Manasseh increased the most. What happened? No one knows for certain and there is a great deal of speculation on both. A popular and plausible suspicion regarding Simeon is that the plague which killed 24,000 was primarly or entirely of Simeonites as Phinehas killed a Simeonite leader. It can also be assumed that the plague started there and ended there judging from the wording in 25:8-9 and knowing that the Israelites camped by tribe.

However, more important are what the Scripture say regarding the division of the land as inheritance. Tribes were to be given land according to their size but also divided up by lot. This is why we cannot find the land of Simeon on a tribal map; they were given certain cities that existed within Judah. Additionally, we are reminded that the 23,000 Levites received no land inheritance. Finally, the end of the chapter affirms that YHWH had successfully removed all those amongst the Israelites who had previously refused to enter the land. Therefore, we can assume outside of Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, the next oldest Israelite was only approximately 59 at the time of the second census.

One additional fact does stand out from our second census in 26:33 for which half of chapter 27 and the entirety of chapter 36 is devoted. A certain family of the Hepherites (who were all of Manasseh) consisted of only five daughters. This must have been rare for this case law to only be developed at this point in the nation’s history, or perhaps, they were the first to press for an inheritance among women in the camp. YHWH agrees with the cause of the daughters granting them a place among the Israelites in the land and adding to the Old Covenant Law, a very rare occurrence indeed!

Joshua’s Rise

YHWH comes to Moses in 27:12 and instructs him to go up Mount Abarim where he will die after seeing the Land. Moses asks YHWH to appoint a leader to replace him who will guide the Israelites into the Land. The obvious choice is Joshua whom YHWH chooses and in whom He has already placed the Holy Spirit. Explicit instruction is given to appoint Joshua in front of the people before Eleazar. Together, Eleazar as High Priest and Joshua as “God’s Anointed” will rule and lead the people.

Other Events and Instructions

In chapter 32, we learn that while camped on the eastern border of the Jordan River, the Gadites and Reubenites saw that the land would support their vast livestock holdings. They wished to stay on that side of the river and build towns for themselves. Moses is initially very displeased with this request believing them to be fearful lack their fathers and refusing to go to war. However, the men of the tribes are willing to go to battle with their brothers and only return when the rest of the Land is subdued. At this suggestion, Moses allows the them to stay and even gives half the tribe of Manasseh the cities that were conquered from the kings Sihon and Og.

The rest of the lesson focuses on the division of the lands and cities by tribes. However, a very important admonition is given 33:50-56 regarding the people in the Land. The Land was to be completely cleansed of inhabitants and their idols. Anyone that is left in the land of that people would continue to cause problems for the Israelites “harassing [them] in the land where you dwell.” Perhaps even more frightening is the final warning in 33:56 indicating that their failure to completely obey YHWH will result in the same judgement falling upon the Israelite people.

**Questions:**

1. The two totals between the censuses are nearly the same even though YHWH killed off a huge number of people between the two and they wandered in the desert. What do you think this says about God’s providence while in the desert for His people? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. How were women typically viewed from a legal standpoint in most Ancient Near East cultures around Israel in that day? What does the treatment of the Hepherite daughters say about YHWH’s view towards women (even from the earliest of times)? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is different about the leadership of Joshua compared to the leadership of Moses? Particularly compare Num 27:21 to Num 12:6-8. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What are the cities of refuge and who could use them? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Does the command of God to Israel in 33:55-56 have any application that we can extend to ourselves today? What lesson can we take from this? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 22 – MOSES’ SPEECH AT MOAB**

**Reading: Duet 1 – 11**

Introduction to Deuteronomy

The rest of our time in this class will be spent primarily in the book of Deuteronomy. The Hebrew title for this book was originally Haddebharim, or simply, “The Words” which is the first phrase of the book. However, it also became known as Mishneh Hattorah which is “Repetition of the Law.” When the Jewish Pentatuch was translated into the Greek Septuagint, it was renamed again to Deuteronomion Touto or “The Second Law.”

For that reason, much of what you will see in this book is repetition of Exodus through Numbers. Why the need for repetition? As you will recall, the entire generation that Moses lead from Egypt has fallen dead in the wilderness. The new generation was not present for the momentous occasions and deliverance that their parents knew. Thus, it is necessary to remind them of the entirety of the Law, the covenants, and the promises of their God.

