

Old Testament History

Lesson #6

Exodus 15:22-40:38

Outline

I. ***The Wilderness Testing (Exodus 15:22-18:27)***

- A. The waters of Marah (15:22-27).
- B. The manna and quail (16:1-36).
- C. The waters of Meribah (17:1-7).
- D. Victory over the Amalekites (17:8-16).
- E. Organization of the people (18:1-27).

II. ***The Covenant At Sinai (Exodus 19:1-24:18)***

- A. Preparation for the covenant (19:1-25).
- B. Proclamation of the covenant (20:1-23:33).
 - 1. The ten commandments (20:1-21).
 - 2. Law of the altar (20:22-26).
 - 3. Laws regarding slaves (21:1-11).
 - 4. Laws regarding violence (21:12-27).
 - 5. Laws regarding animals (21:28-36).
 - 6. Laws regarding property (22:1-15).
 - 7. Miscellaneous laws (22:16-23:9).
 - 8. Sabbaths and feasts (23:10-19).
 - 9. God's covenant promises (23:20-33).
- C. Israel affirms the covenant (24:1-18).

III. ***The Worship Of The Lord (Exodus 25:1-40:38)***

- A. God's instructions concerning worship (25:1-31:18).
- B. The tabernacle and its furnishings (25:1-27:21).
 - 1. The priests and their ministry (28:1-30:38).
 - 2. The builders of the tabernacle appointed (31:1-11).
 - 3. The sabbath a sign of the covenant (31:12-18).
- C. False worship (32:1-34:35).
 - 1. The golden calf (32:1-29).
 - 2. God threatens to remove His presence (32:30-33:23).
 - 3. God renews His covenant (34:1-35).
- D. The building of the tabernacle (35:1-40:38).
 - 1. Reiteration of sabbath law (35:1-3).
 - 2. Offerings for the tabernacle (35:4-29).
 - 3. Bezalel and his craftsmen (35:30-36:7).
 - 4. The process of building (36:8-39:31).
 - 5. The completion of the work (39:32-43).
 - 6. Erection of the tabernacle (40:1-33).

7. God's glory fills the tabernacle (40:34-38).

Notes

Exodus 15:22-16:36

- With the song of triumph on the other side of the sea, the first part of the book of Exodus ends. Israel has now become a nation, and it only remains for this newborn people of God to be consecrated to Him, which is covered in the second part of the book.
- Most of the stations on the journey of Israel have been determined. The first camping place was probably about a half-hour from from the sea shore. It was a fertile, well-cultivated area.
- Life is a combination of the bitter and the sweet, triumphs and trials. The circumstances at Marah seemed hopeless, and the Israelites murmured against God. When our provision stops, we are likely to lose our faith. The circumstances seemed hopeless. The "statute and an ordinance" was that at all times, through seeming impossibilities, God would send deliverance from above, and Israel could expect this during their wilderness journey.
- When the children of Israel reached Elim, there was a healthy supply of water, which allowed the Israelites to stay for a month. They soon would enter an inhospitable desert known as the Wilderness of Sin, where the provisions which Israel had brought from Egypt began to fail. Their unbelief broke forth again, but while they murmured against Moses, they were in reality murmuring against God.
- The visible presence of God should have stopped their murmuring, but it would continue throughout their history with God. Manna was "bread from heaven" (Psalm 78:19-27; 105:40). It was very different from manna which appeared naturally in the desert. Israel could not have confused the two. To show the generosity of God and His provision for His people, supplying six pints (an omer) of manna each for two million people daily would have required four freight trains of sixty cars each.
- The hungry Jews were not fed by looking at the manna, admiring it, or watching others eat it; they had to pick it up and eat it themselves. The manna, however, could not be gathered on the Sabbath, and an omer full of manna was placed in a golden pot, which was placed in the Most Holy Place when the tabernacle was constructed.

Exodus 17:1-18:27

- Rephidim was the great battlefield where Israel defeated Amalek. For three days, since leaving the Red Sea, they would not have passed a single spring, and while their march through the wilderness was during April/May, it would have been hot.

