



Israel's Story from Egypt to the Jordan

A Study of Exodus, Leviticus,
Numbers, and Deuteronomy

Darline Kantola Royer

A Global Association of Theological Studies Publication

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EXODUS

The Books of the Pentateuch

The First Five Books of the Old Testament

Books	Focus	History
Genesis	God as Creator	Beginnings
Exodus	God as Deliverer	Laws for God's People
Leviticus	God as Savior	Israel's Sanctification
Numbers	God as Guide	Direction in the Desert
Deuteronomy	God as Supreme (6:4)	Preparation for Entry (6:23)

The Big Picture of the Book of Exodus

Main Topics	Deliverance from Egyptian Bondage			Revelation of God's Laws & Covenant		
<i>Reference</i>	Chapters 1-18			Chapters 19-40		
<i>Life Application</i>	Redemption from the bondage of sin			Principles for righteous living		
<i>Main Events</i>	Egypt Moses 1-4	Pharaoh - Plagues 5-11 Passover - 12 Egypt to Red Sea 13-14	Journey to Sinai 15-18	Schooling at Sinai 19-24	Tabernacle Plan 15-31	Rebellion Construction Glory 32-40
<i>Event Location</i>	In Egypt 1-13		Red Sea 14	To Sinai 15-18	Wilderness of Sinai 19-40	
<i>Event Times</i>	430 years 12:40-41		One Day 14:30	Two Months 16:1 19:1	Ten Months Exodus 19:1 & Numbers 1:1	

Lesson 1

Course Introduction and the Big Picture of Exodus

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Define Pentateuch and give a brief description of the content of each book of the Pentateuch.
2. Recall the main events and chronology in the Book of Exodus. (See chart.)
Know the key events, people, verses, and words of Exodus.

Scope of Twenty-four Lessons

These lessons from the pentateuchal books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy focus on God's chosen people, the Israelites. They tell the story of the Israelites' deliverance from bondage in Egypt and their forty-year journey through the wilderness to the border of the Promised Land. Exodus and Leviticus relate the events of deliverance from Egypt and Israel's first year in the wilderness. This first year focused on Israel receiving God's laws at Mount Sinai. Numbers tells the story of Israel's onward journey to the Promised Land and their delay of thirty-nine years in the wilderness because of their unbelief and rebellion. At the end of Numbers, the Israelites are camped on the Plains of Moab on the border of the Promised Land near the end of their forty years in the wilderness. Deuteronomy continues Israel's story during Israel's last months in the wilderness as Moses reviews God's laws for the younger generation. As the story of Israel's journey through the wilderness concludes in Deuteronomy, Moses dies and Joshua steps on the scene as Israel's leader, ready to lead Israel into the Promised Land.

Definition of Pentateuch

Pentateuch is a Greek word meaning “five vessels or scrolls.” The first five books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch. In Hebrew these five books are called the Torah, which means “law” or “instruction.” As a collection of five books, the Pentateuch explains the beginning of human history and identifies God’s covenant people. It also gives instructions about how God’s people must live to please Him. The first book of the Pentateuch, Genesis, is a separate GATS (Global Association of Theological Studies) course. These twenty-four lessons cover the remaining books of the Pentateuch: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

The Pentateuch provides the foundation for understanding the rest of the Bible.

Exodus Continues the Genesis Story

The Book of Exodus continues the Genesis story of the Israelites, God’s chosen people. The Genesis record describes them as a family of Jacob’s sons and descendants (Genesis 46), the descendants of Abraham from whom God promised to make a “great nation” (Genesis 12:1-3). The Exodus story records their increase in numbers from family size to a multitude of people of nation size. As the story unfolds, God reveals His plan for freeing His chosen people from bondage and making them a nation of people who know how to please Him.

Theme of Exodus

In Exodus, God frees the Israelites, leads them, and teaches them.

Redemption aptly describes this threefold story. God freed the Israelites from bondage to bring them into a covenant relationship with Him. Their redemption involved learning and accepting God’s laws in addition to their deliverance from Egypt. Israel’s story shows that God’s acts of redemption called for an obedient response.

The content of Exodus sheds light for understanding many New Testament passages. Without the account of Exodus, many passages of the New Testament would not be understood.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them” (Romans 10:4-5).

Book Name and Significance

Exodus means “the way out,” which describes Israel’s exodus from their years of bondage in Egypt. The title comes from the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament.

The original title in the Hebrew was “These Are the Names,” the first words of the book. (See Genesis 46:8 and Exodus 1:1.) After these opening words, the names of Jacob’s sons are listed. On their arrival in Egypt, these sons and their families lived as shepherds (Genesis 46:32; 47:3) in the best of the land (Genesis 47:6, 11). Before the time of the Exodus story, Jacob’s descendants had become slaves. Though slaves, God called them by name. The listing of names reveals that God had His eye on Jacob’s descendants during their years of suffering. Exodus reveals God’s plan to make the Israelites His people in the midst of other nations.

Israel’s story speaks to God’s people who suffer in this present age. God knows each one’s name and has a plan, which will be fulfilled in His time.

Two main divisions show the big picture of the Book of Exodus:

(See Exodus chart - The Big Picture of the Book of Exodus)

1. The deliverance of the children of Israel (Jacob’s descendants) from their bondage in Egypt (chapters 1-18)
2. God’s laws and the Tabernacle, providing the plan for the Israelites to obey and worship God (chapters 19-40)

Places of Events in Exodus

The recorded events take place in four locations as noted in the above chart.

1. In Egypt before and during the time of the plagues (chapter 1-13)
2. Near and through the Red Sea (chapter 14)
3. Journey from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai (chapters 15-18)
4. Wilderness of Sinai as the Israelites received God’s laws (chapters 19-40)

Twelve key words with brief descriptions identify the main events of the book:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Increase</i> | the numerical increase of the Israelites in Egypt |
| 2. <i>Bondage</i> | the story of the Israelites’ bondage in Egypt |
| 3. <i>Moses</i> | the birth of Moses, his raising, and his escape to Midian |
| 4. <i>Call</i> | the call of Moses to deliver Israel from bondage |
| 5. <i>Request</i> | the request by Moses and Aaron to release the Israelites |

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 6. <i>Plagues</i> | the ten plagues visited on Egypt |
| 7. <i>Passover</i> | the institution of the Passover |
| 8. <i>Deliverance</i> | the departure of Israel from Egypt /parting of the Red Sea |
| 9. <i>Journey</i> | the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai |
| 10. <i>Law</i> | the giving of the Law of God to Israel |
| 11. <i>Tabernacle</i> | the construction of the Tabernacle |
| 12. <i>Plan</i> | the plan given for the Tabernacle |

Writer

Both Old and New Testament Scriptures identify Moses as the writer. Moses would have written Exodus and the rest of the Pentateuch during the Israelites' years in the wilderness.

1. Many verses in the Book of Exodus speak of Moses as the one who received the words of the Book of Exodus from the Lord and wrote them.
 - “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book . . .” (17:14).
 - “And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD” (24:3).
 - “And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD . . .” (24:4).
 - “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel” (34:27).
2. The Book of Joshua tells about the writing of the law of Moses. (See Joshua 8:31-35.)
 - “As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses . . .” (Joshua 8:31).
3. The prophet Malachi spoke about the “law of Moses.”
 - “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments” (Malachi 4:4).
4. Jesus spoke about things that were “written in the law of Moses.”
 - “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

- “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:46-47).
 - Read also Mark 7:10; 12:26; Luke 20:37; John 7:19-23.
5. In defense of his ministry and the gospel, Stephen spoke of Moses who received the “lively oracles” in the wilderness (Acts 7).
- “This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us” (Acts 7:37-38).

Note: Acts 7 provides a helpful summary of Old Testament history from the time of Abraham to the years of the Israelites in Egypt, with brief mention of the kings and prophets. Acts 7 focuses much attention on the Israelites during their sojourn in Egypt, their exodus from Egypt, and their years in the wilderness.

The Setting of Events in Exodus

The beginning events of Exodus occurred in Egypt more than four hundred years after the death of Joseph in Egypt.

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt” (12:40-41).

Genesis 50:24-26 gives the account of Joseph’s death. The Exodus story begins with a listing of the family of Jacob (1:1-5), which came into Egypt during the time of famine (Genesis 46). At this time, Joseph served as second ruler in Egypt (Genesis 41:38-44). Exodus 1:5 states that seventy of Jacob’s family came to Egypt. This number includes Joseph, his wife, and his two sons (Genesis 46:26-27; Deuteronomy 10:22). Between the ending of Genesis and the events recorded in Exodus, the family of Jacob increased from seventy to six hundred thousand men, plus women and children. A conservative estimate of the number of Israelites at the time of the Exodus would be two to three million.

The Date of the Exodus

The possible date of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, according to conservative scholars, would be 1445 BC. Scholars base this calculation on the statement of I Kings 6:1. "Scripture dates Solomon's fourth year of reign, i.e., when he began to build the temple (c. 966-65 BC) as being 480 years after the Exodus (I Kings 6:1), thus establishing the early date of 1445 BC for the Exodus" (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 80).

Key People in the Story of Exodus

1. Moses – Chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt. The story of his birth and life begins in Exodus 2 and continues through the entire book.

"These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies" (6:26).

2. Aaron – Introduced in Exodus 4:14 as the brother of Moses whom God gave to Moses as a spokesperson. Exodus 6:20 identifies Aaron and Moses as the sons of Amram and Jochebed. Exodus 28 introduces Aaron as a priest, an office that he filled until this death. Exodus and other biblical passages do not use the title "high priest" for Aaron, but descriptions of his work show that he fulfilled the role of the high priest, a term first used in Leviticus 21:10.

"And take thou unto thee Aaron, thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons" (28:1).

3. Amram and Jochebed – Parents of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Exodus 2:1-2 tells of Moses' birth, but does not name his parents, who were of the "house of Levi." Then Exodus 6:20 gives their names as Amram and Jochebed. Their faith preserved the life of Moses, whom God called to lead the Israelites out of bondage. Though their names are never listed again, their faith lived on in the life and ministry of their three children.

"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment" (Hebrews 11:23).

4. Pharaoh – A title for Egyptian kings (1:15). Exodus mentions Pharaoh over one hundred times, first in Exodus 1:11. The pharaoh of Exodus subjected the Israelites to "hard bondage" (1:14) with hopes of limiting their numbers and influence in his land. However, his actions had the opposite effect:

“But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel” (1:12).

5. Miriam – Sister of Aaron and Moses. In Exodus 2:4, 7 we note that Moses’ sister stood watch when Moses was placed in an “ark among the flags” in the river. She then provided the link between Pharaoh’s daughter and a “nurse,” none other than the mother of Moses (2:7-8). Called a prophetess, she led the women in singing to the Lord after Israel crossed through the Red Sea (15:20-21). Though mentioned only briefly, she filled a spiritual role in Israel’s journey out of bondage. She is first named when she led in worship.

“And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances” (15:20).

6. Jethro – A priest of Midian and the father-in-law of Moses. The Book of Exodus records his name nine times (3:1; 4:18; 18:1-12). After Moses fled from Egypt into Midian, he married Zipporah, Jethro’s daughter. Jethro later joined Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness (18:5). He rejoiced that the Israelites came out of Egypt and acknowledged the Lord as “greater than all gods.”

“And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them” (18:10-11).

7. Bezaleel and Aholiab – Men called by the Lord to do the skilled work on the “sanctuary” (Tabernacle) and furnishings. Exodus records Bezaleel’s name six times and mentions Aholiab two times with him. Their calling by the Lord to this special skilled work shows the value God puts on the labor of men’s hands in fulfilling His purpose.

“And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah” (35:30).

“Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded” (36:1).

Questions for Lesson Review

Before you begin answering the review questions, review the lesson topics and then try to answer the questions without looking back into the lesson.

1. What is the meaning of *Pentateuch* and what Bible books make up the Pentateuch?
2. What is the meaning of *Exodus* and how was this book titled in the original Hebrew?
3. How is the Book of Exodus connected with the Book of Genesis?
4. What are the two main divisions of Exodus?
5. What are the twelve key words of Exodus?
6. Name four of the key people in Exodus and give a brief description about each one.
7. Write four verses from different books of the Bible that show Moses to be the person who would have recorded the events of Exodus.
8. In what four locations did the events of Exodus take place?
9. When did the Israelites leave Israel and how have Bible scholars determined this date?
10. What New Testament book and chapter gives a summary of Old Testament events?

Assignment

1. Read Exodus 1-4.
2. Select a short passage from Exodus 1-4 and write comments describing how these verses have a present-day life application for you.
3. From your reading of Exodus 3-4, write a description of how you visualize the response of Moses when God called him.

Lesson 2

Israel's Increase / Moses Born, Raised, and Called

Exodus 1-4 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Exodus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

God's purpose and plan to deliver the Israelites from bondage in Egypt included His selection of leaders to carry out His plan. His New Covenant plan to deliver people from the bondage of sin includes His call and anointing upon leaders to lead people to salvation.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Summarize how Abraham's descendants had multiplied and become a people living under oppression in Egypt.
2. Describe the family links and experiences of Moses that qualified him to be Israel's deliverer.
3. Explain how Moses received his call to serve as Israel's deliverer and how he responded to God's call.

Lesson Outline

- I. Israel's Increase, Prosperity, and Oppression in Egypt (1:1-22)
 - A. Transition from a Family to a Nation (1:1-7)
 - B. Prosperity under Oppression (1:8-22)

- II. The Birth and Development of a Leader (2:1-25)
 - A. Moses' Birth and Early Life (2:1-10)
 - B. Moses' Forty Years in Midian (2:11-25)
- III. God's Call to Moses and the Revelation of Yahweh (3:1-22)
- IV. The Doubts of Moses and the Signs of God's Power (4:1-17)
- V. Moses' Journey Back to Egypt (4:18-31)

Key Verse

When God calls, He equips.

“And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?” (4:10-11).

Lesson Content

I. Israel's Increase, Prosperity, and Oppression in Egypt (1:1-22)

A. Transition from a Family to a Nation (1:1-7)

God sent the family of Jacob into Egypt to provide for them in a time of famine. During their earlier years, they prospered under the Pharaoh who made Joseph a second ruler.

“And he [Pharaoh] made him [Joseph] to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt” (Genesis 41:43).

Exodus 1:7 reports that the children of Israel “increased abundantly” during their years in Egypt. Scripture emphasizes the increase with these five descriptions: “Fruitful . . . increased abundantly . . . multiplied . . . waxed exceeding mighty . . . land filled with them” (1:7).

These words speak of both numerical increase and a position of influence in the land. This success story shows the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham: “I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee” (Genesis 12:2). Jacob's people went into Egypt as a family of seventy (1:5) and came out of Egypt in numbers to qualify them as a nation. God told Moses to count Israel in the beginning of their second year out of Egypt. Numbers 1:46 gives the count of men twenty years old and upward as 603,550.

With the addition of women and children, a conservative count of the Israelites would be two to three million people.

B. Prosperity under Oppression (1:8-22)

After describing the increase of the Israelites in Egypt, the Bible states that a new king over Egypt did not know Joseph. Seeing the great numbers and might of the Israelites, he became fearful of them. The favor they had known during Joseph's time ended. The new pharaoh (king) feared the Israelites would turn against Egypt in a time of war. Thus, he ordered taskmasters (slave drivers) to afflict them with hard labor. They built treasure cities for Pharaoh and did all manner of work in the field.

Surprisingly, as the afflictions increased, the Israelites multiplied and grew (1:12). Pharaoh meant the hard bondage to weaken and destroy the Israelites, but God used it to strengthen His people. Rather than destroy them, the hard labor prepared them for the difficult journey from Egypt to Sinai and onward to the Promised Land.

Pharaoh added to the oppression by ordering the Hebrew midwives to kill all the boy babies born to the Israelites. Fearing God, they disobeyed Pharaoh and spared the male babies. They excused their actions by saying that the Hebrew women gave birth quickly before they could arrive to deliver the baby. According to Exodus 1:20, God blessed the midwives because they spared the male babies.

“Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied and grew very mighty” (1:20).

When the Hebrew midwives failed to carry out Pharaoh's plan, he commanded all his people to cast every male child into the river (1:22). In desperation, he sought to weaken Israel by reducing their numerical growth. However, Pharaoh did not know God's plan. Neither do evil rulers of today know God's redemptive plan for those who acknowledge Him as Lord.

God's plan worked in spite of an evil ruler. Because Hebrew midwives feared God, they spared Moses from death at the time of his birth.

“Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses” (1:20-21).

Because the midwives feared God, they ignored the command of the king of Egypt. In wisdom, they chose the fear of the Lord and saved the males babies. (See Psalm 111:10; Job 28:28; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10.) The king's command to kill innocent babies was

indeed morally wrong. The actions of the Hebrew midwives brought the favor of God. The Israelites continued to multiply and grow in strength.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever” (Psalm 111:10).

The midwives' fear of God brought them God's favor, for God “made houses” for them. This phrase expresses that God gave them families of their own. “And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own” (1:21, NIV).

II. The Birth and Development of a Leader (2:1-25)

A. Moses' Birth and Early Life (2:1-10)

The Bible's record of Moses' birth and early life confirms that he was a Levite, born to Amram and Jochebed (6:20). Thus, he belonged to the priestly tribe of Levi. His mother kept him hidden, for he was born during the time the Egyptians had orders to kill boy babies. Though the Bible does not state such, it seems probable other Hebrew babies had been cast into the river. Interestingly, Jochebed put Moses in the river at three months of age, but in the safety of a waterproof “ark” she designed. The outcome of the story shows that God had directed the plans and actions of Mother Jochebed.

What may appear to be coincidences proved the unfolding of God's plan for Israel's deliverance. Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe; she saw the ark floating among the flags; she sent her maid to get it. When she saw the baby, she wept with compassion for him. At that point, something within her accepted the child as hers to protect. She claimed the baby as her own even though she knew the baby was a Hebrew. She accepted the sister's offer to find a nurse for the child. For an unspecified time, the child lived with his Hebrew parents. Then the time came for him to go to the palace of his protector, an Egyptian princess. She gave him the name Moses, meaning “drawn from the water.” Her choice to claim Moses as hers exempted him from the death edict her father had given. All of these happenings would have been unlikely apart from God's directive. What Pharaoh intended for evil, God used to fulfill His plan. His own daughter became the person who preserved and nurtured Israel's deliverer.

B. Moses' Forty Years in Midian

From the early years of Moses, the Bible record skips to the time when he was grown (2:11). At the age of forty (see Acts 7:23-24), he killed an Egyptian who was smiting a Hebrew. This tragedy led to his rejection by the Hebrews the next day when he tried to intervene when two Hebrews fought each other.

Pharaoh heard about Moses' actions and sought to kill him. Thus, Moses fled for his life into the land of Midian. Though God had already chosen Moses to deliver Israel from bondage, God's time had not yet come. God told Abram that his seed would be afflicted for four hundred years (Genesis 15:13). The entire four hundred years had not yet been fulfilled.

“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years” (Genesis 15:13).

Moses spent the next forty years in Midian (Arabia or the Sinai area). Moses showed his leadership ability when he assisted the daughters of the priest of Midian (Reuel) at the well. He drove away the shepherds who troubled them and then drew water for their flocks. His kind act won him a place in the home of Reuel (Jethro in 3:1). He married Zipporah, one of Reuel's seven daughters.¹

After a brief account of Moses' forty years in Midian, the story shifts from Moses to the children of Israel. Three verses summarize this period of time (2:23-25):

1. The king of Egypt died.
2. Israel sighed, cried, and groaned in their bondage.
3. God heard their cry.
4. God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
5. God looked upon the children of Israel and had respect unto them.

As the years passed, it must have seemed to Israel that God had forsaken them. The good days of Joseph were faded history. The living generation knew only the heavy yoke of bondage. Then eighty years after the birth of Moses, God heard their desperate cry and remembered His covenant (2:24). God looked upon the children of Israel and began the miracle of Israel's redemption (2:25).

III. God's Call to Moses and the Revelation of Yahweh (3:1-22)

God kept Moses in the wilderness as a shepherd for forty years as part of His plan. During these years, Moses lived in the very desert into which he would one day lead the Israelites. God's call came to Moses as he watched Jethro's flock near Mount Horeb (Sinai). The angel of the LORD in a flame of fire and a burning bush caught his eye. When Moses turned to see, God called his name twice. Moses answered, “Here am I.” Moses opened his mind to the voice of God.

¹ This priest of Midian is given two names—Jethro (Exodus 3:1) and Reuel (2:18), which is the same as Raguel (Numbers 10:29; NKJV marg.; LXX). The Midianites were distant relatives of the Hebrews (Genesis 25:2). (e-sword notes)

As Moses stood by the bush, God began revealing Himself and His purpose to Moses. God told him that he stood on holy ground. This is the first time the word *holy*, which means “sacred, set apart, dedicated,” is found in Scripture. First, God made Himself known to Moses as the God of his father and of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This revelation caused Moses to hide his face in fear. How overwhelmed he must have felt in God’s holy presence. Moses likely recognized these names and their association with the God his parents worshiped. His parents would have taught him about God before he went to the palace.

After introducing Himself, God began telling Moses about the affliction of the Israelites in Egypt. God described them to Moses as “my people.” He wanted Moses to understand His personal concern for the Israelites. God gave Moses a clear picture of the Israelites’ bondage and their cry for help. Then he told him of His plan to deliver them from Egypt and take them into Canaan. God described Canaan as a plentiful land but also as a place filled with six heathen nations (3:8). After this introduction, God asked Moses to “hear the cry of the children of Israel” (3:9). His next words were “come now therefore,” and I will send you to Pharaoh to bring Israel out of Egypt.

This call came as a shock to Moses, which his question to God shows: “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (3:11, NKJV). God assured Moses that He would be with him. He told him that the sign (evidence) would come when he had led the people out of Egypt to serve God on this mountain (3:12 - Horeb or Sinai).

Moses knew he was talking with the God of his fathers, but he felt concerned that the Israelites would want to know the name of the God who sent him (3:13). He had not lived among the Israelites. How would they know that he came with a message from their God? God answered, “I AM THAT I AM.” He told Moses to tell the Israelites that I AM (Yahweh)² sent you to them. In addition, Moses was to tell them that “the LORD God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” sent him.

God’s call to Moses came with urgency. Having revealed Himself and His plan to Moses, God told Moses to “go, and gather the elders of Israel together” (3:16). What God had told Moses, Moses must tell Israel, and Israel would heed his voice. Then, the elders of Israel should go with Moses to request permission for Israel to go three days’ journey into

² 3:13-14 Moses anticipated questions from the children of Israel when he returned to them as the Lord’s spokesman, and he wanted to be able to tell them who sent him. It was at this point that God first revealed Himself as Jehovah, the great I AM. Jehovah (more precisely Yahweh) comes from the Hebrew verb “to be,” *hāyāh*. This sacred name is known as the tetragrammaton (“four letters”). English Jehovah comes from the Hebrew YHWH, with vowel markings supplied from Elohim and Adonai, other names of God. No one knows for sure the true pronunciation of YHWH because the ancient Hebrew spelling used no actual vowels in its alphabet. However, the pronunciation “Yahweh” is probably correct. The Jews consider YHWH too sacred to utter. The name proclaims God as self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal, and sovereign. The fuller name I AM WHO I AM may mean I AM BECAUSE I AM or I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE (e-Sword notes).

the wilderness to sacrifice to their God. However, God assured Moses that Pharaoh would not honor the request to let them go. This request was a test to show that the ruler would oppose Israel's departure from Egypt. Thus the stage was set for God to stretch out His hand, smite Egypt, and perform "wonders." Deliverance would come as God promised, but not without opposition from Egypt and the display of God's wonders (ten plagues). Amazingly, the Israelites would not leave "empty." They would leave with jewels of silver and gold and garments received from the Egyptians. The Israelite women were given the favor of the Egyptians to "ask" (3:21-22, NKJV) rather than "borrow" (KJV). This wealth would be only partial pay for their years of slave labor in Egypt.

IV. The Doubts of Moses and the Signs of God's Power (4:1-17)

Moses doubted the Israelites would believe God had appeared to him. God did not reject Moses for his doubts. Rather, He gave him signs he could use to show that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had appeared to him. First, He turned Moses' rod into a serpent and then back to a rod again. Second, He caused Moses' hand to be leprous and then He healed it. Third, He assured Moses He would turn water from the Nile River into blood if the Israelites did not believe the first two signs.

Still doubting his ability to lead, Moses told the LORD, "I am not eloquent . . . I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." God assured him that He would be with his mouth and give him words to speak. Still doubting, Moses asked for someone else to do the talking. Though God was angry with Moses, He gave him Aaron as a spokesperson. Still God said that He would put words in the mouth of Moses, who then would speak to Aaron (4:15-16). Thus, we read of Moses and Aaron going to speak to Pharaoh. Yet we read that the Lord spoke to Moses, not Aaron. Moses remained the man called to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When the Exodus happened, Moses spoke directly to Israel without Aaron as his spokesperson (chapter 13).

People called to ministry seldom feel adequate. Like Moses, they often find an excuse in their personal weakness to reject God's call. However, God never calls without providing His power and strength to enable the ones whom He calls.

V. Moses' Journey Back to Egypt (4:18-31)

With his shepherd's rod in his hand, Moses began his walk back to Egypt. On his way, he returned to his father-in-law, Jethro, to ask permission to return to Egypt to ask about his brethren. Jethro told him to "Go in peace," and informed him that the men who desired to kill him had died. With his wife and sons and his rod in his hand, Moses set out to do the will of God.

God talked to Moses as he traveled. He reminded him to use the signs he had been given. He informed him Pharaoh would refuse to free Israel. He told him to tell Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, even my firstborn." At this early date, God hinted to Moses that the firstborn would have importance in Israel's future (13:2; Numbers 3:12-13) and in their deliverance (see 11:5; 12:29).

The brief story of the circumcision of the sons of Moses by his wife Zipporah shows Moses knew about the command that each male in Israel should be circumcised as a sign of the covenant given to Abraham (Genesis 17:10-11). Moses must have told his wife to circumcise his sons before he returned to his people (4:25-26).

Not only did God direct Moses, He also spoke to Aaron and sent him to meet Moses in the wilderness. God honored Moses' request for a spokesperson and arranged the timing for the two to meet and discuss God's plan. Then the two went together to meet the people. Aaron spoke at this meeting, and the people believed. Understanding that God saw their affliction, the Israelites bowed their heads and worshiped. After the years of oppression, this first news of hope had to be overwhelming for the Israelites.

When the gospel of Jesus Christ comes to those oppressed with sin and trouble, it brings hope and inspires worship. Seeing the blessing that comes to others in reception of God's Word can lessen any hesitation a person feels in response to the call of God.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What significant transition is seen in biblical history within the first seven verses of Exodus?
2. In a brief paragraph, summarize the events of Moses' birth and how his life was spared.
3. Who were Moses' parents and siblings?
4. To which tribe did Moses belong?
5. Why did Moses end up living in wilderness of Midian for forty years?
6. Summarize the three forty-year periods of Moses' life by explaining where he was and the main events of each forty-year period.
7. How did God get Moses' attention and begin speaking to him about becoming Israel's deliverer?
8. Write the conversation between Moses and God recorded in Exodus 3:11-15 as listed below:
Moses: Who am I, that I should go. . .? (complete)
God: Certainly . . .
Moses:
God:
God:

9. What three signs did God give Moses as evidence that God had sent him with a message for Israel?
10. How did God identify Himself to Moses?
11. How did Moses describe himself to the Lord?
12. What is the meaning and significance of Exodus 4:24-26?

Assignment

1. Read Exodus 5-11.
2. Find the seven verses in Exodus 1-7 that speak about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then describe the message of each verse.
3. After reading these seven chapters, stop and meditate, and then write three personal lessons that you gleaned from these chapters.

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 3

Requests to Pharaoh / Ten Plagues and Responses

Exodus 5-11 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Exodus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Moses and Aaron faced an impossible situation in seeking the release of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. The story of the Israelites' miraculous deliverance from Egypt provides assurance that God is well able to deliver anyone from the bondage of sin under the provisions of the New Covenant in Christ Jesus.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. List the ten plagues, showing the growing severity of each plague until Pharaoh ordered the Israelites to leave.
2. Explain how God provided for the Israelites' release from bondage through the leadership of Aaron and Moses.
3. Show how God used the voice and actions of Moses to reject the compromise offers of Pharaoh.

Lesson Outline

- I. Pharaoh's Rejection of God's Plan (5:1-14)
- II. Moses and Aaron's Response to Rejection (5:10-23)
- III. The Lord Answers Moses by Reaffirming His Covenant (6:1-13)

- IV. Identifying the Genealogies of God's Chosen Leaders (6:14-27)
- V. The Beginning of God's Judgments on Egypt (6:28-7:13)
- VI. "I Am the LORD" in Genesis and Exodus
- VII. Summary of the Ten Plagues (God's Judgments on Egypt)
See the "Chart of 10 Plagues Visited on Egypt."
- VIII. Lessons for Leaders When Faced with Challenges and Offers of Compromise

Key Verses

God told Moses what He willed to do for Israel, and He kept His Word in delivering them from bondage and leading them to the Promised Land.

"Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD" (6:6-8).

Lesson Content

Introduction

God called Moses to return to Egypt after He had prepared him for the role of leading the Israelites out of bondage. God's call came when Moses was eighty years old, and he had spent forty years in the wilderness (Exodus 7:7; Acts 7:30). God had not forsaken His people. His plan was in progress during the years of the Israelites' oppression. His plan to deliver Israel from bondage unfolds in Exodus 5-11.

I. Pharaoh's Rejection of God's Plan (5:1-14)

When God spoke to Moses in the wilderness, He told him to take the elders of Israel with him to speak to Pharaoh (3:18). After Moses complained about not being able to talk, the Lord appointed Aaron as his spokesperson. Thus, Moses and Aaron went together to request that Israel be allowed to go into the wilderness to hold a feast unto the Lord God of Israel. Pharaoh responded with a question, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" He emphasized that he did not know the Lord and would

not let Israel go. Not acknowledging Israel's God, he saw no need for Israel to sacrifice unto the Lord. As events would later prove, his denial of the true God did not lessen God's ability to deliver Israel.

Egyptians used the title pharaoh for their king and regarded him as a god. Seeing himself as god, he rejected the "God of the Hebrews."

Pharaoh reacted to the request of Moses and Aaron by accusing Moses of causing the people to neglect their work (5:4-5). His reaction showed he claimed the Israelites as people subject to his commands. He ordered the taskmasters to increase the workload of the Israelites by demanding that they gather their own straw for brick making. This command implies the Egyptians had provided the straw. The Israelites could not meet the impossible demand of producing the same quota of bricks along with gathering the straw. Their failure caused the Egyptian taskmasters to beat the officers of the children of Israel (5:14).

II. Moses and Aaron's Response to Rejection (5:10-23)

When the Hebrew officers were beaten, they cried to Pharaoh, who showed no compassion. Rather, he repeated his demand that they produce the daily "tale of bricks" (fixed quantity). On their return from visiting Pharaoh, the officers met Moses and Aaron in the way. Feeling defeated in their plea to Pharaoh to lighten their workload, they accused Moses and Aaron for their troubles. They griped, saying that the actions of Moses and Aaron caused Pharaoh to abhor them. Further, they described Pharaoh as having a sword in his hand to slay them. When faced with troubles, the human mind can easily exaggerate the severity of the circumstance. Pharaoh would not likely have been ready to kill the Israelites. After all, they did the hard labor that brought prosperity to his land.

This encounter caused Moses to return to the Lord for counsel. He boldly asked two questions: "O Lord, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me?" (5:22, NIV). Moses needed answers from God, and as a God-called leader, he did not hesitate to ask questions. The events of Exodus 6 show that God had answers for Moses.

III. The Lord Answers Moses by Reaffirming His Covenant (6:1-13)

Moses' questions and concerns (5:22-23) did not meet with a reprimand from the Lord. Rather, the Lord gave Moses a ready answer to his dilemma. Indeed Moses would see God's deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. God's strong hand would compel Pharaoh to let the people go.

“Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land” (6:1, NKJV).

God reaffirmed He was indeed the covenant God who had appeared to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), Isaac (Genesis 26:24), and Jacob (Genesis 28:12-15). In Exodus 6:3, God told Moses He appeared to the patriarchs as “God Almighty” (El-Shaddai), but He was not known to them as JEHOVAH. This is the first time JEHOVAH (the self-existent, eternal) appears in the Bible. (See also Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4.) God seemed to be informing Moses that He would now provide a greater revelation of Himself. His covenant was soon to be fulfilled with the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and their entry into the Promised Land.

“And God spake to Moses and said to him: I am the LORD: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers” (6:2-4).

In quick succession, God spoke words of encouragement and faith to Moses. Even though Aaron accompanied Moses, God spoke specifically to Moses, the man whom He called to be Israel's deliverer. The words that God spoke to Moses provide a distinct message for those whom God calls into leadership.

- I have established my covenant . . .
- I have heard the groanings of the children . . .
- I am the LORD . . .
- I will bring you out . . .
- I will rid you out of their bondage . . .
- I will redeem you with a stretched out arm . . .
- I will take you to me for a people . . .
- I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God . . .
- I will bring you into the land . . .
- I will give it you for an heritage . . .
- I am the LORD (6:4-8).

These verses speak of what God had done, who He was, and what He would do.

Assured with these promises, Moses returned to the Israelites with God's message. Overwhelmed by their severe slave labor, they did not listen to Moses. Yet God did not leave Moses without knowledge of what action to take. He told him to go directly to Pharaoh and ask again for the Israelites to leave. Moses struggled with this command. Once again, he asked God a question (6:12). He questioned how Pharaoh would listen to

him when even the Israelites did not listen with faith. His reference to “uncircumcised lips” relates to his statement of Exodus 4:10 when he spoke of not being “eloquent” and of a “slow tongue.”

Again, God did not criticize Moses for his question and lack of confidence. He spoke to both him and Aaron, telling them to give a “charge” or strong command to the children of Israel and to Pharaoh. The charge was simply, “Bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.”

Gods backed His “charge” with His promises and His power. When God calls people to spiritual leadership, He indeed equips them with promises and power.

IV. Identifying the Genealogies of God’s Chosen Leaders (6:14-27)

The Israelites doubted the authority of Moses because of their increased hardships. In the midst of their doubts, God directed Moses to rehearse a portion of Israel’s genealogy. He names the elder sons of Jacob, Reuben and Simeon. These elder sons would have led Jacob’s family as they went into Egypt. Then God gave the genealogy of the sons of Levi with specific mention of Aaron and Moses (6:20, 26), the ones called to lead Israel out of Egypt. (Note verses 26-27.)

V. The Beginning of God’s Judgments on Egypt (6:28-7:13)

Though Moses felt inadequate, God continued to speak to him. He reminded him, “I am the LORD. You tell Pharaoh all that I tell you.” Again Moses spoke of his “uncircumcised lips” (4:10; 6:12) and asked how would Pharaoh listen to him (6:30). “Uncircumcised lips” translates also as “faltering lips” (NIV).

God answered him by telling him He would make him a god to Pharaoh (7:1). Having been raised in the palace, Moses would understand that Pharaoh saw himself as supreme. With this word from the Lord, Moses could see himself in a different light. Though humanly limited, he could indeed speak to Pharaoh all God commanded.

Chapter 7 opens with God informing Moses of the events to come. Pharaoh would resist the pleas of Aaron and Moses to let the people go. Pharaoh’s resistance would bring on the judgments of God. After God multiplied His signs and wonders, the Egyptians would know He was the Lord. With this knowledge, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh. The rod became a serpent (a sign that God had given to Moses in the wilderness). The magicians of Egypt did the same, and then Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods. Yet Pharaoh did not acknowledge God’s greater power. His heart was hardened. Thus, God’s signs and wonders began. Time after time

Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh. Each time Pharaoh would resist. The Scripture describes his resistance in different terms:

- The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh (7:13; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10)
- Pharaoh's heart grew hard (7:13, NKJV)
- Pharaoh's heart was hardened (7:14; 9:7, 35)
- Pharaoh hardened his heart (8:15, 32; 9:34)

Before the first plague struck, Pharaoh rejected the miraculous sign of Aaron's rod turning into a snake. Exodus 7:13 (NKJV) states, "Pharaoh's heart grew hard." When the Lord instructed Moses to announce the first plague, He told him, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go" (7:14). As the Lord visited the plagues on Egypt, Pharaoh continued to harden his heart (8:15, 32; 9:7, 34-35), repeatedly refusing to release the Israelites. After the sixth plague struck, the Bible records that "the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh," who refused to let the people go (9:12). Six times Pharaoh had seen God act in behalf of the Israelites, yet he stubbornly resisted Moses' requests. Three more verses, related to the last three plagues, speak of the Lord hardening Pharaoh's heart (10:20, 27; 11:10). The record shows Pharaoh had many opportunities to heed the warnings from Moses. His choice to reject the message from Moses finally resulted in the Lord hardening his heart. Pharaoh's choice to harden his own heart ultimately became the Lord's judgment from which Pharaoh had no escape. What a solemn lesson these words proclaim.

VI. "I Am the LORD" in Genesis and Exodus

As the story of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt unfolds, this statement appears repeatedly: "I am the LORD." What is the significance of this repetition?

"I am the LORD" appears two times in Genesis and seventeen times in Exodus. In Genesis 15:7 God describes Himself as the One who brought Abraham out of Ur to give him the land to inherit. In Genesis 28:13 the covenant of the land is repeated to Jacob, introduced with "I am the LORD." The Exodus passages containing "I am the LORD" also contain references to the land promised in the covenant. As God confirmed to Moses that He was "LORD," He emphasized His promise to give them a land. To inherit the covenant land, Israel had to be miraculously delivered from their bondage in the land of Egypt.

LORD (as written in all caps in some English translations) translates from the Hebrew "YHWH" (Yahweh, translated as Jehovah in KJV). Because of the sacredness of God's name (20:7), the Jewish people did not pronounce His name when reading Scripture aloud. Rather, when the reader came to YHWH, he would use the title "adonai," which is written Lord (caps and lower case in some English translations). "I am

LORD” appears in these verses of Exodus: 6:2, 6-8, 29; 7:5, 17; 8:22; 10:2; 12:12; 14:4, 18; 15:26; 16:12; 20:2; 29:46; 31:13).

A study of these passages shows that the Lord revealed His divine name, power, and purpose to Israel.

VII. Summary of the Ten Plagues, God’s Judgments on Egypt (7:1-11:10)

The ten plagues can be viewed in four sections: three sections of three plagues and then the tenth plague. Pharaoh was warned in the morning by the river Nile before the first, fourth, and seventh plagues. Each of the first three sections ends with a plague that comes without warning.

The first three plagues afflicted both the Israelites and the Egyptians and brought only temporary discomfort on the people and animals. During the next three plagues, God spared the Israelites and afflicted only the Egyptians. These plagues also brought greater devastation on the people and their property. After the death of the Egyptians’ cattle in the fifth plague, Pharaoh inquired and learned that Israel’s cattle had lived (9:7). Still his heart was hardened, and he did not let Israel go. The sixth plague showed more of God’s power with the boils afflicting even the magicians (9:11). The third group of plagues came with a pronouncement of severe judgment on Egypt (9:13-15). As the plagues continued, Pharaoh’s servants and the people of Egypt became fearful of the destruction and pleaded with Pharaoh to let the people go (10:7).

In some manner, each of the plagues revealed God’s supremacy over the gods of Egypt (refer to chart). The Egyptians worshiped and looked to many gods for help and protection. At first Pharaoh and the Egyptians did not recognize the power of Moses’ God. Rather, the Egyptian magicians used their satanic powers to duplicate God’s signs. By the time of the third plague, they could not match God’s power (8:18). The magicians themselves said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God” (8:19). Yet Pharaoh did not listen to the magicians. His heart was hard. With each succeeding plague, he resisted Moses’ plea to let Israel go. The tenth and final plague, the death of all the firstborn of Egypt, showed Pharaoh and his people the superiority of Israel’s Lord (Yahweh) over their god of life, Ptah. This final plague (death of all the firstborn) devastated Egypt and brought deliverance to the Israelites. Though Pharaoh ordered them to leave, he later relented and pursued them. However, God’s plan for their freedom prevailed. The Plagues Chart summarizes the ten plagues and lists some of the Egyptian gods that the plagues would have attacked.

At the time of the eighth plague, God told Moses that the signs performed in Egypt should be told to Israel’s sons and grandsons. Each succeeding generation needed

to know about the miracles that the LORD (Yahweh) did for the Israelites. Time after time Moses heard these words: “I am the LORD” (10:2).

Present-day children must hear from their elders that the Lord God does wonders and brings deliverance to those who look to Him and obey Him as Lord.

THE TEN PLAGUES VISITED ON EGYPT					
Refer- ence	Plague	Description	Response	Pharaoh's Response	Egyptian god
7:14-24	Blood	Water changed to blood, fish die, river stinks, and water undrinkable.	Magicians did the same by their magic arts.	Pharaoh's heart was hardened.	<i>Nilu</i> , god of the Nile
8:1-15	Frogs	Frogs were everywhere in the land, the palace, houses, bedrooms, and ovens.	Magicians made frogs come up on the land by their magic arts.	Pharaoh hardened his heart.	<i>Heqt</i> , goddess of reproduction
8:16-19	Lice (Gnats)	Dust smitten by Aaron's rod became lice (gnats) upon beasts and man.	Magicians unable to produce gnats. They said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.”	Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He did not listen to the magicians.	<i>Seb</i> , god of the earth
8:20-32	Flies	Swarms of flies upon the Egyptians and in the houses. No flies in Goshen on Israelites.	Pharaoh said he would let Israel go to sacrifice, but not far.	Pharaoh hardened his heart, and did not let them go.	<i>Khepera</i> , sacred scarab
9:1-7	Livestock Plague	A deadly disease came upon all the livestock of the Egyptians and all the animals died.	Not one of the Israelites' animals died. Pharaoh sent men to check on them.	Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not let the people go.	<i>Apis</i> and <i>Hathor</i> , sacred bull and cow
9:8-12	Boils	Moses and Aaron scattered ashes; boils broke out on Egyptians and their animals.	Magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils.	The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he refused to listen.	<i>Typhon</i> , evil-eye god
9:13-35	Hail, Fire	Hail and fire killed the animals and men left in the fields and destroyed the ripened grain, trees.	No hail in Goshen. Pharaoh admitted he sinned and pleaded for relief from the hail.	The hail ceased. Pharaoh's heart was hardened.	<i>Shu</i> , god of the atmosphere

10:1-20	Locusts	Locusts covered the face of the land and ate all the remaining vegetation left after the hail.	Pharaoh's servants asked Pharaoh to let the people go. Pharaoh again admitted sinning	Locusts taken away. The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart.	<i>Serapis</i> , the protector from locusts
10:21-29	Darkness	Thick darkness covered Egypt for 3 days. Yet the Israelites had light in their houses.	Pharaoh told Moses the people could go to sacrifice without their herds.	The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not let Israel go.	<i>Ra</i> , the sun god
Ch. 11, 12	Death of Firstborn	All the firstborn in Egypt died—men and beasts—but Israelites were spared.	Pharaoh and the people urged Israel to leave in fear they would all die (12:33).	Pharaoh ordered Israel to leave, but he later pursued them.	<i>Ptah</i> , the god of life
Each plague related in some way to one of the gods of the Egyptians. As each plague came, it would appear to the Egyptians that one of their gods was afflicting them. Different sources list various gods worshiped by the Egyptians. Source for list of Egyptian gods: Norman L. Geissler, <i>A Popular Survey of the Old Testament</i> (55).					

VIII. Lessons for Leaders When Faced with Challenges and Offers of Compromise

As instructed by the Lord, Moses and Aaron spoke repeatedly to Pharaoh requesting the release of the Israelites. Observation of these events shows that Moses and Aaron faced many disappointments in seeking the release of the Israelites. Pharaoh's resistance and his offers of compromise provide valuable lessons for God-called leaders.

At the time of the first plague (7:14-24), Moses' request to Pharaoh was to let the Israelites go to the wilderness to serve the Lord. Pharaoh did not respond to the request. Even after the water turned into blood, he simply turned away and went into his house. The acts of his magicians and his lack of response did not void God's message. A leader must courageously speak God's Word even though the hearers may show no response.

Before the second plague, the Lord told Moses to say, "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (8:1-15). Though Pharaoh's magicians duplicated the plague of the frogs, they could not take away the frogs. Recognizing his plight, Pharaoh pleaded with Moses and Aaron to remove the frogs with a promise that he would let the people go. When Pharaoh saw the frogs had died, he hardened his heart and did not honor the request of Moses. People who have not experienced the works of God often turn away from the voice of God's messenger. When hard times come to them, they may seek God's help, only to turn away when things seem good again. Even when rejected, a God-called leader must continue to speak God's message.