Why then would we cover the book of Deuteronomy at all if it merely repeats? This book does so much more than repeat. It provides divinely inspired commentary on Law that was previously just given. There are instructions given here and rationale for the Law that is not given previously. Hence, we will spend much of our time looking at only portions of the book; however, this book is vitally important to us as Christians. No other book provides both a concise version of the Law and detailed divine thought behind the purpose and direction of the nation of Israel.

The Irony of Cowardice 1:26-27; 39

Much of the first chapter recounts the failure of Israel to inherit the land. Moses recounts the fear that was spread by the spies which caused Israel to not go into Canaan. In verses 26 and 27, Moses mentions that they complained and rebelled against God. They feared that they would be killed by the inhabitants and as verse 39 recounts, feared that their children would be taken as slaves. Instead, God killed them in the wilderness and now their children stand ready to go in and possess the land their parents believed they would be enslaved to. It seems that God is not without a sense of irony.

The Denied Prayer of Moses 3:23-29

One of the many insights that is given to us only the in this book is given in these passages. Apparently Moses pleaded with God that he may be allowed to enter the Land. He extols YHWH’s greatness and goodness, but asks that his punishment be taken away. Yet, YWHW would not hear it. In fact, YHWH told Moses to speak to pray to Him no more about the matter as God’s mind was set. There are many lessons that we can and should consider from such a passage and occurrence in the life of a man like Moses.

Divine Commentary on the Law 4:1-40

We have come to one of my favorite passages in the book. The people are instructed to diligently keep the Law in its totality and without alteration. They were older and were adults when the plague of Baal Peor struck killing 24,000 for their disobedience. Certainly, YHWH could command their obedience simply for being YHWH and in light of their covenant. Yet, verses 6 and following give further insight. The Law was given to show the wisdom of God shining through their nation. Other nations would come and give worship to the God of Israel. Clearly, God is interested in the salvation of all men, not only the Jews and the Old Testament is littered with references to God’s intention to bring all men of every race and nationality to a belief in Him.

Furthermore, the primary sin that concerns God in these passages is the sin of idolatry. Because YHWH revealed Himself with no form, it would be impossible to make an accurate representation of Him that man could worship. In fact, the only “form of God” that man is permitted to worship is Jesus the Christ who is God. Imagine if someone was to create a statue of you declaring that your total image could be summed up in that statue. Any one man is far too complex a being to be summed up in one carving. How much more so if someone were to claim that Christ or YHWH could be explained or worshipped in His totality in a singular image! Instead, Israel is given vast images to focus on their omnipotent God that cannot be comprehended by any man.

Finally, we would do well to note that the end of the nation of Israel is given even before it has really taken root in the Land. From verse 25 and beyond, YHWH reveals that in future generations they will disobey and be cast out of the Land. Yet they will seek Him in the latter days, and God will once again rescue His people. He will be the faithful God of the covenant despite their unfaithfulness.

The Shema 6:4-9

These well-known passages constitute the Hebrew Shema which means “to obey.” These verses formed the primary prayer for all Jews. Additionally, it was the verse that was read to begin every synagogue service in Christ’s time. In fact, some scholars have even asserted that the phrase, “*Shema Yisrael, Adonai eloheinu, Adonai echad”* (which is essentially verse 4) would have been the first phrase taught to all Jewish children. This passage formed the centeral identity of what it mean to be a child of Israel for hundreds if not thousands of years.

However, we need to qualify the previous statement. You will notice that your Bible contains the all capital LORD which is YHWH or transliterated into Latin, our Jehovah. By the time of Christ, it was blasphemous to even speak that name which is why Adonai or Lord has replaced it in the above. Why bring this up here? In Dueteronomy 5, Moses retells the Ten Commandments of which the second is a prohibition on blaspheming the name of God which is YHWH. In order to avoid this sin, the rulers declared the name unusable. However, YHWH desires us to use His proper name and to call upon Him by name. His Name is holy and is to be treated with the greatest respect; however, He wants His people to call upon Him by Name.

