

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Law

Jan 2: Genesis 1-3 (Charles Fry)

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Today's reading includes the grand account of the origin of all things physical, the nature of man in his world, God's original interaction with man, an adversary called "the serpent", sin's origin and its consequences, and the first prophecy of deliverance via the "seed" of the woman..

The creation account in Genesis 1 uses the word "created" very sparingly, highlighting 3 phases of God's creative work, the cosmos, living creatures, and human beings.

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Gen 1:21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Gen 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

About The Law:

1. In the Bible the Law includes the first 5 books of the Bible. These 5 books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, are also called the Torah (Hebrew) and the Pentateuch (Greek).
2. The Law was written by Moses during the 40 years of the Exodus wanderings (Deuteronomy 31:24, Mark 12:26, Luke 24:27, 44), ending in about 1400 B.C.
3. Moses probably had older written sources passed down from the patriarchs, as well as revelation from God.
4. The Law includes ancient and divine accounts of the creation of the cosmos, human sin, the great flood, God's call and covenant with Abraham, the growth of the nation of Israel, the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the 40 years of wilderness wandering, and the covenant commandments governing that nation of Jacob's descendants.
5. Themes introduced in the Law include the greatness of God the creator, the origin of life on earth, the origin and purpose of marriage and family, the origins of sin and death, redemption and divine blessing, divine judgment, salvation of a remnant, faith and obedience.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother Charles Fry! It is my strong conviction that it is in this book of beginnings, that we indeed find the starting point for ALL of the principles, doctrines, and truths contained

in scripture, set forth. In order for us to arrive at the proper destination, we here must set and direct our feet upon the proper path; start at the right place - end at the right place.

Steven Wright:

Two discussion points: brother Charles Fry, could you give us your thoughts and suggestions for, 1. Those who say that chapter two gives an account of a different/subsequent creation? And, 2. does our current understanding of snakes, cloud our understanding of the serpent in Chapter 3?

Replies:

Charles Fry:

1) Two accounts in Genesis 1:1-2:4 and 2:5-25 (really 2:5-5:1), but two accounts of one and the same creation. The only possible source for Genesis 1:1-2:4 is divine revelation, God had to tell the story. Adam, the Man, however, knew something about Genesis 2:5-5:1. The breakpoint in 2:4 and 5:1 is the word "generations" in KJV or "account" in NIV. One account from the divine perspective, one account focused on the human element, both inspired by God for inclusion by Moses in the Law. Jesus spoke of "the beginning" and referenced Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 in his comments on marriage in Matthew 19:4-5, and attributed the words of 2:24 to the creator.

2) I appreciate that the NIV and KJV translate Genesis 3:1 so as to differentiate "the serpent" from "any beast of the field" or "any of the wild animals" that the Lord God had made. This is not "a snake", it is "the serpent." It is not "any beast of the field", despite the word "serpent" also being used of ordinary wild creatures. This singular entity is "more subtle" or crafty than "any of the wild animals." Not one of them, not having their kind of mind or their kind of purpose. Several Old Testament poetic and prophetic references to a serpent God defeated, to Rahab, to Leviathan, to a dragon are allusions to this serpent. Paul of course identified this creature with Satan (2 Corinthians 11:3, 14) as did John (Revelation 12:9, 20:2). He is a potent, clever, and merciless adversary.

Steve Wright:

Indeed! Excellent! There may be some who have never encountered such ideas and questions, just thought I would bring them up. Thank you very much for your very helpful responses!

Lori Watt:

Charles Fry so when God cursed the serpent in 3:14, He was cursing Satan to crawl on his belly and eat dust? I have been confused about the snake/serpent/Satan entity-- thank you for your explanation in the above post... that helps!

Charles Fry:

Yes, Lori, the curse was on the tempter, not upon snakes. While we see an analogy in the form of the snake, snakes don't "eat dust." Satan, on the other hand, was cast down. When the Lord asked Satan in Job 1-2 where he had been, the answer was "roaming throughout the earth... going back and forth on the earth." His wings had been clipped, in a manner of speaking, limits imposed. He became "the god of this world." The seed of the woman crushing the serpent's head in Gen 3:15 is certainly a prophecy of Jesus, born of woman, defeating Satan through death (Heb 2:14-15). I'm oversimplifying here for brevity, but hopefully it makes sense.

Lori Watt:

Yes, and thank you!! I could never understand why snakes were cursed for something Satan had done. :-)

Richard and Jeannie Owens:

Charles Fry: Sorry, but we would like for you to expound more on Satan eating dust (is this that he is feeding on man who was made from dust?) and (2) do we know when he was cast from heaven? It appears that he still had access to heaven in Job. Jesus definitely defeated Satan at His death. We would like more elucidation.