After the second rejection, Moses heard from God again with instructions for the third plague. Interestingly, God did not send Moses to warn Pharaoh, and the magicians could not duplicate the plague of lice (8:16-19). The magicians acknowledged “the finger of God” when their abilities had no power. Yet Pharaoh’s heart was hardened; he would not listen (8:19).

Again God directed Moses to go before Pharaoh and make the request, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.” When swarms of flies filled the land, including Pharaoh’s house, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. The severity of the flies got his attention. He seemed ready to listen and said, “Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.” However, his offer was a compromise. As long as the people remained in Egypt, they would be subject to Pharaoh’s order. As leader, Moses knew that the Israelites needed to be separated from Egypt and its abominations to make sacrifice to the Lord. Thus, he requested that they be able to “go three days journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us” (8:27). Moses did not say that they would go and return. Rather, he emphasized that they would do as God commanded.

Pharaoh responded with another compromise offer: “I will let you go . . . only ye shall not go very far away” (8:28). With this offer, he asked Moses to take away the flies. Moses agreed to “entreat the LORD” to remove the flies, but warned Pharaoh not to deal deceitfully anymore in not allowing the people to go sacrifice. However, Pharaoh again hardened his heart and refused to let the people go. Moses might have lost courage after this fourth effort to gain the release. However, Moses understood the Lord intended for Israel to leave, not stay close to Egypt. A leader must teach obedience to God’s Word.

At the time of the eighth plague, Pharaoh’s servants pleaded with him to let the men of Israel go to serve the Lord their God. Moses boldly told Pharaoh that they would all—young and old, sons and daughters, flocks and herds—go to hold a feast unto the Lord. Pharaoh said, “Not so: go now ye that are men” (10:7-11). Again, he offered a compromise and then drove Moses and Aaron from his presence. Leaving their families and possessions behind meant that the men would return to Egypt. As leader, Moses did not accept such a compromise.

After the plague of darkness (ninth plague), Pharaoh offered to let Israel go with their children, but they must leave their flocks and herds behind. Moses found this compromise impossible. Israel could not leave their flocks and herds, for they were necessary for making sacrifice unto the Lord their God (10:24-26). Israel’s departure from Egypt typifies the Christian’s separation from the world.

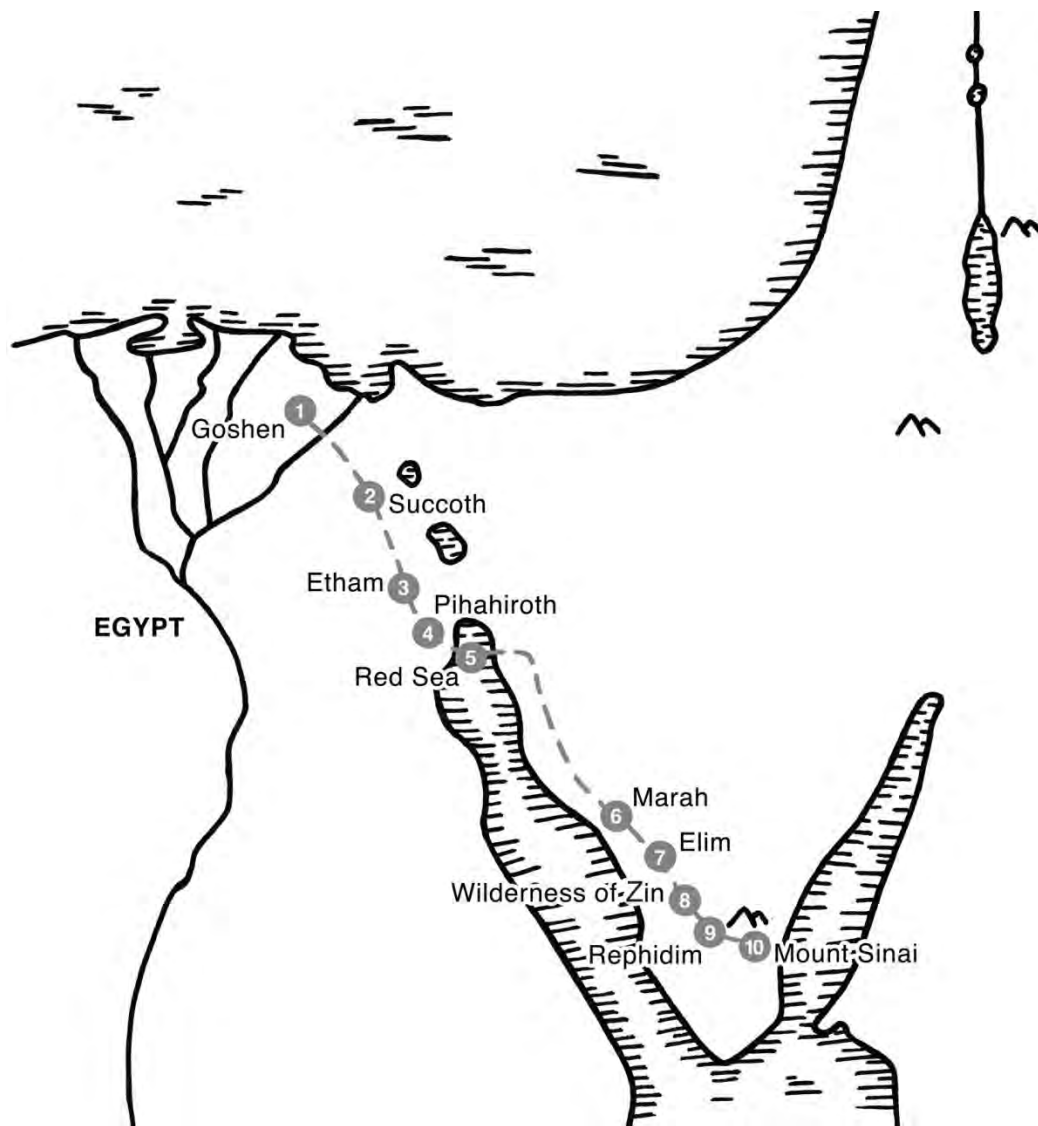
Obedience to God’s Word cannot be negotiated or compromised. The world offers compromise, but God’s Word gives a clear call for separation from the world (I John 2:15).

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What did Pharaoh say to Moses when he requested that Pharaoh let the Israelites go into the wilderness to hold a feast unto the Lord?
2. What happened to the Israelites after Moses made his first request to Pharaoh?
3. When the Israelites complained to Moses and Aaron about the taskmasters laying burdens upon them, what did Moses do?
4. What encouraging message did God give Moses (6:2-8) in response to his despair about the condition of the Israelites as described in chapter 5?
5. What is the importance of the genealogies given in Exodus 6:14-27?
6. What ten plagues came upon Egypt that eventually resulted in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage?
7. After which plague did Pharaoh offer his first compromise and what was his offer?
8. What other compromises did Pharaoh offer?
9. How did the plagues reveal that the God of the Hebrews was greater than the gods that the Egyptians worshiped?
10. What lessons can leaders glean from these stories of Moses and Aaron as they face challenges and offers of compromise?

Assignment

1. Read Exodus 12-18.
2. Memorize Exodus 12:13.
3. As you read these seven chapters, list the key events or subjects mentioned in each chapter. (Note: These observations will prepare you for class discussion and better retention of the chapter contents.)



From Egypt to Mount Sinai

1. Goshen (Ramses) - Israel in Egypt (Genesis 47:11, 27; Exodus 8:22; 12:37)
2. Succoth - Israel's first stop in leaving Egypt (Exodus 13:20; Numbers 33:5)
3. Etham - Edge of the wilderness (Exodus 13:20; Numbers 33:6)
4. Pihahiroth between Migdol and the sea (Exodus 14:2; Numbers 33:7,8)
5. Red Sea Crossing (Exodus 14:19-31; Numbers 33:8)
6. Bitter Waters of Marah (Exodus 15:22-26; Numbers 33:9)
7. Elim - Springs and palm trees (Exodus 15:27; Numbers 33:9)
8. Wilderness of Zin - Manna provided (Exodus 16; Numbers 33:11)
9. Rephidim - Water provided; Amalek defeated (Exodus 17; Numbers 33:14)
10. Mount Sinai Arrival (Exodus 19:1; Numbers 33:15)

Lesson 4

The Journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai

Exodus 12-18 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Exodus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Under the old covenant, God designed a specific plan for delivering the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and miraculously led them to freedom. In like manner, the New Covenant provides a specific plan for man's deliverance from the bondage of sin and guidance for living free from sin.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Describe the manner in which the Passover was observed and explain its purpose and significance.
2. Show on a map the route that the Israelites traveled from Egypt to Mount Sinai, along with describing some of the events that happened on their journey.
3. Explain the lesson that Moses learned about leadership from his father-in-law Jethro.

Lesson Outline

- I. The Passover Observance and Exodus from Egypt (12:1-51)
- II. Consecration of the Firstborn and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (13:1-16)

- III. Journey to and through the Red Sea (13:17-14:41)
- IV. The Song of Moses and Miriam (15:1-21)
- V. Desert Experiences and Complaints (15:22-17:16)
- VI. Moses Learns to Delegate (18:1-27)

Key Verse

God faithfully and miraculously leads His children.

“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night” (13:21).

Lesson Content

I. The Passover Observance and Exodus from Egypt (12:1-51)

While the last plague brought the death of every firstborn for every Egyptian family, it brought hope of deliverance to every Israelite home. For Israel, this tenth plague set the stage for Israel's main religious celebration, the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The narrative of chapter 12 alternates between instructions for the Passover and the events of Israel's departure.

In Exodus 11 God informed Moses, who then told Pharaoh, about the death plague that would strike the Egyptians, causing loud wailings throughout Egypt. His message told Pharaoh that all would be quiet in Israel. However, he did not tell Pharaoh about the instructions of how Israel would be spared from death. Exodus 12 provides this information.

A. Instructions for the Passover (12:1-28)

God gave Moses specific instructions about the time of the Passover, its purpose, and how to prepare for it. For the Israelites to escape from the death plague, they had to carefully follow God's instructions. Each family had to select a one-year-old lamb with no defects on a specific day (tenth day of Abib) and keep it until the fourteenth day of Abib. That evening the lamb had to be killed and its blood put on the sides and top of the doorframes of each house. Then each family had to prepare itself for leaving and then eat in haste (12:11) Why? The answer: “It is the LORD's Passover.”

The name alone did not explain the meaning of “Passover.” Through Moses, their leader, God told Israel that He would pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn

and bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. He reminded them He was Lord (12:12). Then He told them He would “pass over” their houses when He saw the blood. Because of the blood, the death plague would not touch them.

After giving instructions about the purpose and preparation for the Passover, God told Moses the Passover was to be a lasting celebration (festival) in Israel. Along with the Passover, Israel was to observe a weeklong Feast of Unleavened Bread (12:14-20). This celebration was to be an annual event to celebrate Israel’s deliverance from their bondage in Egypt. During this week, Israel must eat their bread without yeast and do no work except to prepare food. From that time onward, Israel observed the month Abib as the first month of their year, the month that marked their deliverance from Egypt (12:1-2).

Having heard from the Lord, Moses called the elders of Israel together and gave them God’s instructions about preparing the Passover lamb. He told them that everyone must remain in their houses where the destroyer would not enter because of the blood. (12:21-23). Also, he told them that they must keep this ceremony when they entered the Land of Promise. Their children must be told in years to come, “It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover.” They must understand that the Lord spared Israel from death. Having heard these words, the Israelites bowed down and worshiped and did what they had been commanded (12:14-28).

Just as God had said, the Lord struck down all the firstborn of Egypt at midnight. With death in every home, Pharaoh now ordered the Israelites to leave, taking their flocks and herds. Yet he wanted them to bless him (12:32). The Egyptians urged the Israelites to leave and gave them silver, gold, and clothing. They just wanted them gone, fearing they would all die (12:33).

B. The Exodus Begins (12:37-42)

These next verses provide some interesting facts about Israel. Without stating the exact time of departure, the Scripture records that Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth.

Rameses appears to have been another name for Goshen, though it is probable that there might have been a chief city or village in that land called Rameses, where the children of Israel gathered before their departure. As the term *Succoth* signifies booths or tents, it is probable that this place was so named from its being the place of the first encampment of the Israelites (*Clark’s Commentary on the Bible*).

The total number of people leaving is recorded as about 600,000 men, plus women and children. A conservative total would be about two million. The “many other people” (12:38, NIV) may have been Egyptians who joined Israel when they saw the miraculous works of God. Though leading two million or more people out of Egypt

would seem an impossible feat, it must be understood for what it was: a miracle of deliverance. The Lord gave the instructions for departure. Obedience to His instructions brought them out of Egypt.

Exodus 12:40 is an important verse in establishing biblical dates. It states the Israelites lived in Egypt for 430 years. Then verse 41 adds that all the host of the Lord went out of Egypt at the end of 430 years to the very day. (See Genesis 15:13; Acts 7:6; Galatians 3:17.) Two main ideas have been expressed about the 430 years of Israel's time in Egypt. A short view of Israel's sojourn in Egypt suggests that they spent only 215 years in Egypt with the other 215 years relating to events prior to their entrance into Egypt. However, the view that Israel spent 430 years in Egypt equates with a literal interpretation of Scripture. This view teaches that Israel spent the entire 430 years in Egypt. The first thirty years likely relate to the early years of their sojourn in Egypt when Jacob came with his family while Joseph served as second ruler in the Egypt. The next four hundred years then relate to the years when Israel came under bondage under a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph. This equates with the Genesis record (15:13) that states that Abraham's seed would be servants in a strange land for four hundred years. Acts 7:6 also speaks of Abraham's kindred being in bondage in a strange land for four hundred years.

II. Consecration of the Firstborn and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (13:1-16)

Following the Passover observance and apparently while Israel camped at Succoth, the Lord told Moses to sanctify unto Him all the firstborn, both man and beast. Because the Lord had spared the firstborn from the death plague, all firstborn sons were to be dedicated to His service (13:2, 11-15). The Lord also gave further details about the Feast of Unleavened Bread (13:3-10).

Two commands in this passage are noteworthy: "Remember this day" (13:3) and tell your son that the Lord brought you out with His strong hand (13:8, 14). Each generation must be diligent to pass on to the younger generation the knowledge of God's work and Word.

III. Journey to and through the Red Sea (13:17-14:31)

A. To the Red Sea

From Succoth, the Israelites resumed their journey. The Bible states that God led them the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea rather than the shorter route to the land of the Philistines. God knew they would be turned back toward Egypt when they met the

Philistines. Later passages reveal that God had a greater purpose in taking them via the southern route into the wilderness of Sinai. He wanted them set apart for a season to receive schooling as His chosen people. As they left Egypt, they carried Joseph's bones (13:13-19), a fulfillment of Genesis 50:25.

God did not allow the Israelites to wander in unknown places; rather, He led them miraculously with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (13:21-22). Though the exact location of their next encampments (14:2) cannot be identified, the Bible gives a fascinating story. God led Israel to a spot where they were trapped in the wilderness (14:3). When the Israelites saw Pharaoh's army coming, they feared and began complaining (14:10-12). The sight of the enemy erased their memory of God's miraculous guidance. However, God had given Moses a word of knowledge that when Pharaoh pursued them, the Egyptians would know this: "I am the LORD" (14:4). When Israel voiced strong complaints, Moses spoke words of comfort and courage:

"And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (14:13-14).

B. Through the Red Sea (14:15-31)

After Moses admonished Israel, the Lord gave Moses specific directions. As leader, he spoke and acted in faith. He told Israel to move forward. Then he lifted up his rod, and God miraculously parted the waters. Thus follows the extraordinary story of the Israelites crossing through the sea on dry ground, and the drowning of the Egyptian army as they pursued Israel. Read and reread this passage in the Bible to get the full impact of this great miracle. The miraculous passage through the Red Sea marks the time when Israel became a separated people rather than mere subjects of the Egyptian nation. However, they must still be schooled at Sinai to understand their place as a chosen nation under God's rule.

Critics have endeavored to discount this miracle, pointing out that the crossing was likely the Reed Sea, an area of shallow water. This argument lacks validity. Shallow water could not account for Israel passing through on dry ground. Neither could it explain how the army of Pharaoh with its chariots and horses drowned in shallow water. The geography of the area (Gulf of Suez) indicates that any area of possible crossing would have had more than shallow water (*Historical Survey of the Old Testament*, Merrill, 116). Only a miraculous event, such as told in Exodus, could provide the basis for Bible history to mention repeatedly the Red Sea crossing. (See Deuteronomy 11:4; Joshua 2:10; Psalms 66:6; 106:9; 136:10-15; Acts 7:36; Hebrews 11:29.)

IV. The Song of Moses and Miriam (15:1-21)

After the Israelites crossed safely through the Red Sea, Moses led Israel in singing unto the Lord, giving praise for salvation. This epic poem acknowledges God's majesty, power, holiness, glory, and great wonders. Surely, a divine anointing rested on Moses and the Israelites as they sang. They first praised God for deliverance from Egypt. Then they began to sing prophetically of the future. In verses 13-18, they sang about events that would happen in the future, even naming Edom, Moab, and Canaan, places related to events and victories at the end of their wilderness years. (See Numbers 20:14-21; 21:11-29; 33:40; Deuteronomy 2:24-25). The Song of Miriam echoes the words of Moses' song, praising the Lord for the defeat of the Egyptians (15:1, 21). Their songs affirmed the Lord as their deliverer. For years they had lived under the oppression of a nation that worshiped many gods. Now they had freedom to serve the eternal God who "reigns forever and forever" (15:18).

V. Desert Experiences and Complaints (15:22-18:27)

With the Red Sea behind them, the Israelites began their onward journey. Moses now led them into a wilderness where he lived during his forty years as a shepherd. What a contrast this would have been for Moses from the solitude of a shepherd to the leader of a vast host of Israelites. Though he had knowledge of the desert, Moses remained dependent on the Lord to provide life necessities for two million people (600,000 men plus women and children). Without assurance that God was with him, Moses faced the challenge. The desert experiences from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai show God's miraculous provision as well as the Israelites' faltering faith and murmurings. When the people faltered, Moses responded by calling on the Lord for direction. The Israelites needed assurance that the God who delivered them could provide for them in the desert. Moses' example provides direction for spiritual leaders of all times.

A. Water of Marah (15:22-26)

After crossing through the Red Sea, the Israelites traveled three days without finding water. When they found water at Marah (meaning bitter), it was undrinkable. Thirsty and tired, their memory of the miraculous Red Sea crossing faded. Rather than trusting God for water, they reacted by complaining against their leader. Moses responded by crying out to the Lord, who showed him a piece of wood. He threw this in the water, and it became sweet. The Scripture states that God provided this experience as a test, reminding Israel that they must listen to and obey the commands of "the Lord your God" (15:25-26). The Lord used this desert experience to show Israel that He was their healer: "I am the LORD that healeth thee" (15:26). Though the Israelites failed to trust the Lord, Moses heard from the Lord and acted in faith.

In the midst of difficulties, people need the positive voice of a leader who is sensitive to the voice of the Lord.

B. Springs and Palm Trees

One short verse (15:27) describes Israel's next encampment, a place of twelve springs and seventy palm trees (also see Numbers 33:9). The water and trees provided a pleasant place to camp. Note the importance of an ample supply of water with the words, "by the waters." Though a desert, there are areas in this wilderness area where an oasis exists. The Lord used the bitter water at Marah to test Israel before He led them to a place with spring water and shade trees. In the Christian's life, trials often come before blessings.

C. Manna and Quail (Bread and Meat) (16:1- 36)

As the Israelites journeyed, they learned the God who miraculously delivered them was also able to provide their daily needs. However, they learned slowly. One month after leaving Goshen in Egypt (16:1; Numbers 33:3), they came to the wilderness of Zin between Elim and Sinai. No doubt hungry from their travel, they resorted again to murmuring against leadership. Rather than focusing on the recent miracles, they mentally returned to Egypt remembering the food they ate there. They considered their hunger so intense they thought of themselves as dying. In this setting God again spoke to Moses: "I will rain bread from heaven for you." Verses 4-36 give the details of God's provision for not only bread (manna) but also for meat (quail) for all of Israel. As Moses told the Israelites about how God would provide for them, he reminded them that their murmurings were not against him and Aaron, but rather against the Lord (16:8). Moses knew that He had heard from the Lord. Thus, he knew that God could handle the complaints.

God sent food in His time and with specific instructions about how the Israelites should gather their daily allotment. While He could have put the needed amount of manna in front of each family's tent, He chose otherwise. His chosen people must go out each day and obtain an exact supply of manna (one omer for each person, or about two quarts). The manna is described as a small, round thing or flake (16:14). The manna could be boiled (seethed) or baked (16:23). Their meat supply came each evening as quail. They were told to gather only enough for each day with nothing left over. Then on the sixth day they were to gather double to provide food for the holy Sabbath unto the LORD (16:23).

This command began an observance that became a major part of their worship to the Lord after their schooling at Sinai. The failure of some of the people to follow the instructions showed their lack of faith in God to provide for their needs. Chapter 16 closes with instructions to fill a jar with an omer of manna as a testimony of God's

miraculous provision. God did not fail His people. He faithfully provided the manna for forty years even though His people faltered at times.

D. Water at Rephidim (17:1-7)

Having lived forty years in the wilderness, Moses would have known that finding water for the host of Israel would be a continual challenge. Yet he confidently led Israel as the Lord commanded. When the Israelites voiced another complaint about water, Moses questioned them (17:2). His questions made them know they were testing the Lord, not him. As Moses often did, he cried to the Lord, and the Lord answered him (17:4-6). Having heard the Lord's answer, he took his rod in his hand, walked before the people to the rock at Horeb, and struck the rock, and water gushed out. (See I Corinthians 10:4 for a New Testament application.) The gushing water answered the people's question, "Is the LORD among us or not?" (17:7). Again their leader led them through another crisis.

E. Amalekite Attack (17:8-15)

While still encamped at Rephidim, the Israelites faced another trial. The Amalekites, a nomadic raiding band of men, descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:12), attacked them, blocking their way to Sinai. Joshua, who grew up in Egypt as a slave and appears here for the first time in the Bible record, led the battle against the Amalekites. Moses instructed Joshua to choose men and go out to fight the Amalekites. In this desert warfare, he gained experience for the battles he would later face in the conquest of Canaan.

As the battle waged, Moses held up his hands and Israel prevailed. However, when Moses lowered his hands with weariness, the Amalekites prevailed. Seeing Moses' weariness, Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses until the end of the day. As Moses' hands stayed lifted heavenward, Joshua overcame the enemy. The Lord told Moses to record the victory over the Amalekites and "rehearse it in the ears of Joshua" (17:14).

Forty years from this event, Joshua needed to be confident that the Lord would be with him as he led Israel into the Promised Land. The record that Moses wrote and the altar that he built (17:15 – The LORD is my Banner) would remind Joshua and Israel that the Lord would fight with them as they faced their enemies.

V. Moses Learns to Delegate (18:1-27)

Having traveled for about two months with daily challenges, Moses was doubtless experiencing leadership stress. With his increased administrative burdens, he needed help. At this crisis time, his father-in-law Jethro arrived and shared helpful advice.

A. Moses Reunited with His Family (18:1-12)

From the record it seems that Moses' wife, Zipporah, and their two boys had returned to stay with her father Jethro while Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt (18:2-4). On hearing about what the Lord had done for Israel, Jethro sent word that he was coming to Moses "near the mountain of God" with his wife and sons. Jethro was a Midianite priest and would not have been a worshiper of Israel's God (3:1; 18:1). However, on hearing the testimony of Moses about Israel's deliverance from Egypt, Jethro rejoiced and declared, "The LORD is greater than all other gods" (18:11). This family reunion became a time of honoring Israel's God with burnt offerings and sacrifices provided by Jethro (18:12).

B. Jethro's Advice to Moses (18:13-27)

As Jethro watched Moses offer counsel to the Israelites from morning to evening, he saw an overburdened son-in-law. Out of concern, he offered Moses advice, which Moses readily accepted. He set leaders over the thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens to judge the lesser matters. Moses retained his responsibility as Israel's spiritual leader to teach them godly principles (18:19-20). Jethro stipulated that capable men should be chosen with the following traits: God-fearing, trustworthy, and honest. This passage provides insight for church leaders in dividing responsibilities and selecting leaders.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. Why is it important and valuable to talk to children about our experiences with God? (See Exodus 12:26-27.)
2. What were the Israelites commanded to do to be spared from the tenth plague?
3. What promise did God give the Israelites regarding the tenth plague?
4. What is the meaning and significance of the Passover?
5. What command did God give Moses about the firstborn and why?
6. How did God miraculously lead Israel during their years in the wilderness?
7. What other Bible books mention the Israelites' miraculous deliverance from Egypt through the Red Sea?
8. What prophetic content was included in the song that Moses and the Israelites sang after they crossed the Red Sea (chapter 15)?
9. Name and explain the significance of the five desert experiences of the Israelites described in 15:22-17:15.
10. What important lesson did Moses learn from his father-in-law?

Assignment

1. Read Exodus 19-24.
2. As you read these six chapters, list one or more verse(s) for which you would like a fuller understanding of the meaning. Write the question you would like answered.
3. Write a summary list of the Ten Commandments and then memorize them in order.

Lesson 5

Israel's Schooling at Mount Sinai

Exodus 19-24 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Exodus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Through Moses, God gave Israel commandments and principles to guide their lives in right living. Likewise, the New Covenant under Christ Jesus provides the commandments and principles for righteous living. The Christian must learn God's laws with the mind, keep them in the heart, and let them guide one's thoughts and deeds.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Define *covenant* as mentioned in the Old Testament and explain the significance of the Mosaic Covenant.
2. Know the content and meaning of the Ten Commandments given to the Israelites at Mount Sinai.
3. Describe the meaning and significance of the civil laws given to the Israelites.

Lesson Outline

- I. The Covenant (19:1-25)
- II. The Ten Commandments (20:1-26)
- III. The Civil Laws (21:1-23:33)
- IV. The Covenant Confirmed (24:1-18)

Key Verse

God sees His people as His treasure.

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine” (19:5). (Also see I Peter 2:9.)

Lesson Content

I. The Covenant (19:1-25)

A. Israel at Mount Sinai

After their deliverance from Egypt and travel through the desert, the Israelites arrived on the plain before Mount Sinai on the fifteenth day of the third month, two months after leaving Rameses in Egypt (19:1; Numbers 33:3). Arrival at Mount Sinai must have been a momentous event for Moses. At this very site, God had called to him from the burning bush (3:1-6). For approximately eleven months, the Israelites would be camped at this site to be schooled as a nation under God.

“And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain” (3:12).

B. The Covenant Introduced

The term *covenant* as found in the Old Testament is an agreement between God and His people. God established a covenant relationship with His people, the Israelites, in which He made promises to them and expected certain responses from them. God's covenant promises and demands in the record of Exodus are known as the “Mosaic Covenant.”

After setting up camp in the “desert of Sinai” (19:2), Moses met God on the mountain where he received a message for the Israelites. The Lord told him to remind Israel of their deliverance “on eagles' wings” for the purpose of bringing them unto Him. Moses had requested their freedom that they might worship the Lord. As Moses stood before the Lord, he likely recalled what God had spoken to him at the burning bush.

The time had come for them to learn how to serve and worship their God.

The description of Israel being carried on “eagles' wings” (19:4) is significant. Eagles are known for pushing their young out of the nest and then catching them on their

outspread wings as they learn to fly. The Lord led Israel out of their secure dwellings in Egypt into a vast and unknown desert. As they faltered on the journey, He renewed their spirits with miraculous provisions. He indeed bore them on His wings.

After reminding Israel of their miraculous deliverance, God called them to obey His voice and keep His covenant. His command came with the promise that Israel would be a peculiar (treasured) people, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (19:5-6). In the New Testament, Peter describes the redeemed in similar terms (I Peter 2:9). When Moses called the elders of the people together to hear these words from the Lord, they said, "All that the LORD hath spoken, we will do." These few verses introduce the concept of the "Mosaic Covenant" that unfolds during Israel's encampment at Mount Sinai. This covenant with Israel relates back to the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 15:13-18).

From their background in Egypt, Israel would have been familiar with the pattern of a covenant, a stated relationship between a superior and subordinates. The story of Exodus 19:3-6 follows this pattern. A covenant typically included a preamble (19:3), a brief history (19:4), stipulations (19:5a), and blessings for keeping the covenant (19:5b-6a). As Moses heard from the Lord and communicated with the Israelites, the elders agreed to the covenant, accepting the provisions of the covenant (19:7-8).

Exodus 19:9-15 describes Israel preparing to hear from God at Mount Sinai with two days of special preparation, including outward cleansing. The people had to get physically and spiritually ready to meet their God. On the third day, the Lord revealed His presence with thunder, lightning, and loud trumpet sounds, which terrified Israel. (19:16-25). The Lord made His presence known in this dynamic way, and then called Moses up to the top of the mount to talk with Him. Hearing from God, Moses returned to the people with warnings not to touch the mountain. As Israel camped before the mount, God showed them His power and taught them how to respect His presence. The Lord desired for His people to understand the reality of His presence as He set the stage for giving them the words of the covenant (Exodus 20-23).

II. The Ten Commandments Given (Exodus 20:1-26)

In Exodus 20 God spelled out the basic laws of His covenant. (See Deuteronomy 5:2-3 regarding *covenant*.) Their redemption involved more than leaving Egypt. They needed schooling in the laws of their Redeemer. The Ten Commandments of chapter 20 state Israel's moral duties to God and to their fellow men. These laws taught Israel how to live to please the Lord God and how to live peaceably with others. God first gave these commandments orally to Moses and the Israelites (20:1-17, 22; Deuteronomy 5:1-26). Later they were written down on tables of stone (Exodus 24:12; Deuteronomy 5:22).

A. Duties to God

Having recently left Egypt, a land of many idols and gods, the Israelites needed to understand the nature of their God and how to worship Him. He was not just another god among many. He was the only God! As the Lord their God, He had brought them out of Egypt and slavery, and they must worship Him alone (20:1).

1. Thus, the first commandment (20:2) emphasized that the Israelites could have no other gods. Their worship must be to the One true God.

2. The second commandment (20:3) stressed that they could not make any idols or images or bow down to any idols. Moses repeated this commandment again in verse 23, an indication that the Israelites needed a reminder of this commandment.

3. The third commandment (20:4) taught them that they must not misuse the name of the Lord their God. His name must never be used in a manner to dishonor Him. Any use of His name should bring honor to Him.

4. The fourth commandment (20:5) emphasized that they must remember the Sabbath by setting aside the day to cease labor and keep the day unto the Lord. In recognition of God's creative work and His rest on the seventh day, the seventh day was blessed and holy. In Deuteronomy 5:12-15, Moses linked the Sabbath with a remembrance of how the Lord their God brought them out of Egypt. The New Testament does not repeat the command to keep the Sabbath while it does repeat the other nine.

B. Duties to Man

Along with knowing and honoring the one and only God, the Israelites received laws about relationships on the human level.

5. The fifth commandment (20:12) taught that children must honor their father and mother. This commandment had a promise attached regarding Israel's future in the land. Children's obedience to the commandments taught by their parents would assure Israel's security in the Promised Land. Israel eventually went into Babylonian captivity because their children failed to honor their parents in obedience to God's laws (Ezekiel 22:7, 15).

6. The sixth commandment (20:13) forbade murder. A divine sentence of death is imposed on every manslayer or one who intentionally kills another person (21:12; Numbers 35:17-21).

7. The seventh commandment (20:14) forbade adultery. This law protected marriage as a sacred relationship (Genesis 2:24). Under the Mosaic law, the punishment for adultery was death (Leviticus 20:10).

8. The eighth commandment (20:15) forbade stealing. Any form of taking someone else's goods or property is stealing. The right to one's own property is an important principle of societal stability.

9. The ninth commandment (20:16) forbade false witness. Justice is served when truth is told. Nearly all societies consider this principle as imperative in courts of law. Witnesses are asked to tell the truth and nothing but the truth.

10. The tenth commandment (20:17) warned against coveting. Any strong desire to have what belongs to someone else is wrong. An intense longing for riches can cause one's heart to covet.

Matthew 19:16-22 tells the story of a young man who came to Jesus asking what good thing he could do to have eternal life. In answering the young man, Jesus told him that he should keep the commandments. After Jesus named five of the commandments regarding man's duties to other men, the young man replied that he had kept these. Jesus then told him to sell his goods and give them to the poor. Hearing this, the young man left sorrowful. Of note in this story is that Jesus did not mention the tenth commandment, "Do not covet." The young man's love for riches (covetousness) kept him from seeking after further knowledge about attaining eternal life. (Note Mark 10:25 and Luke 18:25.)

C. Summary of Commandments in Exodus 20 Repeated in the New Testament

1. No other gods (20:3)	Acts 14:15
2. No graven images (20:4)	I John 5:21; I Corinthians 6:9
3. Do not misuse God's name (20:7)	Matthew 5:34
4. Keep the Sabbath (20:8)	-----
5. Honor parents (20:12)	Ephesians 6:1
6. Do not murder (20:13)	I John 3:15
7. Do not commit adultery (20:14)	I Corinthians 6:9-10
8. Do not steal (20:15)	Ephesians 4:28
9. Do not give false witness (20:16)	Colossians 3:9-10
10. Do not covet (20:17)	Ephesians 5:3

The powerful introduction of God's covenant with thunder, lightning, trumpet sound, and the smoking mountain made the Israelites tremble with fear. Frightened by these things, the people asked for a mediator between them and God (20:19). Moses indeed served as God's spokesperson. He encouraged the people not to be afraid of God but to have a fear of God that would keep them from sinning (20:20).

At this introduction of the covenant, God spoke directly to the Israelites "from heaven" (Exodus 20:22) or "face to face" as described in Deuteronomy 5:4. After God's introduction of the covenant, Moses, as their mediator, received the specifics of the covenant and communicated the details to the people.

The Lord gave Moses clear instructions that the Israelites must not worship Him by building idols or altars such as they had known in Egypt (20:22-26). God had brought them out of the culture of Egypt where idols represented gods.

Exodus 24:7 speaks of Moses reading from “the book of the covenant,” which the people agreed to obey. The commandments and principles of Exodus 20-23 would have been included in this “book of the covenant.”

“And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient” (24:7).

The Law's present application: The Ten Commandments were not intended by God as a way of salvation. They reveal God's holy requirements that show man's need of a Savior.

III. The Civil Laws Given (21:1-23:33)

“Now these are the judgments [laws] which thou shalt set before them” (21:1) introduces the listing of specific laws for Israel. These laws give principles for acting responsibly in one's family and society.

A. Laws Regarding Slaves (21:2-11)

These verses give laws for treatment of slaves. Even though delivered from slavery, the Israelites had slaves. However, they were instructed to treat their slaves as humans and grant them freedom after six years of labor (21:2). Though the Bible recognizes the existence of slavery, it does not encourage it.

B. Laws Regarding Murder and Injury (21:12-35)

These verses name specific actions that were punishable by death, including planned murder, smiting or cursing one's father or mother, and kidnapping someone (21:12-17). Moses also listed other wrongful actions causing personal loss or injury to a person or his property. The list includes injurious, willful acts, and negligent behavior. The offender was to be fined and the injured person was to be compensated (21:18-35). A reading of this passage reveals that God intends for His people to act responsibly for the good of everyone, not just themselves.

The “eye for eye” principle is emphatically stated (21:23-25):

“And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (21:23-25).

This principle provided a guide for judging. The rule states that the punishment meted out by the judge should fit the crime. Many ancient cultures employed cruel, barbaric modes of punishment. The Law given to Israel directed that punishment for offences must be related to the offense. Jesus referred to this principle in Matthew 5:38-48 in teaching the Christian not to seek retaliation. Thus, Jesus taught that the principle was a guide for the judge and not intended as a means of personal revenge.

C. Laws Regarding Personal Property (22:1-15)

These verses list typical situations that might arise in the Israelites' interaction with their neighbors with respect to the care of their animals. In a pastoral society, animals are of great value and importance. In giving these laws, God included typical situations that might arise and gave principles to guide the people in doing right.

D. The Principle of Restitution

Exodus 22 includes principles for doing right and also for making restitution for wrongs. For example, if a man stole someone's donkey, he had to make restitution by paying back double the value of the donkey (22:4). Whatever the culture, the law of restitution established for Israel remains God's law of righteousness. The principle illustrates that a wrong action toward someone should be corrected with generous restitution. Such action will remind the offender not to repeat such action and will also help the offended person to be forgiving.

E. Laws about Responsibility toward Society (22:16-31)

God gave Israel laws for a moral society that set them apart from other cultures. God's laws for Israel forbade many practices allowed by other cultures in their lifestyle and sexual relationships. These verses speak about just treatment of virgins, strangers, widows, orphans, and debtors. The chapter concludes (22:31) with an admonition to be “holy men” unto God.

F. Laws Regarding Justice (23:1-9)

These verses forbid false reports and actions that take advantage of others, whether rich or poor or stranger. Exodus cites returning a man's straying donkey as an example of justice as well as not taking a bribe for one's own benefit.

G. Laws for Sacred Celebrations (23:10-19)

Special days were stipulated as “festivals unto the Lord” (23:14) in remembrance of God’s acts of deliverance. Three times each year, all the male Israelites were to appear at the “house of the Lord” to bring offerings and celebrate their deliverance from Egypt (23:17). (Note: Further study in the Book of Leviticus.)

H. God’s Promise to Protect and Lead Them to the Land (Note 23:20, 30)

God promised that an angel would go before them and bring them into the land inhabited by various people (Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites). Along with His promise, He instructed Israel that they must serve Him and not bow down to the gods of those in the land nor make any covenants with them. He warned Israel that any such covenants would be a snare to Israel, causing Israel to sin against God (23:33). Later in Israel’s history, the record shows these various nations did become a snare to them when they failed to keep the covenant.

IV. The Covenant Confirmed (24:1-18)

A. Covenant Ratification

Chapter 24 tells the story of Israel accepting God’s covenant. While the events of this chapter may seem strange, the Israelites would have understood. Ancient cultures often secured their covenants with oaths and a ceremony.

The scene opens with Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders coming together for worship. Moses alone came “near the Lord.” Moses then went to the people and shared the words of the Lord. The people responded with one voice, “All the words which the LORD hath said, we will do” (24:3). After speaking God’s words to the people, Moses wrote “all the words of the Lord” (24:4). These written words are identified as the “book of the covenant” (24:7).

God gave Moses specific instructions for a special ceremony that included building an altar to represent the twelve tribes (24:4). Moses appointed young men to offer burnt offerings and peace offering (24:5). Half of the blood from the offerings was sprinkled on the altar and the other half saved in a basin. After Moses read the “book of the covenant,” the people again agreed to be obedient to the word of the Lord. Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, a sign of the sealing of a covenant (24:6-8). Such a ceremony would leave a vivid memory in the minds of the Israelites of their acceptance of God’s covenant. The Israelites’ participation showed their inward commitment to obey God’s laws. The visual aspects of the covenant ceremony (the

altar, offerings, reading, and the blood) would remind the Israelites of their commitment to the covenant.

The covenant ratification concluded with Moses going with the priests and the seventy elders to eat and drink (24:9-11). A communal feast was a common part of a covenant ratification. These verses mention that these men “saw the God of Israel” by describing what they saw “under his feet” as “a paved work of a sapphire stone.” Exodus 33:20 records God’s words to Moses: “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.” Certainly, these elders in Israel were impressed by God’s presence among them in this significant event of the covenant ratification.

B. Preserving the Covenant (24:12-18)

After Israel’s acceptance of the covenant, God called Moses to ascend the mountain to receive “the tables of stone” that God had written with a law and commandments for Moses to teach (24:12). These tablets were to be placed in the Ark of the Covenant (25:16). Joshua went with Moses up to the mountain; however, Moses was alone with the Lord on the mountain for forty days and forty nights (24:18).

During these forty days on the mountain, Moses received God’s instructions for the building of the Tabernacle and its furnishings and the priestly garments (chapters 25-31). When God finished communicating with Moses about the Tabernacle, He gave him the “two tables of testimony, written with the finger of God” (31:18).

Questions for Lesson Review

1. How long did it take the Israelites to reach Mount Sinai after their departure from Egypt?
2. What is the meaning of *covenant* as found in the Old Testament story of the Israelites?
3. What significant lesson is found in Exodus 19:4, which speaks about eagles’ wings?
4. What were the Israelites instructed to do in preparation for entering into a covenant with the Lord? (See Exodus 19:9-15.)
5. How were the commandments first given to Moses and the Israelites?
6. What are the Ten Commandments and how can they be categorized in two parts?
7. Briefly describe at least three of the civil laws that gave Israel principles for acting responsibly in one’s family and society.
8. What is the meaning of *restitution* as discussed in Exodus 22?
9. According to Exodus 23:20, 30, how did God promise to lead them on their way and then drive the evil inhabitants out of the Promised Land?

10. What significant event is described in Exodus 24 and what instructions were given for its observance?

Assignment

1. Read Exodus 25-31.
2. Memorize Exodus 25:8.
3. As you read each of the seven chapters (25-31), select one verse that stands out to you as a key verse in that chapter. Write the verse and then a statement explaining how this verse identifies a key thought for you.

Lesson 6

The Tabernacle Plan

Exodus 25-31 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Exodus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

An understanding of the Tabernacle and its furnishings provides assurance that God has designed a definite plan for communicating with His people.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Draw a sketch of the Tabernacle plan with its furnishings.
2. Write a brief description of each of the furnishings of the Tabernacle.
3. Explain the New Testament application or meaning of the Tabernacle furnishings and related rituals.

Lesson Outline

- I. Summary of Preparations for the Tabernacle Construction (25:1-31:18)
- II. Summary Description of the Tabernacle Plan (25:1-31:18)
- III. Typology of Tabernacle—Its Application for Today
- IV. The Tabernacle Craftsmen (31:1-11)
- V. Sabbath Reminder and Tablets of the Testimony (31:12-18)

Key Verses

Making a place for God to dwell

“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (25:8).

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (I Corinthians 3:16).

Lesson Content

I. Summary of Preparations for the Tabernacle's Construction

These seven chapters (25-31) give the details of God's instructions to Moses for the building of the Tabernacle (25:9), also called a sanctuary (25:8). God first told Moses to have the people bring offerings of various materials and valuable metals (25:1-7). These materials were to be used to build a “sanctuary” for God to dwell among them (25:8). God told Moses to build the Tabernacle exactly like the pattern He would show him (25:9). The following list identifies the items to be prepared for the building of the Tabernacle and its furnishings.

Chapter 25 - Offerings, Ark, table for shewbread, lampstand

Chapter 26 - The Tabernacle (its curtains and frames)

Chapter 27 - The altar of burnt offering, courtyard, oil for the lampstand

Chapter 28 - The priestly garments, ephod, breastplate, other priestly garments

Chapter 29 - Consecration of the priests

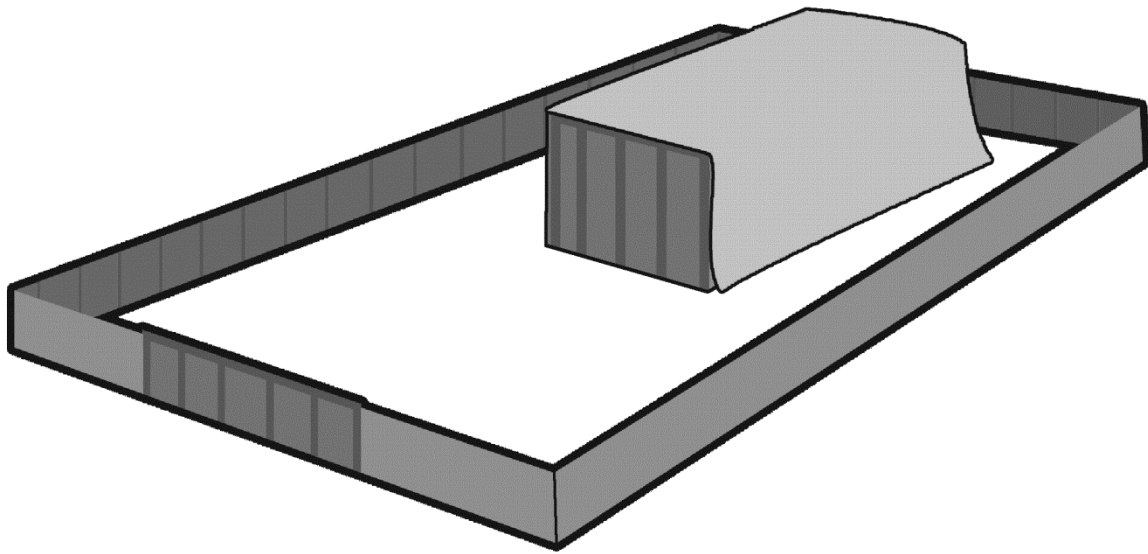
Chapter 30 - The altar of incense, atonement money, basin for washing,
anointing oil, incense

Chapter 31 - Tabernacle artisans (Bezaleel and Aholiab), the Sabbath

After finalizing the covenant with Israel (chapter 24), God gave Moses His plan for dwelling among His people. That plan focused on the Tabernacle where God would be worshiped. Chapters 25-27 describe the Tabernacle and its furnishings. Then Exodus 28-29 reveals God's plans for the priests, providing instructions for their clothing and their consecration. Exodus 30 gives more instructions about the Tabernacle's furnishings and rituals. Exodus 31 explains that two skilled craftsmen, Bezaleel and Aholiab, would oversee the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings. This chapter concludes with mention of the Sabbath, which was a sign of the covenant relationship between God and His people (31:17). After six days of work, the Israelites must rest. Exodus 20:11 states that the day is holy, because God rested on the seventh day after His creative work. The penalty for not keeping the Sabbath was death (31:14).