A Warning 9:1-29

There is a special warning to the Jews that has significance to us today as Christians. YHWH declares that He is going before His people to drive out the wicked nations before them. However, pay special attention to 9:4-6. It is very clear that the Israelites were not a particularly righteous people, but rather YHWH had simply chosen them as He has simply chosen Abraham and all the forefathers. They are not earning the Land. Rather the inheritance they received was an act of pure grace and mercy from their God. We would do well to remember this passage and think on passages like it in the New Testament where Paul often warns us as Christians of falling the same line of thinking.

The Most Important Law & the Vehaya

We will all recognize the passage of 10:12-13. This is the primary and fundamental Law upon which all the rest hang. Christ identifies this truth in Matt 22:37. Furthermore, in the rest of the passage, YHWH illuminates as to why He is to be loved and feared and obeyed. Look at 10:17-22 and know the greatness of the God we serve. Even today, reading these passages can give chills knowing the majesty of one who can claim such titles.

Additionally, we previously spoke of the Shema. After the Shema, the Jewish people followed with the Vehaya (meaning, “and it shall be”) which was the recitation of 11:13-21. This passage is immediately connected with 10:12-13 and follows with the great blessings of obeying. God is the Provider, Protector, and Shepherd of His people who send the rain and the harvest. These are not trite expressions, but life-giving force to a people whose entire economy and survival lay upon God providing crops and rain.

One more note

We will not be able to cover this great book in detail. However, this book is filled with wisdom, praise, and prophecy that spill over every page and almost every other book of the Bible. This is the foundation of what it meant to be Jewish, and the writers of our New Testament are Jews. Our Savior was born and is the King of the Jews. We are denying ourselves great spiritual blessing by not becoming acquainted with this book. I would greatly encourage you to dive in more than we can in the lessons.

**Questions**

1. Why does the book of Deuteronomy exist and to whom was it written? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Look back at 3:23-29. What can we learn about God’s response to Moses’ prayer? What does this say to us about sin and punishment? Does it apply to us today? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Read Romans 11:11-24. Compare this to 9:4-6. Who is the subject being addressed in each one and how do these two passages complement each other? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Pick out a verse or few verses that you find particularly compelling or helpful for you and explain why these are meaningful. Try to avoid those we have already discussed.

**LESSON 23 – MOSES REVIEWS THE LAW**

**Reading: Deuteronomy 12 – 26**

As in the previous lesson, there is far too much to cover in any great detail in this lesson. Below are just selections of passages to highlight some that may be unfamiliar to many or particularly important to the Biblical narrative. However, there are many sections that have tremendous relevance to teachings of Christ and aid our understanding of the environment in which Christianity was founded. These can be key to furthering your knowledge of the New Testament.

Warnings against Idolatry 12:1-4, 29-32; 13:1-18; 18:9-14;

As we mentioned in our last lesson, God is particularly concerned with the temptation to fall into idolatry. One the one hand, YHWH strictly condemns to death any who would even suggest or attempt to lead the people astray into idolatry (see all chapter 13). On the other hand, YHWH throughout the book reminds the Israelites of who He is and what He has accomplished. Furthermore, YHWH promises total military success if the Israelites will put forth the effort to drive out all of the pagan nations that inhabit the land. Yet, as we know, Israel will fail in this regard and succumb to the one temptation that Moses spent the most amount of time lecturing about. It will ultimately be the complete ruin of that nation.

The Prophecy of Jerusalem 12:5-28

In the midst of Moses’ warning on idolatry, there is a large section regarding the place where YHWH will put His name for His dwelling place. After the times of war are over, YHWH will choose a place where His offerings are to be made as opposed to the traditional high places that the pagans would have set up. Of course this passage points forward to the foundation of Jerusalem which was taken by David and really established as a fulfillment of this passage under Solomon. This was the time of Israel’s greatest peace and the height of their rule.

We should be somewhat familiar with this idea of looking for a city of YHWH and YHWH “putting His name” in the New Testament. In fact, the Hebrew writer uses this same terminology in Heb 11:10, 12:22, and 12:28. All of these refer to a city or kingdom that recipients of the letter in conjunction with Abraham were looking. Yet as well know, Jerusalem was not the ultimate fulfillment of the place where YHWH would put His name as the recipients of this same epistle were in or near the city of Jerusalem. A New Jerusalem was being prepared as the ultimate place where YHWH would dwell with His people and His Name would dwell there (Rev 21).