Charles Fry:

RichardandJeannie Owens, regarding going on the belly and eating dust, consider this excerpt about the citizens of God's kingdom from Isaiah 49:23:

"They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet." (NIV)

The idea of the "great" people of the earth, kings and queens, being down on their faces (therefore with their belly to the ground) and licking dust at the feet of the redeemed, conveys the same idea as the humiliation of the serpent in the curse of Genesis 3. His head was once in the heights, he was proud and powerful, but because of his deadly lies he was humiliated, bound to the realm of mortality and decay, dust and ultimate failure.

When was Satan cast down from heaven? Depending on what exactly we mean, there might be more than one answer. In some way Satan was cast down to earth at the time of the curse. Jesus referenced Satan falling like lightning in Luke 10:18-20, which may be a figure of speech, urging his disciples to be realistic about what they had accomplished in their preaching tour, but it may be a reference to the fall of Satan when he sinned in the Garden and was cursed to be earth bound (consider also John 8:44). If we read Isaiah 14:12-15 as not only a prophecy about the king of Babylon but also figurative language reflecting Satan's fall, we might understand reference to be about Satan's fall at the beginning. However, it seems more likely to me that the "cast down" in that passage refers to a later event in human history, which is echoed in Revelation 12:7-17. Satan began his heavenly war in the Garden of Eden, as far as our reference points are concerned, and the battle was waged unsuccessfully against Michael and the forces of heaven. Defeat came through "the blood of the Lamb" and "the word of their testimony." So, for our reference in history, Satan fell at the beginning, but was cast down through the blood of Jesus, and faith in him. That is further affirmed by the reference to his rage and warfare against those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus" in v.17. Note that he is referred to as "the accuser of our brothers" in v.10, a role we see in Job 1-2, and Zechariah 3:1. I would understand that his access to the assembly of the sons of God and opportunity to accuse God's people has been curtailed, by the blood of Jesus (consider Romans 8:33-34 in context). Jesus said in a short parable that he came to bind Satan (Matthew 12:29). He did that by overcoming him through death (Hebrews 2:14-15). Ultimately, Satan will be "cast down" one more time, into the lake of fire, Revelation 20:10, when the Lord returns in judgment.

Consider, if you care to read more, the mid section of the article I have posted here:

<http://livwat.com/otherlw/angelsar.html>

Richard and Jeannie Owens:

Charles, did you not wish to discuss the second part of the question?

Charles Fry:

RichardandJeannie Owens I accidentally posted the reply before it was finished. Now it is finished. :)

Richard and Jeannie Owens:

Charles Fry Thanks for spending so much time with your explanation, Charles. We appreciate it.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Charles Fry & Butch O'Neal for leading Monday discussions in The Law. This was a very thorough introduction. I look forward to absorbing it more & reading chapters in Genesis later today, Lord willing. In the meantime we're enjoying brothers & sisters at the ingles. 😊

Comment:

Steven Wright:

And, thank you Butch O'Neal!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

This mornings post was all Charles Fry! Next week will be my effort. Let us pray for each others efforts in this study.

Comment:

Linda Whitworth Davis:

I wish I could share an audio of the discussion today's reading brought between grandfather, Darl D. Davis and grandson, Andrew Wagner. Good stuff!

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles Fry! A great introduction! I am already working on next Monday's post!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Mosquitos, Angels and Unicorns?

Small children ask the best questions. When were all of these created?

Mosquitos: Probably day 5 or maybe day 6. "fowl" is from Hebrew "owph" which means winged creature and in Lev. 11:20 seems to include insects. They just didn't become "annoying" or what God might call "not good" until the fall when sin entered into the world where they most likely stopped receiving sustenance from plants and began the process of feeding on blood and carrying various diseases that entered the world through the sin of man. This is similar to there being vegetation (Good) before the fall of man and then thorns (Not Good) becoming part of the vegetation.

Angels: Ex 20:11 says everything was created in 6 days. Col 1:16 says that the invisible things in heaven and principalities were created by God. Job 38:4 says, however, that the "sons of God" rejoiced during creation, so it sounds like very early on in the creation week. My vote is for Gen 1:1 included in the heavens part of that verse.

Unicorns: This is the only one that I'm sure of! Ps. 92:10 KJV says, "But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil." The other references point to the strength of the unicorn especially in Num 23 and 24 referring to God bringing his people out of Egypt. Although other versions translate this as a "wild ox" I think science can actually

help us out here. There is a critically endangered animal with the scientific name "diceros bicornis" commonly called the black rhino. It is called "bicornis" because it has two horns. The Indian rhinoceros however only has one horn and is called " Rhinoceros Unicornis" Regardless of the translation the unicorn was definitely created on day 6! Any other type of unicorn you think you might have seen was probably created...in your own mind. :)

Replies:

Charles Fry:

On unicorns... I've read articles about various one horned animals, both modern (the Indian rhinoceros) and extinct. However, particularly because of Deuteronomy 33:17, I think the consensus of translators, that the wild ox, perhaps the aurochs, was in mind is most likely where the KJV has "unicorn." While the animal re'em was unfamiliar to the English scholars who translated the KJV, and for that matter probably unfamiliar to the Greek Jews of Alexandria who translated the Septuagint, the language in Deuteronomy 33:17, in the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, suggests that the animal was bovine, and that it had more than one horn.