- Instead of submitting to the tests God was conducting for them (Exodus 15:25; 16:4), Israel began to test the Lord (Psalm 78:56; 106:7, 14, 25, 29). God's people tempt or test the Lord when they distrust His grace and providential care, and grumble against Him. Moses would later warn that the people were not to put God to the test as they did at Massah (Deuteronomy 6:16). God patiently showed them that there was no situation that could be so desperate that He would not help them.
- The Amalekites were descendants of Esau, closely related to the Israelites (cf. Deuteronomy 25:17-19). The Israelites had done nothing to provoke the attack. The gesture of Moses, along with Aaron's and Hur's help, was not merely for psychological effect to inspire the troops every time they glanced up the hill. Nor does the text specifically claim that Moses prayed while his hands were raised. Rather, Moses' outstretched arms primarily symbolized his appeal to God. Amalek would pay dearly for its awful deed. What they had threatened to do to Israel would be done to them.
- If the attack of the Amalekites represented the hostility of the world to the kingdom of God, the visit of Jethro, which followed Israel's victory, symbolized the opposite tendency. Jethro may be regarded as a kind of firstfruits of God from among the Gentiles, and the honor he rendered toward God an anticipation of the fulfillment of the promise in Isaiah 2:3.
- The wise advice of Jethro was put into place (Deuteronomy 1:12-18). The election of the judges was made by the people themselves, and their appointment was guided by the fear and love of the Lord.

Exodus 19:1-20:17

- The Israelites reached the Sinai range in the third month after leaving Egypt. The plain of Er Rahah was a very suitable camping ground. It has been calculated that the area could have easily supported two million people. This mountainous district bears two distinct names in scripture -- Horeb and Sinai -- the former probably applying to the whole group of mountains, and the latter to one special mountain in it. The vast mountain block of Sinai was two miles in length and one mile in breadth. One mountain, Jebel Musa (the modern Ras Sufsafeh), was in all probability the Sinai upon which the Lord came down and gave the ten commandments.
- God called Moses to the top of the mountain, and for three days the people had been prepared by a twofold sanctification (purifications, symbolic of inward cleansing, and respecting the bounds of the mountain), and now they stood in readiness at the foot of, although shut off from, the mountain. This outward sanctification of Israel had been preceded by inward and spiritual sanctification.

- Just as the priest is the intermediary between God and man, so Israel was to be the intermediary of the knowledge and salvation of God to all nations. The Hebrew term for "holy" means "to be splendid, beautiful, pure and uncontaminated." Israel's designation as a "holy nation" was not due to the holiness of the people, but because God set them apart by special privileges from all others. The call of Israel was only the means. Holiness would be attained through the covenant. This sanctification implies that the ones who are saved by God's grace should cultivate holiness, so that in turn they can sanctify God.
- The fact that the commandments were put in a negative form implies that transgression, not obedience, is common for us. The fifth commandment forms a transition from the first to the second set of commandments. In general, duty to parents is higher than duty to men. The relationship to our earthly father symbolizes our relationship to our heavenly Father.
- The second set of commandments progresses from outward deed, then to speech, and finally to thought and desire. The tenth commandment probes the innermost depths of our hearts. This kind of law was never given by man, and never could have been dreamed of in his highest thoughts. If man had only been able to observe it, not only joy and happiness, but eternal life, would have come with it.
- The ten commandments were infinitely superior to anything known at the time and they underlie all modern legislation and will always remain the great model on which civil society is constructed.

Exodus 20:18-24:18

- The impression produced upon the people by what they saw accompanying God's revelation of His law was so profound that they asked that any further divine communication come through Moses.
- These ordinances or judgments were preceded by a general statement of the manner in which Israel was to worship God (Exodus 20:22-26). The judgments given to Moses determined the civil and social position of all in Israel relative to each other (21:1-23:12), and then their religious position relative to the Lord (23:13-19). The instructions began at the lowest level of society; they declared the rights of people in a state of dependence -- male and female slaves.
- The instructions then covered the guarding of life, the protection of the body against injuries by man or animal, and then finally the regulation of property. God then solemnly prohibited several actions that relate to the Israelites as God's own people (Exodus 22:18-30).
- Although strictly religious festivals, the feasts are viewed primarily, not in their symbolical and typical meaning, but in their national meaning: the Passover feast as that of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, the feast of

weeks as that of the first harvest, and the feast of tabernacles as that of the final ingathering of the year.