God, Generosity, and Financial Freedom 14:22-15:18; 24:10-15; 26:1-15

The Old Testament has quite a bit to say about money and the Israelite’s use of it. In principle, YHWH demanded tithing, generosity, and care for the Levites. Every year, the people were to tithe for an offering to YHWH. The stated purpose was so that Israel would “learn to fear YHWH always.” Additionally, every third year the tithe was dedicated to the care of the Levites. The Levites had no specific portion of the Land dedicated to them, and they were to be busy caring for the things of YHWH. If the Israelites truly obeyed this command and given the Levite’s relative size to all the other tribe, this would have made the Levites a truly rich tribe.

Additionally, ample instruction was given to take care of the poor in the Land. While YHWH promised relative prosperity to the people, He also promised there would be poor in the Land (15:11). Additionally, YHWH built into Israelite society a form of benevolent slavery in an attempt to address what was essentially unemployment. However, in order to care for the poor, the people had to make wise choices about their own finances. What did these instructions include?

* Every seven years all debts were forgiven
* You can only charge interest to foreigners
* The Israelite nation should never run a deficit but could be a creditor nation
* Any Hebrew slave has the option to go free every seven years with payment for their service; an option was given for permanent “slavery” which was designed to be beneficial for both parties
* Pledges for loans or other guaranties shall be returned to the poor the same day
* Paydays are everyday; wages are paid daily

Civil Government & the King 16:18-17:20

Among the many other brief commands in this section are instructions for the establishment of the civil government and how it would function. Reading this section of Scripture is like reading a section of prophecy about how the government of Israel would develop. Initially, the priests, Levites, and tribal judges were to hold court over the Israelites. However, after this time and when the Israelites are in the Land, YHWH will choose a king to set over them. There are very specific instructions for the King, and how the king should behave. Yet, few kings ever held to the standard given in the Law here.

The Prophet 18:15-22

This is a key passage foretells the coming of the Christ in the person of Jesus. He will be the law-giver of a new covenant that contains YHWH’s words. This is a person whom the Jews looked for in the time of Christ as we see from Phillips declaration in John 1:45. The phrase, “Him whom Moses [wrote] in the law” most certainly refers to this promise. Additionally, there is great warning in verse 19 not to ignore the words of the Prophet that are echoed again to the Jews thousands of years later in Heb 12:25-26. Finally, this passage is well summarized in the great comparison given in Heb 1:1-4.

But, how will the people know that any man including the promised coming Prophet is truly of YHWH? If his prophecies prove false, that prophet is not from YHWH. In that case, there are two commands. First, the people should not fear that prophet, and second, that prophet will die for being a false prophet.

**Questions:**

1. Read 12:8. Where else does the phrase “every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes” appear in the Old Testament? How does this compare to the society we live in today? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Are Christians commanded to tithe today? What principles of giving apply to Christians today? Why does YHWH care about our finances? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What are the commands given to the king of Israel? Why does Scripture say that he should do these things? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read the declarations that an Israelite was to make to the priest in 26:3-15. What is the purpose of causing each Israelite to repeat this declaration? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 24 – ISRAEL RENEWS THE COVENANT**

**Reading: Duet 27 – 34**

The Blessings and Cursings

At the end of chapter 26, Moses proclaimed once again that Israel was the chosen people of YHWH. As such they were to enjoy his favor and blessing on the condition that they kept the commandments of the covenant. Yet, as we shall in these final chapters of Deuteronomy, not keeping the covenant of YHWH comes with cursing that is severe and lasting. It will become very plain to the Israelites both now and in future generations, that the relationship to which they agreed in Exodus is meant to be kept.

Chapter 27 begins with instructions to gather large, uncut, and whitewashed stones as an altar for their remembrance. These stones are to be set up on Mount Ebal where offerings are to be made and a carving of the words of the Law is to be made. Furthermore, the people are to split with Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph’s tribes, and Benjamin to stand on Mount Gerizim. The remaining tribes were to stand on Mount Ebal. The Levites are to begin by declaring 12 “sinful people” who would be cursed to which all the people were to say “Amen” in agreement. Pay particular attention to the fact that the last cursed person was one who did not agree to all the words of the Law (27:26). In so doing, the Israelites are declaring that their own cursing is just if they fail to uphold the covenant.