II. Summary Descriptions of the Tabernacle Plan

The Tabernacle (25:9), also called a sanctuary (25:8), was a transportable, unique tent designed by God Himself. God gave detailed orders to Moses for the Tabernacle's materials and construction. In giving Moses the plan, God said that the people should make Him a sanctuary so that He could dwell among them (25:8). Thus, the Tabernacle was to be placed in the center of the camp when completed (Numbers 2:1-2). Its central visibility symbolized that God lived in the midst of His people. The Tabernacle sat in a courtyard and a veil (curtain) divided it into two rooms: the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (26:33).



A. The Frames and Coverings (26:1-37)

The plan called for the coverings of the Tabernacle to hang over wooden frames. Protective layers of goat hair and animal skin curtains covered an inner, embroidered curtain of linen.

B. The Tabernacle Design

The Tabernacle design had three sections, each containing specific furnishings. Different sacred rituals, overseen by the priests, took place in each section.

C. The Courtyard (27:9-19)

The courtyard enclosed the area surrounding the Tabernacle where the people could enter and bring their sacrifices and offerings to the priests. This courtyard, made with curtains supported by poles, separated the Tabernacle from the rest of the camp. A wide gate of twenty cubits provided entry on the east end of the courtyard.

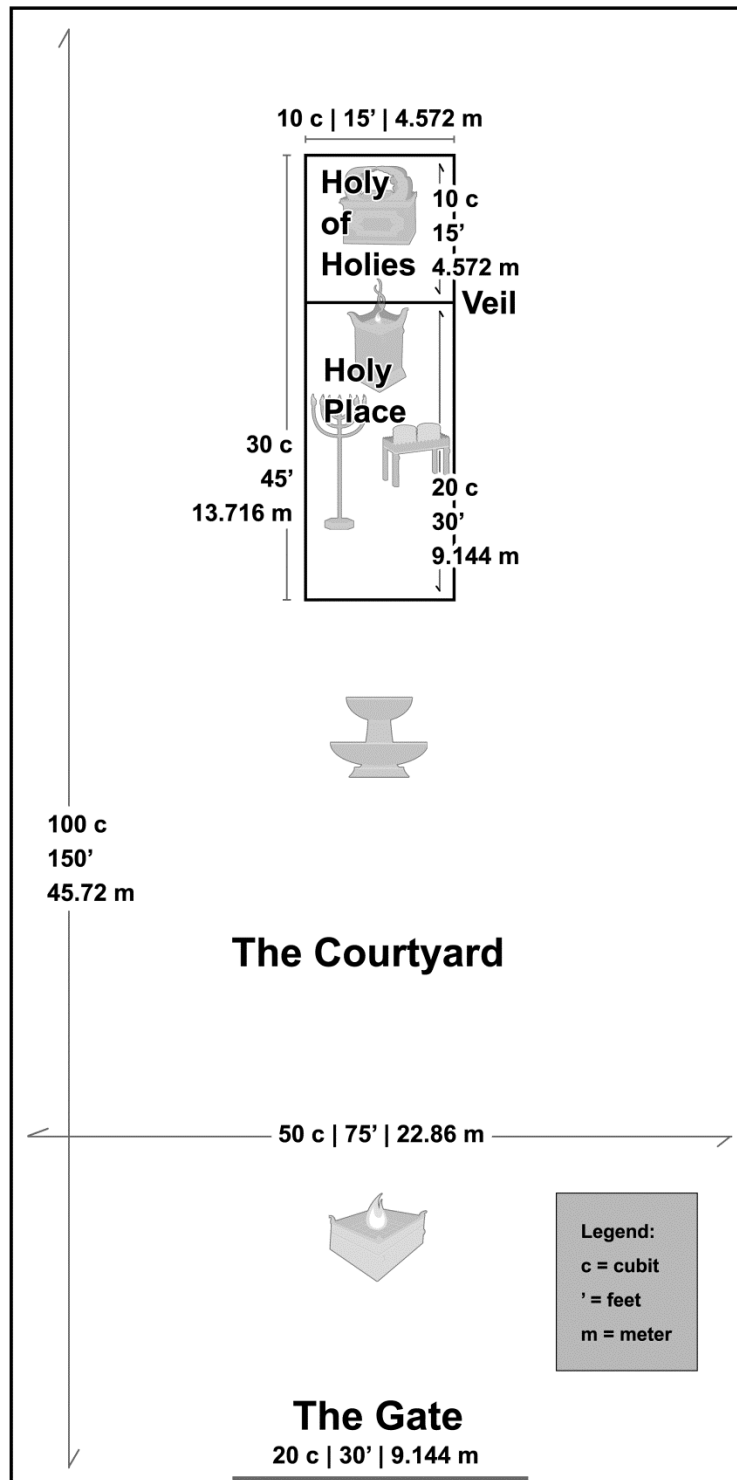


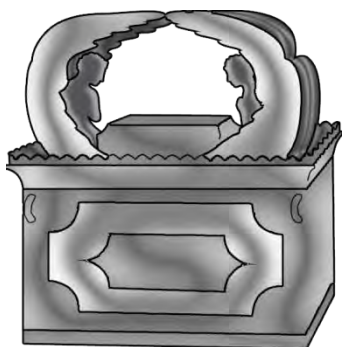
Diagram of the Tabernacle

D. The Holy Place (26:33-34)

The first room, called the Holy Place, occupied the first two-thirds of the Tabernacle. The lampstand, the table with bread, and the altar of incense stood in this room. Only the priests could enter this part of the Tabernacle. Assigned priests entered twice daily to keep the lamps burning and offer incense. Once each week they placed fresh bread on the table.

E. The Most Holy Place (26:31-33)

This innermost room formed the other third portion of the Tabernacle. It contained the Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat and cherubims. God's presence dwelt in this Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies). Only the high priest could enter this room and that just once each year on the Day of Atonement. On this day, he entered to offer the blood of the sacrificed animal to atone for the Israelites' sin. (Studies in Leviticus will provide more detail.)



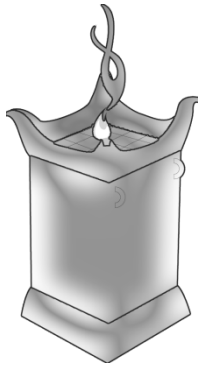
The Ark of the Testimony (25:22; 26:34) or Ark of the Covenant (Hebrews 9:4) stood behind the veil in the Holy of Holies. On its top rested the Mercy Seat made of pure gold. A pair of cherubim with outstretched wings sat on the ends of the Mercy Seat (25:10-21; 37:1-11). God told Moses that He would commune from above the Mercy Seat between the cherubims (25:22). Thus, the Ark symbolized the presence of God. Moses placed the stone tablets on which the Lord inscribed the Ten Commandments in the Ark (25:16, 21; 40:3, 20). God gave instructions for the Ark of the Testimony

before directives for all the other furnishings, and it was the first article placed in the completed Tabernacle (Exodus 40:3).

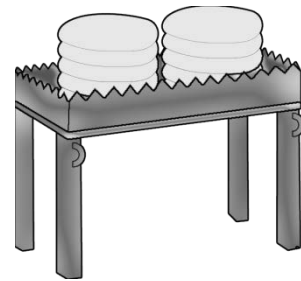
Ark of the Testimony is the phrase used in the Book of Exodus (KJV) in reference to the Ark. Ark of the Testimony is also found in Numbers 4:5; 7:89, and Joshua 4:16. The accounts in Exodus refer to the time in the wilderness when God gave Moses the plans for the Tabernacle and its furnishings and Moses directed its construction. Israel was still camped at Mount Sinai during the time of Numbers 1-10. Numbers 7:89 states that Moses heard the voice of God speaking to him from between the two cherubims above the Ark of the Testimony. The last record of the phrase "Ark of the Testimony" is at the time of the Israelites' crossing of the Jordan into the Promised Land (Joshua 4:16).

"Ark of the Covenant" is first used in Scripture when Israel departed from Sinai to travel to the Promised Land (Number 10:33; 14:44). Then it is not mentioned again until the time of the Book of Deuteronomy. By this time Israel had been in the wilderness for nearly forty years. In the record of Deuteronomy, Moses reminded the Israelites of God's covenant

with them to bring them into a land. As the people of God, they had been schooled in God's laws at Sinai. The stone tablet with these laws as summarized in the Ten Commandments had been placed in the Ark. Moses repeated these laws to them in his discourses to them in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy calls the Ark, which contains the Ten Commandments, the Ark of the Covenant. From that time onward in the Old Testament, we read Ark of the Covenant rather than Ark of the Testimony. It would seem that this changed terminology would be a constant reminder of the covenant that God had made with Israel to make them His people and to give them His law and a land of their own.



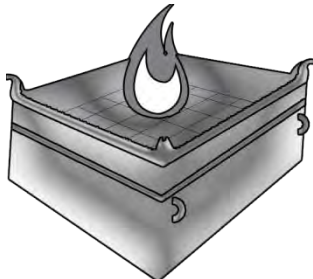
The altar of incense (30:1-10; 37:25-28) stood in the Holy Place just in front of veil. The priests burned incense on this altar to express worship of God. Twice each day, morning and evening, the priest would burn incense and pray for the people. The incense was a mixture of spices designed only for use in the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:34-38). The sweet smelling smoke symbolized the prayers of the people ascending to God. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would take incense from this altar in a censer into the Most Holy Place



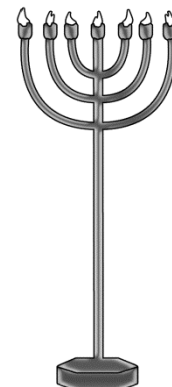
The table of shewbread (25:23-30; 37:10-16) was located on the right side in the Holy Place. This table was made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold. Twelve fresh cakes of unleavened bread (bread of the Presence, 25:30 NIV) were placed on this table each week. The bread symbolized God's presence and care of the twelve tribes of Israel as their Provider.

Shewbread is the word used to describe the bread prepared according to specific instructions (Leviticus 24:5-9) as a symbol of God's presence. This bread was eaten by the priests on duty each Sabbath in the Holy Place. In the New Testament Jesus referred to Himself as the Bread of Life (John 6:32-35).

The golden lampstand (25:31-40; 27:20-21; 30:7-8; 37:17-21; Leviticus 24:1-4) stood to the left within the Holy Place. Three branches extended to each side of a central shaft. Each branch held a cup of oil. The lamps provided light in the sanctuary. The priests kept the lamps trimmed and burning continually. The lampstand, now known as the menorah, became a symbol of the nation of Israel. It typifies Jesus Christ who is the true Light (John 1:6-9; 8:12).

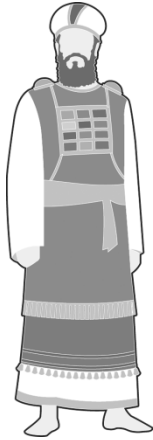


The altar of burnt offering (27:1-8), also called the great altar, stood in the courtyard before the entry into the Tabernacle. It was made of acacia wood covered with bronze. The priests slaughtered the



sacrificial animals on this altar. The blood was then applied to the horns of the altar as an atonement for sin.

The laver (30:17-21; 38:8), made of bronze, stood between the great altar and the Tabernacle. This was a basin for water. The priests used it to cleanse themselves before they offered sacrifices and before they entered the Tabernacle.



The priesthood (28-29) was a God-appointed, mediatorial agency. Through the priests, the people could approach God. The people brought their offerings and sacrifices to the priests who served in the Tabernacle. The priests were from the tribe of Levi. God chose the Levites to take the place of the firstborn as the ones dedicated to the service of God. (Note Numbers 8:5-26).

The sacrifices (details will be studied in the Book of Leviticus) were the means by which the people could approach God. The sacrifices served to restore fellowship with God or to express and manifest fellowship with God.

III. Typology of the Tabernacle . . . Its Application for Today

A study of the Book of Hebrews provides many applications related to the Old Testament. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ provide the antitypes (fulfillment) of the Tabernacle of the old covenant. Many passages in the New Testament show that the Tabernacle design provided a pattern for humanity to live in fellowship with a holy God. Under the New Covenant, that fellowship is available and experienced through Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 10:19-25 explains how the Tabernacle provided a pattern designed by God so that His people could know Him and communicate with Him.

The following summary gives a few of the New Testament passages of Scripture that show the significance and meaning of the Tabernacle for today.

A. The Most Holy Place

Jesus' shed blood and death provided entry into God's presence. Before Calvary, only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place. When Jesus died, the veil (curtain) into this Most Holy Place ripped from top to bottom, giving man access through Christ Jesus. (See Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19.)

Altar of incense – The incense burned in the Holy Place expressed prayer, communication, or worship to God. The prayers of God's saints ascend to God as incense. (See Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8; 8:4.)

The lampstand – Jesus, the light of the world, imparts light, giving His Spirit to guide those who seek Him. (See John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; I John 1:5-7.)

Table of the shewbread – Jesus and His Word provide spiritual bread. Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). (See also John 6:33, 35, 48.)

Great bronze altar – Christ's sacrificial death on Calvary provides forgiveness of sins. Scripture confirms that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9:28a). (See also Hebrews 9:22-28.)

The laver (basin for washing) – A priest had to wash before offering a sacrifice or entering the Holy Place. Confession of sin provides a cleansing that allows a person to enter into God's presence (I John 1:9).

IV. The Tabernacle Craftsmen (31:1-11)

A. The LORD's Choice of Bezaleel and Aholiab

God directed Moses to choose two talented artists to oversee the design of the Tabernacle and its furnishings:

Bezaleel – God said of him: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts – to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship" (31:3-5, NIV).

This description shows him as a man with exceptional ability as a designer and craftsman whom God Himself had enabled. Verse 2 notes that Bezaleel was from the tribe of Judah. He was a great grandson of Caleb (I Chronicles 2:18-20).

Aholiab – God said He appointed Aholiab of the tribe of Dan to help Bezaleel and then added: "I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you (31:6, NIV).

In assigning these men to the work, God mentioned the Tabernacle and all its furnishings, along with the priests' garments and the oils and incense to be used in the

Tabernacle services. God concluded these directives with this notable statement: “They are to make them just as I commanded you” (31:11b, NIV). Thus, God’s directives were not mere suggestions; rather, they were clear commands to obey carefully.

V. Sabbath Reminder and Tablets of the Testimony (31:12-18)

A. The Sabbath

Along with giving Moses the plan for the Tabernacle during Moses’ forty days on the mountain, God said to him:

“Say to the Israelites, You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy” (31:13, NIV).

The fourth commandment to “remember the Sabbath” as a holy day during which the Israelites must rest is further identified as a token of God’s covenant relationship with Israel. As Creator, He rested on the Sabbath and He commanded the same for Israel (20:11). Israel’s observance of the Sabbath identified them as God’s chosen people. Rest on the Sabbath applied to everyone living among the Israelites. Failure to observe the Sabbath was punishable by death.

The fourth commandment regarding observance of the Sabbath is the only commandment not repeated in the New Testament. However, the Bible identifies a rest given to the New Testament believer. Hebrews 4:1-11 speaks about a Sabbath-rest for those who have obeyed the gospel: “There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9, NIV).

B. The Tablets of Stone

After God finished speaking to Moses about the Tabernacle plans, He gave him “the two tables of the testimony” (31:18). These tables (tablets) were unique, for God had written the Ten Commandments on these stones with His own finger. This record in stone showed that God wanted Israel to have a distinct, unforgettable reminder of His moral laws by which they must live. Exodus 20 records the account of the oral giving of the commandments soon after Israel arrived at Mount Sinai.

New Testament righteousness embraces the moral commands of the Old Testament covenant. Though the rituals of the Old Covenant no longer apply, God’s moral laws have never ceased. When Christ Jesus gave Himself as the ultimate sacrifice to provide atonement for humankind, the veil of the Tabernacle ripped from top to

bottom (Matthew 27:51). The old covenant blood sacrifices ceased when Jesus shed His blood for the remission of sin, but God's moral laws did not end.

“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28).

In this New Testament age, God has written His moral laws in stone in the sense that they are unchangeable. In a greater sense, He has now written them in the hearts of those filled with His Spirit, enabling the Christian to live according to God's righteous principles or laws.

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

Hebrews 9:11-28 provides a clear picture of the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse a person so that they can serve the living God according to God's unchangeable, righteous laws.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. With what attitude were the children of Israel to bring their offerings for the Tabernacle?
2. What was the purpose of the courtyard and who could enter it?
3. How was the Tabernacle divided and who could enter each division?
4. What furnishings were in the Holy Place?
5. What furnishings were in the Most Holy Place?
6. How does the Christian have access into the Most Holy Place?
7. Who were Bezaleel and Aholiab and what role did they fill in the design and building of the Tabernacle?
8. What New Testament book provides a comparison between the provisions of the old covenant under Moses and the New Covenant under Jesus Christ?
9. What were the “tables of the testimony” and how did Moses obtain them?
10. In what way were the Israelites to “remember the Sabbath” and what was its significance (20:8-11; 31:12-17)?

Assignment

1. Read Exodus 32-40.
2. Find and write the nine verses in the Book of Hebrews that speak about the Tabernacle: As you find them, take time to read them in context so that you understand what is being said about the Tabernacle.

Lesson Seven

Rejection and Renewal / Construction and Glory

Exodus 32-40 (Unless noted, the numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Exodus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

The Israelites faced judgment for building a golden calf in rejection of God's command to have no other gods. Rejection of God's plan leads to disaster, while compliance with God's plan brings the presence of His glory.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Describe the manner in which the Israelites failed to keep covenant with the Lord in constructing the golden calf and how God intervened through Moses to renew the covenant relationship.
2. Explain how the construction of the Tabernacle took place under the guidance of Moses and the appointed artisans.
3. Show the relationship between the Tabernacle plan and the new covenant under Christ Jesus as described in the Book of Hebrews.

Lesson Outline

- I. Replacing God's Plan with an Idol (32:1-35)
- II. Hearing God's Voice (33:1-23)
- III. Receiving a Second Set of Stone Tablets (34:1-35)

- IV. Constructing the Tabernacle (35:1-38:31)
- V. Preparing the Priests (39:1-30)
- VI. Inspecting and Setting Up the Tabernacle (39:32-40:33)
- VII. Seeing the Glory of the Lord (40:34-38)
- VIII. Significance of the Tabernacle Plan in Scripture

Key Verse

God anoints His plans with His glory.

“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (40:34).

Lesson Content – More About Israel at Mount Sinai

I. Replacing God's Plan with an Idol (32:1-35)

A. Happenings in the Camp

Unknown to Moses during his forty days on Mount Sinai, the Israelites lost faith in his leadership and turned to Aaron, saying, “Up, make us gods, which shall go before us” (32:1). Aaron responded by receiving their gold and fashioning a golden calf. Reverting to Egyptian idolatry, the people began worshiping the golden calf (32:4-6). The Lord intervened at this time and spoke to Moses about Israel's turning away (32:8). As leader, Moses interceded with God to spare Israel, reminding God of His covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (32:13). God had promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed after long years in a foreign land (Genesis 15:13-18).

B. Moses and the Tablets

The Lord responded to Moses' prayer and repented of His desire to destroy the Israelites (32:14). After interceding, Moses turned and went down from the mountain. During his forty days on the mountain, the Lord had given him the Tabernacle plan (25-31) and two tablets engraved with the commandments (32:18). God had given the commandments orally at first (20; Deuteronomy 5). With the tablets in his hand and the plan for the Tabernacle in his mind, Moses descended from the mountain (32:15-16). Note verse 16:

“And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables” (32:16).

When Moses reached the camp and saw Israel dancing in worship to the golden calf, he threw down the tablets in anger and broke them. The Israelites had broken the covenant with the Lord by making and worshiping an idol. The first and second commandments of God's covenant with Israel forbade worship of other gods or the making of idols (20:3-4). The broken tablets depicted Israel's broken relationship with the Lord.

C. Judgment for Idolatry

Though Moses had interceded for Israel, he made them accountable for their actions. Aaron tried to avoid responsibility by blaming the people (32:22). He then suggested the golden calf appeared when he cast the gold into the fire (32:24). Seeing the idolatrous actions of the people, Moses called for those who were on the Lord's side. The sons of Levi presented themselves and followed Moses' directive (32:2-28). Moses took firm action against the evil of idolatry. In choosing to stand with Moses against the worship of the calf, the Levites were chosen to serve as priests for Israel.

God could have justly destroyed the Israelites for not keeping their covenant with Him. Because of the intercession of Moses, He granted mercy to Israel. This example in Scripture shows the importance of a leader's compassion and prayers. It also emphasizes that God links mercy with punishment. As a punishment, three thousand were slain (32:27-28) and the Lord brought a plague on the people (32:35). Yet, in the midst of this difficult time, God promised Moses that His angel would go before him (32:34).

II. Hearing God's Voice (33:1-23)

A. God's Reassurance to Moses

Exodus 33 shows a renewed relationship between God and Israel following their punishment. After Moses dealt with Israel's disobedience, the Lord visited him. He gave him a specific message to "depart, and go up" to the land that He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He told Moses that He would send an angel before him to drive out the inhabitants. The Israelites did show a repentant spirit by obediently stripping themselves of their ornaments. They had possibly put on these ornaments as part of their worship of the golden calf (33:1-8). Moses would have understood that this command "to go to a land flowing with milk and honey" was linked with God's covenant to give the Israelites a land (Genesis 15:13-18).

B. Moses Communes with the Lord

Moses communed with the Lord in a tabernacle (“tent of meeting,” NIV) that stood outside the camp. Scripture describes the Lord speaking to Moses as a friend and Moses seeking God’s favor (33:11) and guidance as Israel’s leader.

The Lord responded to Moses with assurance: “My presence shall go with thee” (33:14). During his conversation with the Lord, Moses asked to see the Lord’s glory (33:18). Thus, the Lord instructed Moses to stand upon a rock where he would see the “back parts” of the Lord’s glory as He passed by. He explained to Moses that no one could see His face and live. This passage, which speaks of God’s mercy, is quoted by Paul in Romans 9:15. In the context of Exodus, the Lord assured Moses of His mercy and compassion as He led the Israelites.

III. Receiving a Second Set of Stone Tablets (34:1-35)

A. New Stones

Moses likely received the Lord’s command to make new tablets like the first ones while he remained in the “tent of meeting” (34:1). Thus, he quickly chiseled out two stones. The next morning he climbed back to the mountaintop. The Lord met him in the cloud, passed before him, and gave him an amazing message of mercy, compassion, and judgment.

“The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generations” (34:6-7, NIV).

B. Renewed Covenant

Moses responded with humble worship (34:8), acknowledging the “stiffnecked” condition of Israel. The Lord responded with a renewed assurance of His covenant promise to give Israel the land promised to Abraham (34:10-11). This renewed covenant included Israel’s pledge of obedience to God’s commands (verse 11). The Lord reminded Moses that Israel must not worship other gods and must not make covenants with those in the land (34:12-16). The command “Thou shalt make thee no molten god” (verse 17) warned Israel not to revert to idolatry such as the golden calf. Revealing His name as “Jealous,” the Lord emphasized that worship could not be given to any other deity.

C. Covenant Provisions

As Moses communed with the Lord, he received reminders of God's expectations for Israel (34:18-28) such as had been given when God first gave the commandments and covenant provisions (20:22-23:19). For another forty days, Moses stayed on the mountain without food and drink. During this time he wrote the Ten Commandments on the stone tablets (34:27-28). The "finger of God" had inscribed the original tablets (31:18).

D. Moses Radiates God's Glory

When Moses descended the mountain with the new "tables of the testimony" (34:29), he did not realize his face radiated God's glory. Because of the radiance, Aaron and the Israelites feared to come near him. Moses then covered his face with a veil, called Israel to him, and gave them all the commands that God had spoken to him in Mount Sinai (34:29-35). Moses' descent and message would have been a memorable event for Israel as they recalled their failure during Moses' first forty days on Mount Sinai.

IV. Constructing the Tabernacle (35:1-38:31)

This final section of Exodus focuses on the building of the Tabernacle, concluding with the account of the glory of the Lord filling the Tabernacle. The account of the Tabernacle construction duplicates much of the instructions given to Moses in Exodus 25-31.

A. Preparations to Begin Building

In preparation for the construction activity, Moses called an assembly of the Israelites. Before speaking of the Tabernacle construction, he reminded the people that they must do no work on the Sabbath, observing the fourth commandment. In all their activity, they must always observe the Sabbath as a holy day unto the Lord (20:8; 35:1-3).

B. Gathering the Building Materials (35:4-19)

Moses spoke to the whole assembly of Israel about the offerings (materials) God commanded them to bring for the Tabernacle construction. However, they were to bring their offerings with "a willing heart" (35:5). This principle of giving willingly to the Lord's work appears in the New Testament. Paul urged Christians to give cheerfully (II Corinthians 9:7). In addition, those "skilled" were called to build the Tabernacle according to the plan given to Moses (35:10).

C. The Generous Response of the People (35:20-29)

In response to God's call through Moses, the people willingly brought generous offerings to build the Tabernacle (verse 22). Verse 29 describes their response as "freewill offerings for all the work of the Lord through Moses" (verse 29, NIV). After being disciplined for their involvement in idolatry, the Israelites responded to Moses with generous and willing hearts (36:2-5). As construction began, the people had contributed more than enough (see 36:6-7).

D. Craftsmen Chosen to Build and Oversee (35:30-36:7)

God's choice of Bezaleel and Aholiab as the chief craftsmen for the Tabernacle specified that He had filled them with His Spirit, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge to do and oversee the construction (31:3-6). Along with their building skills, they were able to "teach others" (35:34) who assisted with the building. To read this account is to understand that God equips and calls people for the execution of His plans.

E. Constructing the Tabernacle Tent (36:8-38)

With God's design made clear and the workers identified, construction of the Tabernacle began. Detail by detail, as described in the Exodus account, the skilled laborers built the structure according to the plan given to Moses. As people read this Bible account, they can mentally picture the busy construction site. While some workers built the support poles, others were tanning animal hides and weaving curtain material. Other accomplished workers sewed the materials together in the exact manner and dimensions as God had told Moses. Constructing this elaborate tent involved countless hours of diligent labor. Amazingly, this biblical record provides sufficient detail for Bible students to be able to build a model of the Tabernacle. (Note: Students will study the Tabernacle in more detail in another GATS course.)

F. The Tabernacle Courtyard, Furnishings, and Interior (37:1-38:31)

The Exodus record describes the construction of the Tabernacle first. Then it speaks about the work on the furnishings. Most likely, all phases of the work were being done at the same time by the various laborers. Exodus 37 describes the details for the furnishings for the Most Holy Place (the Ark with the cherubims) and the Holy Place (the table, lampstand, and the altar of incense). Exodus 38 gives the details for the courtyard and its furnishings (the laver and altar of burnt offerings). "The Israelites did everything just as the Lord commanded Moses" (39:32b, NIV) summarizes these chapters.

Moses commanded that Ithamar, son of Aaron, the priest, direct a listing of the Tabernacle materials. This detailed inventory is recorded with a note that Bezaleel "made everything the Lord commanded Moses" (38:22, NIV), along with Aholiab, who is

described as a craftsman, designer, and embroiderer (NIV). This record shows that God demands accountability from every person called to do His work.

VI. Preparing the Priests (39:1-31)

A. Tailoring the Garments for the Priests

God gave Moses specific patterns for the garments for the priests “to do service in the Holy place” (39:1). The descriptions in this chapter and earlier (chapter 28) show the skilled workers wove and tailored the priestly garments from the finest materials with specific and vivid colors. The sacred garments for the priests included a robe, tunic, turban, headband, and undergarments. The high priest’s garments included an ephod (39:2-7) and an elaborate breastplate (39:8-21). Both of these items had twelve stones representing the twelve sons of Israel and tribes. Bells and pomegranates were attached to the hem of his robe. Finally, a plate of pure gold engraved with the words HOLINESS TO THE LORD was attached to the high priest’s turban (39:30).

VI. Inspecting and Setting Up the Tabernacle (39:32-40:33)

A. Inspection of the Completed Work (39:32-42)

After the craftsmen had completed all the items for the Tabernacle, they brought their work to Moses for inspection. The Bible records that Moses inspected the work and saw it had been done just as the Lord had commanded. Seeing their good work, Moses blessed them (39:42-43). The Tabernacle plan teaches that workers should strive to please God and then invite and welcome their leaders to inspect what they have done.

B. Setting Up the Tabernacle (40:1-33)

As Israel’s leader Moses provided instruction and supervision in assuring that God’s pattern for the Tabernacle construction was carefully followed. After Moses had inspected all the work, God spoke to Moses and said, “Set up the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the first month” (40:1, NIV). The Lord then gave Moses detailed instructions on the placement of the furnishings in the Tabernacle, beginning with placement of the “ark of the testimony” (40:3). Next, God told Moses to anoint the Tabernacle and everything in it with oil (40:9-11). God then instructed Moses to bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the door of the Tabernacle to wash them with water. Aaron was to dress in the sacred garments, and Moses was to anoint and consecrate him as priest. Following this, Aaron’s sons were brought in, dressed, and anointed (40:12-16). The anointing of the Tabernacle items and priests set them apart as holy for God’s service (40:9). Though Aaron is mentioned (40:13) as distinct from his sons as a priest, the term

“high priest” is not in the Exodus record. It’s first used in regard to the Aaronic priesthood in Leviticus 21:10.

After receiving God’s instructions for setting up the Tabernacle, Moses did just as God had told him (40:17-33). As the work neared completion, Moses, Aaron, and his sons washed their hands and feet and went into the tent of the congregation (40:31-32). Finally, they set up the court around the Tabernacle. With brevity, the record states: “So Moses finished the work” (40:33).

VII. Seeing the Glory of the Lord (Exodus 40:34-38)

With everything in place just as God had commanded, God sent a cloud to cover the Tabernacle. The Bible gives this picture: “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (40:34). This passage informs us that the cloud remained over the Tabernacle during Israel’s encampments. When the cloud moved, then Israel knew it was time to move onward (40:36-37). God promised Israel that He would dwell among them and be their God (29:45), and the provision and presence of the Tabernacle assured them that He dwelt among them. The visible sign of the cloud descending on the Tabernacle showed God’s desire to make Himself known to Israel as they learned to worship Him in accordance with the Tabernacle plan.

A. Looking Ahead

An understanding of the Tabernacle plan recorded in the Book of Exodus provides a foundation for understanding the worship patterns that God designed for Israel. God designed a special plan for Israel so that they could have a relationship with Him. The offerings, feasts, and festivals described in the Book of Leviticus allow us to view God’s plan for Israel.

VIII. Significance of the Tabernacle Plan in Scripture

God’s blueprint for the Tabernacle and the priests, followed by its construction and dedication, comprise thirteen chapters of Exodus (25-31; 35-40).

The Book of Hebrews contains three chapters focused on the Tabernacle, the priesthood, and the symbolical meaning for the New Covenant in Christ Jesus (Hebrews 8-10). The amount of space devoted to the Tabernacle reveals the importance of the Tabernacle plan as a “type” that speaks of Jesus Christ. The Tabernacle, the brazen altar, the laver, the Mercy Seat, and the high priest, all “serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the

tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount” (Hebrews 8:5).

God told Moses, “And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount” (Exodus 25:40). As God instructed Moses to carefully follow the pattern, thus it is essential that a follower of Christ follow His teaching and example (I Peter 2:21; I John 2:6).

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What happened in the Israelite encampment during the forty days that Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving instructions from the Lord?
2. How did Moses learn about the Israelites’ sin and what was his reaction when he returned to the camp?
3. How did God reveal His glory to Moses to assure him that His presence would be with him to lead the Israelites as described in Exodus 33:12-23?
4. What did Moses have to do to obtain new “tables of stone” to replace those that he broke on his return from the mountain?
5. How did the Israelites respond to Moses’ request to bring offerings for the building of the Tabernacle as described in Exodus 35:29-29?
6. What skills and abilities did Bezaleel and Aholiab have that qualified them to be the chief craftsmen in the building of the Tabernacle?
7. Describe the clothing items that were made for the priests.
8. Describe the two special items that were made for the high priest.
9. When was the Tabernacle completed and set up in relationship to Israel’s departure from Egypt? (40:2)
10. Describe the actions that took place in setting up the Tabernacle and what happened when everything had been completed.

Assignment

1. Do this first: Write a paragraph describing your present understanding of the general content and purpose of Leviticus. Later you can refer back to your paper to see how your study has given you a greater understanding of Leviticus.
2. Read Leviticus 1-4 in preparation for lesson 8.
3. After reading these four chapters, write down four words that seem to be key words in these chapters. Write a statement explaining why each of these words seems significant to you.

Personal Study Notes



LEVITICUS

THE BIG PICTURE OF THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

The Way to God – Chapters 1-18

Law of the Offerings	Law of the Priesthood	Laws of Purity	The Day of Atonement and the Blood
1-7	8-10	11-15	16-17
Manner and Purpose of the Laws			
Sacrifice - Shedding of Blood			
People's Cleansing			
Climax - The Day of Atonement			

New Testament Application

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12).

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Hebrews 10:19).

The Walk with God – Chapters 18-27

Holy People	Holy Priests	Holy Seasons	Holy Vows
18-20	21-22	23-25	26-27
Benefits			
Fellowship - Holiness			
People's Clean Living			
Climax - Year of Jubilee			

New Testament Application

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7).

Lesson Eight

Introduction to Leviticus

(Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Leviticus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Recognizing that God preserved the record of the building of the Tabernacle as well as the accounts of the Tabernacle rituals gives the Bible student confidence that significant lessons are to be learned and lived from these accounts.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Describe the relationship between the Books of Exodus and Leviticus.
2. Draw a chart showing the main divisions and key events of the Book of Leviticus.
3. Write a summary explaining the institution and ministry of the Aaronic priesthood.

Introductory Lesson Outline:

- I. The Purpose and Importance of Leviticus
- II. Relationship to the Book of Exodus
- III. The Writer and Date of Leviticus
- IV. Grasping the Big Picture of the Book of Leviticus (See Leviticus Chart)
- V. God's Covenant with Israel as revealed in Exodus and Leviticus
- VI. The Institution of the Priesthood

Key Verse

The lessons of Leviticus revealed God's saving plan to Israel.

“And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses” (10:11).

Lesson Content

I. The Purpose and Importance of Leviticus (A Quick Look into Leviticus)

The Book of Leviticus provided instructions for the Israelites on how they should serve and worship the holy God. While Bible readers often neglect Leviticus because of its much repetition and focus on rules and rituals, its message was vital for Israel. Because the Israelites had been in bondage in Egypt for over four hundred years, their idea of God had become tainted by the pagan idol worship in Egypt. Leviticus provided specific guidelines for the priests and Levites in their duties that would provide the way for the people to commune with God.

God speaks in Leviticus – “God said” or “commanded” is used more times in Leviticus than in any other book.

Following God's directives was necessary for the Israelites to find forgiveness and favor with God. Leviticus emphasizes personal holiness and its necessity in response to a holy God. Though the rituals of the old covenant no longer apply, the message of Leviticus remains clear and distinct for the New Testament believer: God desires and demands that His people be holy. (Compare Leviticus 19:2 with Hebrews 12:14.) The holy God of the old covenant is the holy One of the New Covenant who calls His children to holiness.

“Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy” (19:2). (See also 4:1; 5:14; 6:1; 7:22.)

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrew 12:14).

References to the Book of Leviticus by New Testament writers highlight the importance of the message of Leviticus. “The New Testament writers quote the Book of Leviticus more than fifteen times” (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 133).

II. Relationship to the Book of Exodus

The Book of Exodus tells how the Lord God redeemed and set apart “a peculiar people” for Himself (Exodus 19:5). God designed the Tabernacle as a means for dwelling among His people and communicating with them. Exodus closes with the erection of the Tabernacle and the account of God filling it with His glory. The predominant theme of Exodus is redemption, while the overall theme of Leviticus is holiness.

God revealed His part of the covenant to Israel in Exodus 19:3-6 after redeeming them from bondage in Egypt. The Book of Leviticus shows Israel's part or responsibility in living under the provisions of the covenant. The Israelites who were redeemed from Egyptian bondage had only the historical records about the patriarchs whose story is told in Genesis. After four centuries of living in idolatrous Egypt, their idea of God had become vague and distorted. Exodus 19:5-6 reveals God's plan to call them into a covenant relationship, making them a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” That call was instituted with the plan of the Tabernacle given in Exodus, providing Israel with a central place of worship, which was hallowed by God's glory (Exodus 40:34). Leviticus follows up with stipulations on how the Israelites were to worship and obey God through the ministry of the priesthood.

The content of Leviticus can be described as the code regulating the spiritual life of Israel, God's chosen people. Moses received the revelations of Leviticus at Mount Sinai (25:1; 26:46; 27:34). God likely spoke the words of Leviticus to Moses when He gave him the plans for the Tabernacle.

III. The Writer and Date of Leviticus

The content of the Book of Exodus identifies Moses as the author. As Israel's leader and lawgiver, he provided the people with a written record of God's communication with him. More than fifty times Leviticus makes comments such as “the Lord spake unto Moses.”

“And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying . . .” (1:1). (Also see 4:1; 5:14; 6:1; 7:22.)

The New Testament refers many times to Moses as the author of Leviticus. Some examples are found in Matthew 8:4, Luke 2:22, and Hebrews 8:5.

“And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them” (Matthew 8:4 – Compare Leviticus 14:2-32).

Moses received the message of Leviticus around the middle of the fifteenth century before Christ (1445 BC) and before the wilderness journey described in the Book of Numbers. God spoke the words of Leviticus during the first month of the second year after the exodus from Egypt. However, Moses may have put them in written form during the wilderness years before his death.

IV. Grasping the Big Picture of the Book of Leviticus

(See Leviticus Chart.)

A. Title

The book's name comes from the priestly tribe of Levi. The word *Leviticus* means "matters of the Levites." Leviticus is also identified as the Law of the Priests and Book of the Law of Offerings.

B. Theme

Holiness stands out as the predominant theme. The word *holy* appears nearly one hundred times in the Book of Leviticus (ninety-four times in KJV).

Leviticus speaks of the holy sanctuary, the holiness of God, the holy implements, and the holiness of obedient behavior. The ceremonies instituted in Leviticus drew the people into the presence of the holy God.

C. Two Main Sections

Leviticus can be divided into two sections. The first section emphasizes the way to God (chapters 1-17). The second section teaches about the walk with God (chapter 18-27). In the first part, Moses taught Israel about God's holiness and how to attain His holiness. In the second part, Israel learned how to practice holiness in a practical way in their daily living.

V. God's Covenant with Israel (Revealed in Exodus and Leviticus)

A. Origin

The Lord God instituted the covenant through Moses while the redeemed Israelites camped at Mount Sinai. Exodus 19:1 through Numbers 10:10 provide the record of Israel's encampment at Mount Sinai. God revealed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai, showing them the manner in which they should worship and serve Him.

B. The Covenant

God revealed to Moses that He had chosen Israel as His “treasure” (Exodus 19:5; see I Peter 2:9 for New Testament application). He spoke to Moses the provisions for His covenant relationship with Israel. This is known as the Mosaic Covenant. The Ten Commandments reveal the heart of that covenant in stating Israel’s moral duties to God and to fellow humans. Exodus and Leviticus unveil many specific provisions of the covenant. God’s covenant with Israel stood firm. The condition for receiving the blessings of the covenant was obedience.

C. The Sanctuary

Before the construction of the Tabernacle, an altar had served as a place of sacrifice and worship (Genesis record). During their years in Egypt, the Israelites had increased in numbers but not in their knowledge and worship of the Lord God. In Exodus the Israelites were commanded to build a Tabernacle so God might dwell among them (Exodus 25:8).

D. Laws for Holy Living

The covenant relationship stipulated laws for holy living. Following the giving of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), additional regulations given in Exodus and Leviticus guided the Israelites as God’s holy people. These laws had moral, civil, and ceremonial aspects. The moral laws remain permanent. Many of the ceremonial and civil laws were temporary in nature. They related to the culture of the time to separate Israel from the heathen cultures of Egypt and later Canaan.

E. The Priesthood

In earlier Bible accounts, the head of a household who represented his family in worship of God made the offerings. With the beginning of the Mosaic Covenant, the priesthood became vitally important. God wanted Israel to be a holy nation, and thus gave them priestly leadership to provide orderly ministration of their worship.

F. The Offerings, Appointed Feasts, and Seasons

With the Tabernacle established in the midst of the Israelites’ encampment, Moses introduced Israel to all the provisions that would be a part of their covenant relationship with God. The Book of Leviticus gives details not included in Exodus regarding the Israelites’ worship and lifestyle designed and commanded by God.

V. The Institution of the Priesthood

A. Aaronic Priesthood

God set Aaron and his sons apart from the tribe of Levi to be the priests. Exodus 28-29 give details for making the priestly garments. Exodus 29 tells how the priests should be consecrated. The Leviticus account (chapters 8-9) describes the beginning of the Aaronic priesthood. Aaron was the first high priest. The distinctive clothing placed on him at the ordination of Aaron and his sons (chapter 8) identifies him as such. The term *high priest* with regard to the Aaronic priesthood is first mentioned in Leviticus 21:10.

B. God's Choice of the Levites

When the Lord spared the firstborn sons of the Israelites at the time of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, He told Moses that the firstborn of men and animals belonged to Him. Thus, they were to be consecrated to Him (Exodus 13:1-2). When God instituted the Tabernacle ministry, He told Moses to select the Levites, along with Aaron and his sons, to serve the Tabernacle in place of the firstborn sons. The Book of Numbers records these instructions (Numbers 3:9, 12) as the Israelites were preparing to leave Mount Sinai. However, Moses would likely have received these instructions earlier.

“And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel” (Numbers 3:9).

“And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine” (Numbers 3:12).

C. Ministry of the Priests

The high priest entered the Holy of Holies just once each year on the Day of Atonement to sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat as an atonement for the sins of the people. (See additional details in lesson 3 on the Day of Atonement.) Aaron's sons ministered in the Holy Place. The rest of the Levites served as assistants and were divided into three categories: Gershonites, Kohathites, Merarites. Subsequent lessons discuss the various capacities in which the priests oversaw the offerings, taught Israel the laws, and directed Israel in observing God's holy days.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What was God's purpose in requiring Israel to offer the ritualistic offerings described in Leviticus?
2. How does the content of Leviticus relate to the events of the Book of Exodus?
3. Write the words and reference of a verse from Leviticus that show that Moses was the writer of this book.
4. How many times does Leviticus make comments about Moses' authorship with words such as "the Lord spake unto Moses"?
5. What is the predominant theme of the Book of Leviticus? How is this emphasized?
6. What is the meaning of the title Leviticus?
7. What are the two main outline headings that can be used to describe the content of Leviticus?
8. What phrase is often used to identify the covenant God made with Israel as revealed in the Books of Exodus and Leviticus?
9. Explain from the Scriptures how the tribe of Levi was selected from among all the people to be the priestly tribe.
10. How did Aaron differ in his role from his sons who were also priests?

Assignment

1. Read Leviticus 1-7.
2. Memorize Leviticus 19:2; 20:7, and 20:26.
3. Write a short paper explaining how the priests were selected and what ministry they were commissioned to do in the Israelite community.