- Israel's religious festivals were tied to the agricultural year in a series of "sevens." The seventh day was the Sabbath and the seventh year was the Sabbatical Year. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated for seven days after Passover. The seventh month opened with the Feast of Trumpets and included the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles.
- The judgments which the Lord commanded His people were then appropriately followed by promises (Exodus 23:20-33). First and foremost, the promise of the personal presence of God was given to them. The Israelites were to obey Him, and every contact with idolatry and idolaters was to be avoided.
- When the people had accepted the covenant, Moses wrote it down in the "book of the covenant." The covenant was inaugurated by sacrifice, the sprinkling of blood, and a sacrificial meal. Under the law of Moses, God determined how near people could be to Him. But under grace, we are the ones who determine our nearness to God. The elders worshiped God "afar off" (Exodus 24:1), but we today are invited to "draw near" (Hebrews 10:22; James 4:8).

Exodus 25:1-33:23

- Now that God had set apart His people unto Himself, it was necessary that they have a place where He could meet with them and dwell among them. For 40 days and 40 nights, God revealed to Moses the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the services which would be celebrated. God showed Moses every detail to indicate that every detail had a special meaning (symbol and type), and therefore could not be altered in any way (cf. Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:5).
- The order in which the Tabernacle and its furniture was given to Moses was very appropriate. The arrangement was from within outwards. The ark was discussed first, then the table of shewbread and the golden candlestick. Next the dwelling itself was described, and then the altar of burnt offering along with the court that would surround it.
- The prolonged absence of Moses frightened the people. Israel did not mean to forsake God, but only to serve Him under the symbol of Apis, the sacred calf (Exodus 32:4-5). As God's anger burned against His people, Moses underwent a trial of his singleness of purpose and faithfulness to his mission. God wanted to kill the people and start over with Moses. However, he interceded on their behalf. It was God's glory that was at stake in this situation. The Jews never knew the price Moses paid to be their leader, and they appreciated him so little!

- On that day, 3,000 died by the sword of Levi. The golden calf was destroyed and its ashes were sprinkled in the water of which Israel had to drink, symbolizing that everyone had to bear the fruits of their sin.
- The account of the people's repentance and of God's forgiveness forms one of the most precious parts of this history. The first manifestation of their repentance was the permanent putting away of their ornaments. Next, Moses moved a tent (probably his own) outside the camp and the Lord descended to speak to Moses. When the people saw this, they worshiped God.
- Moses learned that the deepest mystery of God's grace lay not in God's national, but in His individual dealings of divine mercy. What Moses saw when God passed by was the afterglory, the luminous reflection of what God really was.

Exodus 34:1-40:38

- The covenant relationship between God and Israel was now fully restored. Moses was commanded to bring to the mountain two more tablets so God could write down the ten commandments again. The Israelites were required to stay away from the Canaanites and their idolatry completely, and to observe the service of God in the way described by Him (Exodus 34:11-26).
- Aaron and the Israelites were afraid of the reflection of divine glory which caused Moses' face to shine. Therefore, Moses used a covering for his face while speaking to them, and he only removed it to speak to the Lord. Paul refers to this when he contrasted the Old Testament glory with the enduring glory of the New Testament (2 Corinthians 3:7).
- The amount of gold and silver actually used is specifically mentioned in Exodus 38:24-26. Scholars have estimated that the people used nearly a ton of gold, about 3 1/4 tons of silver and 2 1/4 tons of bronze.
- The Israelites manifested true spiritual devotion when it came to the construction of the tabernacle. Because of this devotion, all of the work regarding the tabernacle and its services was completed within six months.
- The final act of setting up the tabernacle was the visible presence of God settling in the Most Holy Place, between the cherubim above the mercy seat. As long as it stayed, Israel stayed. When it rose up, Israel followed.