However, what follows is a little confusing and has lasting impact that is little noticed in the Bible. According to Deut 11:29, the Israelites were to bless Mount Gerizim and curse Mount Ebal where the memorial altar for the Law stood at its foothills. These two mountains are very close to each other with only a small valley separating the two. It is unclear if those tribes on Mount Gerizim shouted the blessings thus making that mountain blessed, or if the tribes on Mount Ebal shouted the blessings to the tribes on Mount Gerizim making it blessed. However it was very clear that Gerizim represented blessing and Ebal represented cursing. This particular command from Moses stuck so much with the Israelites that the Samaritans considered Gerizim to be a holy mountain of YHWH where they placed their own replica temple of Solomon’s temple in the Intertestamental period. It was later destroyed, yet this is why the Samaritan woman at the well proclaimed that her father’s said they should worship on Mount Gerizim.

The blessings of the Law revolved around the blessings of dwelling richly in the Land. The Israelite’s lives were to be fruitful with abundant food. They were to be a fertile people. They were to rule over their enemies, and be the head of the agreements to which they entered as opposed to the tail. Perhaps the crowning blessing can be found in 28:10 where the pagan nations would look upon Israel and see they carried the name of YHWH and fear.

The cursings of the Law are almost the exact opposite and revolve around the Land turning on them or even being thrown out from the Land. Israel would be destitute, unable to feed its own. The Israelites themselves would suffer from physical ills and sickness. The pagan nations, as opposed to fearing them, would come and take their children and wives as slaves. Perhaps the most startling and prophetic of the words can be found in 28:36-37 promising that they and their future king will be driven amongst the nations, and those nations will be astonished by it (fulfilled in Jeremiah’s prophecy in Jer 24:9, 25:9).

The Coming Cursing

However, something changes in 28:45 in the tone of the cursings that follow. The cursings go from being theoretical “if’s” but rather a certainty that will befall Israel in the latter days. This idea is continued into 29:22-28, 31:16-19, 31:29, 32:15-38. It becomes very clear that Israel will not obey the Law, but that future generations will grow self-reliant or idolatrous or both. YHWH will give them up, and the consequences of their sin will be the most severe any nation has or will suffer in the history of man. In fact, Moses recorded a Psalm in chapter 32 of which the vast majority is a notice of warning to the Israelites whose express purpose is to witness their own sins against them (see 31:19).

The Coming Blessing

Yet the news of their sin is not all bad. Just as certain as it is that Israel will depart from YHWH, it is also certain that they will return to YHWH in covenant relationship. This is made clear in 30:1-10. When they do return, their end state will be as blessed as the first. YHWH will again delight in His people drawing them back from the all the nations of the earth where they may have been scattered according to the cursing. Yet again, all of these blessings are contingent upon their obedience to the command of YHWH.

Completion of the Law, Joshua’s Appointment, & Moses’ Death

Thus with this confirmation, there are but a few remaining tasks for Moses’ journey to be complete and for the law to reach its completion. It seems fitting that the lawgiver, Moses, would end his life with the accomplishment of the complete revelation of God to the people that Moses labored so long with in the desert. The Law was to be read in its entirety every seven years at the Feast of Tabernacles, a most blessed and holy time in the calendar of Israel when debts were forgiven and slaves set free.

Additionally, before moving onto a new stage in the life of the nation of Israel, Moses like Jacob before sets a blessing upon each of the tribes (see 33:1ff). We are meant to think back to Gen 49 to those words and see a continuation here. Yet, this blessing is centered on the covenant and the Land. All Israel is blessed in the refuge of YHWH who is their provider and defender.

Finally, a new stage demands a new leader. We see in 31:1-8 a final blessing and instruction to Joshua who will user Israel into their Land. Moses repeatedly calls Joshua to courage and faith in God to deliver the Land into their hands. Yet, Moses’ sin required his death before entrance into the land of Canaan. Moses ascended Mount Nebo in Moab to view the land and died at the age of 120. YHWH buried Moses on the mountain and no one from Israel knew where the grave of Moses was located. Israel wept at the base for 30 days. The final epithet of Moses is given in Deuteronomy 34:10-12 which says, “*Since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom YHWH knew face to face, in all the sign and wonders which YHWH sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.”*