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 9

The Way to God— Israel's Access to God

Leviticus 1-7 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Leviticus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Knowing that God cared enough about the children of Israel to give them definite instructions on how they could have fellowship and favor with Him shows He provides a plan for every person to know Him and have His favor.

Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Name and describe the manner and purpose of the three voluntary offerings.
2. Name and describe the manner and purpose of the two mandatory offerings.
3. Describe the ordination and involvement of the priests in the five offerings of the Israelites.

Lesson Outline

- I. Introduction: The Way to God through Offerings and the Priesthood (1:1-7:38)
- II. The Three Voluntary Offerings (1:1-3:17)
 - A. The Burnt Offering (1:3-17; 6:8-13)
 - B. The Grain Offering (2:1-16; 6:14-23)
 - C. The Peace Offering – Fellowship (3:1-17; 7:11-36)

- III. The Two Mandatory Offerings (4:1-5:19)
 - A. The Sin Offering (4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17)
 - B. The Trespass Offering (5:14-6:7; 7:1-7)
- IV. The Way to God through the Priesthood –
How the Priests Are to Receive and Officiate over the Offerings (6:1-7:38)
 - A. Instructions to the Priests (6:8-7:38)
 - B. Instructions Regarding Blood and Fat (7:22-26)
 - C. Summary of Instructions to Priests (7:28-38)

Key Verses

Through sacrificial offerings, God provided a way for the Israelites to receive forgiveness and have fellowship with Him.

“This is the law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings; which the LORD commanded Moses in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai” (7:37-38).

Lesson Content

I. Introduction: The Way to God through Offerings and the Priesthood (1:1-7:38)

The first seven chapters of Leviticus reveal how Moses taught the Israelites to approach God. God spoke to Moses from the completed Tabernacle, giving him instructions (1:1-2). God gave Moses the details of how the people must bring sacrificial offerings through the ministry of the priests. Leviticus 1-5 describes in detail five different offerings. The first three (1-3) were voluntary and the last two (4-5) were obligatory. These voluntary offerings provided Israel with a means to express their devotion to God in a specific, orderly manner. This was done through the sacrifice (giving up) of something that belonged to them. The obligatory offerings provided the Israelites with a means for seeking forgiveness of sins to maintain fellowship with God.

Although the people had offered sacrifices since the days of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-4), this is the first time the Israelites had received detailed instructions for offerings. First, the people were given instructions (1-5) and then the priests (6, 8). This sacrificial system became an integral part of the Mosaic law, emphasizing the seriousness of sin and revealing God's provision for atonement.

In this time, Israel transitioned from being a family (descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) to becoming a nation. National status includes people, governing laws, and a land. As the Israelites transitioned to becoming a nation, God gave them explicit instructions about how to worship Him and maintain fellowship with Him. God prepared them for their entry into the Promised Land by giving specific instructions, not just suggestions. God designed a theocratic nation for Israel to be governed by His rules. Unfortunately, they later rejected God's theocratic plan when they requested an earthly king to rule them (I Samuel 8:5-9).

The five offerings described in Leviticus 1-5 provided the Israelites with a means to have their sins forgiven and for them to have fellowship with God. The offerings taught them a new way of life after being subjected to the pagan practices of Egypt. The strict details and requirements set them apart as God's treasured people (Exodus 19:5-6). The requirement of perfect animals for their offerings taught them to give their best in reverence to God. The demand for exact obedience taught them the importance of God's laws. In bringing their offerings, they showed faith in God and received His forgiveness in response.

The Offerings	Purpose of Offering	Importance	New Covenant Aspect
Burnt Offering (Voluntary) Leviticus 1:3-17; 6:8-13	Expressed dependence on God for forgiveness. Verse 4 states that it made atonement for the offerer. After the blood was sprinkled on the sides of the altar, the animal was completely burned up.	Showed full surrender and devotion to God. The animal bore the worshiper's sins and died in his place.	Jesus fully surrendered Himself as an offering for sin (Matthew 26:39). "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Romans 12:1).
Meat (Grain) Offering (Voluntary) Leviticus 2:1-16; 6:14-23	Expressed thankfulness to God with an offering of flour, unleavened bread or roasted grain brought to the priest. The priests burned a portion on the altar and then ate the rest.	Acknowledgement that everything belonged to God and His provisions should be remembered with gratefulness.	Jesus willingly gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice. "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Hebrews 13:15).

The Offerings	Purpose of Offering	Importance	New Covenant Aspect
Fellowship (Peace) Offering (Voluntary) Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:11-36	Expressed peace or fellowship between the worshiper and God through the shed blood. After some parts were burned on the altar as a "sweet savour" (3:16), the priests waved their portion.	The worshiper and the priests ate a communal meal symbolizing peace and fellowship with God.	"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one" (Ephesians 2:13-14).
Sin Offering (Required) Leviticus 4:1-5:13; 6:24-30	A blood sacrifice to make payment for sins committed unintentionally such as uncleanness, neglect, or carelessness. The offerer brought his offering to the priest as a confession.	The offering provided atonement for sins against God and restored fellowship with God.	The offering shows that every person must seek forgiveness for his sins. Forgiveness comes only by acceptance of Jesus Christ, who made atonement for the sins of everyone.
Trespass (Guilt) Offering (Required) Leviticus 5:14-6:7; 7:1-7	A blood sacrifice to atone for sins against God and others. It included paying for damages (restitution). Blood was sprinkled on the altar and animal parts burned. Other parts were roasted for the priests.	Taught the Israelite the importance of a right relationship with God and with his fellow Israelites.	"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24).

Typically, these offerings spoke of the day when Jesus would die and offer Himself as the final sacrifice for sin. The sacrificial death of Jesus ended this sacrificial system of the Old Testament (Hebrews 10:1-18). The offerings (sacrifices) will be summarized in the following sections:

- Three Voluntary Offerings – burnt, grain, peace (1-3)
- Two Involuntary Offerings (4-5)
- How the Priests Were to Receive and Officiate These Offerings (6-7)

For a clearer picture of the five offerings, the student can compare the descriptions in Leviticus 1-5 with the additional instructions Moses gave to Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 6-8. These chapters describe the preparations for Aaron and his sons to be ordained as priests.

II. The Three Voluntary Offerings (1:1-3:17)

A. The Burnt Offering (1:3-17; 6:8-13)

This offering (sacrifice) showed full dedication and surrender to God. The name *whole burnt offering* refers to its being fully consumed by the fire, except for the skin or feathers. The skin was given to the priest. The burnt offering expressed the person's total dependence on God for forgiveness. Verse 4 states that it made atonement for the one who offered it. *Atonement* means "cover." David spoke of atonement in Psalm 32:1: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." The burnt offering provided a temporary covering, but it did not eliminate sin. As a type, it speaks of the Christian's complete surrender and devotion to God.

"But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:3-4).

Description – Every Israelite family was to bring an offering to the Tabernacle. The offering could be a bull, male sheep, or male goat without blemish, or turtledoves, or pigeons. The type of offering related to the wealth of the person. The person who brought the offering laid his hand on the head of the animal and then killed it before the priests. This action emphasized that the animal bore the person's sins. The animal died in his place. The priests, Aaron's sons, sprinkled the blood of the animal on all sides of the altar at the entrance to the Tabernacle. After that, the person who brought the offering skinned the animal and cut it in pieces. The priests took the pieces, washed them, and placed them on the wood fire they had built on the altar. Then fire consumed the offering. No one ate any of the burnt offering. In confessing his sin through the sacrifice of an animal, the offerer found forgiveness for his sin. The Bible states that this offering was a "sweet savour unto the Lord" (1:9).

B. The Grain Offering (2:1-16; 6:14-23)

The KJV uses the word *meat*. The translators used *meat* because in their time it was the general name for food. The latter part of verse 1 clarifies the intended meaning by identifying the offering as "fine flour." The offerer gave this grain (meal) offering at the time of the burnt offering. This was the only offering that did not require an animal sacrifice.

This voluntary offering expressed the people's thankfulness to God for His goodness and provisions. The Israelites brought fine flour, oil, and frankincense to the priest. The priest then burned a handful of these ingredients on the altar as a "sweet savour unto the Lord" (2:2). The people could also offer a cake baked in an oven or frying pan without leaven (2:4, 7) or roasted grain mixed with oil and frankincense (2:14-15). After

the priest burned a portion of the offering, he could partake of the rest (2:9-10). Seasoned with salt, the offerings were a reminder of God's permanent covenant with them. (See Numbers 18:19.) The priests could eat a part of this offering (2:3), which was different from the burnt offering.

Significance for the Christian – The New Testament speaks of offerings given willingly with thankfulness unto God (II Corinthians 9:7-11; Hebrews 13:15-16).

“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Hebrews 13:15-16, NIV).

C. The Peace Offering – *Fellowship* in NIV (3:1-17; 7:11-36)

This voluntary offering expressed peace or fellowship between the worshiper and God with thanksgiving (7:11-12). The offering was to be an animal without blemish from a herd or flock. The animal could be a male or female, which was different from the burnt offering. The choice of an animal depended on the person's wealth. The manner of presentation was similar to that of the burnt offering (1:3-9 compared with 3:1-5). After some parts were burned on the fire as a “sweet savour” (3:16), the priests waved the breast and right shoulder as their portion (7:30-34). The offerer ate the remainder of the meat in a communal meal of thanksgiving (7:15). This was the only offering in which the offerer partook of a portion of the offering along with the priests. This communal meal symbolized peace and fellowship with God.

The New Testament believer (Christian) has fellowship with God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ: “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (I Corinthians 1:9).

III. The Two Mandatory Offerings – Sin and Trespass (4:1-5:19)

A. Sin Offering (4:1-5:13; 6:24-30; 8:14-17)

The sin offering was mandatory (required). The purpose of the sin offering was to atone for sins committed inadvertently. The earlier offerings dealt with general sin. The “sin offering” was for specific unintentional sin. This offering was required of everyone: priests, leaders, the congregation, and all the people. Leviticus 5:1-4 lists some typical situations that required a sin offering. The following list shows that different offerings were required according to one's status or wealth.

- For the sin of the high priest, the offering was a bull without blemish (4:3-12).
- For the whole congregation, the offering was also a bull without blemish (4:13-21).
- For a ruler, the offering was a male goat without blemish (4:22-26).
- For a common person, the offering was a female goat or lamb without blemish (4:27-35).
- For a poor person, the offering was two turtledoves or two young pigeons (5:7-10).
- For extreme poverty, the offering could be fine flour (5:11-13).

The offerer brought his sacrifice as a confession when he became aware of his sin (4:3, 14, 23, 28; 5:5). He slaughtered the animal at the entrance to the Tabernacle. Then the priest took the blood and applied it in the following ways:

1) In the case of the high priest and congregation, the priest took the blood of the slain animal into the Tabernacle and sprinkled it before the Lord seven times in front of the veil. After that he put blood on the horns of the altar of incense. Then he took the remaining blood and poured it at the base of the altar of burnt offering (4:5-7, 16-18). After applying the blood in the Tabernacle, the priest burned the fat on the altar of burnt sacrifice. The priests burned the remaining portions of the bull outside the camp. In this way the priest made atonement for himself and the Israelite community (4:20-21).

2) In the case of a ruler (leader), the leader laid his hand on the head of the male goat and then slaughtered it by the altar of burnt sacrifice. The priest took some blood on his finger and put it on the horns of the altar and poured out the remaining blood at the base of the altar. Next, the priest burned the fat on the altar (4:22-16). The Bible states, "In this way the priest will make atonement for the man's sin, and he will be forgiven" (4:26, NIV).

3) In the case of a common person, he laid his hand on the head of the female goat or lamb and slaughtered it by the altar. The priest followed the same pattern as he did for the leader (4:27-35). Chapter 5:1-5 mentions some of the intentional sins that must be confessed: "When anyone is guilty in any of these ways, he must confess in what way he has sinned" (5:5a, NIV).

4) In the case of the poor who brought doves or pigeons for an offering, the priest applied the blood to the sides of the altar and then drained the rest into the base of the altar. Though some particulars varied, the purpose was to make an atonement so that sins could be forgiven (5:10).

5) Those in dire poverty with no animal to offer still had access to the priest who could make an atonement, thus providing them forgiveness (5:11-13).

As a type, the sin offering shows that all people, regardless of their status must seek forgiveness for their sin. Their positions do not exempt them from the need to confess sin and seek God's forgiveness. The New Testament makes this clear:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (I John 1:8-10).

The priests received the portion of the sin offering not burned on the altar. They ate these portions in the Tabernacle court (6:25-26). Those who brought the offerings received no portion.

This Tabernacle pattern reveals that God provided for those who served as spiritual leaders. The priests received a portion of most of the sacrifices as food for them. In like manner, God designed a means under the New Covenant for the support of the His ministers. (See I Corinthians 9:7-14.)

“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:14).

B. The Trespass Offering (5:14-6:7; 7:1-7)

The trespass (“guilt,” NIV) offering was like the sin offering except for one aspect. Like the sin offering, it was for unintentional sin. Unlike the sin offering, it related to sins that required restitution. Moses cited three situations as examples that required the need for the trespass offering:

- 1) A sin against the holy things – Tabernacle or priesthood (5:14-16)
- 2) Breaking a clearly stated command of God (5:17-19)
- 3) Sin against a neighbor by lying, stealing, cheating, or mistreating (6:1-7)

Restitution – Along with bringing a trespass offering (a ram or lamb), the offender had to make restitution. This involved bringing to the priest the sacrificial offering plus a twenty percent fine (“add a fifth of the value,” 5:16; 6:5). This extra money was given to the person who had been wronged. The practice of restitution emphasized the requirement of honest behavior in their worship (“Lord’s holy things,” 5:14) as well as their relationships with their neighbors (6:2).

The Priest's Portion – The priest who officiated received the portion of the offering not burned. He was to eat his portion in the Holy Place (7:6).

IV. The Way to God through the Priesthood (6:1-7:38) – How the Priests Are to Receive and Officiate over the Offerings

Chapters 1-5 focus on the worshiper's part in bringing the offering. Chapters 6-7 speak about the priests' responsibilities in the offering rituals. Each of the offerings required the presence and guidance of the priest. He applied the blood of the sacrifice and prepared the wood for the fire. If the priest failed in his responsibility, it would lead to the people's failure to receive atonement for their sins.

A. Instructions to the Priests (6:8-7:38)

This portion of Scripture begins with these words: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command Aaron and his sons, saying . . ." (6:8-9).

The commands that followed gave the priests further instructions about their involvement in each of the five offerings (sacrifices). Leviticus 1-5 covers the main aspects of these offerings, with some reference to information from chapters 6-8. Thus, only brief comment needs to be noted about chapters 6-8.

Note that this list was given in a different order than that in chapters 1-5. The peace offering is mentioned last rather than in third place.

- 1) The Burnt Offering (6:8-13)
- 2) The Grain [Meat in KJV] Offering (6:14-23)
- 3) The Sin Offering (6:24-30)
- 4) The Trespass [Guilt in NIV] Offering (7:1-10)
- 5) The Peace [Fellowship in NIV] Offering (7:11-18)

Instructions to the priests emphasized the holiness of the sacrifices. They had to carefully follow God's plan for the sacrifices to be effective. Without the priests accurately guiding the rituals of the sacrifices, the people would have no atonement for their sins. Neither would the people have access to fellowship with God.

B. Instructions Regarding Blood and Fat (7:22-26)

Through Moses, the Lord directed the people that they must not eat the fat of the animals. The priests burnt the fat on the altar as part of the sacrificial ritual. He also forbade the people from eating the blood of animals or birds. The explanation of the blood's significance came later. (See Leviticus 17:11-14.) The application of blood on the

altars and Mercy Seat was a significant aspect of the atonement for sin. The word *blood* appears eighty-eight times in the Book of Leviticus (KJV) in sixty-six verses. The commands not to eat the fat or blood came with strong warnings. Anyone who disobeyed these commands was to be cut off from the people.

In discussing the requirements for Gentile believers, the council at Jerusalem likely consulted Leviticus 17:11-14 and Genesis 9:4 regarding the matter of abstaining from blood (Acts 15:20).

C. Summary of Instructions to Priests (7:28-38)

These eleven verses summarize the instructions of 6:8-7:21. This passage reviews the priests' responsibilities and rights. As ministers of the Tabernacle, they helped and taught the people about their spiritual life. They directed the Israelites in knowing how to obtain forgiveness for their sins. They instructed the people about the purpose and rituals of the Tabernacle. If the priests failed in their responsibilities, the people faltered in their relationship with the Lord. If the people were unfaithful in bringing their offerings, the priests suffered. Why? Because their daily food came from the offerings (sacrifices) brought by the people. The priests and the people depended upon each other.

The Levitical pattern of spiritual leadership reveals God's design for His people to have God-appointed leadership. First Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11 summarize spiritual leadership of the New Testament.

Faithful priests kept the people faithful to God's commands. When the priests failed, the nation of Israel declined.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What phrase summarizes the content of Leviticus 1-7?
2. *Offerings* and *priests* are key words in these chapters. Why was an understanding of offerings and priests vital to the Israelites?
3. What five offerings are described in Leviticus 1-7?
4. Which of these offerings were voluntary and what was their purpose?
5. Which of these offerings were involuntary and what was their purpose?
6. Under the New Covenant, what do these offerings typify and why are they no longer needed?
7. Describe the difference between the purpose of the sin offering and the trespass offering.
8. Explain the meaning of *restitution* as a part of the trespass offering and describe the requirements for making restitution.

9. Why was it important for the priests to carefully follow the commands of Moses in offering the sacrifices?
10. What was the significance of the blood being applied to the Mercy Seat?
11. What does the passage in Leviticus 17:11-14 explain regarding the importance of blood?

Assignment

1. Read Leviticus 8-10.
2. Memorize Leviticus 10:10-11.

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 10

The Priests—Ordination and Responsibilities

Leviticus 8-10 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Leviticus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

God Himself designed and ordered the priestly ministry. God's call to ministry comes with commands and guidelines established by God and published in His Word.

Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Describe the ceremony and significance of how the priests were ordained for their ministry in the Tabernacle.
2. Discuss some of the instructions given to the Israelites regarding foods and matters relating to personal health.
3. Describe the meaning and significance of the Day of Atonement and the ceremonies associated with this holy day.

The Setting

The Israelites had seen the Tabernacle constructed and placed in the midst of their encampment. Leviticus 8-10 provides details about the ordination of the priests and the beginning of their ministries. God gave Moses specific instructions to guide the priests as they provided spiritual guidance for the Israelites. The ministry of the priests is rich in typology as revealed in the Book of Hebrews.

Lesson Outline: Focus on the Priests

- I. The Ordination of Aaron and His Sons (8:1-36)
- II. The Beginning of the Priests' Ministry (9:1-24)
- III. The Failure of Priests and Replacements (10:1-20)

Key Verses

Holiness must be taught by godly leaders.

“And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses” (10:10-11).

Lesson Content

I. The Ordination of Aaron and His Sons (8:1-36)

Moses explained the ceremony for the ordination of the priests in Exodus 29. The Lord told Moses explicitly that the priests were to be hallowed (KJV) to serve the Lord in the priest's office (Exodus 29:1). The rituals served to “set apart” or “consecrate” the priests for ministry. The Lord told Moses that Aaron and his sons were the ones chosen to minister in the priest's office (Exodus 28:1).

The ceremony for ordaining Aaron and his sons took place before the entire congregation according to the Lord's instructions to Moses (8:1-3). This chapter presents a portrayal of the ordination ceremony in five scenes:

A. Five Scenes of the Ordination Ceremony

1. Presentation and Aaron's Garments

Aaron and his sons were presented to the congregation and washed with water. Then Aaron was dressed in his priestly garments: tunic, sash, robe, ephod, waistband, breastpiece with Urim and Thummim, turban, and gold plate with sacred diadem (8:5-9 - descriptive words used in NIV).

2. Anointing and Priests' Garments

Moses took anointing oil and anointed the Tabernacle and everything in it. Then he poured the anointing oil on Aaron's head to consecrate him. After

that he presented Aaron's sons and dressed them in their priestly garments: tunics, sashes, and headbands (8:10-13).

3. Sacrifices for Sin

Having anointed the Tabernacle and priests, Moses assisted the priests in offering the sacrifices for sin: the sin offering (8:14-17) and then a burnt offering (8:18-21). Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the bull or ram, and then Moses slaughtered the animal and applied the blood. With the sin offering, he put the blood on the horns of the altar to purify it. With the burnt offering, he sprinkled the blood on the side of the altar. These offerings symbolized the priests' need for forgiveness as well as forgiveness for the people. This ordination ceremony showed that the priests had to identify with the people in their need to have their sins forgiven.

4. The Consecration (Ordination) Ceremony

A fourth scene presents fascinating details about the consecration sacrifice for the priests (8:22-29). Moses slaughtered a ram and put the blood on Aaron: on the lobe of his right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. Then he did the same to Aaron's sons. This application of blood likely typifies consecration of the ears to hear the Word of God, hands to do right in God's service, and feet to walk in godly paths. After applying the blood, Moses took portions of the ram and a cake of bread and placed these in the hands of Aaron and his sons. The priests then waved these before the Lord as a wave offering. After the waving, Moses took the offerings from the priests and placed them on top of the burnt offering. This is described as an "ordination offering" (NIV), a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the Lord by fire. This scene ends with Moses waving his portion of the offering before the Lord.

5. Anointing Oil and Blood (8:30)

The consecration ceremony ended with Moses taking blood from the altar and some of the anointing oil and sprinkling it on Aaron and his sons and on their garments. The words *sanctify* or *consecrate* in this verse mean "to make or proclaim clean or holy."

"And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him" (8:30).

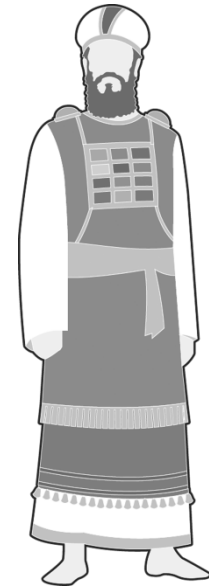
“So he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments” (8:30b, NIV).

B. The Consecration Week (8:31-36)

After the anointing, Moses instructed Aaron and his sons to cook the meat at the door of the Tabernacle and to eat it there with the bread from the basket of the ordination offerings. They were to burn any remaining meat and bread on the altar. Then Moses commanded Aaron and his sons to stay at the door of the Tabernacle for seven days and nights. Moses told the priests that the Lord commanded this to make atonement for them. As priests, they needed their “sins to be covered” so that they could effectively minister to others. The Bible says, “Aaron and his sons did all things which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses” (8:36).

C. New Covenant Application

This account of the priests’ ordination teaches the importance and necessity of specific preparation for spiritual ministry. God established a definite pattern for the priests to follow. Through the leadership of Moses, God imparted the knowledge that Aaron and his sons needed to fulfill their ministries. In like manner, every person called to spiritual ministry must be mentored in the Word and godly principles of leadership. Additionally, this story of the priests’ consecration (ordination) teaches that those called to ministry should set aside special days in which they separate themselves from others to wait in the presence of God for His cleansing and anointing on their ministries.



II. The Beginning of the Priests’ Ministry (9:1-24)

At the conclusion of the week of consecration, Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders and told them to prepare for the offerings. In obedience, they gathered the required animals and grains for the sin, burnt, peace, and grain offerings. With these offerings in hand, the congregation of Israel gathered in front of the Tabernacle. As they stood before Moses, he said, “This is what the LORD has commanded you to do, so that the glory of the LORD may appear to you” (9:1-6, NIV).

Chapter 9 describes how Aaron, in his role as high priest, offered each of the sacrifices according to the instructions given him. This was indeed a momentous event. For nearly a year, the Israelites had been involved in gathering materials and building the Tabernacle. Now on this day, they would see further confirmation of God’s presence among them. Earlier they had seen God’s glory descend in a cloud on the completed Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35).

When Aaron finished offering the sacrifices, he lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them and then stepped down from the altar (9:22). Then Moses and Aaron entered the Tabernacle. When they came out, they blessed the people. Then an amazing thing happened. A fire from God's presence came down and consumed the sacrifices. This display of God's glory caused the people to shout for joy and fall on their faces (9:24).

III. The Failure of Priests and Replacements (10:1-20)

A. Judgment by Fire

Leviticus 10 opens with a sobering account of consuming fire from the Lord, bringing death to Nadab and Abihu, the two older sons of Aaron and priests. The joy that erupted when the fire consumed the sacrifices (chapter 9) turned to sorrow because two disobedient priests offered "strange fire" before the Lord. Whatever the nature of the fire, it was not authorized by God. As priests, they were to follow God's command and show the holiness of the Lord before the people. Simply said, they disobeyed the Word of God. They assumed they could do things their own way. God's judgment on them demonstrated to the people the importance of leaders strictly obeying God's commands. God punished their rebellious actions for others to see as a warning.

B. Eleazar and Ithamar

After having their bodies removed from the Tabernacle, Moses admonished Aaron and his two younger sons, Eleazar and Ithamar. He told them to remain in the Tabernacle while the people mourned the death of their brethren (10:6). With the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, the two younger sons of Aaron became the only priests to serve in the Tabernacle. Later in Israel's story, the line of Eleazar was designated as the line of the high priest (Numbers 25:10-13). This came about because Eleazar's son Phinehas "was zealous for his God."

Moses' words emphasized that God had specific requirements for priests. The priests' appearance (10:6), their sobriety (10:9), their teaching (10:10-11), and their eating of the sacrifices (10:10-15) had to be done according to God's command. The obedient actions of the priests taught the Israelites to discern "between holy and unholy" (10:10-11). Their role as priests was to teach God's holy commands and demonstrate God's holiness by their attitude and conduct.

C. Difficult Passage

Leviticus 10:16-20 seems puzzling in light of the judgment pronounced on Nadab and Abihu. Moses confronted Aaron's younger sons about failing to eat the priests'

portion of the offering in the Holy Place (See 6:26). Rather, the meat offering had been burned up.

Moses possibly confronted the sons as their father Aaron was dealing emotionally with the recent judgment on his older sons. Verse 19 indicates that Aaron overheard and spoke to Moses and accepted responsibility for the failure: He said to Moses, "If I had eaten the sin offering today, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?" Aaron pointed out that the sacrifice ritual had been properly done except for the eating. The phrase "such things have befallen me" perhaps implies that they did not feel like feasting on the meat because of his sorrow. Whatever the case, Moses heard Aaron's plea and was satisfied. It seems that Moses accepted that rebellion was not the root cause of the sons' failure to follow the rule.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. According to Exodus 29, what was the purpose of the ordination ceremony for the priests?
2. In what place was the ordination ceremony for the priests to be held?
3. How did the priestly garments of Aaron, the high priest, differ from those of his sons?
4. What took place after the priests were anointed and dressed in their priestly garments?
5. According to Leviticus 8:30, what did Moses do as a conclusion to the ordination ceremony? What was the purpose?
6. After their anointing as priests, what did Aaron and his sons do and where did they stay for one week?
7. How did Aaron and his sons begin their ministry as priests as told in Leviticus 9?
8. What lesson(s) can ministers of the New Covenant learn from the ordination story of the priests?
9. What amazing things happened after Aaron offered the sacrifices for the people and lifted up his hands to bless the people (9:22-24)?
10. What caused the tragic deaths of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu?

Assignment

1. Read Leviticus 11-17.
2. As you read these chapters, take special note of the verses in which the words holy, unholy, clean, and unclean appear.
3. Select and write the words of four verses in these chapters in which you find thoughts that you can apply to your own life as a Christian. With each verse, state the application thought you gleaned from the verse.

Lesson 11

Holy and Healthy Living and the Day of Atonement

Leviticus 11-17 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Leviticus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

The holy lifestyle God designed for Israel reveals His divine design for His people to live separate from the world and its lifestyle.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Explain the biblical meaning of *clean* and *unclean*, *holy* and *unholy*, and name some of the specific examples mentioned in chapters 11-17.
2. Discuss how some of the rules given to Israel related to their personal wellbeing and healthy living in the wilderness.
3. Write a summary of how the Day of Atonement was to be observed and explain the significance of the Day of Atonement in Israel's spiritual life.

The Setting

With the Tabernacle completed and the instructions given to the Israelites about how they could approach God through offerings, Moses added instructions for the Israelites' lifestyle under God's covenant. With the guidance of the priests, the Israelites began their religious practices centered around the Tabernacle plan that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai (7:38; 25:1; 26:46; 27:34). These next ten chapters (8-17) may seem

repetitious and difficult to understand; however, they contain important instructions regarding Israel's spiritual life and physical health.

Lesson Outline

- I. Instructions for the Israelites' Holy and Healthy Living (11:1-15:33)
 - A. Meaning of *Clean* and *Unclean* in Leviticus
 - B. Instructions about Food (11:1-47)
 - C. Instructions about Childbirth (12:1-8)
 - D. Instructions about Diseases, Mildew, and Uncleanness (13:1-14:57)
 - E. Instructions for Personal Care and Cleanliness (15:1-33)
- II. The Day of Atonement (16:1-17:16)
 - A. The Day of Atonement—The Key to Leviticus (16:1-28)
 - B. Instructions for the Day of Atonement (16:29-34)
 - C. Significance of Offerings and of the Blood for Atonement (17:1-16)

Key Verse

Be holy!

“For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (11:45).

Lesson Content

I. Instructions for the Israelites' Holy and Healthy Living (11:1-15:33)

A. Meaning of *Clean* and *Unclean* in Leviticus

While the stipulations in chapters 11-15 seem hard to understand, a careful study reveals that God had Israel's welfare in mind. He was concerned for both their physical and spiritual wellbeing. This study will look at just a few items to provide some helpful pointers for understanding these seemingly strange rules given to the Israelites. Key words of this section are *clean* and *unclean*. The repeated use of these terms impressed on the Israelites that God made a clear distinction between what He approved and what He rejected. *Clean* meant acceptable to God. *Unclean* meant unacceptable to God. These repeated terms emphasized to Israel that God made a distinct difference between holy and unholy.

- *Clean* appears 46 times in the Leviticus record (KJV)
- *Unclean* appears 110 times in the Leviticus record (KJV)

- *Holy* appears 94 times in the Leviticus record (KJV)
- *Unholy* appears only once in the Leviticus record (KJV)

In the setting for the Israelites, *clean* and *unclean* had meaning beyond the idea of sanitary and dirty. A person who was declared clean was prepared for daily life and worship. An unclean person had conditions that limited him from daily life among the people and from the place of worship. An unclean person could usually become clean by following the directives of the priest.

B. Instructions about Food (11:1-47)

God's prescribed foods for Israel provided them with a healthy diet, protected them from sickness, and made them distinct from idolatrous cultures. This chapter names animals and birds that could be eaten as "clean" and those that must not be eaten as "unclean." All the reasons for not eating the unclean meats are not specified. Though God forbade them to eat some meat, He gave them plenty of other meat to sustain them.

Leviticus 11:44 identifies God's purpose in giving detailed instructions and requirements about clean and unclean. God wanted His people to be clean and holy so that they would manifest His holiness. The distinctive food stipulations separated them from idolatrous people who had no restrictions. Verse 44 states the reason for the restrictions of this chapter: "For I am the LORD your God."

"For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (11:44).

After this verse, the phrase "I am the LORD your God" is mentioned about fifty more times in Leviticus, along with the phrase "I am holy." God intended for His holiness to carry over into their everyday lives. Their acceptance of God's rules for outward ceremonial cleanness prepared their hearts for inward holiness. An understanding of this theme of holiness throughout Leviticus gives clarity and meaning to the difficult details.

Note that Deuteronomy 14:3-20 is a duplication, almost word for word, of Leviticus 11:3-23. Thus, the younger generation received the same instructions that the older generation had heard at Mount Sinai.

The person who reads about these dietary laws might ask: "Am I required to follow these laws today?" The answer of no is found in the words of Jesus in Mark 7:14-23 where Jesus declared all foods clean. His teaching in this passage focused on holiness of the heart under the New Covenant through Jesus Christ. To nonbelievers, the Spirit-filled person's commitment to holiness may seem as odd as the dietary laws of the old

covenant. Yet serving God according to biblical commands seems right and good to the person committed to God's holiness.

C. Instructions about Childbirth (12:1-8)

The Lord gave Moses special instructions for women following childbirth. He gave special precautions and ceremonies for the physical and spiritual welfare of the mother and child. After giving birth, the mother was to stay at home and not go to the Tabernacle for a stipulated time: thirty-three days for a boy or sixty-six days for a girl. These days gave the mother time to care for the newborn and bond to the child and to fulfill her time of purification after childbirth. The regulations regarding uncleanness referred to the mother's afterbirth, not the child. After her days of "purification" (12:6-8), the mother went to the Tabernacle with her sin offering. The priest then made an atonement for her (12:8).

This passage does not teach that childbirth is dirty (12:1-3) because a sacrifice is commanded (12:6-8) as some have taught. Neither does it suggest that a girl is of less value than a boy is (12:3-5).

D. Instructions about Diseases, Mildew, and Uncleanness (13:1-14:57)

Chapter 13 gives regulations about providing health protection for the Israelite community from infectious skin diseases. The skin conditions described indicate that various skin problems existed ("plague," in KJV). The term *leprosy* as found in the KJV does not necessarily refer to the serious contagious disease that required isolation (13:2-4).

The priests were responsible for looking at the skin condition and determining what precaution should be taken (13:1-37). Until the priest could diagnose a skin condition as temporary or healed, the person was "unclean" and subjected to repeated observation by the priest. While under observation, the afflicted person could not move freely among the people. The priests found many of the conditions were to be minor temporary conditions. Once the priest pronounced a person "clean," he could enter the place of worship. Only the serious conditions resulted in the afflicted person being isolated from the Israelite community (13:45-46). These commands served to protect the Israelites from major epidemics, not to identify individuals as "unclean" and therefore to be expelled from the community.

Mildew in clothing ("plague of leprosy," 13:47) and leather goods also came under careful observation and regulations (13:47-59). If washing could not stop the mildew, it had to be destroyed. Leviticus 14:33-57 gives similar laws for houses with spreading mildew, along with measures for cleansing the mildew from a dwelling.

E. Restoration

Leviticus 14 explains the cleansing rituals required for a healed person to be accepted back into community life. The person who recovered from her problem first went through a ritual outside the camp (14:1-7) so that she could reenter the Israelite community (14:8-9). Next she took her sacrifice to the Tabernacle where she was anointed by the priest (14:10-32). The provisions for restoration show that God was interested in the people being healed and restored to their family and community life.

F. Instructions for Personal Care and Cleanliness (15:1-33)

Chapter 15 speaks about bodily discharges that cause “uncleanness.” It mentions five types of discharges that could make a person unclean and anyone in close contact with the person unclean. Modern medicine supports this chapter’s idea that diseases can be spread through body fluids (*Leviticus/Numbers, Shepherd’s Notes*, 32).

These instructions show the importance of a person becoming ceremonially clean to approach holy things. God required purity to come before Him. Natural discharges required no sacrifice, only certain rituals and time, to be considered clean (15:16-24). Other discharges resulting from some type of disease involved bringing a sin and a burnt offering after the priest pronounced the person cured (15:2-15, 25-30). These commands reveal God’s concern and requirement for the personal health and purity of His people (15:31-32).

II. The Day of Atonement and the Blood (16:1-17:16)

A. The Day of Atonement – The Key to Leviticus (16:1-28)

The Day of Atonement, introduced in Leviticus 16, presents the key to the message of Leviticus. This chapter describes Israel’s need for forgiveness, which was met by the presence of God’s mercy and holiness. Additional references to the Day of Atonement are in the following passages: Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 23:26-32; Numbers 29:7-11; Hebrews 9:1-28.

The Day of Atonement was to be observed annually (16:34; Exodus 30:10) on the tenth day of the seventh month (16:29). Throughout the centuries, Jewish people have observed this day as their most solemn holy day. They call it Yom Kippur and observed it as a day of fasting. Jewish people often spend the day in the synagogue praying for forgiveness of sins. A reading of the Book of Jonah reminds the Jewish people of God’s forgiveness and mercy (*Rose Guide to the Tabernacle*, 113).

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to make atonement through offerings (sacrifices) for himself and for all Israelites. The Hebrew term for *atone* means “to cover.” On this special Day of Atonement, any and all sins of the people could be forgiven.

B. Day of Atonement Instructions (16:29-34)

The account opens with a warning to Aaron about the sacredness of the Most Holy Place and the instruction that only the high priest could enter this place and only on this one day of the year (16:2).

Next, the Lord through Moses told Aaron what offerings to bring for himself into the Tabernacle and to wash and put on linen garments, different from his usual high priest garments (16:3-4). Then his instructions were to take two young goats and a ram from the people for their offerings (16:5). Before offering the goats for the people, Aaron was to first offer his sin offering of a bull to make atonement for himself and his family (16:6). Then he was to take the goats from the congregation and present them to the Lord at the door of the Tabernacle (16:7). He sacrificed one goat as a sin offering for the people and kept the other one alive and sent it into the wilderness as a scapegoat (16:8-10). Next, Moses instructed Aaron to kill the bullock for his sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household.

With the blood from the sin offering, Aaron was to enter the Most Holy Place with a censer of burning coals from the altar and fragrant incense. The smoke would cover the Mercy Seat (“atonement cover,” NIV) above the Testimony. Aaron was to take his finger and sprinkle the blood on the front of the Mercy Seat and seven times before the Mercy Seat (16:11-14).

After making atonement for himself and his household, Aaron was to kill the goat and sprinkle its blood on the Mercy Seat in the same way as a sin offering for the people (16:15). In this manner, their sins were forgiven. Also, this ritual cleansed the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (16:16). In addition, Aaron was to atone for the altar by sprinkling the bull and goat’s blood on the horns of the altar (16:18-19).

Finally, and of great significance, Aaron was to place his hands on the live goat’s head, transferring the people’s sins to the animal. Then this goat was led away into the wilderness. This signified the removal of all the Israelites’ sins (16:20-22). This “sin offering” depicts Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice for the removal or remittance of sin.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Corinthians 5:21).

On completing the sin offerings, Aaron was to go into the Tabernacle and take off the linen garments and leave them there. While in the Holy Place, he was to bathe and put on his regular priestly robes. When he came out, he was to offer the burnt sacrifices for himself and for the people.

Careful preparation was to be made for the Day of Atonement. The day was to be a day of rest (a Sabbath) and fasting (16:31). The instructions for this day stressed that it was to be a lasting ordinance to be continued by the priests who succeeded Aaron. The instructions conclude with a final emphasis:

“And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses” (16:34).

The sacrifices in Leviticus applied until Calvary when Christ gave Himself a sacrifice as a final atonement for sin. The death of Jesus combined all the Levitical offerings into one. What a marvelous truth to know! (See Hebrews 9:28; 10:1-22.)

C. Significance of Offerings and of the Blood for Atonement (17:1-16)

Offerings, God's Way Only!

The Tabernacle stood at the center of God's plan. Leviticus 17:1-9 emphasizes that all offerings must be brought to the door of the Tabernacle according to that “which the LORD hath commanded” (17:2). Any unauthorized offering or place could result in a person being “cut off from among his people” (17:4, 9). This passage indicates that some people had been sacrificing outside the camp (17:3-4). Others had brought their offerings to idols (17:7). Such practices indicate that some were mixing pagan practices with God's plan. Bringing offerings to the Tabernacle protected the Israelites from reverting to the practices of pagan religion.

The Sacredness of the Blood

The thought of bloody sacrifices may be difficult to understand apart from the Bible's comments about blood. When Cain killed Abel, God asked, “What have you done?” Then he added, “Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground” (Genesis 4:10, NIV). After the Flood, God restricted Noah from eating or drinking the blood of animals (“lifeblood,” Genesis 9:4, NIV). Leviticus 17:11-12 provides this explanation:

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of

Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood (17:11-12).

Atonement by the Blood

Leviticus 17:11 clearly states that “blood” provides “atonement.” Thus, blood was to be set apart from the offerings to provide for a person’s reconciliation with God. “For the life of the flesh is in the blood” describes the life-sustaining element of the blood (17:11). Blood represents the essence of life. The shedding of blood represents death. Since the blood contains life, it is sacred to God. The shed blood of the sacrifices substituted for the sinner who was condemned to death.

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20a).

“And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him” (Numbers 15:28).

The Israelite had to accept God’s blood plan in order for his sins to be covered. God provided the plan, giving each person the provision of bloody sacrifices for forgiveness and fellowship with Him. To reject the bloody sacrifices (offerings) meant spiritual death for an Israelite.

In the New Testament, the shed blood of Jesus Christ purchases our salvation. We are invited to turn to Him for cleansing from sin. (See I John 1:7.)

Avoiding Heathen Practices

Leviticus 17:13-16 gives rules for hunting that include the command of not eating blood. This prohibition warned the Israelites against following heathen customs. “It was customary with heathen hunters, when they killed any game, to pour out the blood as an offering to the god of the hunt” (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 155). God desired for the daily lifestyle of the Israelites to be established according to His pattern of worship and atonement for sin.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What is the meaning of *clean* and *unclean* as revealed in these chapters of Leviticus?
2. How were the food stipulations mentioned in chapter 11 beneficial to the Israelites?

3. What reason is stated in Leviticus 11:44 for the distinctive and restrictive food stipulations for the Israelites?
4. What benefits can be seen in the instructions that a woman was to follow after giving birth to child?
5. How were the instructions mentioned in chapters 13-14 beneficial to the Israelite community?
6. What was the purpose of the Day of Atonement and how often was it observed?
7. What is the meaning of *atone*?
8. How did the high priest officiate in making atonement for the people?
9. How do the Jewish people still observe the Day of Atonement and by what name is this day known among the Jews?
10. What verses in Leviticus explain the significance of the blood in making atonement for sins?

Assignment

1. Read Leviticus 18-27.
2. Memorize Leviticus 20:7-8.

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 12

Israel's Walk with God— Living as a Holy People (Part I)

Leviticus 18-22 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Leviticus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

God desires holiness for His people, and He provides the way to holiness and the rules and guidelines for walking in holiness.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Name and define the five kinds of sinful sexual relationships that Leviticus 18 describes.
2. List ten or more of the twenty-four laws for holy living that Moses gave to Israel in Leviticus 19.
3. Recall the standards that God designed for the priests and the manner in which they were to offer the sacrifices brought by the people.

Lesson Outline

- I. Holy People: Living by God's Standards (18:1-20:27)
 - A. Sinful (Unholy) Sexual Relationships (18:1-30)
 - B. Various Laws for Living Holy (19:1-37)
 - C. Punishments and Warnings for Unholy Conduct (20:1-27)

- II. Holy Priests: Serving by God's Rules (21:1-22:33)
 - A. Holy Standards for the Priests (21:1-22:16)
 - B. Offering Sacrifices by God's Rules (22:17-33)

Key Verse

Be holy because you are His and He has separated you from the world.

“And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine” (Leviticus 20:24).

Lesson Contents

I. Holy People: Living by God's Standards (18:1-20:27)

With the sacrificial system in place, the Israelites had access to God and atonement for their sins. Now the Lord spoke through Moses giving specific instructions about how a forgiven people must live to please a holy God.

A. Sinful (Unholy) Sexual Relationships (18:1-30)

Before listing forbidden behavior, the Lord told Moses to give the Israelites this word: “I am the LORD your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices” (18:2-3, NIV).

Repeating, “I am the LORD your God,” the Lord then emphasized that Israel must be careful to follow His rules. With obedience came God's promise of life (18:4-5). A close look at the listed items reveals God's standard for a moral society, which was very different from the idolatrous conduct of Egypt and Canaan. The list identifies various types of prohibited behavior or sinful acts, particularly unholy sexual acts.

1. Forbidden Sexual Relationships

Verse 6 states that an Israelite must not have sexual relations (“uncover nakedness” as in KJV) with a “close relative” (NIV). Verses 7-19 define more specifically what is meant by a “close relative” or “near of kin” (KJV). These verses emphasize God's prohibition of sexual abuse. Incest is included in this list of sexual prohibitions, specifying that incest is sinful and detestable to God.

2. Adultery

Verse 20 is a reminder of the seventh commandment to not commit adultery. Without question, adultery destroys relationships and fractures family life. God forbade adultery, desiring for His people to have harmony in the family.

3. Forbidden Worship

Verse 21 forbids the Israelites to give their children in sacrifice to Molech, reminding them that God is their Lord. Looking into Israel's future, God knew that they would be tempted to sacrifice their children in this manner. Punishment for this sin is stipulated in Leviticus 20:2-4. Accounts of such forbidden sacrifice are mentioned later in Israel's history (I Kings 11:7; II Kings 23:10, Jeremiah 32:35).