**Questions:**

1. Go back and examine the blessing listed in 28:9-10. How does this blessing compare to name of Christian? How is this blessing similar to blessings we are promised? How is it different? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Read 29:2-4. What do you suppose is meant by verse 4? Are there other similar passages that you can think of in the New or Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Read 30:11-14. What does this passage mean? Can you explain it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read 30:15-20. What does it mean to choose life? How do we choose life? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. There seems to be some mysticism around the death of Moses that continued on even to the day of Jesus (see Jude 9). Why do you suppose the secrecy around the death of Moses? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 25 – THE JOURNEY ENDS**

**Reading: Joshua 1 -5**

We now leave the Pentateuch for our last lesson to give an epilogue of the events that occurred immediately after the death of Moses. Moses was the great Lawgiver of Israel, and as we had alluded to in our last lesson, his assistant Joshua would take over. Joshua whose Jewish name would have been Yeshua, meaning “YHWH is Salvation”, is the exact same name that the Messiah would bear, Jesus. This was not Joshua’s given name which was actually Hoshea meaning “Salvation”. The name change like all name changes in the Bible is significant pointing to YHWH bringing them salvation in the conquests of Joshua and pointing toward a coming Messiah who would bring a greater salvation.

After the death of Moses, YHWH speaks to Joshua giving commands and encouragement. All the land of the Hittites which was in the northern part of the Land going up to modern day Turkey, to the Mediterranean, and to the Euphrates was to be their dominion. No one would be able to stand before Joshua in battle. Secular history confirms that YHWH chose the perfect time to bring the Israelites into the Land. The Hittite empire which had controlled all the iron in the region making them militarily superior was in decline. The control of Egypt had been greatly reduced. No power from the east was strong enough to lay hold of the Land. YHWH had surely caused all of these events clearing the path for the Israelites.

Furthermore, the admonition most often repeated to Joshua was to be strong and courageous. This strength and courage would be rooted in an absolutely secured foundation in the Book of the Law. In meditating on that Law, Joshua would find the light that would direct his path so that he would not turn from the way YHWH would have Joshua lead His people.

Jordan Crossing & Circumcision

Chapter 1 of this book ends with the command to cross another large body of water similar to the crossing of the Red Sea. This feat is accomplished in Chapter 3. YHWH’s presence in the chariot of the Ark of the Covenant rides before them to separate the waters causing Israel to pass through. Passing through the waters, like name changes, is another great Biblical sign of rebirth, deliverance, and making new that is used many times (such as the Creation out of water, Noah’s ark, Moses’ ark, the Red Sea crossing, the Jordan crossing, Naaman’s baptism, Ezekiel 47’s prophecy, Jesus’ baptism, new covenant baptism).

What is happening in this baptism in the Jordan? A new generation of Israelites is being reborn out of the wilderness and into the Land. Additionally, through their rebirth they were delivered from the bondage. Furthermore, accompanying this idea of rebirth through the water is circumcision that cuts off the reproach of their slavery to Egypt. Chapter 5 details that after their water crossing, the enemies of YHWH melted away yet the people needed to circumcised as they had not been in the desert. This renewal of the covenant accompanied with their baptism caused YHWH to say in 5:9, “This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.”

Rahab and the Spies

Most all of us are familiar with the story of the spies of Israel that hid in the house of Rahab. Rahab, a harlot living in a sinful city that God would command never to be rebuilt, hides the spies because of her faith in the God of Israel. It is interesting to compare her fear which moved her to act compared to the fear of pagan nations which caused them to despair. Both had seen the mighty deeds of YHWH in Egypt. Yet, a simple harlot from a pagan nation is given the clarity and faith to act. As a reward for her bravery, she alone is spared from the complete and utter destruction of Jericho. Additionally, she will go on to have a very wealthy son by the name of Boaz. Boaz will go on to marry a Moabitess by the name of Ruth who will produce the line of David and, ultimately, Jesus.

**Questions:**

1. This particular passage focuses quite a bit on fear, faith and courage. What is godly fear? Where can we find working definitions for it in Scripture? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. There is another kind of fear that works in opposition to faith. What Biblical characters display this kind of fear? What impact does it have on their lives? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. In this lesson, we gave several examples of “water crossings” and what they mean. Choose a couple of these examples and explain how they illustrate rebirth, regeneration, and salvation. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What does circumcision mean and signify? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. When and why does the giving of manna stop? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_