4. Homosexuality

Verse 22 forbids homosexuality, describing it as "an abomination" ("detestable," NIV). This type of behavior destroys the family unit of man and woman, which God instituted (Genesis 2:18-24). The New Testament likewise denounces homosexuality as a sinful behavior (Romans 1:18-32).

5. Bestiality

Verse 23 forbids sexual relationships with an animal, describing such behavior as "confusion" ("perversion," NIV). Egyptian and other ancient religions included such practices. Bestiality in a culture indicates that sexuality has become terribly depraved from God's purpose.

This passage concludes with a strong warning that Israel must not defile themselves with any of these sinful actions (18:24-28). God explained that He would drive the Canaanites out of the land because of their corrupted behavior. Such behavior "defiled the land" and thus it would "vomit out her inhabitants" (18:25). In driving out the corrupt Canaanites and giving the land to Israel, God warned Israel not to repeat such abominations.

B. Various Laws for Living Holy (19:1-37)

Chapter 19 mentions various life situations, teaching the Israelites about behavior pleasing to God. God again admonished Israel to be holy. God's holiness is cited as the reason for His laws (19:2). Fifteen times in this chapter, the Israelites are reminded of the Lord's preeminence among them with these words: "I am the LORD your God" or "I am the LORD."

This passage identifies God's commands for Israel's holy living. These moral principles for holy living apply to any culture or generation. A study of this list provides spiritual guidance for the New Testament Christian.

- 1) Fear ("respect," NIV) your father and mother (19:3a).
- 2) Keep the Sabbaths (19:3b).
- 3) Do not turn to idols (19:4).
- 4) Willingly bring your fellowship (peace) offering (19:5-8)
- 5) Leave some harvest for the poor (19:9-10).
- 6) Do not steal, lie, deceive, swear falsely, defraud, or withhold wages (19:11-13).
- 7) Do not curse the deaf or cause the blind to stumble (19:14).
- 8) Do not pervert justice by partiality or favoritism (19:15).
- 9) Do not spread slander (19:16).
- 10) Do not endanger your neighbor's life (19:17)
- 11) Do not hate your brother (19:17).
- 12) Do not seek revenge or hold a grudge. Love your neighbor as yourself (19:18). Note: This command is quoted often in the New Testament.
- 13) Keep God's decrees (19:19). The three unusual prohibitions listed in this verse "may have been characteristic of some idolatrous practices" (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 157).
- 14) Punishment and offerings for immorality (19:20-22).
- 15) Withhold the harvest from trees for three years on entry to the land (19:23-25).
- 16) Do not practice divination or sorcery (19:26). These were forbidden forms of witchcraft that included demonic activity. (See Deuteronomy 18:9-12).
- 17) Verses 27-28 prohibit pagan practices that were likely associated with Egyptian idolatry. "Tattoos also were connected to names of idols, and were permanent signs of apostasy" (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 157).
- 18) Do not degrade your daughter with prostitution (19:29).
- 19) Observe the Sabbaths and have reverence for the sanctuary (19:30).
- 20) Shun "familiar spirits" and "wizards" (19:31). Such activity involved demonic spirits in seeking to communicate with the dead.
- 21) Rise up and honor the elderly and fear God (19:32).
- 22) Show kindness and love to the alien among you (19:33-34).
- 23) Use honest standards in measuring and weighing (19:35-36).
- 24) Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them (19:37).

C. Punishments and Warnings for Unholy Conduct (20:1-27)

After identifying unholy behavior in Leviticus 18-19, the Lord gave Moses instructions about punishment for such sins. Chapter 20 emphasizes that sin cannot be left unpunished. Without consequences for sinful actions, the Israelite community could have quickly adapted to the sinful ways of the Canaanite culture.

The severity of the punishment revealed the seriousness of sinful behavior. Death was the stipulated punishment for sins such as offering a child sacrifice to Molech (20:1-5); witchcraft or being a medium or spiritist (20:6, 27); adultery (20:10); sexual abusers (20:11-12); practicing homosexuals (20:13), and sex with an animal (bestiality) (20:15-16). The punishment for other sins was dismissal from the community or doomed to be childless (20:17-21).

Such punishment may seem severe; however, God's design was to develop a nation of people not influenced by the gross depravity of the Canaanite culture. He instructed them: "You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you (20:23, NIV). He gave them strong commands about holy living:

"You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own" (20:26, NIV).

Paul exhorted Christians not to associate with those who claim to be Christian and yet participate in immoral, drunken, and other sinful behavior (I Corinthians 6:9-10) such as named in Leviticus. He further stated that those who practice such behavior will not inherit the kingdom of God. This is spiritual death. However, he made clear that such a sinful person can be washed, sanctified, and justified in Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 6:11b).

II. Holy Priests: Serving by God's Rules (21:1-22:33)

A. Holy Standards for the Priests (21:1-22:16)

As the spiritual leaders in the Israelite community, the priests had to be very knowledgeable of God's rules for themselves as well as the people. The priestly instructions of Leviticus 21-22 complement those named in Leviticus 1-10.

These chapters cover various standards for priests:

- 1) Standards pertaining to death and mourning (21:1-4).
- 2) Standards about beard and hair during mourning (21:5-6).
- 3) Marriage only to a virgin (21:7; 13-15).
- 4) High priest's anointing, garments, and separation (21:10-12).
- 5) Disabled people not qualified as priests (21:16-24). The priestly duties involved hard work of lifting, cutting, and carrying. Though barred from priestly duties, they were not expelled from the priestly tribe.
- 6) Proper respect in handling the sacred offerings (22:1-9).
- 7) Rules for eating the priests' portions of the sacred offerings (22:10-16).

B. Offering Sacrifices by God's Rules (22:17-31)

These verses reemphasize the importance of bringing offerings that are acceptable, according to God's standards. In this passage Moses spoke to Aaron and his sons, reminding them that only unblemished animals could be brought for sacrifice. The priests' responsibility was to accept only those animals designated by God for each type of offering. Anything less than God's standards was unacceptable. An Israelite had to willingly bring an acceptable offering to receive forgiveness and have fellowship with God (22:29).

God's love for Israel defined their privileges and their boundaries. He implored Israel to keep His commandments, to follow Him, and not profane His name (22:31-32). Their obedience to Him linked them to their holy God, the one who delivered them from Egypt. This section concludes with the oft-repeated statement of God to Moses: "I am the LORD."

Questions for Lesson Review

1. In chapters 18-22, what key word emphasizes God's character and what He desires His people to be? How many times does this word appear in the Book of Leviticus? (See lesson 8.)
2. With what group of people of the opposite sex was Israel forbidden to have sexual relations? (18:6).
3. Make a list of the specific people that are named as those with whom an Israelite must not have sexual relations (18:7-19).
4. What did Moses mean by commanding them not to allow their seed to "pass through the fire of Molech" and how would this apply to their future (18:21, 26-30)?
5. What did God tell Moses about an Israelite having sex with someone of the same gender (18:22)?
6. What reason did God give Moses for instructing all Israelites that they should be holy (19:2)?
7. What important lessons can be learned in a study of the punishments that Moses described for the Israelites who practiced sinful behavior (chapter 20)?
8. Name six of the physical defects that prohibited a Levite from serving as a priest (21:16-23)?
9. Considering the importance of the priest's role, why do you think a person with physical disabilities would be restricted from the priesthood?
10. What reminder did God give to Moses and Aaron about the type of offerings that they could accept for sacrifice (22:17-31)?

Assignment

1. Read Leviticus 23-27.
2. List ten verses of Scripture that include the phrase, "I am the Lord," and write the related item mentioned with this phrase as follows:
19:30 - I am the Lord - Keep my sabbaths; reverence my sanctuary
25:17 - I am the Lord - Don't oppress one another; fear God

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 13

Israel's Walk with God— Living as a Holy People (Part II)

Leviticus 23-27 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Leviticus.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

God desired for the Israelites to be holy and provided the way of holiness as described in the Leviticus record. God's provision for holiness under the New Covenant was fulfilled in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and in the precepts of holy living given in the New Testament.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Describe the seven holy feasts or festivals the Israelites observed annually.
2. Explain the New Testament meaning and significance of these Old Testament observances.
3. State the purposes of the Sabbath Year and Year of Jubilee.
4. Discuss Moses' teaching about the rewards of obedience and the keeping of vows.

Lesson Outline (Continued from Lesson 12)

- III. Holy Seasons:** Observing God's Appointed Feasts/Festivals (23:1-25:55)
 - A. Seven Holy Feasts/Festivals (23:1-44)
 - B. The lamp oil and bread for the Holy Place (24:1-9)
 - C. Punishments for Unholy Conduct: Blasphemy and Murder (24:10-23)
 - D. The Sabbath Year and Year of Jubilee (25:1-55)

- IV. Holy Vows:** Responding to the Holy God (26:1-27:34)
 - A. Receiving Reward or Punishment from the Holy God (26:1-48)
 - B. Keeping Vows to the Holy God (27:1-34)

Key Verse

Chapter 23 describes the Holy Seasons provided for Israel to have fellowship with the Lord God.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts” (23:2).

Lesson Content

III. Holy Seasons: Observing God's Appointed Feasts (23:1-25:55)

A. Seven Holy Feasts/Religious Festivals (23:1-44)

Leviticus describes seven feasts (festivals) that God designed for Israel. The Lord told Moses to inform Israel about these special days.

“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies’” (Leviticus 23:2, NIV).

Purpose

These seven feasts (festivals) served as reminders to the people of how God delivered them from bondage and provided for their needs. They were sacred days during which the Israelites set aside their normal routine to reflect on God's blessings and worship Him in a specified manner. These “holy convocations” (KJV) or “sacred assemblies” (NIV) were introduced with a reminder of the “sabbath” (23:3) that the Israelites were commanded to keep (Exodus 20:8-11).

1. The Passover (23:4-5; Exodus 12:1-11; Numbers 9:1-14; 28:16; Deuteronomy 16:1-8)

God instituted the Passover as a time for Israel to remember their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. In this season the people were to reflect on how God passed by their homes in Egypt where the blood had been applied, sparing

their firstborn sons from the death plague (Exodus 12). The time of this feast marked the beginning of each new year for the Israelites. The set time for the feast was on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month (14 Nisan – March or April). This feast was to be kept as a memorial for all generations (Exodus 12:14).

The New Testament observance of the Lord's Supper serves in a similar way for Christians as they remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper with His disciples when He was together with them eating the Passover meal (Luke 22:14-20). He associated the unleavened bread with His body and the fruit of the vine with His shed blood. Thus, Jesus linked the Old Testament types with His sacrificial death at Calvary. (See Hebrews 9:20-28.)

2. Feast of Unleavened Bread (23:6-8; Exodus 12:15-20; 23:15; 34:18:20; Numbers 28:17-25; Deuteronomy 16:3-8)

This feast began on the fifteenth day of the second month, one day after the Passover observance. This feast commemorated the Israelites' hurried departure from Egypt and lasted for seven days (23:15-21). They made their bread without leaven (yeast) during the feast to represent how God led them out of Egypt in haste. On the first day they did no work. Each day they presented an offering by fire to the Lord.

"Today the Feast of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits have all been incorporated into the celebration of Passover. Passover is celebrated for eight days" (*Rose Guide to the Tabernacle*, 104). (See Luke 22:7.)

Deuteronomy 16:16 identifies this Feast of Unleavened Bread as one of the three times each year when all the Israelite males were required to "appear before the Lord" at the Tabernacle. The other two feasts are Feast of Weeks and Feast of Tabernacles.

3. Firstfruits (23:9-14; Exodus 23:16, 19; Numbers 28:26-31)

This celebration reminded Israel that God was their provider. They celebrated on 16 Nisan, the next day after the first day of Unleavened Bread. They offered the first sheaf of the harvest to the Lord in thanksgiving and dedication of the harvest to the Lord. Since the spring harvest in the land of Canaan would have been the barley harvest, the firstfruits would have been a sheaf of barley. Burnt, grain, and drink offerings (23:12-13) accompanied the grain sheaf.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest” (23:10).

4. **Feast of Weeks (23:15-22; Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:9-12)**

The Feast of Weeks is also called the Feast of the Harvest (Exodus 23:16) or Latter Firstfruits. This festival marked the completion of events that began with the Passover. The offering of the Feast of Weeks was to be brought seven Sabbaths and one day or fifty days after the Passover. (See Leviticus 23:16.)

On the fiftieth day the Israelites were to bring an offering of “new grain” from the harvest. In addition, they were to bring a burnt offering, sin offering, and peace (fellowship) offering. These offerings expressed the Israelites’ thankfulness and joy. This feast also commemorated the giving of the Law at Sinai. “It is believed that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments at this time” (*Rose Guide to the Tabernacle*, 108).

Significance of the Feast of Weeks in the New Testament – In the New Testament this feast is referred to as Pentecost, which means “fifty” in Greek (Acts 2:1; 20:16; I Corinthians 16:8). It is notable that God poured out His Spirit at the time of the Feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the celebration of Passover. After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of His Father (Luke 24:49). On the Day of Pentecost (fifty days after Passover), the disciples were gathered in an upper room in one accord. As they waited, the Spirit came with the sound of a rushing wind and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1-4).

God sealed His Covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai seven weeks after Israel’s miraculous deliverance from Egypt after the Passover. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place fifty days after the death of Christ. The shed blood of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of His Spirit sealed the New Covenant. (Read II Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13.)

5. **Feast of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:23-25)**

The Feast of Trumpets falls on the first day of the seventh month (1 Tishri-September or October). This “holy convocation” (“sacred assembly,” NIV) was announced with trumpet blasts and the people were instructed to rest and present an “offering made by fire unto the Lord.” The Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement began the fall festivals. This week-long Feast of

Trumpets reminded the Israelites that the Day of Atonement was near. Nine days after this feast began, the Day of Atonement took place (23:27).

6. Day of Atonement (23:26-32)

Lesson 11 gave the details of the Day of Atonement. As noted earlier, the high priest made atonement for the sins of the people on this day, which is regarded as the most solemn of Jewish holy days.

New Testament Significance – When Jesus died on the cross, providing atonement through His shed blood, the thick veil in the Temple ripped from top to bottom. Through His death as high priest (Hebrews 9:11), He provided entrance into the Most Holy Place. By His own blood, He obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). Salvation under the New Covenant comes through acceptance of Jesus as the final atonement for sin as revealed in the gospel (Hebrews 9:26-28; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 2:36-38). Before Calvary, the Day of Atonement was the most important day for the Israelites in seeking God's forgiveness.

7. Feast of Tabernacles (23:33-44; Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:13-16)

Five days after the Day of Atonement (15-21 Tishri-September or October), the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. This week-long festival, at the end of the harvest season (Deuteronomy 16:13), served as a reminder of Israel's forty years in the wilderness. This festival called Israel to remember God's faithful provision and protection on their journey to the Promised Land (23:43). During the seven days of this festival, the Israelites lived in temporary structures or booths as a reminder of their wilderness days. *Tabernacles* refers to the booths in which they lived.

Along with the Passover and Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Tabernacles was one of the three feasts when the male Israelites had to "appear before the Lord," making a pilgrimage to the Tabernacle (and later to the Temple). (See Deuteronomy 16:16.)

Stipulations for the Feast of Tabernacles

- 1) The first day was a sacred assembly with no work (Leviticus 23:35).
- 2) Each day they were to "offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD" (23:36)
- 3) The eighth day was to be a sacred assembly with an offering and no work (23:36).

- 4) They had to gather specific plants to cover their booths (23:40).
- 5) They had to live in booths (23:42).
- 6) During the seven days they were to rejoice before the Lord (23:40; Deuteronomy 16:13-14).

The Jews continue to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, which they call Sukkot. Each household builds a booth in the yard or house balcony for this week. They decorate the booth with palm branches and other foliage. They often eat one meal a day in the booth (sukkah). They observe this week in commitment to Leviticus 23:42-43.

“All native-born Israelites are to live in booths so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt, I am the LORD your God” (23:42-43, NIV).

B. The Lamp Oil and Bread for the Holy Place (24:1-9)

Aaron, as high priest, was responsible for keeping the lamps trimmed and burning continually in the Holy Place. The people provided clear olive oil. Likewise, he was to see that the twelve loaves of bread were prepared and placed each Sabbath on the golden table, along with incense. The incense burned on the altar of incense was a memorial. Aaron and his sons were to eat the bread in the Holy Place.

C. Punishments for Unholy Conduct: Blasphemy and Murder (24:10-23)

Once again the instructions for the Tabernacle worship are interrupted with an account of rebellious behavior. (Recall Leviticus 10.) A young man of mixed blood (an Israelite mother and Egyptian father) fought with an Israelite and then blasphemed the “Name” with a curse (24:11). As Israel’s leader, Moses sought to know “the will of the LORD” regarding discipline in this sensitive case. God answered Moses with instructions that the blasphemer must be stoned. God made clear that blasphemy against “the Name” must be met with severe punishment for anyone, including a native-born or alien.

God also confirmed to Moses at this time that an act of murder or injury of another person, whether by a native-born or alien, must be punished according to the principle of “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth.” The punishment should fit the crime and not go beyond it. The emphasis in this passage focuses on proper punishment without partiality.

D. The Sabbath Year and Year of Jubilee (25:1-55)

The Sabbath Year (25:1-7) provided for restoration of the land that God gave to Israel. The people were not to plant during the seventh year, thus giving the land rest. This rest restored nutrients to the soil, which provided for healthier harvests in the other six years. Whatever grew naturally provided food during this year (15:5-7).

The Year of Jubilee (25:8-55) was the fiftieth year (25:8-11). The Israelites celebrated this year as a Sabbath year with the land at rest. The main purpose of the Year of Jubilee was to allow an Israelite to regain his property that he had lost through hardship in previous years (25:13). This chapter gives specific guidelines about how a man could sell his property and then later redeem it. The chapter also gives instructions about helping one's fellow Israelite who became poor. For example, loans had to be given without interest and food sold to the poor man at no profit (25:35-37). The guidelines about property and slaves stipulated that a person could not rule over his fellow Israelites ruthlessly (25:46). The Year of Jubilee provided redemption of property for those who could not redeem lost property through earlier means (25:54).

IV. Holy Vows: Responding to the Holy God (Leviticus 26:1-27:34)

A. Receiving Reward or Punishment from the Holy God (26:1-46)

Reward – Leviticus 26:1-13 promised care and blessing for the Israelites according to their obedience to God's commandments. He prefaced His promises with a reminder to shun idolatry, keep His Sabbaths, reverence the sanctuary, and obey His commandments (26:1-3). God promised rain and abundant crops (26:4-5). Additionally, God assured them of peace and protection from savage beasts and enemies (26:6-8). With a reminder that He had broken their yoke of bondage and brought them out of Egypt, He promised to dwell among them.

God's word to Israel speaks yet today to those who choose to follow Him in obedience to His Word: "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people" (26:12).

Punishment – Leviticus 26:14-46 promised severe punishment for those who disregarded God's laws and violated His covenant. The description of the physical illnesses, crop failures, and multiplied afflictions is vivid and horrible. He pleaded with Israel to be an obedient people. However, He assured them that if they remained hostile toward Him and refused to listen, He would multiply their afflictions seven times (26:18, 21, 23-24, 27-28).

This warning to Israel of judgment for sin contains a prophetic aspect describing the time when they would be removed from the Promised Land and taken into Babylonian captivity for their failure to obey God (26:27-45; II Chronicles 36:17-21). Yet it ends with a description of the compassionate God who will remember Israel because of the covenant He made with their ancestors whom He brought out of Egypt (26:45).

B. Keeping Vows to the Holy God (27:1-34)

This closing chapter of Leviticus speaks about vows or promises in dedicating one's person, income, or things to the Lord's work. An Israelite could dedicate himself or someone to the Lord (27:1-8). An Israelite could dedicate an animal (27:9-13). An Israelite could dedicate his house or land (27:14-25). This passage indicates that money could be given in place of the actual person, animal, or land. A value was determined for each contribution, and the giver could not take back his gift without paying an additional twenty percent. God taught the Israelites when they made a vow, they had to faithfully keep that vow. An Israelite could not give a gift of something that already belonged to God, such as a firstborn animal or tithe (27:26-33).

Verses 30-33 speak about "a tithe of everything from the land" that belongs to the Lord. This is the only mention of the tithe, which means ten percent in the Book of Leviticus.

Numbers 18:21-32 provides further instruction about the tithe. The tithe was given to the Levites for their Tabernacle service. As a people dependent on the land for sustenance, the Israelites' increase was chiefly from crops and increase of their herds and flocks.

Leviticus for Today

Christians can learn much from Leviticus, which at first seems hard to understand. Many practical lessons in holy living can be gleaned from the instructions given to the Israelites about God's principles of righteousness. Of prime significance is the typology found in Leviticus. Through an understanding of the offerings and the Day of Atonement, the Christian gains a greater appreciation for the sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary. As the book moves to its conclusion, the necessity and benefit of obedience to God's commands should impact the Christian. The Book of Leviticus emphasizes that God's holy provisions are accompanied by God's holy commandments.

"For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (11:44).

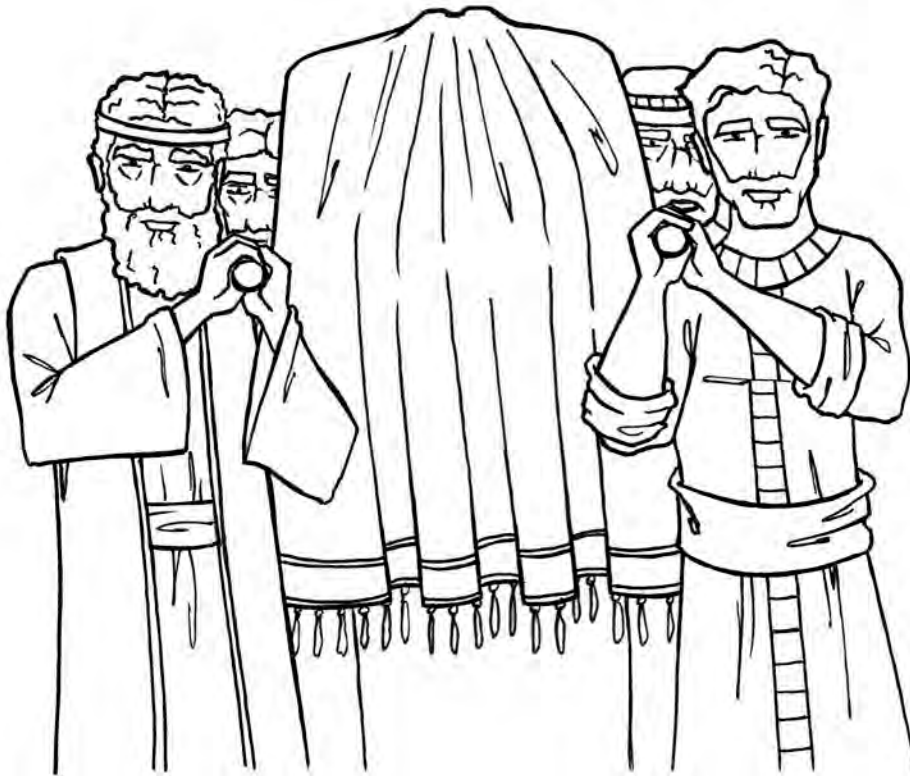
Questions for Lesson Review

1. What was the purpose of the seven yearly feasts (festivals) celebrated by Israel?
2. What New Testament observance did Jesus initiate when He ate the Passover meal with His disciples?
3. At the time of what three annual feasts were the Israelite males required to “appear before the Lord” at the Tabernacle?
4. What did the Feast of Unleavened Bread commemorate and when was it celebrated?
5. What reminder did the celebration of the firstfruits give to Israel?
6. What is the significance the Feast of Weeks in the New Testament?
7. What reminder did the week-long Feast of Trumpets give to Israel?
8. What is the New Testament significance of the Day of Atonement?
9. What did the Israelites commemorate in their observance of the Feast of Tabernacles and what did they do during this week?
10. What is the Feast of Tabernacles called as it is now celebrated by the Jews?
11. How were the lamps kept burning and the bread provided in the Tabernacle?
12. How did Moses deal with the man who blasphemed the Name of the Lord and cursed, and what lesson is learned from this incident (24:10-16)?
13. What was Israel ordered to do concerning their land every seventh year and why (25:1-7)?
14. Describe the purpose of the Year of Jubilee (25:8-17).
15. How was an Israelite to treat a poor Israelite whom he had purchased to work for him (25:35-43)?
16. List six or more of the problems that Israel would face if they failed to keep God's commandments (26:14-38).

Assignments

1. Read Numbers 1-10:10.
2. Write a paragraph explaining how the message of Leviticus applies to your walk with God.

Personal Study Notes



NUMBERS

THE BIG PICTURE OF THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

The story of Numbers begins when the Israelites had been camped near Mount Sinai for more than one year where they received God's laws. The book opens with the record of the census (numbering) that Moses took of the Israelites according to the Lord's command in preparation for their onward travel to the Promised Land. The book name comes from this census.

At Mount Sinai 1-10:10	From Sinai to Kadesh 10:11-14	In the Wilderness 15-19	From Kadesh to Moab 20-36
3 Weeks	2 Months	About 38 Years	A Few Months
Preparing for the Journey	Traveling and Rebelling	Wandering in the Wilderness	Onward to the Promised Land Entry
1-4 Census and Order of Tribes	11-12 Murmurings	"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise" (14:34).	20-21 Journey Renewed
5-6 People's Cleansing	13-14 Rebellion at Kadesh	15, 18, 19 Instructions	22-25 Balaam and Balak
7-10 Worship and Passover		16 Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram	26 Second Census
Guidance for travel 9:15-23		17 Budding of Aaron's rod	27-36 Final Preparations to Enter Canaan
		NOTE: Moses told only a few stories about Israel's many years of <i>wandering</i> in the wilderness because of their unbelief and rebellion.	

Lesson 14

Part I—The Big Picture of Numbers

Introduction (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Numbers.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

God gave the Israelites specific instructions about camping and marching as they traveled through difficult places on their way to the Promised Land. God's Word gives Christians clear directions for their spiritual journey in a world that opposes righteousness.

Introduction Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Write a summary of the key events of Numbers after studying the outline and the chart of the Book of Numbers.
2. Locate on a map the key places of the events of Numbers and recall the main events that happened at each of these places.

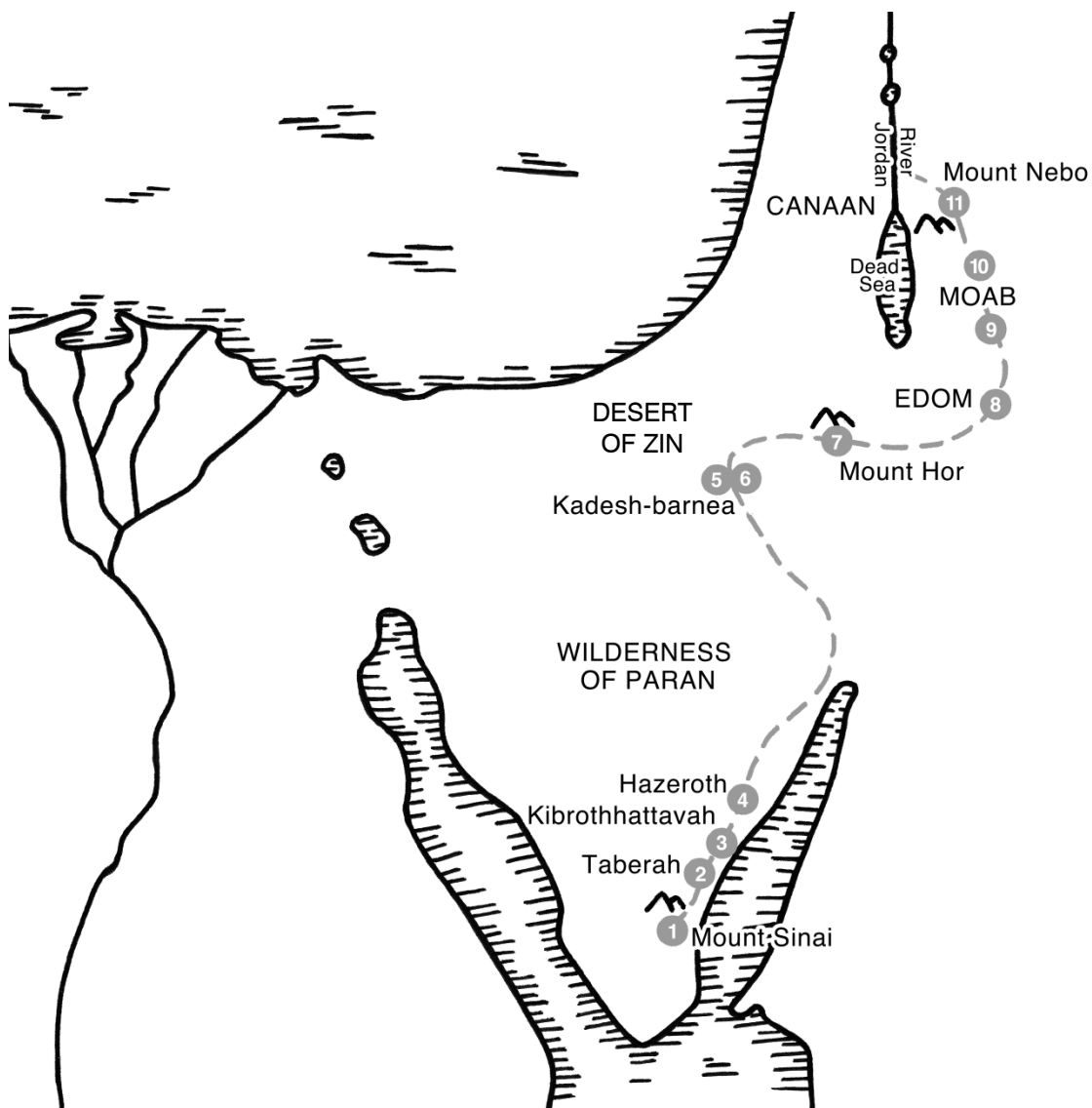
Numbers Outline

- I. Preparing for Travel to the Promised Land (1:1-10:10)
- II. Traveling and Rebelling (10:11-14:45) - Lesson 15
- III. Wandering in the Wilderness (15:1-19:22) - Lesson 16
- IV. Onward Travel to the Promised Land - The New Generation (20:1-21:35) - Lesson 16
- V. The Story of Balaam and Balak and Israel's Failure (22:1-25:18) - Lesson 17
- VI. Final Preparations to Enter Canaan (26:1-36:13) - Lesson 18

Key Verses

According to His plan, God directed His people to advance to the Promised Land after eleven months of training at Mount Sinai.

“And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran. And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses” (10:11-13).



From Mount Sinai to the Plains of Moab (Map shows possible locations.)

1. Mount Sinai - Israel's Year of Schooling (Exodus 19 - Numbers 10:10)
* Travel from Sinai into the wilderness of Paran (10:11, 33)
2. Taberah - Complaints and God's fire (11:1-3)
3. Kibrothhattavah - Lusting and supply of quail (11:4-34)
4. Hazeroth - Aaron and Miriam's complaint (11:35-12:15)
5. Kadesh-barnea in the wilderness of Paran - Spies sent, Israel's rebellion (12:16-14:45)
* Wilderness wanderings for over 38 years - Rebellion and murmurings (15:1-19:22)
6. Kadesh near the desert of Zin - Miriam's death; water from the rock (20:1-13)
7. From Kadesh to Mount Hor - Aaron's death (20:14-29)
8. Travel around Edom - Complaints and fiery serpents (21:4-9)
9. Travel to Plains of Moab - Defeat of Amorites and Bashan (21:21-35)
10. Plains of Moab - Prophecies of Balaam (22:1-25:18)
11. Top of Pisgah on Mount Nebo on Plains of Moab - Moses' death (Deut. 34)
Note: Numbers 33 lists 40 encampments, excluding Rameses and the Plains of Moab.

Key Places During the Events of Numbers:

- **Mount Sinai** – Israel had been camped in the wilderness of Sinai for eleven months (Exodus 19:1; Numbers 1:1) when the events of Numbers began. The book opens with the account of the first census of Israel at Mount Sinai. After the census, Moses gave the Israelites further instructions in preparing them to leave Mount Sinai.
- **Desert of Paran** – The Israelites departed from Mount Sinai and traveled northward into the wilderness of Paran (10:12). From this wilderness area Moses sent a leader from each of the tribes of Israel into Canaan to spy out the land (13:2). The spies returned with a negative report and the Israelites feared to enter Canaan (13:26-33). This place in the wilderness of Paran is identified as Kadesh (13:26). From Kadesh the Israelites wandered in the wilderness area for over thirty-eight years (14:26-34).
- **Kadesh** – As Israel's forty years of wilderness living drew to an end, they were again camped at Kadesh (20:1). Kadesh was located on the northern border of the wilderness of Paran (13:26) and on the southeast border of the desert of Zin (20:1). Miriam died at Kadesh (20:1). The people rebelled against Moses at Kadesh because of no water and Moses angrily struck the rock instead of speaking to it (20:7-13; 27:14). Though the record of the forty years of wandering is sparse, it appears that the Israelites spend many of their wilderness years in the area around and near Kadesh (20:16; 20:22; 33:36).
- **Edom and Mount Hor** – From Kadesh Moses sent messengers requesting permission to travel through Edom (20:14). When the king of Edom did not

grant permission, the Israelites traveled to Mount Hor (20:22) and then around Edom. Aaron died and was buried at Mount Hor (20:24-29). After leaving Mount Hor, the Israelites became discouraged and spoke against God and Moses and God sent fiery serpents among them (21:4-9).

- **Ammon** – As the Israelites traveled northward, they were attacked by the Amorite king, Sihon. Israel defeated the Amorites and claimed the territory stretching to the border of Ammon (21:21-32).
- **Bashan** – After their defeat of the Amorites, the Israelites fought against Og, the king of Bashan, and took possession of the territory of Bashan.
- **Plains of Moab** – Having gained possession of much of the land east of Canaan, the Israelites pitched their tents in the Plains of Moab. This area was near the Jordan River across from Jericho (22:1). The Moabites were descendants of Lot (Genesis 19:36-37).
- Deuteronomy 2:9 reveals why Israel would not have fought against Moab. However, Balak, the Moabite king, did not know Israel was forbidden to attack Moab. Numbers 22-26 tell the story of Balak, the Moabite king, who feared the Israelites because of their victories (22:3). The remaining events of Numbers and those of Deuteronomy take place on or near the Plains of Moab.

Part II—Preparing for Travel to the Promised Land

Numbers 1:1-10:10

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

As Moses prepared the Israelites for their travel to the Promised Land, He gave them strict guidelines for a lifestyle of purity that would be distinct from the nations they would meet. In a similar manner, God's Word gives the Christian guidelines for a lifestyle distinctively different from the world's way of life.

Lesson Objectives (Part II)

The student should be able to . . .

1. Draw a diagram showing the arrangement of the Israelite encampment and explain the reason for the census described in Numbers 1.
2. Describe the responsibilities assigned to the three groups of Levites.
3. Summarize the events described in chapters 5-9 that took place as Israel prepared to depart from Sinai and travel onward to the Promised Land.

Lesson Outline

- I. Preparing for Travel to the Promised Land (1:1-10:10)
 - A. A Census of Israel's Men (1:1-54)
 - B. Arrangement of Israel's Encampment (2:1-34)
 - C. Role of the Levites (3:1-4:49)
 - D. Spiritual Preparations (5:1-6:27)
 - E. The Tabernacle and the Passover (7:1-9:14)
 - F. Final Preparations for Leaving Sinai (9:15-10:10)

Key Verse

God placed Israel's spiritual leaders, the Levites, in the center as they traveled and camped on their journey to the Promised Land.

"Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards" (2:17).

Lesson Content

I. Preparing for Travel to the Promised Land (1:1-10:10)

These ten chapters tell the story of Israel's last twenty days at Mount Sinai. During these twenty days (three weeks), the Israelites received specific instructions from Moses and Aaron. This section summarizes the instructions and events concerning Israel's preparation to depart from Sinai.

A. Census of Israel's Men (1:1-54)

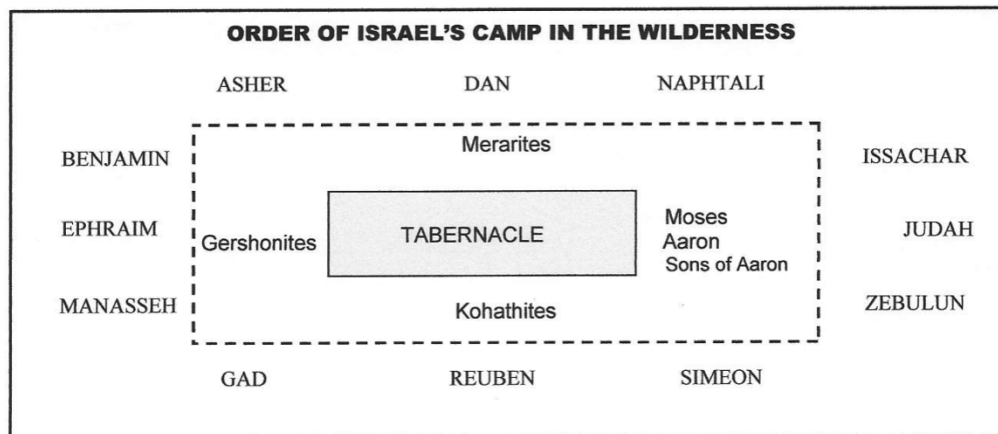
The Lord directed Moses and Aaron to count all the men in Israel from the ages of twenty years and older. Moses named one man from each tribe to assist them with this census. These men were regarded as those able "to go forth to war" (1:3). The count for

each tribe is listed, and the total of 603,550 is recorded in Numbers 1:46. The men were listed by name, one by one (1:18). They took this census one month after the completion of the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:17 cf. Numbers 1:1).

The Levites were not included in this count of men fit for war. Their work was to take down, to carry, and to set up the Tabernacle (1:47-51). When setting up camp, the Levites were to pitch their tents nearby the Tabernacle (1:53).

B. Arrangement of Israel's Encampment (2:1-34)

Chapter 2 describes the precise, symmetrical order for Israel's encampment. Each tribe was assigned a specific location in relationship to the Tabernacle, which was placed in the middle of the encampment. The Tabernacle was always set up to face eastward. The following diagram shows the setup of the camp. Moses heard and recorded God's order: "The Israelites are to camp around the Tent of Meeting some distance from it, each man under his standard with the banners of his family" (2:2).



C. Role of the Levites (3:1-4:49)

The priests' assistants – Moses received specific instructions from the Lord about the tribe of Levi's selection to assist Aaron and his sons. Though Aaron is identified in Exodus as the one appointed to the office of high priest along with his sons as priests (Exodus 28:1), the term "high priest" appears only three times in the Pentateuch. "High priest" is first mentioned in Leviticus 21:10. It appears again in Numbers 35:25, 28.

In preparing to leave Sinai, Moses verified Aaron's position as high priest with Eleazar and Ithamar serving as priests with him. According to God's directive, Moses presented the tribe of Levi to Aaron to assist him. They were to do the work of the Tabernacle and care for all the furnishings (3:5-9).

Levites in Place of Firstborn – God explained to Moses that He had chosen the Levites for service in place of the firstborn. The selection of the firstborn for dedication to God's service had been implied earlier (Exodus 13:11-16). Because God had spared the firstborn from death in Egypt, He claimed them as His own (3:11-13). At this time God told Moses to count all the male Levites who were a month old or more. Gershon, Kohath, and Merari are named as the sons of Levi. Then a count was made of each of these family clans.

The Total Count of the Levites Was 22,273 (3:39). After recording the count of the Levites, Moses was instructed to count all the firstborn Israelite males and list them by name. This count was 22,273. God asked Moses to be very precise. Since there were not as many Levites as there were firstborn Israelites, the people had to give five shekels for redemption of each of the 273 firstborn Israelites. This money (1,365 shekels) was given to Aaron and his sons (3:39-51).

Levite Responsibilities – Included with the record of the count is a description of each clan's responsibility for care and transport of the Tabernacle as follows:

- Gershonites: Tabernacle curtains and hangings of the courtyard (3:25-26).
- Kohathites: Tabernacle furniture and vessels and inner curtains (3:31).
- Merarites: Tabernacle frames, bars, pillars, bases, and accessories (3:36).

More Details – Numbers 4 gives additional instructions regarding the work of the Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites in caring for the Tabernacle and preparing it for transport. The Lord told Moses and Aaron to assign these responsibilities to the men between the ages of thirty and fifty. The total count of men qualified by age to do the work of the Tabernacle was 8,580 (4:47-48). This shows that 13,420 of the Levites were either too young or too old to do the work at that time. God's provision of workers to serve the Tabernacle reveals that His plans have definite order and purpose. Moses, Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar provided careful oversight for the work of the Levites. (Note 3:32; 4:16, 27-28, 33.)

D. Spiritual Preparations (5:1-6:27)

Purity (5:1-4) – Preparations for leaving Sinai included reminders about maintaining "cleanness" within the camp such as had been described in Leviticus. The various prohibitions had health benefits along with illustrating the need for "cleanness" when approaching the Tabernacle for worship.

The Principle of Restitution is addressed once again (5:5-10). A sin against a fellow Israelite was considered a sin against God. Along with confessing wrongdoing

toward someone, the Israelite was reminded that he must make restitution by adding “one fifth” (twenty percent) to the value to replace the harm he had caused. The compact living conditions of the Israelites’ camp demanded careful adherence to God’s moral laws. Christian conduct includes the principle of making things right following hurtful actions toward someone.

Test of Marital Faithfulness (5:11-31) – The Lord gave Moses detailed instructions on how to deal with marital discord involving possible adultery or false accusations. Adultery had to be addressed to maintain the purity of the camp. Jealousy had to be dealt with to restore marital harmony. God instructed Moses regarding a public test or trial that should be used to determine the guilt or innocence of the husband and wife. This account emphasizes the importance that God places on the purity and harmony of marriage.

The Nazarite Vow (6:1-21) – “Nazarite transliterates a Hebrew term meaning ‘dedication by separation’” (*MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 172). Any Israelite could choose to take the Nazarite vow and thus dedicate himself in a special way to God. The vow could be taken for a minimum of thirty days or longer or even for a lifetime. Numbers 6 names the provisions of this vow of separation:

- 1) Abstinence from all grape products (6:3-4)
- 2) No cutting of one’s hair during the time of separation (6:5)
- 3) No contact with any dead body throughout his separation (6:6-8)
- 4) If someone died suddenly in the presence of a person under the Nazarite vow, the person had to shave his head and go through a cleansing ceremony. Then he would take the vow again, not counting the previous days of his vow (6:9-12).
- 5) Upon completion of his vow, the person went to the Tabernacle to present offerings, including burnt, sin, grain, and drink offerings (6:13-17).
- 6) At the entry to the Tabernacle he then shaved off his hair, which was burned as a peace (fellowship) offering (6:18).
- 7) In conclusion, the priest presented a wave offering to the Lord that ended the vow (6:19-20).

Though the office of the priesthood was restricted to Aaron and his sons, God provided a means for every Israelite to give himself in special dedication and separation to the Lord. Judges 13-16 tells the story of Samson, the Bible’s most notable Nazarite. The judgment on Samson for breaking his vow shows the importance of keeping one’s vow to the Lord.

The Priestly Blessing (6:22-27) – The Lord instructed Moses regarding a blessing that Aaron and his sons should pronounce upon the children of Israel. This blessing invited God’s favor to be shown to the Israelites. These gracious words express the desire of God to bless His people throughout all ages. The Christian does well to speak these words to others:

“The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).

This blessing invoked God's power to keep, His presence, His kindness, and the comfort of His peace. This blessing placed the “name of the Lord” on the Israelites, a sign of His very presence with them (6:27).

E. The Tabernacle Dedicated and the Passover (Numbers 7:1-9:14)

The Tabernacle and Its Furnishings – When Moses finished setting up the Tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings (7:1). The events of Numbers 7-10 show how God spoke to Moses in the Tabernacle (7:89) and gave him directions for leading Israel. Chapter 7 gives a detailed listing of the gifts that the Israelites brought for the dedication of the Tabernacle. Moses was instructed to accept the gifts to be used for the work of the Tabernacle. The gifts were to be distributed to the Levites for their use in doing their assigned work (7:4-5).

The first offerings were six covered carts and twelve oxen (7:3). The Gershonites, who were assigned to the Tabernacle curtains and courtyard hangings, were given two carts and four oxen for their work. The Merarites, who were assigned to the Tabernacle frames, bars, pillars, bases, and accessories, were given four carts and eight oxen for their work. The Kohathites were not given carts and oxen because they had to carry the Tabernacle furniture and vessels on their shoulders (7:6-9).

Generous Giving (7:10-88)—The tribal leaders were instructed to bring offerings for the dedication of the altar (7:10). Beginning with the tribe of Judah, the leaders brought generous offerings over a twelve-day period. Each leader gave the same gifts. These were the same leaders named in Numbers 1, who oversaw the numbering of the people. The order in which the gifts were brought was the same order listed for Israel's travel in chapter 2:3-32. These offerings provided vessels and supplies for the Tabernacle service:

- Silver charger (plate) filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering
- Silver bowl filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering
- Gold spoon (dish) filled with incense
- One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt offering
- One kid of the goats for a sin offering
- Two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five yearly lambs, for a peace offering

Setting up the Tabernacle Lamps (8:1-4) – The instructions for making the golden lampstand were recorded in Exodus 25:31-40. The record of its completion was

verified in Exodus 37:17-24. With the Tabernacle completed, Aaron was instructed to light the lamps (8:2-3; Exodus 40:25). These lamps were to be tended by the high priest and kept burning continually (24:2-4).

The New Testament story of the ten virgins reminds Christians of the importance of keeping themselves continually filled with God's Spirit and ready for His return (Matthew 25:1-12).

Presenting and Anointing the Levites (8:5-26) – Numbers 3-4 describe the selection and work of the Levites for the Tabernacle work. This passage explains the ceremony that prepared the Levites to begin their assigned duties. The Lord told Moses to “take the Levites from among the other Israelites and make them ceremonially clean” (8:6, NIV). The ceremony included cleansing with water along with burnt, grain, and sin offerings. The Levites were brought to the Tabernacle where the Israelites laid their hands on them, making them ready to do the work of the Lord (8:10-11). This special ceremony for the Levites reveals God's careful concern in preparing individuals for ministry. God reminded Moses that He had chosen the Levites in the place of the firstborn, who belonged to Him because He saved Israel's firstborn in Egypt: “Of all the Israelites, I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the Tent of Meeting on behalf of the Israelites and to make atonement for them” (8:19, NIV).

God told Moses that only Levites between the ages of twenty-five and fifty should do the work in the Tabernacle. After fifty they could assist their brothers in performing the Tabernacle duties, but they must not do the work (8:23-26). In Numbers 4:3, the age for beginning service is stated as thirty. Perhaps the difference relates to different tasks. The passage in Numbers speaks about preparing the Tabernacle for moving. Numbers 8:24 speaks about a Levite serving in the Tabernacle. During David's reign as king, the age of the Levites for serving in the temple was lowered to twenty (I Chronicles 23:24, 27).

Passover Observance (9:1-14) – The observance of the Passover described in this chapter followed the dedication of the Tabernacle described in chapter 7. The Tabernacle had been set up on the first day of the first month as Israel began their second year at Sinai (Exodus 40:2). The Passover was celebrated at Sinai at “even” on the fourteenth day of the first month. This Passover observance took place before the census of chapter one, which happened on the first day of the second month.

The command that every Israelite observe the Passover was emphasized by the account of those who found themselves “unclean” because of touching a dead body. Thus, they could not join the others in presenting the Lord's offering at the time of the Passover. Moses' response was to seek the Lord's answer (9:8). As Israel's leader, God gave him a specific answer. Those who were unclean could observe the Passover one month later on the fourteenth day of the second month. However, if such a person did not

observe the Passover and follow all the regulations, he would be cut off from his people and bear the consequence of his sin (9:13).

Lesson 4 (Exodus) described the institution of the Passover on the night that God spared Israel's firstborn from death and delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 12). In Leviticus 23:4-8 the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread are listed among the appointed "feasts" or "holy convocations" the Israelites were to observe yearly.

The account of Israel's thirty-eight years of wandering in the wilderness contains no record of Israel observing the Passover. However, at the end of the wilderness years, the Lord told Moses to "command" the Israelites regarding the offerings and feasts that they must observe (28:1-31; Deuteronomy 16). The first record of the Passover being observed after Mount Sinai is found after Israel's entrance into Canaan. (See Exodus 12:25.)

"And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho" (Joshua 5:10).

F. Final Preparations for Leaving Sinai (9:15-10:10)

God's Guidance (9:15-23) – God gave Israel the visible assurance of His presence and guidance with the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. The "pillar of cloud" and "pillar of fire" led the Israelites from Egypt to Sinai (Exodus 13:21). When the Tabernacle was erected, the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord filled it (Exodus 40:34). Numbers 9:15-23 and Exodus 40:36-38 describe the continuing presence of the cloud and fire, which led the Israelites during their forty years in the wilderness. This Numbers account reveals that Israel sometimes camped for only a day or a few days. At other times, they camped for a month or a year (9:21-22).

The Trumpet Signals (10:1-10) – God instructed Moses to make two trumpets of silver for calling the Israelite community together before the entry to the Tabernacle and to order the camps to set out. The sounding of both trumpets called for an assembly of the people. One trumpet blast called the tribal heads to gather. The encampments set out in order according to the trumpet blasts. The sons of Aaron blew the trumpets. Trumpets announced the appointed feasts and the offerings. God told Moses that He would remember His people in the time of battle when they sounded the trumpets. The trumpets served as a means of communication to keep the Israelites in touch with God's guidance. Through His Word and anointed ministers God gives a clear trumpet sound of guidance to the Christian.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. When was the census of Israel taken, who was included in the count, and what was the total count of the census?
2. Who were the Levites and what were the specific responsibilities of each of the divisions of the Levites?
3. What was the principle of restitution as described in Numbers 5:5-10?
4. What is the meaning of *Nazarite* and what was the purpose of the Nazarite vow?
5. What was the priestly blessing that Aaron and his sons were instructed to speak to the Israelites?
6. Why were six carts and twelve oxen brought as offerings for the Tabernacle?
7. What was the purpose of the generous offerings brought to the Tabernacle?
8. What special ceremonies took place to prepare the Levites for their work in the Tabernacle?
9. In what settings and how often was the Passover observed during Israel's years in the wilderness?
10. How did Israel know that the time had come for them to move from their encampment at Mount Sinai?
11. What method did God instruct Moses to use to call the people together to hear his words and to announce the appointed feasts and offerings?

Assignment

1. Read Numbers 10-14.
2. List the character traits that you see evident in Joshua and Caleb in the account of twelve spies.
3. Lesson 15 lists ten references from Exodus and Numbers that mention episodes when Israel's actions displeased God. List these references and give a descriptive phrase that identifies Israel's action that displeased God.

Lesson 15

Traveling and Rebelling

Numbers 10:11-14:45 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Numbers.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Twelve spies explored Canaan and saw the land that flowed with milk and honey. Ten viewed the land as good but focused on the giants and fortified cities. The other two also saw the good land and the giants, but chose to focus on the God who was with them. Israel's choice to follow the doubters kept them in the wilderness for another thirty-eight years. (See Deuteronomy 2:14.) Joshua and Caleb's faith gave them entry into the Promised Land while all the other adults died in the wilderness. Which will you choose to be: a Caleb or a Sethur (13:4-15)? Choice determines destiny.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Describe the order and manner in which the Israelites prepared for their departure from Mount Sinai.
2. Discuss happenings and attitudes among the Israelites as they traveled from Mount Sinai to the border of the Promised Land.
3. Write a short story based on Numbers 13-14 telling about the twelve spies who explored Canaan and the Israelites' reaction to their reports.

Lesson Outline

(Continued from Lesson 14)

- II. Traveling and Rebelling (10:11-14:45)
 - A. Departure from Sinai (10:11-16)
 - B. Complaints and God's Anger and Provision (11:1-35)

- C. Complaints of Miriam and Aaron (12:1-16)
- D. Spies Explore Canaan and Bring Reports (13:1-33)
- E. Israel's Rebellion–Failure to Believe the Good Report (14:1-45)

Key Verse

Faith speaks victory even when doubt focuses on the impossibilities.

“And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (13:30).

Lesson Content

II. Traveling and Rebelling (10:11-14:45)

A. Departure from Sinai (10:11-16)

Thirteen months after leaving Egypt and eleven months after their arrival at Sinai, the Israelites departed from Sinai when the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle (10:11). Verses 14-27 describe the order in which the tribes marched with Judah taking the lead. They set out and traveled for three days with the Ark of the Covenant going before them and the cloud over them (10:33-34). Numbers 10:12 summarizes their travel from place to place until they rested in the desert of Paran. According to Numbers 13:26, Kadesh (or Kadesh-barnea) was in the wilderness of Paran. Israel reached Kadesh and camped there while the spies searched out the land. Deuteronomy 1:2 states that the journey from Horeb (Sinai) to Kadesh-barnea takes eleven days.

Dan	Ephraim	Tabernacle Furniture (holy things) Carried by Kohathites	Reuben	Tabernacle carried by Gershonites And Merarites	Judah	A R K
Asher	Manasseh		Simeon		Issachar	
Naphtali	Benjamin		Gad		Zebulun	

As they began their journey, Moses asked Hobab, his brother-in-law, to stay with them rather than return to his own land. He acknowledged that Hobab, who knew the desert, could be their eyes to know where to camp (10:29-32). This passage does not state that Hobab stayed with Israel. However, Judges 4:11 speaks about the descendants of Moses' father-in-law living among the men of Judah.

B. Complaints and God's Anger and Provision (11:1-35)

This chapter could be titled “Overwhelmed.” The Israelites felt overwhelmed by their hardship. Moses felt overwhelmed by their complaints. In the midst of their distress, both the people and their leader focused on their circumstances rather than on God's faithful provision.

Complaints (11:1-3) – As they journeyed, the people began to complain about their hardships. Their complaints angered the Lord, who sent fire in the outskirts of their camp. When the people cried to Moses, he prayed. The fire died and the people named the place *Taberah*, which means “burning.”

More complaints and quail from the Lord at Kibroth-hattavah (11:4-35) – In spite of the judgment by fire, the people's complaints continued. A lustful spirit rose up among them through the influence of the “mixt multitude.” They complained about the miraculous daily supply of manna, remembering the variety of food they had in Egypt. On hearing their wailings, Moses became troubled. In quick order, Moses asked God six questions (11:11-13, NIV):

- 1) Why have You brought this trouble on Your servant?
- 2) What have I done to displease You that You put the burden of all these people on me?
- 3) Did I conceive all these people?
- 4) Did I give them birth?
- 5) Why do You tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant . . . ?
- 6) Where can I get meat for all these people?

Moses felt overwhelmed. In his despair he blurted out these six questions that expressed doubts about God's concern for him as Israel's leader. He expressed a desire to die if he didn't have favor in God's eyes. God responded to Moses by showing him that he should select seventy elders from Israel to share the burden of the people. God promised to put the same Spirit on these men that He had put on Moses.

Having assured Moses of His presence, God told Moses to call the people together for a time of consecration. God explained to Moses that He would give the people meat in abundance. The amount would be so great that the people would despise the meat. Moses could not grasp what God was telling him. He could only picture the inadequacy of all the flocks and herds among them and the fish in the sea to satisfy the Israelites. God's response to Moses was, “Is the Lord's arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you” (11:23). With this assurance, Moses went out and told the people what the Lord had said. He brought the seventy elders to the Tabernacle where the Spirit came on them and they prophesied.

Joshua appeared on the scene at this time (11:28) concerned that two elders, Eldad and Medad, were prophesying in the camp without authority to do so. Moses did not feel threatened by this and expressed that he wished that all of the Lord's people were prophets.

After this incident, the Lord acted on His Word and sent an abundance of meat into the camp. Quails flew into the camp, flying two cubits (about three feet) above the ground. The quails continued coming for a day and a night and another day. The people gathered the quails and spread them around the camp. God became angered with their craving and struck them with a severe plague. The place was named Kibroth-hattavah, meaning "graves of craving." From there they moved onward to Hazeroth.

C. Complaints of Miriam and Aaron (12:1-16)

The story of Miriam and Aaron's criticism of the leadership of Moses shows God's disapproval of rebellion against God's appointed leadership. Moses' sister and brother began their attack by speaking about his Ethiopian wife ("Cushite," NIV). "Although the term Ethiopian could have been used concerning Zipporah, Moses' first wife, it seems more likely that Moses had remarried after the death of Zipporah" (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 176).

The Bible records that the Lord heard their complaints and spoke suddenly (12:2, 4). He called the three of them to the Tabernacle. At the door of the Tabernacle the Lord came down in "a pillar of cloud" and called Miriam and Aaron to step forward and listen. The Lord described Moses as His faithful servant to whom He spoke "mouth to mouth" in a more direct way than He spoke to prophets. He concluded by asking Miriam and Aaron why they were not afraid to speak against Moses (12:6-8). In the context of this story, Moses is called a meek (humble) man, meeker than any other man.

In His anger against their complaints, God caused Miriam to become leprous. When Aaron saw Miriam's leprosy, he asked that Moses not hold against them the sin they had so foolishly committed. Moses responded by crying to God for her healing. Miriam did receive healing, but she still had to go through the seven days of isolation outside the camp (note Leviticus 13-14). After her return to the camp, the Israelites moved from Hazeroth to the desert of Paran.

D. Spies Explore Canaan and Bring Reports (13:1-33)

Spies Selected (13:1-16) – From their encampment in the desert of Paran, Moses chose twelve men, one from each tribe, and sent them to view the Promised Land (13:1-16). The names of the leaders differ from those mentioned in chapters 1, 2, 7, 10. The new list indicates that Moses was looking to men of the younger generation to fulfill the difficult physical assignment of spying out the land of Canaan.

Joshua – Verse 16 includes an interesting note: “And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.” In his commentary, John MacArthur comments: “For reasons not made clear, Moses changed the name of Hoshea, meaning “desire for salvation,” to Joshua, meaning “the Lord is salvation” (177). At this stage in Israel’s history, Joshua begins to serve in a notable role as a leader. He is mentioned a total of twenty-five times in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. His name appears 151 times in the Book of Joshua.

Spies’ Assignment – Moses charged the appointed leaders with assessing the condition of the land, the strength and weaknesses of the people, and the fortification of the towns. He asked them to bring back some of the fruit of the land, noting that it was the season for the first ripe grapes. Thus, the spies went northward and “searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob” (13:21). This phrase describes the southern and northern borders of Canaan.

Spies’ Report – After forty days, the spies returned to Kadesh in the desert of Paran with their report. They brought back to the camp a cluster of grapes, pomegranates, and figs (13:23, 26). They showed the fruit and testified that the land surely flowed with milk and honey. When God called Moses to deliver Israel out their affliction in Egypt, He described Canaan as a “land flowing with milk and honey” (Exodus 3:8, 17; 13:5). This phrase portrays a land offering bounteous provision. The first words of their report focused on the bounty that they found in the land. However, their next comments focused on the impossibilities. They graphically described the walled cities and gigantic people. They failed to embrace God’s promises assuring them of victory over strong enemies (Leviticus 26:7-8).

Caleb’s Response – Caleb challenged the ten spies’ focus on the impossibility of possessing the land with his positive response:

“And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (13:30).

In spite of Caleb’s encouragement, the other men continued their “evil report,” insisting that Israel was not able to conquer the “men of a great stature” (13:32). They pictured themselves as grasshoppers in the eyes of the giants, the sons of Anak (13:28, 33). Although the majority of the people in Canaan would not have been giants, the spies focused on the giants and allowed fear to replace faith in God’s promise. Deuteronomy 2:21 and 9:2 mentions the descendants of Anak.

E. Israel's Rebellion – Failure to Believe the Good Report (14:1-45)

Rejection of the Good Report (14:1-3) – Having heard the good and the evil reports, the congregation of Israel chose to reject Caleb's challenge to go at once to possess the land. The report of the ten spies was "evil" because it focused on the dangers and instilled fear in the people. Rather than embrace God's promise that He would send an "angel" before them to bring them into the land (Exodus 23:20), the report emphasized the enemy. In response to the "evil report," the congregation lifted up their voices and wept throughout the night. Along with their crying, they murmured against Moses and Aaron. They expressed that dying in Egypt or the wilderness would have been better (14:1-3).

Rebellion against God's Plan (14:4-10a) – As a congregation, they began to say to one another, "Let us make us a captain, and let us return into Egypt." In their fearful and faithless state, they rejected God's appointed leader. Faced with Israel's rebellion, Moses and Aaron fell facedown before the congregation. Joshua and Caleb, who had explored the land, tore their clothes (a sign of distress) and spoke to the congregation. They reminded the people that Canaan was exceedingly good. They pled with Israel to not rebel against the Lord. They admonished them to not be afraid, for the Lord was with them. However, the people rejected their words and talked of stoning them.

Moses' Intercession for Israel (14:10-21) – In response to the people's rebellion, the glory of the Lord appeared in the Tabernacle before all the people. The Lord spoke to Moses informing him that He would strike rebellious Israel with a plague and destroy them. Moses responded with a prayer of intercession similar to his prayer in Exodus 32:11-13. He reminded the Lord that the Egyptians should not see Him as a God unable to bring the people into the land He had promised (14:16). Moses also spoke to the Lord about His longsuffering, great mercy, and forgiveness as well as His judgment for sin (14:18). God responded to Moses' prayer with these words: "I have pardoned according to thy word" (14:20).

God's Judgment for Israel's Rebellion (14:22-45) – God did not destroy Israel for their rebellion. However, He did punish them for their rebellious rejection of His plan. They ordered their own judgment in wishing they had died in the wilderness. God granted their wish. Those who were twenty years or older when the Israelites were counted died in the wilderness and did not enter the Promised Land (14:28-29). However, their children, whom they complained would be victims in the wilderness (14:3), would enter the land. Before declaring this judgment, God reminded the Israelites that they had not hearkened to His voice ten times. Exodus and Numbers record ten episodes of Israel's actions that displeased God.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1) Exodus 14:10-12 | 2) Exodus 15:22-24 | 3) Exodus 16:1-3 |
| 4) Exodus 16:20, 30 | 5) Exodus 16:27-30 | 6) Exodus 17:1-4 |

- 7) Exodus 32:1-35
- 8) Numbers 11:1-3
- 9) Numbers 11:4-34
- 10) Numbers 14:3

God told Moses and Aaron that the Israelites would wander forty years in the wilderness, a year for each of the forty days that the twelve spies spent exploring the land (14:34).

The Destiny of the Twelve Spies (14:30) – Because of their faith in bringing a good report, Caleb and Joshua were promised entry into the Promised Land along with the younger generation (14:24, 30). God struck the ten spies who brought back the “evil” report and undermined the people’s faith with a plague and they died (14:37). They were the first of the older generation to die.

Further Rebellion and Defeat (14:39-45) – When Moses reported God’s judgment to the Israelites, the people mourned. Then they made plans to advance to the place God had promised. They said, “We have sinned.” However, Moses counseled them not to go. He told them they would be defeated for God was not with them. Just as Moses warned, they were defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. How long were the Israelites camped at Mount Sinai?
2. As the Israelites traveled, where was the Tabernacle in their marching order?
3. When the people complained about their journey (11:1-3), what punishment did God send and how did Moses respond?
4. What caused Moses to feel overwhelmed in the happenings of Numbers 11:4-35, and how did he respond?
5. What happened at Kibroth-hattavah, and what was God’s response?
6. Why was God angered at Aaron and Miriam in the story of Numbers 12?
7. What assignment did God give to the leaders of the twelve tribes in Numbers 13?
8. How long did the spies spend exploring Canaan and what reports did they bring back?
9. What judgment did God pronounce on the Israelites for their rebellion against His plan for them to go in and possess the land of Canaan?
10. What happened to the ten spies who brought back an “evil report of the land”?
11. What promise was given to Joshua and Caleb for bringing a good report?

Assignment

1. Read Numbers 15-21.
2. Locate all the verses in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy that mention the “tithe” or “tithes,” which were to be brought to the Levites. List the references and write the verses.
3. Refer to the following verses and write a biographical summary of Caleb and his family: Numbers 13:6, 30; 14:6, 24, 30, 38; 26:65; 32:12; 34:19; Deuteronomy 1:36; Joshua 14:6, 13-14; 15:13-20; 21:12; Judges 1:12-15; 3:9.

Lesson 16

Wilderness Experiences and Onward Travel

Numbers 15-21 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Numbers.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

The Israelites lived in the wilderness for forty years and endured many hardships because of their unbelief and rebellion. Paul reminded the Christians in I Corinthians 10:1-11 that the story of Israel's experience in the wilderness was an admonition not to follow their rebellious ways.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Name and describe the three events Moses recorded that happened in the Israelite camp during their years of wandering in the wilderness because of their rebellion at Kadesh.
2. Explain the duties of the priests and God's provision for their daily needs as taught to the younger generation of Israelites in Numbers 18.
3. Write a summary of the recorded events between the time the Israelites departed from Kadesh, after nearly forty years in the wilderness, and their arrival on the Plains of Moab.

Lesson Outline

(Continued from Lesson 15)

- III. Wandering in the Wilderness (15:1-19:22)
 - A. Instructions about offerings (15:1-41)
 - B. Accounts of Rebellion against Leadership (16:1-50)
 - C. Budding of Aaron's Rod (17:1-13)
 - D. The Priest's Role and the Levite Offerings (18:1-32)
 - E. Water of Purification - Red Heifer (19:1-22)
- IV. Onward Journey to the Promised Land - The New Generation (20:1-21:35)
 - A. The Setting
 - B. No Water! Moses' and Aaron's Response (20:1-12)
 - C. Travel and Aaron's Death (20:14-23)
 - D. Travel Events (21:1-35)

Key Verses

God's reminder to the younger generation regarding the work of the Levites and how their needs were to be provided.

“And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation” (18:6).

“And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation” (18:21).

Lesson Content

III. Wandering in the Wilderness (15:1-19:22)

The record of Israel's thirty-eight years of wandering in the wilderness is confined to five chapters. God did not have much to say about Israel during these years. Three of these chapters contain instructions looking ahead to the years when the younger generation would enter the Promised Land. Numbers 16-17 records only three historical events.

A. Instructions about Offerings (15:1-41)

Chapter 15 opens with the Lord telling Moses to speak to the people about the offerings they are to present to the Lord after they enter the land (15:2). While the older

generation awaits death, Moses taught and reminded the younger generation of God's provisions and laws. Verses 18-21 command that when they eat the food of the Promised Land, they must always present a portion as an offering to the Lord. Verses 22-31 define the difference between unintentional and defiant sin. Moses taught them that they must bring their offerings for sin to seek atonement. He warned that a person who sins defiantly must be cut off from the people (15:30-31).

The account of a man who gathered wood on the Sabbath contrary to the Law follows the instructions about defiant sin. Death was his judgment, which certainly taught the younger generation the importance of heeding God's laws (15:32-36).

Moses instructed the Israelites to make fringes (tassels) on their garments as a visual reminder to "remember all the commandments of the LORD" (15:37-41).

B. Accounts of Rebellion against Leadership (16:1-50)

Moses possibly recorded accounts of rebellion against spiritual leadership as a testimony of problems that arose during the wilderness years. It seems that the rebellious spirit evident at Kadesh continued to trouble Israel.

Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram – Chapter 16 tells the story of Korah (a Levite and the son of Kohath), Dathan, and Abiram who joined with 250 notable Israelites to oppose Moses and Aaron. This group accused Moses and Aaron of taking too much upon themselves and lifting themselves up to the people. They based their claim on the promise that "all the congregation are holy, every one of them" (16:3). When Moses heard their complaint, he fell on his face. Then he directed them to appear the next day to know God's response. Moses' comments to Korah revealed that Korah was not satisfied in his work as a Levite. Rather, he desired the priesthood (16:9-10). Moses then sent for Dathan and Abiram. They defiantly answered, "We will not come" (16:12). They accused Moses of bringing them out of a land that flowed with milk and honey into a wilderness instead of into a land flowing with milk and honey (16:13-14).

God removed the rebels from the camp in a miraculous way (16:15-40). The "earth opened her mouth and swallowed up" the three rebel leaders, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their households (16:31-34). Numbers 26:10-11 indicate that Korah's children did not die in this judgment. Earlier Moses had told each of the 250 men to bring censers with fire and incense to the door of the Tabernacle as a test to see whom God chose as holy (16:5-7). Verse 35 reports that a fire from the Lord consumed the 250 men. Then the Lord told Moses to have Eleazar the priest take the brazen censers and beat them into a covering for the altar. This covering was to be a reminder to the Israelites that only the seed of Aaron could offer incense before the Lord (16:36-40). Thus, God reaffirmed His choice of Aaron as priest to Israel.

Murmurings about God's Judgment (16:41-50) – The following day the congregation of Israel murmured. They accused Moses and Aaron of killing the people. As they gathered before the Tabernacle, the cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord appeared. The Lord told Moses to move away from the people, for He would consume them in a moment. According to God's word, people began dying from the plague. Aaron interceded for the people by offering incense and making atonement for them. With his censer he stood between the dead and the living. Finally, the plague stopped. Tragically and as a warning against rebellion, 14,700 people had died in the plague.

C. Budding of Aaron's Rod (17:1-13)

The Lord responded to the Israelites' rebellious attitudes noted in chapter 16 by giving Israel a visual proof of Aaron's priesthood. According to the Lord's command, each tribal leader was to bring a rod to the Tabernacle. Each man's rod was to have his name written on it.

Aaron's name was to be put on a rod for the tribe of Levi. These thirteen rods were to be placed in the Tabernacle before the "testimony" (the Ark containing the "testimony" or Ten Commandments). The Lord said that the rod He chose would blossom (17:5). When Moses went to see the rods the next day, Aaron's rod had budded, blossomed, and produced almonds. He brought out all the rods for the people to see. Each man took his rod, but the rod of Aaron was placed with the "testimony" to be kept as a witness to stop the murmurings of the rebellious Israelites. This event shook the people. They recognized their sin and feared for their lives (17:12-13).

D. The Priests' Role and Levite Offerings (18:1-32)

Duties of the Priests and Levites (18:1-7) – This passage reviews the duties of the priests and Levites. Such a review was significant in light of the Israelite rebellions that Moses and Aaron had faced. The Lord spoke directly to Aaron emphasizing the priests' responsibility for the sanctuary. The Levites were given to them as a gift to help with the service of the Tabernacle (18:6). But only Aaron and his sons could minister the holy things of the sanctuary (18:7).

"Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the veil; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death" (18:7).

Offerings for the Priests and Levites (18:8-20) – After reminding Aaron of the priestly responsibilities, the Lord spoke about His plan for the priests' daily provisions. The Lord reminded Aaron that the priests were to receive a portion of the offerings the people brought. They could keep for themselves the portions of the sacrifices not burnt

on the altar. Also, they were to receive the offerings of the firstfruits (18:13). From the offerings, they provided for their families (18:13, 19).

The Covenant of Salt (18:19) – After speaking about the priestly role and provisions to Aaron, the Lord said to Aaron, “It is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee” (18:19c). This statement speaks of the durability of God’s covenant for the priesthood. Salt keeps its flavor and does not burn. Thus, God established an enduring plan for the support of His priests. God’s people are to support God’s ministers. Paul referred to this old covenant provision and linked it to the support of the New Covenant ministers of the gospel.

“Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:13-14).

The Inheritance for the Levite: The Tithe (18:20-32)

“And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation” (18:20-21).

When the Israelites settled in the Promised Land, the Levites were not assigned any portion of the land as their own. As keepers of the Tabernacle and spiritual leaders, they were assigned cities within the various tribal allotments (35:1-34). God made provision for them through “the tithes of the children of Israel” (18:24). From the tithe the Levites received from the people, they were required to pay a tenth (tithe) to the Lord, bringing it to Aaron (18:26-28).

In speaking of the tithe, the Lord emphasized the giving of one’s best (18:29-30). Also, the priests were to recognize the tithes as reward for their service. And they were admonished to not pollute the holy things lest they die (18:3-32).

E. Water of Purification – Red Heifer (19:1-22)

Numbers 19 speaks about a cleansing ritual that involved the sacrifice of a red heifer. During their years of wanderings, the Israelites buried over one million people as the older generation died. The Lord gave Moses and Aaron detailed instructions for providing a means of purification for those who had touched a dead body. As noted earlier in Leviticus, a person was declared unclean after touching a dead body and special

purification rites had to be observed (Leviticus 12-15). Numbers 19:1-10 describes how the “water of purification” was to be prepared from the ashes of an unblemished red heifer. Eleazar the priest was in charge of the ceremony for sacrificing the red heifer. Verses 11-22 provide detail about how a person who had touched a dead body could become clean through the cleansing ritual. While these rituals may seem strange in today’s world, they had definite value and importance for the Israelites in their daily life and worship.

IV. Onward Journey to the Promised Land Entry– The New Generation (20:1-36:13)

A. The Setting

During the time of chapters 20-21, the older generation began to pass off the scene. Miriam (20:1) and Aaron (20:29) died and Eleazar became high priest (20:22-29). Israel moved from Kadesh (20:1) to the Plains of Moab (22:1). Chapters 22-36 describe events and record instructions associated with Israel’s encampment on the Plains of Moab. From Moab the Israelites would make their move into the Land of Promise.

B. No Water – Moses’ and Aaron’s Response (20:1-12)

In the fortieth year – Number 20:1 states that the Israelites arrived at Kadesh “in the first month,” but no year is given. This visit to Kadesh was near the end of Israel’s forty years in the wilderness as determined by the year of Aaron’s death. Chapter 20 records Aaron’s death (20:29). Numbers 33:38 states that Aaron died in the fortieth year in the first day of the fifth month after the Israelites left Egypt. The Israelites began their wilderness wanderings from Kadesh (13:26) after leaving Sinai in the second year on the twentieth day of the second month (10:11). After their years of wilderness wandering, the Israelites returned to Kadesh (20:1, 14; 33:37) and began their journey to Moab, their entry point to Canaan (Joshua 1:2).

“There Was No Water” (20:1-5) – In their desert wanderings, Israel likely faced numerous times without sufficient water. Their survival for nearly forty years proved that God had provided water. Perhaps Moses recorded this particular incident by inspiration to show his own failure in a time when the people quarreled with him and again criticized his leadership. Paul wrote that Israel’s story in the wilderness was “written for our admonition” (I Corinthians 10:1-11).

This is the second record of Israel complaining about no water (see Exodus 17:1-7). Both times Israel criticized Moses for bringing them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. From the human standpoint, water shortage was indeed a serious problem.

However, from God's viewpoint, He was the provider of water. In their thirst, the Israelites forgot God's promise of provision.

Moses and Aaron's Response—God's Judgment (20:6-13) – Moses and Aaron responded to the Israelites' complaints by going to the Tabernacle where "they fell upon their faces." God's glory appeared and spoke to Moses: "Take your rod. You and Aaron gather the people together. Then you speak to the rock. The rock will pour out water for the people and their livestock." Moses did as God commanded. However, when the people gathered, Moses spoke harshly to the people, calling them "rebels," rather than speaking to the rock. Then he took his rod and struck the rock twice. Water did gush out and the people and animals drank. Seemingly overwhelmed by the repetitious opposition of the people against his leadership, Moses responded to his emotions rather than to the voice of God. God's word to Moses contains a sobering message for leaders.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (20:12).

B. Travel and Aaron's Death

Travel from Kadesh to Mount Hor (20:14-23) – From Kadesh, the Israelites sent a request to Edom, identifying themselves as "thy brother Israel," asking permission to travel through their land (20:17; Genesis 36:1). The Israelites promised to stay on the "king's high way" as they traveled through Edom. They even promised to pay for any water they used. The Edomites refused permission and sent out an army against Israel. Israel turned away without fighting and went to Mount Hor. Deuteronomy 2:2-6 indicates that God forbade Israel to fight with the children of Esau. Mount Hor was likely a mountain near the southern border of Edom.

Aaron's Death (20:23-29) – As they camped at Mount Hor, God announced to Moses and Aaron that it was the place and time for Aaron's death. God reminded them that Aaron's death was due to his rebellion with Moses at the water of Meribah (Numbers 20:12-13). According to God's instructions, Moses took Aaron and Eleazar his son up on Mount Hor. There Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar. Without further detail, the record says, "Aaron died there in the top of the mount" (20:28). Then Moses and Eleazar descended the mount. On seeing them, the congregation knew that Aaron was dead. Eleazar, dressed in the priestly garments, showed Israel that he was replacing his father in the role of high priest. For thirty days Israel mourned Aaron's death. This mourning period signified the importance of Aaron to the Israelite community. The normal time of mourning for death seemed to be seven days as noted in Genesis 50:10.

D. Travel Events (21:1-35)

Chapter 21 depicts five different scenes as Israel advanced toward their last encampment before entering the Promised Land.

Battle with Canaanite King (21:1-3) – Coming from the area where the spies had entered Canaan, King Arad attacked Israel and took some Israelites as prisoners. Israel vowed to destroy these Canaanites and their cities if God would deliver them. God heard Israel and delivered them. This victory happened at Hormah. This was where they had been defeated earlier (see 14:45).

Fiery Serpents (21:4-9) – Since they could not pass through Edom, Moses led them on a longer route around Edom (verse 4). As they journeyed, the people became much discouraged because of the way. Again they spoke against Moses. They complained about no water and no bread. They detested the manna God had provided. The Lord then sent fiery serpents whose bites brought death to many. Moses responded with prayer when the people acknowledged their sin. In response, the Lord told Moses to set up a brass pole that resembled a fiery serpent. Then he told Moses that everyone who was bitten would live if he looked at the serpent. Their deliverance from death depended on a definite act of their will. Jesus referred to this incident when He spoke about the death He would suffer at Calvary (John 3:14-15).

Travel toward Moab (21:10-20) – This passage names nine encampments on their journey northward. Verse 14 mentions “the book of the wars of the LORD” that identifies “brooks of Arnon” as the northern border of Moab. This was apparently a book they (perhaps Moses) had compiled and had with them about their journey. Verse 16 reports a significant event at a place called Beer. The Lord told Moses to gather the people at Beer where He would give them water. In gratefulness, the Israelites sang a song about a well. The passage concludes with Israel in the valley of Moab where Mount Pisgah sits. Mount Pisgah is mentioned later (four times) in relation to two significant people: Balaam and Moses.

Defeat of King Sihon and the Amorites (21:21-32) – Israel requested King Sihon to give them passage through the Amorite country. He refused and gathered his army against Israel. Since Israel had no command from the Lord against fighting the Amorites, the Israelites fought them and won. They captured all their cities and surrounding areas. Their victory gave them a large expanse of land where they settled (verse 31).

Verses 27-30 are poetic quotes, probably from the Amorites, whom Israel defeated. In his commentary, John MacArthur makes this observation:

The words of verses 27-30 describe the Amorites' defeat of the Moabites north of the Arnon River. Ironically, as the Amorites had taken the land

from the Moabites, the Israelites had taken the land from the Amorites. The purpose of these words cited by Moses was to substantiate Israel's right to this land. According to God's commandments, the territory belonging to the Moabites was not to be taken by Israel because the Moabites were descendants of Lot (Deuteronomy 29). However, what belonged to the Amorites had been promised to Israel and was theirs for the taking (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 184).

Defeat of Og, King of Bashan (21:33-35) – Another foe awaited Israel in their conquest of the land. King Og approached Israel with his whole army. Before the battle began, the Lord told Moses not to fear, for He had delivered the king, his people, and his land into his hand. Though Israel had to fight, their victory was assured. With the defeat of kings Sihon and Og, Israel claimed possession of all the land east of the Jordan and north of Moab.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. How many chapters tell the story of Israel's 38-39 years of wandering in the wilderness and how many events are described?
2. What happened to the man who gathered wood on the Sabbath? Why do you think he was judged in this manner?
3. What truth was affirmed by the severe judgment that was given to the rebels Korah, Dathan, and Abiram?
4. How was Aaron's position as high priest confirmed in the happenings of Numbers 17?
5. Since the Levites were not to be given an allotment in the Promised Land, what provision did God make for their daily needs? What responsibility did they have regarding this provision?
6. What was the purpose of the sacrificing of a red heifer as described in Numbers 19?
7. What happened that resulted in God forbidding Moses and Aaron to enter the Promised Land? Why was this judgment pronounced on these leaders?
8. Where did Aaron's death happen and how did Moses prepare for Aaron's death?
9. How did Jesus compare His death to the incident of the fiery serpents in Numbers 21?
10. As the Israelites traveled northward toward the Promised Land, what kings and people did they defeat before they arrived on the Plains of Moab?

Assignment

1. Read Numbers 22-25.
2. From the passage in I Corinthians 10:1-12, make a list of the actions of the Israelites that Christians must avoid to stand firm and not fall.

Lesson 17

The Story of Balaam and Balak and Israel's Failure

Numbers 22-25 (Unless noted, the numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Numbers.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

The space devoted to the story of Balaam and Balak (four chapters) and the repeated mention of Balaam in the Bible call attention to the significance of the spiritual lesson to be learned. Though Balaam did right in not cursing Israel, he somehow departed from full commitment to righteousness in loving “the wages of unrighteousness” (II Peter 2:15) and in influencing Israel to get involved in the pagan worship of Baal (31:16). The Christian must guard his words, his motives, and his actions to remain a godly influence on others.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Tell the story of Balaam and Balak and discuss the significance of Balaam's refusal to curse Israel as well as his negative influence on the children of Israel.
2. Discuss the census that took place after the Israelites arrived on the Plains of Moab and other instructions that were given to the younger generation.
3. Describe God's instructions to Moses to appoint Joshua as his successor and the various provisions to be organized for Israel's settlement in Canaan.

Lesson Outline

(Continued from Lesson 16)

- V. The Story of Balaam and Balak and Israel's Failure (22:1-25:18)
 - A. Balak's Appeal to Balaam
 - B. Balaam's Messages to Balak
 - C. Balaam's Tragic End and Influence on Israel

Key Verses

Balaam spoke God's message to Balak.

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (23:19-20).

Lesson Content

V. The Story of Balaam and Balak (22:1-25:18)

A. Balak's Appeal to Balaam

Setting – Having defeated the armies of King Sihon and King Og, the Israelites pitched their camp in the plains of Moab near the Jordan River and across from Jericho (22:1). As they camped in the plains of Moab, the Israelites were tested morally in their relationship with the Moabites.

Balak Calls for Balaam (22:1-20) – King Balak and his people, the Moabites, heard about Israel's victories. Fearful and distressed, Balak called for Balaam to come to him and curse Israel so that Moab could defeat them. Balaam lived in Pethor, a city on the Euphrates River. The Bible records that Balaam used "enchantments" (24:1). He was a soothsayer, and he was not identified as a true prophet of God. Balak acknowledged that Balaam had the power to bless or to curse. However, Balaam lacked the power to curse God's people and bring about their defeat as Balak requested as the story reveals.

Balak sent "elders of Moab and Midian" to Balaam with "rewards of divination in their hand" (22:7). Balaam did inquire of the Lord whether he should go with them. God told Balaam that he must not go and neither should he curse Israel because they were blessed. Thus the "princes of Moab" (22:14) returned to Balak without Balaam. Not satisfied, Balak sent more "princes" with greater honor back to Balaam. With them he

sent word that he would give Balaam great honor and reward of his choice. Balaam gave them an immediate answer.

“And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more” (22:18).

After answering the men in this manner, Balaam asked them to spend the night. He said he would inquire more from the Lord. God responded by telling him to go with the men. However, he was to speak only God's message (22:20).

Balaam's Talking Donkey (22:21-39) – In the morning Balaam rose up, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. The Bible states that God was angry with Balaam and put an “angel of the Lord” in the way as an adversary (22:22). The details of this fascinating story are best gleaned by a careful reading of this biblical passage. When Balaam's donkey finally spoke and then Balaam's eyes were opened to see the angel, Balaam acknowledged his sin. God then gave him the message he needed to hear and heed. He could only speak the words that God gave him to speak.

As the men approached Moab, Balak came to meet Balaam. He questioned him about why he did not come when he called and offered a reward and honor. In response, Balaam informed Balak that in his coming he could only speak what God put in his mouth (22:38). The next day Balak took Balaam up to the high places of Baal where they could see the plains below (22:39).

B. Balaam's Messages to Balak (23:1-24:25)

In preparation for speaking about Israel, Balaam asked Balak to prepare seven altars, seven oxen, and seven rams. Even though these offerings were made on pagan altars, it was the Lord who gave Balaam his messages (23:1-5). Balaam never cursed Israel in his seven messages.

Balaam's First Message (23:1-12) – “And he took up his parable” (“he uttered his oracle,” NIV) begins each of Balaam's messages (23:7, 18; 24:3, 15, 20, 21, 23).

As Balaam's message came forth, Balak heard him speaking blessings rather than cursings upon Israel. Balaam emphatically stated that Israel could not be cursed (23:8). He spoke of Israel's numerical strength and even expressed a desire to share Israel's righteous blessing (23:10). These words angered Balak, who feared the strength of Israel (see 22:3). Balaam still insisted that he could speak only what God put in his mouth (23:12). In response, Balak led Balaam to another place where they could view the host of Israel (23:13).

Balaam's Second Message (23:13-26) – Balak took Balaam to the top of Pisgah where they built seven more altars and offered sacrifices. On Pisgah the Lord gave Balaam more words for Balak. He challenged Balak to rise up and listen.

“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (20:19).

Balaam reminded Balak that he could only bless and not take back the blessing. He spoke of God delivering Israel from Egypt with great strength. He said that no enchantment or divination could be done against Israel (23:22-23). God would give Israel victory over their enemies as a lion devours his prey (23:24).

Balak pleaded with Balaam to not bless Israel if he could not curse them (23:25). But Balaam reminded him of what he had earlier told him: “All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do” (23:26).

Balaam's Third Message (23:27-24:14) – Thinking that a new location might change Balaam's message, Balak took him to the top of Peor. There they built another seven altars and offered a bull and ram on each altar (23:27-30). Unlike the previous times, Balaam did not “seek for enchantments” (KJV) or “resort to sorcery” (24:1, NIV). He lifted up his eyes and saw the encampment of Israel. God's Spirit came upon him and he began speaking blessings once again. He spoke of the fruitfulness of Israel and their triumph over nations. Verse 9 refers back to Genesis 12:3 and the Abrahamic covenant: the one who blesses Israel will be blessed.

As he heard these words, Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam. He struck his hands together and said, “I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times” (24:10). With that said, he told Balaam to leave at once without reward. He said the Lord had kept Balaam from being rewarded (24:11).

Balaam's Fourth Message (24:15-19) – Before leaving, Balaam spoke again. This fourth message predicted the coming of Israel's future king who would smite the corners of Moab and triumph over all enemies (24:17-19). God's message is always true even though it may be spoken by someone whose life has not measured up to God's Word. God honors His Word!

Balaam's Final Three Messages (24:20-25) – With brief comments Balaam gave three final messages about nations. He predicted that Amalek would perish (24:20). The Kenites, part of the Midianites, would be taken captive by Asshur (24:21-22). The final message speaks of ships coming from Chittim (Cyprus) and subduing Asshur and Eber. However, they will come to ruin (24:24).

C. Balaam's Tragic End and Influence on Israel

Balaam's Mention in Scripture – When Israel fought against Midian and slew their kings, Balaam was killed. “Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword” (31:8).

According to Numbers 31:16, Balaam's counsel caused Israel to get involved in the pagan worship of Baal as described in Numbers 25. Deuteronomy 23:4-5 speaks of Balaam being hired to curse Israel. Joshua 13:22 identifies Balaam as a “soothsayer” whom Israel killed with the sword. The Books of Joshua and Nehemiah also record the account of Balak calling Balaam to curse Israel (Joshua 24:9-10; Nehemiah 13:2). The prophet Micah spoke of Balaam (Micah 6:5).

New Testament verses speak of the “error of Balaam” and his desire for reward:

“Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet” (II Peter 2:15-16). (See also Jude 11; Revelation 2:14.)

Moab Seduces Israel - Worship of Baal (25:1-18) – During Israel's encampment in Shittim on the plains of Moab, some of the Israelites got involved in the worship of Baal (25:1-3). According to Numbers 31:16 and Revelation 2:14, this failure resulted from Balaam's counsel to Balak. When Balaam failed to curse Israel, he told Balak how the Moabites and Midianites (25:17-18) could entice the Israelites into pagan worship and provoke God's anger against them. Worship of Baal was clearly against the first commandment. Numbers 25:1-3 describes Israel's participation in pagan immorality, their sacrifice to false gods, and their eating and bowing down to false gods.

God's Anger and Judgment – God told Moses to slay the leaders of these people and “hang them before the Lord” to turn away His fierce anger (25:4). Then Moses ordered the judges of Israel to slay the men who had joined themselves to Baal-peor. This account includes the story of an Israelite man who openly took a Midianite woman into his tent, disregarding God's moral laws (see verses 14-15). When Phinehas, the son of the high priest Eleazar, saw what happened, he took a spear, went into the tent, and killed both the man and woman. Phinehas's anger and action against the sinful conduct turned away God's wrath (see Psalm 103:30). Nevertheless, twenty-four thousand Israelites had already died in the plague of God's judgment (25:7-9). Because the Midianites had enticed Israel into sensual idolatry, the Lord told Israel to smite the Midianites in return (25:17-18). Numbers 31:1-24 records Israel's attack on the Midianites.

Reward of Zeal for God (25:11-13) – Because Phinehas was zealous for God in opposing sinful conduct, God gave him a covenant. He promised him “the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.” This meant that all future, legitimate high priests would come through his family line.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. Who was Balak and why did he send for Balaam to come see him?
2. Who was Balaam?
3. Why did Balaam refuse to go with the men who came to take him to Balak?
4. What unusual thing happened when Balaam finally agreed to go and began traveling to see Balak?
5. How many messages did Balaam speak and what were some of the significant things that he mentioned in his messages?
6. How did Balaam cause Israel to sin?
7. What passages of the New Testament speak about Balaam, and what do these passages tell about him?
8. What tragic thing happened during Israel's encampment at Shittim?
9. What judgment did God pronounce upon those who enticed Israel to become involved in worship of Baal?
10. Why was Phinehas promised “the covenant of an everlasting priesthood”?

Assignment

1. Read Numbers 26-36.
2. Write a summary of the life of Joshua which includes his earlier days as Moses' assistant and the episodes of his life that eventually led to him being chosen as Moses' successor as leader of Israel. Summarize only his years before Israel's entry into the Promised Land. (Joshua is mentioned seven times in Exodus, ten times in Numbers, and eight times in Deuteronomy.)

Lesson 18

Final Preparations to Enter Canaan

Numbers 26-36 (Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Numbers.)

History Applied . . . A Truth to Live

Through His appointed leaders, God gave specific instructions for Israel's settlement in the Promised Land. Under the New Covenant God appoints and anoints leaders to provide instructions for Christians through the Word and His Spirit.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Discuss the census that took place after the Israelites arrived on the Plains of Moab and other instructions that were given to the younger generation.
2. Describe Moses' prayer for a leader for Israel and God's instructions to Moses to appoint Joshua as his successor.
3. Summarize the final happenings on the Plains of Moab and list the final instructions for Israel's settlement in Canaan.

Lesson Outline

(Continued from Lesson 17)

- VI. Final Preparations to Enter the Promised Land of Canaan (26:1-36:13)
 - A. Second Census and Inheritance Laws (26:1-27:11)
 - B. Joshua Appointed as Israel's Leader (27:12-22)
 - C. Instructions to the New Generation (28:1-30:16)
 - D. Israel's Battle with the Midianites (31:1-54)
 - E. Tribal Allotments East of Jordan (32:1-42)

- F. Summary of Israel's Wilderness Journey (33:1-49)
- G. Preparation for the Conquest of Canaan (33:50-36:13)

Key Verse

God appointed a capable, experienced leader for Israel as the time of Moses' death drew near.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight” (27:18-19).

Lesson Content

VI. Final Preparations to Enter Canaan (26:1-36:13)

A. Second Census and Inheritance Laws

Setting – These last eleven chapters of Numbers record events and instructions related to Israel's preparation for entry into the Promised Land. God speaks to the new generation through Moses. The record shows this younger generation being obedient to God's commands.

The Second Census by Tribes (26:1-65) – God told Moses and Eleazar the priest to “take the sum” (census) of those twenty years of age and upward who are able to go to war. This census took place thirty-eight years after the first census (Numbers 1:1-46). The total count was 601,730. This was 1,820 less than the previous census. Seven tribes increased in number (Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Manasseh, Benjamin, Dan, and Asher). Five tribes decreased in number (Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Ephraim, and Naphtali). Manasseh had the greatest increase (20,500). Simeon had the greatest loss (37,100). Could it be that the men of the tribe of Simeon suffered the greatest loss from the plague (chapter 25) with a death record of 24,000? Verse 14 records that it was a man from the tribe of Simeon that took the Midianite woman into his tent.

A note at the end of the census report verifies that the census on the plains of Moab did not include even one of those counted in the earlier census at Sinai, except for Joshua and Caleb (26:65). Thus, the older generation had died in the wilderness during the thirty-eight years in between the two counts.

Census for Land Allotment (26:52-56, 63-65) – Along with calculating the number of men able to fight, this census became the basis for land allotment. Each tribe was to receive a portion of land based on its census. The land portions were to be decided by lot.

Separate Count of Levites (26:57-62) – This second census of the Levites totaled 23,000. This was an increase of 1,000 over the previous census (3:39). This census gives the record of Amram and Jochebed as the parents of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam (verse 59).

Inheritance Laws (27:1-11) – The census account that mentioned Zelophehad as having no sons and only daughters (26:33) provides the background for this passage concerning inheritance rights. The five daughters of Zelophehad, whose names were listed in the census, approached Moses at the Tabernacle concerned about not having any property in the Land of Promise. Their father had died in the wilderness. Property rights normally passed through the sons. Moses took their case to the Lord. The Lord assured Moses that he must certainly pass their father's inheritance to them as daughters. This became a statute in Israel. Along with this stipulation, God gave Moses further instructions about the order of inheritance.

B. Joshua Appointed as Israel's Leader (27:12-22)

As Israel waited to enter Canaan, the Lord spoke to Moses about his impending death. He reminded him of his disobedience in the desert of Zin by not honoring His word in speaking to the rock to bring forth water (20:11-12). Thus, he would not enter the land. However, he instructed Moses to ascend Mount Abarim (Mount Nebo) to view the land before his death.

As Moses faced his death, he asked God to select a man to lead the Israelites. Moses understood that without an appointed leader the people would be like sheep with no shepherd (27:16-17). The Lord spoke to Moses, "Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him" (27:18).

As a helper to Moses in the wilderness years, Joshua was well acquainted with Moses' role as Israel's leader. According to God's directive, Moses called for Eleazar the priest to join him in presenting Joshua to the Israelites as their new leader. Verse 21 states that Joshua was to receive counsel through the ministry of the priest. According to the word of the Lord, Moses laid his hands on Joshua and gave him a charge before the congregation of Israel (27:22-23).

C. Instructions to the New Generation (28:1-30:16)

These three chapters, Numbers 28-30, illustrate the importance of teaching each generation the commands of the Lord. Just as Moses had taught the older generation at Sinai, he now repeated God's commands to the new generation. Though these chapters seem repetitious to the present day reader, the lessons were vitally important to the new generation, the majority having been born in the wilderness. At God's command, Moses again taught the Israelites the manner in which they must worship and obey their God. A summary observation reveals that Moses taught about worship, purity, offerings, the various festivals to be observed, and vows to be kept by Israel when they entered the Promised Land.

"These things ye shall do unto the LORD in your set feasts, beside your vows, and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meat offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings. And Moses told the children of Israel according to all that the LORD commanded Moses" (29:39-40).

D. Israel's Battle with the Midianites (31:1-54)

Numbers 31 tells the story of Israel going to battle against the Midianites in obedience to God's command. God commanded Israel to destroy Midian because the Midianites enticed Israel to Baal worship at Peor (recall Numbers 25:17-18). Even though Joshua had been appointed to succeed Moses, God commanded Moses to lead the attack against the Midianites before his death. In obedience to God's command, Moses called for one thousand men from each tribe. Moses then sent these twelve thousand soldiers to battle with orders to "avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites" (31:2). The Israelite soldiers succeeded in killing every man, including the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam with a sword (31:7-8). His death among the Midianites suggests that he must have lived among them rather than returning to his home.

When Moses and Eleazar met the soldiers returning from battle, they found that they had saved the women who had caused Israel to sin (31:16). Moses then commanded that all the Midianites be killed except for the virgin women. The killing of all the males and the adult women insured that the Midianites would be completely destroyed. "Reference to the Midianites later (Judges 6:1-6) was to a different clan. It was the Midianites living in Moab who were destroyed here" (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 190).

All the goods and animals that the soldiers collected from the battle were divided equally between them and those who stayed behind (31:21-47). Then the people gave offerings to the Lord from what they received (31:48-54).

E. Tribal Allotments East of Jordan (32:1-42)

After the victory against the Midianites, the tribes of Gad and Reuben requested that they be given their land allotments from the land Israel had conquered east of the Jordan.

“Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan” (32:5).

They made this request thinking that the land was suitable for their herds of cattle. However, Moses feared that they did not want to participate with their fellow Israelites in battle to claim the Promised Land (32:6-7). After these tribes assured Moses that they would fight with the other tribes, Moses agreed to their request (32:17, 20-22). Verse 33 summarizes the details of the allotment. The half tribe of Manasseh is included in this summary even though this tribe was not among those making the request.

“And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about” (32:33).

F. Summary of Israel's Wilderness Journey (33:1-49)

The Lord commanded Moses to write the history of Israel's journey. This record would be a reminder to Israel of God's guidance during their forty years in the wilderness. As noted by John MacArthur, the list includes forty places not counting their starting point at Rameses and their last camp on the plains of Moab (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 190). Some places mentioned earlier are not mentioned here. For example, their first camp at Kadesh from where the spies entered Canaan is not listed. As Moses listed these places, Israel would be reminded of God's guidance and His provision. They would also recall the lessons they had learned in not fully trusting and obeying God. As they camped on the border of the Promised Land, they would understand that God had brought them on a long journey to fulfill His Word in giving them the Land of Promise. That land stood just across the river Jordan.

G. Preparation for the Conquest of Canaan (33:50-36:13)

When the Israelites had left Sinai as recorded in Numbers 10, they had faced a journey only of eleven days from Sinai to the southern border of Canaan (Deuteronomy 1:2). Sadly, their faithlessness and rebellion extended their stay in the wilderness from one year and a few months to forty years. With the forty years behind them, the Israelites

again looked forward to settlement in the land that God had promised them when they left Egypt. In these final chapters of Numbers, Moses gave Israel God's instructions for their peaceful settlement in Canaan. Instructions were given for six main subjects:

Drive out the Enemies (33:50-56) – God commanded Israel to drive out all the inhabitants when they crossed over the Jordan River into Canaan. Also, they were to destroy all the images and high places related to the false religion of the Canaanites. The Canaanites placed their altars and idols on hills (high places). God warned that if Israel allowed any of the inhabitants to remain, they would later begin to vex or trouble Israel and God would do to Israel what He planned to do to the Canaanites.

Know Your Boundaries (34:1-10) – The Lord gave Moses specific instructions about the boundaries of the land He promised to give Israel as their inheritance. The boundaries described cover more area than the Israelites actually conquered at the time of the conquest. However, they do relate more to the areas conquered by David when he was king of Israel.

Assign the Land by Lot (34:11-29) – The land west of the Jordan was to be assigned to the nine and one-half tribes that received no land east of the Jordan. Eleazar and Joshua were given the responsibility to assign the land with the help of tribal leaders. None of these men were sons of those listed in Numbers 1:5-15. This was the new generation of leaders except for Caleb, who was leader of the tribe of Judah. Caleb and Joshua were the only two of the older generation who would be entering the Promised Land. Twelve allotments were to be made. Levi was given no allotment. Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, each received an allotment.

Provide Levite Cities (35:1-5) – The Lord told Moses to command the Israelites to give the Levites cities within their allotments, along with pasturelands around their cities. Joshua 21:1-42 gives the details about the allotment of these cities at the time of the conquest. The Levites received a total of forty-eight cities distributed among the tribes.

Establish Cities of Refuge (35:6-33) – Six of the forty-eight Levitical cities were to serve as "cities of refuge" (35:6). These cities provided a place of safety for a person who had accidentally killed someone. Three cities were on the east side of Jordan and three to the area of Canaan on the west of Jordan (35:14). Careful instructions were given for determining a man's innocence or guilt in causing someone's death. Only the person who had accidentally killed could stay within the city of refuge. The "avenger" could not reach an innocent man who had run into a city of refuge for safety.

The "congregation" judged a man's innocence or guilt (35:24). If a man was judged guilty, the man was released to the avenger to put him to death. According to John MacArthur, *avenger* means "near of kin." "It refers to the person chosen by the family to

deal with a loss suffered in the family” (*The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 191). The innocent person had to remain in the city until the death of the high priest (35:25). No man could be judged guilty on the testimony of only one witness (35:30).

Learn Inheritance Laws – Zelophehad’s Daughters (36:1-13) - The subject of this chapter relates back to chapter 27:1-11 where the five daughters of Zelophehad requested an inheritance from their deceased father since he had no sons. Moses inquired of the Lord and received word that the daughters would receive the inheritance.

Family heads from Manasseh came to Moses in this setting concerned that the tribe would lose some of their allotted land in the year of jubilee if these daughters married into other tribes. Again Moses inquired from the Lord and received an answer. Any daughter who received her father’s inheritance had to marry within her tribe so that no inheritance in Israel would pass from tribe to tribe.

Numbers closes on a positive note stating that Zelophehad’s daughters did as the Lord commanded Moses (36:10).

“And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father” (36:12).

The Closing Statement in Numbers

“These are the commandments and the judgments, which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho” (36:13).

Questions for Lesson Review

1. How did the census in Numbers 26 differ from the census in Numbers 1?
2. What were the two main purposes of the census?
3. What laws were involved in the story about Zelophehad’s daughters?
4. What important lesson can be learned from chapters 28-30, which provide instructions for the generation of Israelites who will be entering the Promised Land?
5. Why did God command Moses to fight against the Midianites and how did he prepare for the battle (31)?
6. How did Moses know to appoint Joshua as his successor and what did he do to verify this appointment?
7. Which tribes received their allotment east of the Jordan?

8. Why were cities appointed for the Levites and how many cities were to be appointed for them?
9. What was the purpose of the cities of refuge and where were they to be located?
10. What instructions did God give Israel regarding the inhabitants of Canaan?

Assignment

Write a short paper describing five practical lessons that you have gleaned for your own life from the Book of Numbers.



DEUTERONOMY

THE BIG PICTURE OF DEUTERONOMY

Setting: Plains of Moab, Across the Jordan River from the Promised Land

History	Law		Covenant	Close
1-4	5-26		27-30	31-34
Moses' First Message: Review	Moses' Second Message: Restatement of God's Laws for Holy Living		Moses' Third Message: Covenant Renewed	Moses' Last Message: Reminders to be strong and courageous
Recalling the Past	Commandments for the Present		Choices for the Future	Moses' Last Words and Death
Wilderness Events	Ten Commandments	Related Commandments	Blessings and Cursings	Joshua Commissioned; Moses Buried
Don't forget Teach your children	Hear them Learn them Keep them Do them Teach them	Hear, O Israel! Our God is one. Love Him, obey Him, and teach your children His commandments.	Plea for obedience: Blessings for obedience Curses for disobedience	Moses delivered the written law to the Levites and commissioned Joshua as Israel's leader.
4:9	5:1-21, 31	6:1-9	27:11-13	31:9-15

A Look at the Covenant Concept of Deuteronomy

Preamble	Stipulations	Sanctions	Covenant Continuity
Covenant Mediator and History	Covenant Life	Covenant Ratifications	Next Generation
Moses as Mediator	Moses teaches the younger generation the statutes of God's Covenant with Israel.	Moses leads the covenant renewal	Sinai Covenant at Moab
1:1	5:1	27:1	29:1

Lesson 19

The Big Picture of Deuteronomy

Introduction to Deuteronomy

(Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Deuteronomy.)

A Truth to Live . . . History Applied

As the Israelites stood on the border of the Promised Land, Moses reminded them of the laws and principles that marked them as God's chosen people. The Israelites had to hear and heed the commands of God to receive God's promises. In the same manner, the Christian must become knowledgeable of God's Word and obedient to its commands to receive God's blessings.

Deuteronomy Outline: Final Messages of Moses to Israel

- I. Review of Israel's Wilderness Journey (1:1-4:49) - Lesson 20
- II. Restatement of Laws for Godly Living (5:-26:19)
 - Part I - Lesson 21
 - Part II - Lesson 22
 - Part III - Lesson 23
- III. Recommitment to the Covenant (27:1-30:20) - Lesson 24
- IV. Reminders to Know and Obey God's Laws (31:1-33:29) - Lesson 24
- V. Record of Moses' Death and Burial (34:1-11) - Lesson 24

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Describe how the story of the Book of Deuteronomy links with the promise given to Abraham in the Book of Genesis.

2. Write brief statements to describe the main theme of each of the four messages that Moses spoke to the Israelites on the Plains of Moab.
3. Explain the meaning of the book title, Deuteronomy, identify the writer and the date of writing, and list key words that emphasize actions, which Moses instructed the Israelites to remember and do.

Introductory Lesson Outline

- I. The Settings and Importance of Deuteronomy
- II. The Book Name and Meaning
- III. Author, Date of Writing, and Significance
- IV. Deuteronomy Chart
- V. A Brief Look into Deuteronomy
- VI. Link with Genesis
- VII. The Land in Sight and Its Significance
- VIII. Promise Fulfilled
- IX. Key Words of Deuteronomy

Key Verse

After forty years, the Israelites again approach the Promised Land.

“Behold, the LORD thy God hath set the land before thee: go up and possess it, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath said unto thee; fear not, neither be discouraged” (1:21).

Lesson Content

I. The Setting and Importance of Deuteronomy

As Moses spoke and recorded the words of Deuteronomy, Israel was camped on the Plains of Moab. The events of Deuteronomy took place during the last month before Israel crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Deuteronomy begins where Numbers ended.

“And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho” (Numbers 22:1). “And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho” (Numbers 35:1). (See also Numbers 36:13 and Deuteronomy 1:1.)

Deuteronomy is mainly a book of instructions for the younger Israelites. These new generation Israelites grew up or were born in the wilderness. Moses retold the story of Israel's years in the wilderness to remind this new generation of their history and of God's law. In his messages Moses pleaded with the Israelites to know and obey God's laws and principles. He urged the people to love God and to fear and obey Him.

II. Book Name and Meaning

Deuteronomy means "second law." This title comes from an early Greek translation of the phrase "a copy of this law" as found in Deuteronomy 17:18. [*Deuteronomy, Shepherd's Notes*, 1]. In the Hebrew Bible the book title is "These are the words." This title comes from the opening words of the book.

God gave the Law to the Israelites at Mount Sinai during their first year in the wilderness. At the end of their forty years in the wilderness, Moses restated the original Law to the new generation on the Plains of Moab. Note that Deuteronomy does not contain a second or different law. However, it does expand on the original Law given through Moses at Mount Sinai.

III. Author, Date of Writing, and Significance

As God's voice to Israel, Moses spoke the words of Deuteronomy during the last month of his life. He gave God's message to Israel before God took him up to Mount Nebo to die. The record of his death was likely added to Deuteronomy by his successor Joshua.

- The Book of Deuteronomy contains many references of Moses speaking and writing the words found within the book (1:1, 5; 5:1; 27:1; 29:1; 31:1; 33:1).
- Other Old Testament writers spoke about "the law of Moses." (See Joshua 8:31; I Kings 2:3; II Chronicles 23:18; Ezra 3:2; Nehemiah 8:1; Daniel 9:11; Malachi 4:4).
- Jesus' acceptance of Moses as the author of the Pentateuch is evident in His reference to "the law of Moses" (Luke 24:27, 44).
- Jesus quoted from the Book of Deuteronomy in responding to the temptations of the devil (Matthew 4:3-11 compared with Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16, 13).
- Quotations from Deuteronomy are found more than eighty times in the New Testament. It is the book most quoted in the New Testament [Geissler, 77].

IV. Deuteronomy Chart

A preview of the Deuteronomy Chart before reading the book will aid the student in understanding the content. The book is both a review and an expanded account of God's precepts and principles given to the Israelites during their year at Mount Sinai.

V. A Brief Look into the Five Divisions of Deuteronomy

As noted in the outline of Deuteronomy, the book has five logical divisions. These divisions are the four "messages" by Moses to Israel, followed by the record of his death.

Summary of Messages

1. In his first message to Israel on the Plains of Moab, Moses admonished the people to remember what God had done for them in delivering them from bondage (1:1-4:49).
2. In his second message, Moses restated God's laws, instructing Israel to know, remember, and obey these laws (5:1-26:19).
3. In his third message, Moses led the younger generation in a renewal of the covenant God had made with Israel at Mount Sinai. He taught them about the blessings of obedience and the consequences of disobedience (27:1-30:20).
4. In his farewell message (fourth message), Moses told Israel that he would soon die and commissioned Joshua as their new leader. He instructed them to be strong and courageous. He reminded them that God would never leave them nor forsake them. Finally, he spoke a blessing on each of the twelve tribes (31:1-33:29).
5. Deuteronomy closes with the record of Moses climbing Mount Nebo to the top of Pisgah across the Jordan River from Jericho. From there he viewed the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (34:4). Moses died at the age of 120 and God buried him where no man knew his grave (34:5-7).

VI. Link with Genesis

The Book of Deuteronomy is closely linked with the Book of Genesis. Genesis records God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which stated that their descendants would increase in number and become a nation (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:3-5; 28:3-4; 35:10-12). This nation would then possess the land "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the Euphrates" (Genesis 15:18).

VII. The Land in Sight and Its Significance

During the events of Deuteronomy, the nation of Israel was camped at the border of the Promised Land. The land of Canaan was God's gift to the Israelites in fulfillment of His promise to Abraham, which was repeated to Isaac and Jacob. Deuteronomy describes the land as a place of "rest" and "safety" for God's chosen people (12:9-10).

Entry into Canaan would complete God's promise that Abraham's seed would become a "great nation" (Genesis 12:2). A nation is defined as a large body of people associated with a territory and unified by a government particularly its own. Simply defined, a nation is people, land, and laws.

VIII. Promise Fulfilled

During their 400 years in Egypt, Abraham's seed multiplied and became a large body of people. During their year at Mount Sinai, God gave Abraham's seed unique laws for their government. At the close of Deuteronomy, the Israelites were on the threshold of entering the land promised to Abraham (see Deuteronomy 1:8). They would soon become a distinct nation.

IX. Key Words of Deuteronomy (as found in the KJV English Bible)

In his messages to the Israelites as he prepared them for their entry into the Promised Land, Moses used repetition to emphasize what they must do to receive God's promises. He told them that they must know, take heed, remember, obey, and love the Lord God. Each of these words identifies an action. These actions provided the way to God's blessings. Neglecting these actions would bring failure and sorrow to the Israelites.

The lessons of Deuteronomy linked with these key words show the path to blessings under the New Covenant in Christ Jesus.

Know appears 15 times
Take heed appears 10 times
Remember appears 14 times
Obey appears 10 times
Love appears 16 times

Questions for Lesson Review

1. Where were the Israelites camped when the events of Deuteronomy took place?
2. What is the connection between the Book of Deuteronomy and the Book of Numbers?
3. What is the meaning of the title Deuteronomy?
4. Quote one verse from Deuteronomy that identifies Moses as the one who wrote the book.
5. How many other Old Testament books speak about “the law of Moses?” Name four.
6. What verses in the New Testament provide testimony that Moses wrote Deuteronomy?
7. During what significant event in his life did Jesus quote from Deuteronomy?
8. What are the five logical divisions of Deuteronomy that aid in recalling the content of the book?
9. How is the book of Deuteronomy linked with the Book of Genesis?
10. What five words (or terms) are often repeated in Deuteronomy that emphasize how the Israelites could receive God’s blessing?

Assignment

1. Read Deuteronomy 1-4. After you read each chapter, write a short phrase or sentence that will help you recall the main theme of that chapter.
2. Memorize Deuteronomy 1:8 and 4:9.
3. For each of the key words mentioned in this Introductory Lesson, find one verse that contains that word. Then write the whole verse and give the chapter and verse.

Lesson 20

Moses' First Message (Review of Israel's Wilderness Journey)

Deuteronomy 1-4

(Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Deuteronomy.)

A Truth to Live . . . History Applied

The Book of Deuteronomy repeated God's laws given at Mount Sinai with the distinct purpose of training the younger generation to know and obey. Every generation must be given a firsthand knowledge of God's Word.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Describe the Israelites' location and what was happening during the time of Deuteronomy.
2. Recall the main events that Moses reviewed about Israel's time in the wilderness in his first message to the Israelites at the end of their forty years of wandering (1:9-3:29).
3. Describe three reminders that Moses used in pleading with the Israelites to be obedient to God as noted in chapter 4.

Lesson Outline

- I. Moses' First Message – A Review of Israel's Wilderness Journey (1:1-4:49)
 - A. The Opening Scene of Deuteronomy (1:1-8)
 - B. Reminder of Appointed Leaders (1:9-18)

- C. Review of the Twelve Spies and Israel's Unbelief (1:19-46)
- D. Review of the Journey from the Wilderness to the Plains of Moab (2:1-3:29)
- E. Moses' Plea for Israel's Obedience (4:1-49)

Key Verses

This verse captures the theme of Deuteronomy.

“Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons” (4:9).

Lesson Content:

I. Moses' First Message – A Review of Israel's Wilderness Journey (1:1-4:49)

A. The Opening Scene of Deuteronomy (1:1-8)

The history of Israel's departure from Egypt, the events of Mount Sinai, and the stories about Israel's travels in the wilderness had no doubt been retold countless times in the Israelite tents as they wandered in the wilderness for nearly forty years. However, at the end of Israel's wilderness journey, Moses stood before the people to review the past and prepare the people for their future.

As the Book of Deuteronomy opens, Moses is speaking to the host of Israel as they are camped “in the desert east of the Jordan.” Verse 2 notes that the journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea (the southern border of Canaan) takes eleven days of travel. Verse 3 records that Israel was now in their eleventh month of their fortieth year in the wilderness. Though the distance to the Promised Land from Mount Sinai (Horeb) was short, Israel's unbelief stretched their journey to forty difficult years. This scene takes place after Israel had defeated the two powerful kings (Sihon and Og) on the east of Jordan.

As the Israelites camped peacefully in Moab, Moses began expounding God's law to them. He reminded them of God's command at Mount Sinai to break camp and advance to the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants. He stressed that God had commanded them to go in and take possession of the land (1:5-8).

B. Reminder of Appointed Leaders (1:9-18)

As Moses spoke to the younger generation, he reviewed how God had directed him in choosing wise leaders from among them to assist him with resolving the disputes and problems that arose (Exodus 18:13-27; Numbers 11:10-17). He mentioned that the leaders had been instructed to judge fairly and without partiality. In reviewing the past, Moses emphasized to the new generation the characteristics that leaders should have. They should be “wise and respected men” (1:15, NIV).

C. Review of the Twelve Spies and Israel's Unbelief (1:19-46)

Moses spoke about the spies visiting Canaan as recorded in Numbers 13-14. None of the Israelites born during Israel's forty years in the wilderness would have been present to have a personal memory of the time when the spies visited Canaan. Those that had been adults during the visit of the spies had already died during the wilderness years. The only Israelites who would have a memory of the spies' visit were those who had been under the age of twenty when the spies went into Canaan.

Moses reviewed for Israel the journey from Mount Sinai to Kadesh-barnea and reminded them that he had instructed the Israelites to go up and take possession of the land that God had promised. He had told them, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (1:21, NIV). Then, at the request of the people, Moses selected twelve spies, one from each tribe, to enter the land and bring back a report about the route and towns. The spies brought back this report: “It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us” (1:25, NIV).

The spies had seen and reported that it was indeed a “good land.” Moses retold the story of how the spies also brought back reports of the giants (Anakites) and walled cities, which caused the people to fear. He spoke of the people's unbelief and complaints against God. Then Moses talked about how he reminded them to not fear but to remember how God had carefully and miraculously led them from Egypt to the border of the Promised Land (1:26-32).

Moses then told how God had become angered with Israel for their rebellion against God's command to enter the land (see 1:26). As a result, God condemned Israel to forty years of wandering (Numbers 14:34) in the “great and terrible wilderness” (see 1:19) until the rebellious generation had died (1:34-40). At this time Moses told Israel that only Caleb (1:35-36) and Joshua (1:38) of the older generation would enter the land. He then asked the people to encourage Joshua who would lead Israel to inherit the land (1:38).

Moses told how Israel refused to accept God's punishment. They acknowledged their sinful rebellion and decided they could then go up and fight to enter the land. However, the Lord told Moses He would not go with them, and they would be defeated.

Ignoring this word from the Lord, they marched into the hill country. According to God's word, they were defeated and wept before the Lord (1:41-46).

These words of Moses were a solemn warning to the younger generation to heed God's word. The reader of Deuteronomy should identify the audience who heard these words of Moses. With the exception of Caleb and Joshua, none of them would have been older than sixty. Moses preached to the sons and daughters of the elders who had rebelled at Kadesh-barnea. He spoke to a generation who had buried their parents and grandparents during their difficult years in the "great and terrible wilderness." As a wise leader, Moses recognized that this younger generation needed a reminder of their past in preparation for their future. Yes, they were a generation toughened by years of wilderness difficulties. Yet they needed to remember God's promises and recognize Israel's failure as they stepped into God's plan for their future in the land of promise.

D. Review of the Journey from the Wilderness to the Plains of Moab (2:1-3:29)

A Brief Reminder of Israel's Thirty-eight Years of Wilderness Wandering (2:1-23) – "Then we turned, and took our journey into wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days" (2:1).

The record of Numbers 16-20 provides limited details about Israel's decades of wandering in the wilderness. In the same manner, Moses reviewed the thirty-eight years of Israel's wilderness wanderings with brief comments. He focused on Israel's advancement at the end of Israel's forty years in the wilderness.

Moses summarized the long years in the wilderness by describing Israel as traveling around and around Mount Seir. Then in verse 14, he made special note that the journey from Kadesh-barnea to the southern border of Moab ("brook Zered") took thirty-eight years (2:14). He also mentioned that the Lord's judgment was completed with the death of the "generation of men of war" during these years (2:14-18).

As Israel advanced to the Plains of Moab, they passed through or by the regions of the Moabites and Ammonites without troubling them. God had ordered this because He had given these territories to the descendants of Lot (2:19-20).

A Review of Israel's Defeat of Sihon, King of Heshbon (2:24-37) – Israel's conquest of the Promised Land began with the defeat of King Sihon, who had established a kingdom centered around the city of Heshbon. This territory lay on a plateau between Moab and Ammon, just east of the Plains of Moab where Israel would later camp (Numbers 21:26). Sihon's refusal to allow Israel to pass through his area provoked war. As a result, Israel defeated Sihon and took possession of all his land and goods. This victory caused surrounding nations to fear Israel according to God's word to Moses.

A Review of Israel's Defeat of Og, King of Bashan (3:1-11) – Moses continued his review of history by recounting Israel's victory against Og, king of Bashan. This area lay east of the Sea of Galilee and extended from the Jabbok River north to Mount Hermon. Moses told how the Lord assured him not to be afraid of the army that came to meet them, for they would be victorious against the whole region that included sixty cities. As the Lord promised, the Israelites destroyed all the people of Bashan and took the plunder for themselves. With the defeat of the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, Israel possessed most of the land east of the Jordan River.

Moses concluded this account by mentioning that King Og remained alive. The mention of his large iron bed (thirteen feet long and six feet wide) revealed that King Og was indeed a giant.

The description of these wars and the total destruction of the inhabitants as commanded by God seems shocking. These battles and other battles later in the land of Canaan need to be understood as God's plan to completely destroy a people devoted to sensuality and worship of other gods. Bible scholars have referred to them as holy wars. Such wars were limited to a short span of Israel's history as God equipped Israel to occupy the land He had promised to Abraham's descendants. The inhabitants whom Israel was commanded to destroy were given over to idolatry and moral corruption.

“But for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee” (9:4).

Two earlier verses provide further insight into God's command for Israel to destroy the inhabitants.

God's Promise to Abraham about the Land

“But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Genesis 15:16).

“And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants” (Leviticus 18:25).

Reminder of Land Allotments East of the Jordan River (3:12-20) – Moses reviewed briefly the land allotments east of the Jordan that had been assigned to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manasseh (Numbers 32). He reminded them that the able-bodied men of these tribes were to advance ahead of their fellow Israelites to assist in possessing the land across the Jordan. However, their wives, children, and livestock could stay behind. The men could return to their possession after the land was conquered for the other tribes.

As Leader, Moses Recalled His Desire to Cross the Jordan and the Lord's Response (3:21-29) – As Moses commanded Joshua to take note of how God had given them victory over the two kings as a sign that other victories would follow, he felt overwhelmed with desire to also cross over to see the good land (3:25). When he pleaded with the Lord to let him cross the Jordan, the Lord told him not to speak again about the matter. Earlier in the account of Numbers 20:1-13, Moses had struck the rock twice rather than speaking to the rock at the Lord's command in seeking water for the Israelites. Thus, God had forbidden Moses from leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. Though Moses could not enter the land, God told him to climb Mount Pisgah and view the land (3:27).

Having been denied entry, Moses stressed to the young generation that Joshua was commissioned to lead them across the Jordan. According to the Lord's command, he was to encourage and strengthen Joshua for this work (3:28).

E. Moses' Plea for Israel's Obedience (4:1-40)

Having reviewed the key events that took Israel to the entry to the Promised Land, Moses gave a passionate call for Israel to obey God. He called them to obedience by reminding them of three main things.

“Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (4:1-2).

1. Moses called Israel to obey by reminding them of God's presence and their past (4:1-24) – Moses pled with Israel to obey God's laws so that they would live and take possession of the Promised Land. He also warned them to not add to or take away from God's commands. Obedience to God's laws would prove that no other people or nation had such a god “near them” with righteous decrees and laws (4:7-8).

Moses reminded them of their past failures that brought them death and hardships as a warning to not be disobedient. Moses mentioned three incidents:

- Sexual idolatry at Baal-Peor (4:3; Numbers 25:1-5; Psalm 106:28-31)
- Golden calf at Mount Sinai (4:15-17; Exodus 32:1-35)
- Israel's rebellion in the wilderness of Zin (4:21; Numbers 20:1-13)

Moses recalled God's powerful appearance at Mount Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments in his plea for Israel's obedience (4:9-13). He commanded them to

“take heed” to do the commandments and not corrupt themselves by making graven images (4:14-19). He reminded them that the Lord had taken them out of the “iron furnace” in Egypt to be His inheritance. They must not forget the covenant with the Lord their God (4:20-23).

2. Moses called Israel to obey by pointing to their future (4:25-31) – After speaking of their past, Moses pointed to the future. He warned the Israelites that they would be driven from the Promised Land if they corrupted themselves with idolatry (4:25-28). His message spoke prophetically of Israel's future when Israel and Judah went into captivity when they forsook God's laws (See II Kings 17:1-20 and II Chronicles 35:11-21).

Along with warnings of God's judgment for disobedience, Moses spoke of God's mercy, which was extended to Israel repeatedly through the centuries. Note Deuteronomy 4:29-31.

- “seek the Lord thy God”
- “thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all they heart”
- “turn to the Lord thy God”
- “the Lord thy God is a merciful God”

The Book of Judges records many accounts of Israel's repetitious pattern of disobedience, seeking God, and finding forgiveness during the times of the judges. The writer of Chronicles records another such call for Israel to seek the Lord and find His forgiveness (II Chronicles 7:14). These biblical accounts sound a call for all people to diligently seek God and find forgiveness in His mercy.

3. Moses called Israel to obey by acknowledging that the “LORD is God” and He loves you (4:32-40) – Moses ended his first sermon to Israel by asking a series of questions. These questions spoke about the special way in which God revealed Himself to Israel. They identified how God delivered them by His mighty hand and marvelous signs. They expressed how God redeemed them and formed them into a great nation (4:32-34). Moses declared to Israel, “The LORD he is God; there is none else beside him” (4:35, 39). On the basis of these realities, Moses called for Israel's obedience, assuring them that obedience would prolong their days (4:40).

Moses named three cities of refuge east of the Jordan (4:41-43) – With the first section of Deuteronomy focusing on the conquest and settlement of the land east of the Jordan, this list of cities fits well as a conclusion to Moses' first sermon. Joshua would later designate three more cities of refuge in the land of Canaan in keeping with Moses' instructions (19:1-3; Joshua 20:1-9). These cities of refuge provided a safe haven for any person who had innocently killed someone.

Questions for Review

1. What was the main subject of Moses' first message to Israel as they were camped on the Plains of Moab?
2. How long had Israel been in the wilderness at the time of Deuteronomy?
3. What was the distance in days of travel between Mount Horeb (Sinai) and the border of the Promised Land at Kadesh-Barnea?
4. What leadership characteristics did Moses describe as needful for the new generation who would enter the Promised Land?
5. Why was Moses reviewing Israel's history of their wilderness years in chapters 1-4?
6. How did Moses briefly describe Israel's years in the wilderness in 2:14-18?
7. What victories did Moses review in chapters 2 and 3?
8. After speaking about his desire and denial to enter the Promised Land, what did Moses tell them concerning Joshua?
9. Moses called Israel to careful obedience of God's laws by reminding them of what three key realities (4:1-40)?
10. What was the purpose of the cities of refuge that Moses designated for Israel?

Assignment

1. Read Deuteronomy 5-8.
2. Review and know the key words that identify the Ten Commandments.
3. Memorize Deuteronomy 6:4-6, a passage that summarizes important principles.

Lesson 21

Restatement of Laws for Godly Living (Part I)

Moses' Second Message – Part I

Deuteronomy 5-8

(Unless noted, the numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Deuteronomy.)

A Truth to Live . . . History Applied

Moses taught the Israelites: “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD” (6:4). Jesus quoted Moses (Mark 12:29). Paul wrote to the Christians: “But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (I Corinthians 8:6). (See also Ephesians 4:6 and Galatians 3:20.)

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Discuss the similarities and differences between Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 and the importance of Israel knowing and obeying these words of Moses.
2. State and explain three principles of the law as given by Moses in chapters 6-8.
3. Quote Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and talk about the importance of this passage and its relationship to New Testament passages and principles.

Lesson Outline

(Continued from Lesson 20)

- II. Moses' Second Message-Restatement of Laws for Godly Living (5:1-26:19) - Part I
 - A. Introduction to Moses' Second Message
 - B. Restatement of the Ten Commandments to the New Generation (5:1-33)
 - C. Three Principles of God's Laws and Covenant with Israel (6:1-8:20)

Key Verse

Moses' plea for Israel's enduring wellbeing.

"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (5:29)

Lesson Content

II. Moses' Second Message - Restatement of Laws for Godly Living (5:1-26:19)

A. Introduction to Moses' Second Message

These twenty-two chapters (5-26) contain Moses' longest message to the Israelites as they prepared to enter the Promised Land. After Moses reviewed the history of Israel's journey through the wilderness, he then began speaking about God's commandments given to them at Mount Sinai. His message is introduced in the words of Deuteronomy 4:44: "This is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel."

This section will be covered in three parts:

- Lesson 21 - Part I
- Lesson 22 - Part II
- Lesson 23 - Part III

1. Moses first restated the Ten Commandments (5:6-21).
2. Next he taught about five principles of the commandments (6:1-11:32).
3. Then he spoke about specific rules that related to the basic commandments (12:1-24:22).

4. Moses closed his message with instructions for the Israelites to bring offerings to the Levites when they took possession of the land (26:1-15).
5. Finally, he charged them to obey God with their whole heart and soul, reminding them that they were God's chosen people and nation (26:16-19).

B. Restatement of the Ten Commandments to the New Generation (5:6-21)

Moses began by urging the Israelites to hear, learn, keep, and do the commandments he would speak. He reminded them of the covenant the Lord made with their fathers at Mount Sinai as He spoke to them out of the midst of the fire (5:1-5).

Restatement of the Ten Commandments (5:6-21) – With all the adults who heard the Law at Mount Sinai already dead (except for Moses, Joshua, and Caleb), Moses spoke to the new generation. He began his message by stating the basic Ten Commandments, followed by related principles and interpretations.

The content of the Ten Commandments as given in Deuteronomy 5 is almost identical with the record of Exodus 20. One notable difference is the reason given for observing the Sabbath. Exodus relates the Sabbath rest to God's rest following His six days of Creation (20:11). Deuteronomy mentions the Sabbath as a remembrance of Israel's redemption (5:15). This seems to be an additional reason that refers to the Israelites' hard labor in Egypt and lack of rest.

Without repeating the details of the earlier Exodus lesson, remember that the Ten Commandments divide into two logical sections:

1. The first four commandments speak about Israel's relationship with God. These commandments emphasize the worship of God alone.
2. The next six commandments speak about Israel's relationships with one another. These commandments reveal the value God places on humanity and God's principles for human relationships.

These verses associate the Ten Commandments with God's covenant with Israel. In short form, the Ten Commandments express God's commands that the Israelites must obey in order to live as His covenant people. As the sovereign God, He held the right to command their obedience. Moses emphasized to the new generation that the covenant made at Mount Sinai applied to them also (5:1-3).

“The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day” (5:2-3).

As leader, Moses recognized that Israel's future success rested in their obedient acceptance of God's specific laws. In like manner, the Christian's hope of eternal salvation rests in full obedience to God's Word.

C. Principles of God's Laws and Covenant with Israel (6:1-11:32)

As Moses continued his message to Israel, he taught life principles based on the first two commandments. These commandments established that He alone was God and He required full devotion and obedience.

"I am the LORD thy God . . . Thou shalt have none other gods before me (5:6-7).

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . . Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them" (5:8-9).

Principle One: The Israelites must fear God, love God, and keep His commandments (6:1-25)

Moses acknowledged that the Lord had commanded him to teach the people so they would fear God and keep His commandments (6:1-2). As he spoke, he exhorted them to hear. Then he uttered these words, which the Jews know as the Shema.

"Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD" (6:4).

These words are recited twice daily by devoted Jews. They express the heart of ancient Israelite and Jewish worship. As the only God, He demanded total and exclusive worship.

Having made this declaration, Moses instructed the Israelites to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and might (6:5). He then commanded them to teach these truths diligently to their children (6:7). Without consistent teaching the children would cease to fear God and keep His commandments. The psalmist emphasizes this principle of teaching in Psalm 78:4-7. This same principle applies in Christian living and ministry today (Ephesians 6:4; II Timothy 2:2).

Jesus quoted from this passage (6:4-7) on more than one occasion, acknowledging that it was the heart of the Law.

"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And

thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:28-30).

(Note also Matthew 22:37-38; Luke 10:25-28.)

Israel faced the danger of exposure to the gods in Canaan. Only a firm faith in the Lord God would keep them from worship of false gods (6:12-14). Moses spoke about Israel's failure to believe God for their needs in the wilderness as a warning that they must diligently keep God's commandments (6:16-19; Exodus 17:1-7). Then he told them that they must be prepared to teach their children about God's great wonders in delivering them from Egypt and the necessity of fearing God and obeying His commandments (6:20-25).

Principle Two: The Israelites must not associate with the Canaanites and their gods (7:1-26).

The first two commandments made it clear that God's people must not associate with any form of worship focused on other gods. As God's appointed leader, Moses recognized the dangers of everyday contact with the corrupt culture and worship of the Canaanites. In preparing the Israelites for daily life when they entered Canaan, he named seven nations of people that inhabited Canaan. Then he gave strong commands that no covenants could be made with them and no marriages, for they would turn their children's hearts to other gods (7:1-4).

In addition to not associating with the Canaanites, Moses commanded the Israelites to destroy the altars and places of the Canaanite gods (7:5; 25). Having given this directive, Moses spoke encouraging and memorable words to the people. (Take special note of verses 6-9.) Moses identified the Israelites as a holy, chosen, and special people upon whom God had set His love. He reminded them that God had redeemed them by His mighty hand. Then Moses added these noteworthy words:

“Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations” (7:9).

As God's chosen and holy people, they were commanded to stay separate from the culture of the Canaanites. In verses 16-26 Moses instructed the people that they were not to be afraid of the Canaanites, and “little by little” (7:22) they were to consume or destroy them. He assured them that the Lord God would help them destroy the idolatrous Canaanite (7:23). Moses stressed the importance of destroying the false gods and not even keeping the gold and silver from the images for they were an “abomination” (7:25-26).

God's command to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan may seem difficult to understand. However, various passages, as cited earlier, make it clear that the inhabitants of Canaan had become very corrupt. Since none of the biblical writers make apology for the accounts, the reader can recognize that God had selected the Israelites for a unique purpose. As a just and faithful God, He has a divine plan that men may not fully understand but can accept by faith.

Principle Three: Moses promised God's provision to the Israelites in accordance with their remembrance of and obedience to God's laws (8:1-20).

Moses reminded the Israelites that obedience to God's commandments would bring them success in the Promised Land (8:1). Then he admonished them to "remember" God's provision that they had experienced during their forty years in the wilderness. He made note that God humbled and tested them by allowing them to suffer hunger and thirst. After they suffered, He supplied their physical needs (8:2-4, 15-16). Moses explained that God allowed them to suffer lack so they would understand this principle:

"Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live" (8:3b).

This principle emphasized the importance of obeying God's word above seeking for one's physical comfort. Jesus quoted this passage when the devil tempted Him in the wilderness (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4).

Moses described for them the good land into which God was bringing them. In the land they would have abundant provisions (8:6-9). They must remember to praise God for the good land and not forget the Provider when they had eaten and been satisfied (8:10-14). He warned Israel not to become proud and forgetful of God, thinking that their power and strength had produced their wealth (8:17-18). Forgetfulness and disobedience would indeed bring them to destruction (8:19-20).

Israel's forgetfulness in their future proved the truth of Moses' message to Israel. Forgetfulness and disobedience of God's laws do indeed bring devastation to any society or nation.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What is the theme of Moses' second message to the Israelites on the Plains of Moab?
2. How is Deuteronomy 5 related to Exodus 20?
3. What principle is established by the message contained in chapter 6?
4. What verse of Deuteronomy is stated twice daily by devoted Jews and by what title is this verse known to the Jews?
5. How did Jesus describe the commandments in Matthew 22, Mark 12, and Luke 10?
6. What principle, related to the first two commandments, is discussed in chapter 7?
7. According to the principle discussed in chapter 8, how could the Israelites be assured of success in the Promised Land?
8. Why were the Israelites instructed to destroy the false gods of the Canaanites?
9. What principle from Deuteronomy did Jesus quote when the devil suggested that He turn the stones into bread?
10. What reminder and warning did Moses give in the concluding verses of chapter 8?

Assignment

1. Read Deuteronomy 9-14.
2. Select a verse from each of these six chapters in which you find a personal application for your life. Write the verse and then state how the verse applies to your life.

Personal Study Notes

Lesson 22

Restatement of Laws for Godly Living —Principles and Regulations

Moses' Second Message - Part II

Deuteronomy 9-14

(Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Deuteronomy.)

A Truth to Live . . . History Applied

God asked Israel to fear Him, to walk in His ways, to love Him, and to serve Him wholeheartedly, assuring them that these requirements were for their good. Following God's requirements with one's whole heart is indeed the path to blessing and goodness.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Discuss how Moses reached back into Israel's history in the wilderness to remind them of how their victories would be based on God's promises and His faithfulness to them rather than on their worthiness as noted in Deuteronomy 9.
2. Show how the requirements of the old covenant find a parallel in the New Covenant relationship with the Lord.
3. Explain the instructions that Moses gave to keep the Israelites from becoming involved in worship of false gods.

Lesson Outline

(Continued from Lesson 21)

- II. Restatement of Laws for Godly Living (5:1-26:19) - Part 2
 - C. Principles of God's Laws and Covenant with Israel (9:1-11:25)
 - D. Acceptance or Rejection of God's principles: Blessing or a Curse (11:26-32)
 - E. Regulations Related to God's Laws and Covenant with Israel (12:1-14:29)

Key Verses

God's requirements bring God's blessings.

"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (10:12-13).

Lesson Content:

II. Restatement of Laws for Godly Living (5:1-26:19) - Part II Principles and Regulations

C. Principles of God's Laws and Covenant with Israel (9:1-11:25)

Principle Four: Israel's victories depended on God's faithfulness and righteousness and not on their worthiness (9:1-29).

Once again Moses reminded the Israelites that they would face powerful nations with strong cities as they crossed the Jordan River. However, he assured them that God would go before them like a devouring fire to drive out the inhabitants (9:1-3).

Moses then explained that God would drive out the "nations" because of the wickedness of the nations and in fulfillment of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 15:18-21; 17:8). Moses admonished Israel not to credit their victories to their righteousness, for they were a "stiff-necked people" (9:4-6). Moses defined what he meant in calling the Israelites a stiff-necked people:

“Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD” (9:7).

With this introduction, Moses reached back into the record of Israel's forty years in the wilderness and cited examples of their rebelliousness (9:8-24). Then he told how he had fervently prayed for the Lord to not destroy the people for their rebellion (9:25-29). God had responded by instructing Moses to make new tablets with the Ten Commandments and place them in safe keeping in the Ark (10:1-5). During this time, Moses stayed on the mountain for forty days. Then he returned to the camp with God's answer that He would not destroy Israel but would spare them so that they could possess the land he had promised to their fathers (10:10-11).

This portion of Israel's history demonstrates the significance of a leader's role in interceding for wayward people and directing them back to the path of God's laws and His righteousness.

Principle Five: Restatement of the first and foundational principle that fearing God, loving Him, and keeping His commandments was essential for their success in Canaan (10:12-11:32).

“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?” (10:12-13).

Moses asked a question (10:12-13), which included the answer, as a reminder to the Israelites of how they could maintain their covenant relationship with God. God chose them as His own and loved them (10:15). In return He asked for their obedience to His commandments, which would bring them success in possessing and living in the Land of Promise (11:8-9).

These requirements of the Mosaic Covenant find a parallel in the New Covenant relationship with the Lord:

- Fearing the Lord their God (Acts 9:31; II Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:28; I Peter 2:17)
- Walking in all His ways (Romans 6:4; 8:1; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 2:10; 5:8; Colossians 2:6; I John 1:7, II John 1:6)
- Loving the Lord (Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27)

- Serving the Lord their God with all their heart and soul (Romans 12:10-15; Acts 20:19-20)
- Keeping the commandments and statutes (Matthew 22:36-40)

Moses emphasized the greatness of Israel's God (10:17). He reminded them that their fathers went into Egypt as seventy in number and came out as a great multitude (10:22). Then he listed for them some of the miracles God had performed in bringing them out of Egypt and leading them through the wilderness (11:2-6).

“But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD which he did” (11:7).

Moses described Canaan as a land for which God showed great care. He would send the needed rains in season in accordance with Israel's love for God and their obedience to His commandments (11:12-15). However, if Israel turned aside to other gods, the Lord would pour out His wrath (11:16-17).

Again Moses admonished the people to faithfully teach God's word to their children. (Compare 6:7-9 and 11:19-20.) In so doing they would be assured of possessing and prospering in Canaan, the Land of Promise (11:22-25).

D. Acceptance or Rejection of God's Principles: Blessing or a Curse (11:26-32)

Having stated these principles, Moses set two choices before them (11:26-28):

1. If they chose to obey God's commandments, they would be blessed.
2. If they chose to disobey and turn aside to other gods, they would be cursed.

Moses then gave instructions that they should assemble at Mount Gerezim and Mount Ebal upon entry into Canaan. There they would speak of the blessings and cursings (11:29-32). In his third message to Israel, Moses enumerated the blessings and cursings that would happen to Israel based on their obedience or disobedience in the Promised Land (27:1-29:1). Joshua 8:30-35 records the account of Israel gathering at these mountains for the covenant renewal ceremony.

E. Regulations Related to God's Laws and Covenant with Israel (12:1-25:19)

The next fourteen chapters contain many instructional details about Israel's daily life and worship when they settled in the Promised Land. This section will be summarized by a descriptive title for each chapter followed by brief comments.

1. Place of Worship and Laws for Worship (12:1-32) – Chapter 12 relates to the first two commandments forbidding “other gods” or “graven images” (5:7-8). Moses began and ended this section with instructions to destroy all aspects of false worship, including the places of worship, the altars and images (12:1-3, 29-31). The heart of the chapter focuses on the manner of Israel’s worship, which was to be centered in “the place which the LORD your God shall choose” (12:5, 11, 14, 18, 21, 26).

A central place of worship separated the people from the practices and influence of Canaanite worship. Moses spoke about the sacrifices and offerings to be brought for the Israelites’ worship (12:6, 26-27) as detailed in the Book of Leviticus. Their worship was to be a time of rejoicing before the Lord (12:6, 12, 18).

As Moses gave instructions about Israel’s worship, he inserted a special note to “forsake not the Levite” (12:19). He clarified that their worship included provision for those who served in the place of worship.

2. Warnings against Being Influenced to Worship Other Gods (13:1-18) – Moses gave strong warnings against individuals or cities who would entice the people to “go after other gods” (13:1-3, 6, 12-13). Such influencers were to be destroyed (13:9, 15). Because of the subtle influence of pagan worship, God did not want the Israelites to even ask about their practices (see 12:30). Moses emphasized that Israel must not listen to the dreams or ideas of someone who suggested going “after other gods.” He admonished the people to wholeheartedly follow the LORD their God by walking, fearing, keeping, obeying, serving, and cleaving (read verse 4).

While the Christian may not be enticed by pagan idols or shrines, the world offers many enticements that can lead a person away from God. Any activity or company that offers a lifestyle that contradicts godly principles should be rejected and avoided by the Christian.

3. Instructions about Clean and Unclean Foods and about Tithes (14:1-29)

Foods: In listing some prohibitions about the Israelites’ conduct and food, Moses explained the basis for these restrictions:

“For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth” (14:2).

God did not want His people to participate in pagan rites (14:1). He gave them special dietary rules that set them apart from their pagan neighbors (14:3-21; Leviticus 11:1-47). While we may not fully understand the restrictions, we can know that God had Israel’s spiritual and physical welfare in mind.

The Tithe (14:22-29) – Moses again mentioned the tithe, giving instructions about bringing it to “the place” that God had chosen (14:23). If one-tenth of one’s goods could not be brought, then the tithe was to be converted to money (14:25). The bringing of the tithe was to be a joyful time (14:26). At the end of three years, all the tithe was to be brought. The tithe provided for the Levites and for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows (14:28-29). Moses reminded the people that their tithe brought God’s blessing upon the work of their hands (14:29c).

Summary: The principles expressed by God’s laws provided Israel with the guidelines for living a life pleasing to God. As they feared God, walked with God, loved Him, and served Him with their whole heart and soul, they would keep His commandments. In other cultures, only the priests lived by strict regulations. In Israel, all the people were to be a holy people (14:2), a people set apart to represent God to the world.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What was the principle on which Israel’s victories would be based?
2. What explanation did Moses give for why God would drive out the nations and give the land of Canaan to the Israelites?
3. To whom was the land of Canaan first promised?
4. What explanation did Moses give for calling the Israelites a “stiffnecked people”?
5. What leadership lesson can be seen in the account of Moses praying and fasting for the Israelites after they fashioned a golden calf at Mount Sinai?
6. What did God require of His people for them to receive His promises?
7. What two choices did Moses set before the people in chapter 11?
8. What were the people to do at Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal when they entered Canaan?
9. What was the purpose of a central place of worship in Canaan?
10. What warnings did Moses give about those who would cause the people to worship other gods?
11. What reason did Moses give for restrictions about foods?
12. What was the purpose of the tithe and how did it benefit the Israelites?

Assignment

1. Read Deuteronomy 15-26 (12 chapters).
2. Draw a simple map that shows the area of Canaan and the Plains of Moab and show on this map the location of the six cities of refuge (See Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 19:1-7; Joshua 20:1-9).
3. Read carefully Deuteronomy 18:14-22 and note its association with Acts 3:22-23 and John 7:40.

Lesson 23

Regulations Related to God's Laws and Covenant with Israel

Moses' Second Message - Part III

Deuteronomy 15-26

(Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Deuteronomy.)

A Truth to Live . . . History Applied

God gave the Israelites detailed regulations for their daily lives. A good and profitable life is experienced in knowing and following God's regulations and guidelines.

Lesson Objectives

The student should be able to . . .

1. Explain the various regulations that Moses outlined for the Israelites regarding financial matters such as tithes and offerings, giving to the poor, and provisions for debt pardon.
2. Describe the purpose and manner of the three annual pilgrimage festivals.
3. Identify the prophetic passages that speak of a future king in Israel and of the Messiah.
4. Discuss various laws that pertained to the Israelites' relationships in the family and community.

Lesson Outline

- II. Restatement of Laws for Godly Living (15:1-26:19) - Part III
 - E. Regulations Related to God's Laws and Covenant with Israel (15:1-25:19)

(Continued from Lesson 22)

4. Debt Pardon in the Sabbatical Year/Giving to the Poor (15:1-23)
5. Three Pilgrimage Festivals (16:1-17)
6. Judges, False Worship, Levitical Law Court (16:18-17:13)
7. Future Choice of a King (17:14-20)
8. Offerings for Priests and Levites, Ungodly Practices (18:1-13)
9. Prophetic Passage (18:14-22; Acts 3:22, 23)
10. Cities of Refuge, False Witnesses (19:1-21)
11. Instructions for War (20:1-20)
12. Laws for Human Relationships (21:1-25:19)

Key Verse

A godly lifestyle is rewarded with God's promises.

“That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee” (16:20).

Lesson Content

II. Restatement of Laws for Godly Living (5:1-26:19) - Part III

E. Regulations Related to God's Laws and Covenant with Israel (15:1-25:19)

4. Debt Pardon in the Sabbatical Year/Giving to the Poor (15:1-23)

God gave Israel a unique law that aided the unfortunate. At the end of every seven years (sabbatical year), debts of fellow Israelites were to be cancelled (15:1-2) and indentured servants freed (15:12-14). Also, Moses instructed the Israelites that they must be generous in giving to the poor (15:7-10). Moses assured the Israelites that God would reward their generosity with blessing.

5. Three Pilgrimage Festivals (16:1-17; Exodus 23:14-19)

As Moses prepared the Israelites for entry into the Promised Land, he gave renewed instruction about the three pilgrimage festivals to be observed every year. The Israelite males were to travel to Jerusalem for these festivals where they would bring offerings with rejoicing (16:16-17).

- a) The Passover (16:1-8; Exodus 12:1-28; Leviticus 23:5-8; Numbers 28:1-25)

- b) The Feast of Weeks (16:9-12; Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26-31)
- c) The Feast of Tabernacles (16:13-15; Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:33-43)

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee” (16:17).

Under the old covenant God designed that His people should come together for worship and giving. The New Covenant likewise calls for God's people to assemble together for worship (Hebrews 10:25). Christians are also commanded to be givers (Luke 6:38).

6. Judges/False Worship/Levitical Law Court (16:18-17:13)

Moses instructed Israel to appoint judges and officers throughout their tribes. These judges were to judge fairly and not take bribes (16:18-20). In addition, a court of Levitical priests was to be chosen to deal with the cases too difficult for the tribal judges (17:8-13).

Moses gave an example of a case of false worship that had to be diligently examined for judgment to be decided (17:2-7). Matters worthy of death had to be verified by two or three witnesses (17:6).

7. Future Choice of a King (17:14-20)

In speaking about a king in Israel, Moses spoke prophetically about a future time when Israel would desire a king as other nations (I Samuel 8:4-5). Biblical references to a king are found as early as the days of the patriarchs (Genesis 17:16; 35:11 49:10). Moses mentioned five things regarding the king:

- The king must be an Israelite (17:15).
- The king must not multiply horses for himself (17:16)
- The king must not multiply wives to himself (17:17a)
- The king must not multiply silver and gold to himself (17:17b)
- The king should write a copy of the law to read, keep, and do (17:18-20).

8. Offerings for Priests and Levites/Ungodly Practices (18:1-13)

Moses reminded the Israelites that the priests and the Levites would not receive any land inheritance. Their provisions would come from the offerings brought by the Israelites. Moses reminded the people that their offerings should be from the best of their meat and fruits (18:3-4).

Moses warned Israel to never participate in any of the pagan practices (18:9-12). He admonished them to “be perfect with the LORD thy God” (18:13).

9. Prophetic Passage (18:14-22) - See Acts 3:22-23.

This passage contains a twofold message. Moses spoke about the importance of a prophet, one who speaks for God, speaking only truth. The word of a true prophet would be fulfilled as spoken (18:22). Men who presumed to be prophets and spoke falsely were to die (18:20).

Significantly, Moses spoke prophetically about Jesus, the Messiah (18:15, 18). In preaching to the “men of Israel” at the Temple, Peter preached about Jesus and identified Him as the prophet of whom Moses spoke.

“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken” (18:15).

“For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:22-23).

10. Cities of Refuge – False Witnesses (19:1-21)

The sixth commandment forbade murder (wrongful or unlawful killing). The penalty for murder was death. Under the Law, a family member (“avenger of blood”) of one who was murdered could seek to kill the murderer (19:12; Numbers 35:12). To protect the innocent, Moses designated that cities of refuge be established where the Israelite who accidentally caused the death of someone could run to safety. Six cities were designated in Israel as cities of refuge — three east of Jordan and three west (19:1-3, 7-9; 4:41-43; Numbers 35:9-15; Joshua 20:1-9).

A false witness: Moses taught that diligent inquiry must be made when an accusation was brought against a person. If a man brought a false witness against someone, the judgment that he sought must then be given to him. This type of judgment caused men to fear and not lie (19:15-21).

11. Instructions for War (20:1-20)

Moses gave instructions for warfare in taking possession of Canaan or fighting enemies outside of their land. As the Israelites faced each battle, the priest was to come

near and speak words of encouragement to not fear, faint, tremble, or be terrified. Their victory was assured.

“For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you” (20:4).

Some men were exempt from fighting:

- A man who had built a new house and had not yet dedicated it (20:5)
- A man who had planted a vineyard and had not eaten of it (20:6)
- A man who had just become pledged to marry (20:7). He could stay at home one year to be with his wife (24:5).
- A man who was fearful or faint-hearted (20:8).

The rules for warfare differed according to the location of the city. Cities that were far away and not part of Canaan could be made tributaries if they agreed to a peace offer from Israel. If they refused, all the males of the city were to be killed. The women, children, and goods could be spared (20:10-15). But no breathing person or animal could be spared in the cities within the Promised Land (20:16-17). This order was in accordance with the rules for holy war which Moses had commanded earlier (7:1-5). The purpose of Israel's wars was to destroy pagan practices, which would entice Israel into sin.

“That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God” (20:18).

12. Laws for Human Relationships (21:1-25:19)

Social laws – Chapter 21 includes a variety of laws regarding human relationships. These laws address situations that deal with crimes, justice, treatment of women taken captive in war, respect toward wives, rebellious sons, and respectful treatment of the dead.

Neighborly Deeds/Marital Issues/Sexual Purity (22:1-30) – Moses spoke about showing concern and care for animals that have strayed (22:1-4). He then gave brief rules about matters related to care of their houses, lands, and clothing (22:5-12). Moses' statement in verse 5 calls attention to the biblical principle that God created man and woman as distinctively different. Moses commanded that men and women must manifest that difference even in their apparel.

“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God” (22:5).

Moses gave rules for dealing with marital problems (22:13-21). He followed this with judgments to be exercised on those who become involved in sexual activity outside of marriage (22:22-30).

Rules for Worship and Various Matters (23:1-25) – Moses reminded the Israelites that some things would disqualify a person from entering the place of worship (23:1-8). Though these particulars do not relate to the Christian era, the principle remains. Any person desiring to enter into God's presence must come according to God's provisions (John 3:5).

In addition, Moses spoke about matters of hygiene, treatment of slaves, prohibition of prostitution and sodomy, loaning to fellow Israelites without interest, and payment of vows (23:9-23). He ruled that an Israelite could eat from a neighbor's vineyard or field while standing there, but he could take out no harvest (23:24-25).

Divorce/Care for the Weak and Poor (24:1-22) – Moses' command about divorce in this passage addresses a singular issue and not all instances of divorce. He ruled that a man who had divorced his wife could not remarry her after she had been married to another man (24:1-4). He then added that a newlywed should be released from military duty for one year (24:5).

Dealing with various matters of Israelite life, Moses continued teaching. He spoke against kidnapping children and making merchandise of them (24:7). His statutes showed protection for the dignity and reputation of one's fellow man. He spoke about regard for lepers (24:8-9), debtors (24:10-13), poor debtors (24:14-15), strangers, orphans, and widows (24:17-18). He stressed that some of the harvest of grain or fruit should be left for the poor to gather (24:19-21). This gave the poor a means of obtaining food without resorting to begging.

Punishment, the Ox, Levirate Marriage, Honesty (25:1-19) – Moses decreed that punishment for a guilty person must not be excessive. A beating could not exceed forty stripes (25:1-3).

Moses included teaching about allowing the ox to eat as it treaded out the grain (25:4). Apostle Paul referred to this passage when he taught about giving to support the elders who taught and preached in the church (I Timothy 5:17-18).

Verses 5-10 explain the Mosaic law that provided for a man to inherit his dead brother's property in order to provide for his brother's widow. This kept the property within the family. The law provided for the brother to marry the widow, if she had no children, and raise up children to carry on the name of his brother. If the brother refused to take on this obligation, it would be noted by the elders as a disgrace (25:10). Biblical

scholars refer to this as the custom of the levirate marriage. *Levirate* is defined as marriage to the widow of one's brother.

The "perfect and just weight," as mentioned in verse 15, expresses the key thought of verses 13-19. Moses stressed to the Israelites that they must be honest in all of their dealings and relationships. He used the example of the Amalekites as those who dealt unfairly and whose memory should be blotted out (25:17-19).

F. Moses' Charge to Be Givers and Obey God Wholeheartedly (26:1-19)

Giving the Firstfruits to God (26:1-11) – As Moses concluded his second message, he instructed the Israelites to remember God's provision when they settled in the land. Moses told them they must take their firstfruits of harvest in a basket to the priest. This offering was to be brought every year during the Feast of Weeks. (See Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Numbers 28:26-31; Deuteronomy 16:9-12.) When they presented the firstfruits to the priest, the priest would set the basket in front of the altar. Then the giver was to rehearse the story of Israel's sojourn in Egypt and their miraculous deliverance by the mighty hand of God. Bowing down by his basket, the giver was to rejoice for the good things the Lord God had given to him and his household.

Exodus records Moses' earlier command that Israel must bring their firstfruits each year during the Festival of Weeks (Exodus 23:16, 19; 34:22). This offering provided for the Levites who had no land inheritance (Deuteronomy 12:6-19; 14:22-27; 18:3-5). As noted in these passages, Moses made frequent mention of the manner in which the Israelites were to provide for Levites. This provision included the priests, who were Levites. (Reminder: All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests.)

Bringing the Tithe (26:12-15) – These verses describe a third-year tithe of produce that was to be taken to the Levites (See 14:28-29). This tithe provided food for the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (26:12). As the Israelite brought the tithe, he was to declare his honesty before the Lord and ask for God's blessing (26:13-15).

Following God's Command Wholeheartedly (26:16-19) – Moses ended his second message by charging the Israelites to keep God's commandments with all their heart and soul (26:16-17). He reminded them that they were chosen above all nations to be God's peculiar or treasured people. Their obedience to God's commandments set them apart as holy people unto the LORD their God (26:18-19).

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What was the sabbatical year and what two things took place during this year?
2. What three annual festivals required the Israelite males to travel to Jerusalem?
3. What provision did Moses make for dealing with problems and by whom were the difficult cases to be handled?
4. What five stipulations did Moses give regarding a king in Israel?
5. What was the two-fold message of the prophetic passage of Deuteronomy 18:14-22?
6. What was the purpose of the cities of refuge and where were they to be established?
7. The priests were commanded to speak what message to the men going into battle and what was the reason for destroying the Canaanites?
8. What men were exempt from going to war?
9. What biblical principle relates to the command of Deuteronomy 22:5?
10. What different groups of people did Moses express concern for in his statement of laws about human relationships?
11. What instruction did Moses give regarding a levirate marriage?
12. What instructions did Moses give regarding how Israel must give and pay tithes when they settled in the Promised Land?

Assignment

1. Read Deuteronomy 27-34.
2. Memorize Deuteronomy 32:4 and 33:27.

Lesson 24

Israel Called to Obedience and Covenant Renewal

Moses' Third and Fourth Messages: Deuteronomy 27-33

Record of Moses' Death: Deuteronomy 34

(Unless noted, numbers in parentheses are Scripture references in Deuteronomy.)

A Truth to Live . . . History Applied

As Moses faced his final days, he urgently pled with the Israelites to recommit to the covenant, choosing to love God and obey His voice. Spiritual leaders under the New Covenant find a pattern in Moses that reminds them of their responsibility to continue calling Christians to renewed commitment.

Objectives

The students should be able to . . .

1. Describe Moses' call for a recommitment to the covenant and his directions for Israel to gather on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal to rehearse the "blessings and cursings" in pleading for Israel to make a choice for life or death.
2. Give a summary of the final happenings of Moses' life as he finalized the written law, commissioned Joshua, and spoke his final words to Israel.
3. Tell the story of Moses' death and burial and identify the verse that identifies him as a great prophet whom God knew "face to face."

Lesson Outline

(Continued from Lesson 23)

- III. Moses' Third Message - Recommitment to the Covenant (27:1-30:20)
- IV. Moses' Fourth Message - Reminders to Know and Obey God's Laws (31:1-33:29)
- V. Record of Moses' Death and Burial (34:1-12)

Key Verses

Moses' urgent and final plea to Israel.

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (30:19-20).

Lesson Content

III. Moses' Third Message – Recommitment to the Covenant (27:1-30:20)

After Moses restated the laws for godly living in his second message to Israel (5-26), he then spoke about the blessings or curses they would receive for keeping or breaking the commandments of God's covenant (27-28). He then summarized the covenant and appealed to Israel to be faithful to the covenant (29). Moses ended this message by setting before Israel the contrast between life and death. He challenged them to choose life by cleaving to God and obeying His voice (30).

A. Plea for Covenant Obedience and Mount Ebal Curses (27:1-26)

In company with the elders of Israel, Moses again commanded the people to keep all the commandments. He instructed them to inscribe the law on stones before they entered Canaan and then carry the stones across the Jordan River and set them up at Mount Ebal. On arrival at Mount Ebal the Israelites were to build an altar and offer burnt and peace offerings with rejoicing. Having given these directives, Moses declared, "You have now become the people of the LORD your God" (verse 9). Their entry into the land

would complete the threefold aspect of what made them a nation: people, laws, and land (27:1-10).

Moses then gave these instructions for a special ceremony to take place after Israel's entry into the Promised Land: Six of the tribes (Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin) should stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people. The other six tribes (Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali) should stand on Mount Ebal to curse the people (27:11-14). With the tribes standing on the mountains, the Levites were to speak the curses and the blessings. Those standing on Mount Ebal would say "amen" when they heard the curses that would fall upon those who disobeyed God's covenant. Chapter 27 lists twelve curses and chapter 28 mentions additional ones (27:15-26; 28:16-68). Those standing on Mount Gerizim would respond in the same manner to the blessings spoken. As each Israelite heard and responded, he would affirm his personal responsibility to keep the covenant. He would also acknowledge the consequences of his behavior.

Joshua 8:30-35 gives the account of this ratification ceremony that took place after Israel's conquest of the southern portion of Canaan.

B. Blessings and Curses (28:1-68)

After describing disobedient acts that would bring curses upon the people, Moses spoke about the blessings that would come to those who faithfully hearkened to the voice of the Lord. The blessings promised a good life to the obedient. The blessings covered Israel's personal, social, economic, and national life. Many of the blessings referred to the fertility of the land and the prosperity of their flocks and herds (28:3-5, 8, 11-12). Other blessings referred to Israel's significance as a people and a nation (28:1, 7, 10, 13).

"And the LORD shall make thee the head and not the tail" (28:13a).

Moses began and ended this assurance of blessings with the condition of Israel's obedience to the covenant commandments (28:1; 13-14). "If" Israel hearkened to the voice of the Lord, they would indeed be blessed.

"The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways" (28:9).

After summarizing the blessings, Moses spoke again about curses. The lengthy list of curses compared to the listing of blessings (four to one) reveals God's concern for Israel's future. The curses for disobedience would certainly undo the blessings for obedience (note verse 45). The curses foresaw Israel being taken into captivity by Babylon (28: 49, 64-65. Note II Kings 25:1-26; Psalm 137).

“The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand” (28:49).

C. Israel's Choice: Life or Death (29:1-30:20)

A Call to Faithfulness (29:1-29) – Once again, as he had done in his first message, Moses reminded Israel of God's mighty acts of deliverance (29:2-8). With this reminder, Moses called the people to be faithful to God's covenant with them (29:9). He appealed to all Israel to stand before the Lord and personally enter into the covenant (29:10-15). As God's spokesman, Moses foresaw the trouble that would come to Israel in forsaking the covenant (29:18-29). History reveals that His message foretold about Israel's captivity and dispersion into all the world (29:28).

A Call for Decision – Choose Life or Death (30:1-20) – Chapter 29 ends on a sad note in prediction of Israel's being “rooted out of their land” because of forsaking God's covenant (29:28). Chapter 30 begins with words of hope. Moses spoke about how God would extend mercy and forgiveness when Israel would choose to obey God's voice after their time in captivity (30:1-3).

Moses challenged Israel to make the right decision in choosing between “life and death.” (Read 30:15-20.) Moses admonished them to affirm their covenant relationship with God. He clearly defined the choice: to love and obey God was life; to reject God was death (30:19-20). Rejection of God's covenant with them would bring severe punishment (30:17-18).

“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (30:19).

The New Covenant calls everyone to choose spiritual life by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul quoted verses 12-14 in Romans 10:6-8 when he spoke about salvation through faith in Christ. In using the words of Moses, Paul confirmed that the message of salvation through Christ was clear and understandable.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them” (Romans 10:4-5).

IV. Moses' Fourth Message – Reminders to Know and Obey God's Laws (31:1-33:29)

These final four chapters of Deuteronomy summarize the last days of Israel's life before their entry into the Promised Land. They describe Moses' last message to Israel, his writing of the law, Joshua's commission, and the Song of Moses.

A. Last Words of Moses

At 120 years of age, Moses gave his final message to Israel. He began his message by assuring Israel of God's help. He charged them to be strong, courageous, and unafraid because God would go before them (31:3-6). Then Moses called Joshua and repeated this same charge to him (31:7-8).

B. The Written Law

A significant work of Moses as Israel's leader was his writing of the Law that God had given through him. As part of his last message to Israel, Moses delivered this Law to the priests with instructions that it must be read every seven years during the Feast of Tabernacles. He stipulated that men, women, and children should hear the Law so that they would learn to fear God and obey His laws (31:9-13). He told the Levites to put the Law in a book and place it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant as a testimony against Israel's future evils (31:24-27). Only the Ten Commandments were placed inside the Ark.

Then God told Moses that he would soon die (31:14a).

“And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord saying, take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee” (31:24-26).

C. Joshua Commissioned

As commanded by God, Moses brought Joshua to the Tabernacle so that God could give Joshua a charge (31:14). As they stood in the Tabernacle, God appeared in a cloud and talked with Moses in Joshua's presence. God warned that Israel would turn to other gods after the death of Moses, bringing judgment upon themselves. Certainly, this gave Joshua an understanding of the challenges he would face in leading Israel. After speaking these things, God Himself commissioned Joshua with this charge:

“Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them on oath, and I myself will be with you” (31:23, NIV).

D. The Song of Moses (31:22; 32:1-52)

God told Moses to write a song that would be a witness among them in the years to come of God's faithfulness and Israel's waywardness. Music does carry a message that replays in the mind. Amazingly, Moses wrote the song in one day and taught it to the people, reciting the words from beginning to end (32:1).

The "Song of Moses" stands as a masterpiece of Hebrew poetry. It praises the great acts of God on behalf of His people along with notations of Israel's erring and God's certain judgment. Frequent references in the song refer to God as "the Rock" (32:4, 13, 15, 18, 30, 31, 37). After teaching this song, Moses reminded the Israelites that they must teach the Law to their children for it was their life (32:44-47). (Note: A reading of Ezekiel 16 reveals similarities with this song.)

E. The Blessing of Moses on the Tribes of Israel (33:1-29)

Verse 1 describes the intent of Moses' last words to the Israelites. This verse also includes the first use in Scripture of the phrase "the man of God." Later in the Old Testament, it is found some seventy times.

"And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death" (33:1).

Though many of his messages to Israel had been words of warning and reproof, Moses' last words expressed his desire for Israel to be blessed. He began his blessings by praising the works and love of God (33:2-5). He ended the blessings by offering praise to God and acknowledging His care (33:26-29).

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them" (33:27).

Jacob had blessed his sons who were the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 49). Some of Jacob's blessings contained curses. But Moses spoke only positive things, desiring good things if Israel remained faithful to God. With the exception of Simeon, Moses spoke blessings on all the tribes. Joseph is blessed through his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. These blessings were likely recorded by someone other than Moses.

V. Record of Moses' Death and Burial (34:1-12)

After Moses had written and taught his song, God told him to ascend Mount Nebo where he could view the Promised Land, and there he would die (32:49-52). Chapter 34 reports that Moses heeded God's word and went up Mount Nebo (the highest peak of the Pisgah range). The record of Moses' death was obviously written by someone other than Moses, most likely Joshua.

“And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither” (34:4).

The Scripture states that Moses died still having good eyesight and physical strength (34:7). Verse 6 indicates that God buried him where no man knew his grave. The Israelites remained in Moab for thirty days to mourn his death (34:8). Though God forbade him to enter Canaan because of his earlier failure (32:51-52), Moses was honored in Israel as a great prophet.

“And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face” (34:10).

As Moses ascended Mount Nebo and passed from view, God's anointing rested on Joshua. Soon Israel would advance into the Promised Land led by a man of wisdom who had manifested faith nearly four decades earlier.

“And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses” (34:9).

Though the events of Deuteronomy took place long ago, God's message through Moses and Israel speaks yet today. Through the preserved word of the old covenant, fulfilled in the New Covenant, God continues to call His children to a life of obedience to His commands and principles. With obedience comes God's blessings and the assurance of His love and provision of salvation.

Questions for Lesson Review

1. What was the theme of Moses' third message to Israel (27-30)?
2. When did Israel officially become a nation and what three things identified them as a nation?

3. What were the Israelites commanded to prepare before they crossed the Jordan?
4. Describe the scene of what was to take place when the Israelites arrived at Mount Ebal.
5. What did Moses instruct the Israelites to do at Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal in making a recommitment to the covenant?
6. What is the main subject of Deuteronomy 27-28?
7. What choices was Moses calling the Israelites to make in Deuteronomy 29-30?
8. How was Joshua commissioned to take Moses' place as the leader of Israel?
9. What instructions did Moses give to the Levites about keeping the written law in a safe place?
10. What type of message did Moses deliver to Israel before his death (33)?
11. After Moses taught his song to Israel as a witness of God's faithfulness, what did he tell the Israelites to do for their children?
12. How did Moses' death and burial take place?

Assignment

Review lessons for final exam.

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Missionary Spotlight: Harold Glen and Rachel Smith



Glen and Rachel Smith were in diapers when they first met. R. C. and Lota Hall and baby Rachel stayed with the Robert Henry Smith family—which included toddler Harold Glen—while R. C. held a revival in Eros, Louisiana. The families remained close friends through the years. However, the Smiths remained in Eros with Henry working at the sawmill and later the paper mill to support his family. R. C. and his family moved around, pastoring congregations in Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas. Glen joined the US Navy when he was seventeen. He and Rachel married June 22, 1941, shortly after she graduated from high school and he came home from the Navy.

As a child and young teen, Glen had seen God bless his parents as they faithfully put God first in everything. That all seemed to end when Henry injured his back at the paper mill and could no longer work. Glen lost faith, quit going to church, and became the stereotypical boozing, brawling sailor. Even after they married and Rachel continued being active in church, Glen remained unmoved. He re-enlisted in the Navy after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. For the next four years, Glen served in the Atlantic on board a submarine chaser, surviving four major naval battles by Rachel's intercessory prayers.

In January 1954, Arless Glass began a four-week revival at the church in West Monroe, Louisiana. On Valentine's Day, a Sunday, Glen decided to please Rachel by going to church with her. After Brother Glass preached, he walked back to Glen, laid his hand on Glen's shoulder, and "just gave a little tug." Glen responded and went to the altar. The next night, February 15, 1954, Glen Smith received the Holy Ghost. This was the answer to Rachel's nine years of praying following the war.

Glen Smith's daily devotion to God, consistent study of the Word, as well as his enthusiasm and faithfulness to church and to God inspired the West Monroe church. God made a soldier of the cross out of ex-Chief Boatswain's Mate Glen Smith. Never one to

fritter away time wondering what to do, Glen put on the ‘whole armour of the Lord’ and picked up his sword (the Bible) right away.³

Various doors of ministry opened for Glen and Rachel and they began holding revivals and preaching around as their work schedules permitted. Glen was now working at Montgomery Ward department store as display manager. His supervisor approached him and said that the corporate office in Chicago was offering Glen the regional display manager job for a nine-state area. However, a career with a department store no longer appealed to the young preacher. Instead of accepting the promotion, Glen and Rachel became fulltime evangelists.

In 1958, a letter from A. D. Varnado, a former pastor of the church in West Monroe, changed the course for the young couple. The letter was a Macedonian call for the Smiths to come to Jamaica to help the Varnados. Without any financial backing or promise of support, the Smiths sold their 1954 Oldsmobile 98 and went to Kingston, Jamaica.



The Varnados already had the Smiths scheduled to preach a revival for young Norman Houslin—later the district superintendent of Jamaica—in Ocho Rios on the island’s north shore. The blessings of the Lord rained on the services. Revival continued to follow the Smiths as they crisscrossed the island.

After three months, Brother Varnado advised Glen to get a missionary appointment. Glen had had the Holy Ghost for only five years and was unsure of the next steps to take. Nevertheless, they returned home, met the Foreign Missions Board at the 1959 General Conference, and returned to Jamaica in October as fully appointed missionaries. The Pentecostal Conquerors had blessed them with a nineteen-and-a-half-foot travel trailer and a Chevrolet. The Smiths’ personal allotment was the standard \$50 a month per person.

The travel trailer was the first of its kind in Jamaica and drew a lot of attention as the Smiths pulled the trailer over the narrow, hilly country roads to Ocho Rios, St. Ann’s Bay, Bamboo, Nutfield, Montego Bay, Spanish Town, Bog Walk, Warsup, Waitabit, and

³ Glen and Rachel Smith with Mary Wallace, *Caribbean Call*, (Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1991), 53.

several other small towns and villages. Over six hundred people received the Holy Ghost. Permanent churches developed in Golden Grove, Warsup, Schoolfield, and other villages.

During these revivals, Glen saw how the whole Caribbean area could be reached with the gospel. He envisioned using Puerto Rico, a US commonwealth, as a base to reach the other islands. In October 1963, the Foreign Missions Board changed Glen and Rachel's appointment to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.



The Smiths arrived in Puerto Rico February 25, 1964. Two men met them and invited them to stay in the home of Nicholas and Lucrecia Pastrana. (Nicholas and Lucrecia, along with Charles and Doris Ortez, had been baptized in Jesus' name by Frank Munsey in 1962.) The Pastranas, the Ortezes, and the Adrian Santos family became Glen's first congregation. Others followed.

Edwin Judd noted in the October 1969 *Global Witness*, "Puerto Rico has witnessed a move of God during the past five years. Seven churches and preaching stations have been established. Over 200 have received the baptism of water and Spirit. This base has also resulted in reaching souls in the Dominican Republic and Haiti where over 800 have been baptized in the past year."⁴

Many North American guests visited the Smiths and ministered in Puerto Rico and on other islands. Guests quickly learned that H. G. Smith was frugal. He and Sister Rachel lived humbly. His car did not have air conditioning. He thought paying an extra dollar a night for air conditioning was too much—even though the hotel room was only \$6 a night and included three meals. They also learned that Rachel could bake delicious coconut cakes.

In 1965 Glen received a letter from a man in the Dominican Republic telling of receiving a tract on the oneness of God, *Is Jesus in the Godhead?* from Howard and Harvey Davis in California. "The letter said, in essence, 'Your address is on the tract so we are writing you to come and baptize us. Fourteen of us here have received the message of the oneness of God. We are fasting and praying that someone will come and baptize us in the name of Jesus. If you can't come soon, we'll baptize each other.'"⁵

⁴ Edwin E. Judd, "Puerto Rico," *Global Witness* (October 1969): 4.

⁵ Smith, 78.

Naturally, Glen and some Puerto Rican brethren answered the call. When they arrived at the Garcia home for service, almost a hundred people overflowed the twelve-by-fourteen-foot room. Glen preached about the crucified Christ. Shortly after Glen returned home from baptizing the Dominicans, civil war tore the country apart. Glen did not have a chance to return for two years.

Glen wrote an article about the Dominican Republic that appeared in the *Pentecostal Herald*. A Haitian pastor saw the report and invited Glen to Haiti. He went to Haiti in 1966. In a short time, he applied for a charter for the United Pentecostal Church of Haiti.

Glen stated:

We were really hurting for finance by this time. We had opened the work in the Dominican Republic, as well as in Haiti and in St. Croix [US Virgin Islands], all before 1969. In just five years from 1964 to 1969, we had over a hundred churches and preaching places in Haiti, seven churches in the Dominican Republic, and ten in Puerto Rico. We had to operate this work on three hundred dollars per month plus the profit we made from selling pastelles, coconut cakes, and woodwork.⁶

The Smiths pioneered a work in St. Maarten, the Dutch side of St. Martin, in 1970.

Regarding the Smiths, *The Foreign Missions Story 1988* states:

Using Puerto Rico as a base, they reached out to other nations of the Caribbean as the Lord opened the doors. The fields of Puerto Rico, the Leeward Islands, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Trinidad-Tobago have all been influenced by the pioneering ministry of Brother and Sister Smith. They have been involved in virtually all phases of developing and bringing these fields into maturity through evangelism, church construction, pastoral seminars, Bible school construction and instruction throughout the Caribbean.

Other missionaries came to help fulfill Glen Smith's vision. Ralph and Donna Holland arrived in 1971; after a term in Puerto Rico, they transferred to Costa Rica. Lloyd and Nancy Shirley received their appointment to the Leeward Islands⁷ in 1973, Daniel and Marion Vannoy to Haiti in 1976, Henry and Sharon Ritchie to the Windward

⁶ Smith, 131

⁷ The Leeward Islands include Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Martin/Saint Maarten, the British and the United States Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Saint Kitts-Nevis, Saba, and Saint Barts.



Islands⁸ in 1977. Jerry and Beth Burns went to the Dominican Republic, Darrell and Bonnie Sheets to Haiti. Gary and Kristi Landaw went to Puerto Rico; together the Smiths and Landaws opened the work in Trinidad-Tobago. Others joining the Caribbean missionary team in the 70's and 80's were Roger and Maurine Barcus, Gabriel and Sharon Cruz, Devon and Joy Dawson, Pierre and Raymonde Mahautiere, Phillip and Sandra Rhodes, and Ron and Dian Sharp.

In January 1984, upon the recommendation of the Foreign Missions Board, the General Board of the UPCI appointed Glen Smith as the regional field supervisor of the newly formed Central America/Caribbean Region. As the RFS, Glen's responsibility extended to all of the islands of the Caribbean, Mexico, the nations in Central America, and the three nations of Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana on the northern coast of South America. He rejoiced as more islands and nations received an Apostolic witness.

Harold Glen and Rachel Smith set a high example for all of the missionaries that came to the region. From the ones they mentored such as Ralph and Donna Holland and

⁸ The Windward Islands include Martinique, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, the Grenadines, and Grenada. Although in the area, Barbados, Trinidad, and Tobago do not consider themselves part of the Windward Islands.

Gary and Kristi Landaw to the ones who were appointed while Brother Smith supervised the region, Glen and Rachel Smith touched lives.

H. G. Ferguson of the Bahamas was an independent Apostolic pastor when he was introduced to Glen Smith. He stated:

I met Brother Glen Smith in early 1987. Since then this man has touched my life. He is truly a stalwart pillar, a warrior, and above all a man of God. Whatever my spiritual life will be and is at this point, he has played a major role in it.

I had always wanted a spiritual father, someone I could trust and look up to. Not only did God provide me with a spiritual father but also a dear friend like a natural father. Glen Smith has truly touched my life.

He made me to understand what it really means to sacrifice for God. He taught not by words but by action. He asked nothing for himself. He seeks no pleasure or fame, but is always directed by God, a man willing to spend and be spent for the cause of God. His mind is always on missions, on the missionaries, on souls, on what can be done for the work of God.

Glen and Rachel Smith retired from missionary service January 1992. Not one to be idle, Glen accepted the pastorate of the Pentecostal Church of Eros, Louisiana. He pastored his childhood church for six years. He passed from this life on April 17, 2006. Although in failing health, Rachel remains in West Monroe, Louisiana.