17 In majesty he is like a firstborn bull;

his horns are the horns of a wild ox.

With them he will gore the nations,
even those at the ends of the earth.

Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim;
such are the thousands of Manasseh.”

Marc Hermon:

The closer you could move back in time before the flood and before the fall of man I'm sure the more amazing creation would seem. Fossils show beaver like creatures that were 7 ft long and mosquitos themselves were at least 3 times bigger than they are now. Everything was bigger and more robust even though the world seems to primarily focus on the "terrible lizards". It's hard to fathom what creation was really like in light of our current context of what we see left after 6000 years of degradation.

Marc Hermon:

I'm also thinking about the complete and utter disdain some scientists would have if reading these posts. ;)

Charles Fry:

The continued inquiries of science suggest that the world, living things, and the whole cosmos are more remarkable (and wonderful) than we have ever imagined. The early earth must indeed have been even more spectacular in ways the world subject to millennia of sin, decay, violence, abuse, and periodic catastrophic events no longer is. Birth pangs, subjected in hope.

Wendy Range:

I think you would enjoy touring the Ark Experience in Kentucky. While all is very admittedly speculation, it was enjoyable to see the types of animals that could all fit in the ark, and read the theories from the Biblical worldview. The Creation Museum has a room that talks about ideas about mosquitoes, disease, etc. I took pictures of a lot of displays to think about later. I think your explanation of mosquito creation seems right.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

One further thought. Mankind has confused the classifications of God's creation. Evolutionists claim that fish could eventually become fowl or that animals could eventually become man. More recently, people have believed that men can become women or women can become men. However, I have also heard Christians say that their loved ones have died and become angels. Although I understand this comes out of sorrow or a way to comfort someone it does not make it true. We need to all be content with what God has given us and how he has created us. As He told Paul his grace is sufficient for us. Change is definitely part of our future but we will leave that up to God. "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Replies:

Charles Fry:

The distinctiveness of mankind is strongly emphasized in Genesis 1, with the use of that word "create." The living creatures are set apart from what came before, including plants, and the human beings are set apart from what preceded. Likewise in chapter 2, the story of presenting the animals to Adam for naming communicated to Adam, and all his descendants, "Adam, you are not an animal." The distinctiveness of the sexes is likewise emphasized in the both creation chapters, and the account of sin's entrance into the world in chapter 3, though humanity has tried many times before, and now in our time, to obfuscate the particulars of being male and female, man and woman.

Doug Twaddell:

I have always appreciated the concept of "kinds." Each reproducing part of creating (plant, animal and man)

Doug Twaddell:

Sorry, I am going to try again when I can type on my computer instead of my phone. 😊

Doug Twaddell:

Ok, I am on my computer. Tough going on the phone. I have always appreciated the concept of "kinds." We are told that each reproducing part of creation (plants, animals and humans) reproduces "after its own kind." Two fish cannot produce a lizard. Two lizards cannot produce an ape. Two apes cannot produce a human. Even though they make attempts to show this process, scientists cannot come up with any real proof. The fact that two things have similarities does not mean that that one came from the other. It just means that the creator saw no reason to make everything absolute and completely different.

Doug Twaddell:

Another truth about the difference between man and animals is from 2:7. God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living being (soul). There is no record of this happening to any other part of creation. This is a distinction of purpose, character, free will and a part that goes back to God after the physical death. God goes to great lengths to help us understand that even though there are similarities between humans and the animal kingdom, man is not "related to" nor did we "descend from" animals.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

One thing I find intriguing in Genesis 1-3 is the emphasis on food and eating. The creation included what was good for food, and the good fruit was a gift to the created pair of humans. The garden was a scene that included every tree good for fruit eating. Both the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life had edible fruit on them. The great lie involved urging to eat what God had not given, in fact had forbidden. The curse of the ground was in regard to food and labor. The exile from the garden was particularly to prevent eating the fruit of the tree of life. These references set the stage for the role of eating in fellowship, sharing sacred experiences, nourishing ourselves literally and spiritually, and the experiences of cravings, lust, greed, as well as the positives of sufficiency, satisfaction, thankfulness, and pleasure in good things.

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

The great lie followed pattern for cravings of sin. (I John 2:16) "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of flesh) and pleasing to the eye (lust of eye) and also desirable for gaining wisdom (pride of life), she took and ate it."

Comment:

Kathy Tutterow:

Good stuff....commenting so will see notifications when comments are added.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Amen brethren! Marc Hermon, I think your points about mosquitoes and thorns are well taken, How about this though? <https://www.google.com/search?q=medicinal+plants+with+thorns&biw=1280&bih=615&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwia9Zuu4aTRAhVmx1QKHRpYCBcQsAQIlg> then, there is this fella . . .when

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Replies:

Steven Wright:

Because there are indeed toxic plants, I would equate these to the mosquito analogy.

But I would take the strength of the (Genesis 3:17 - 19) issue to apply to the complexities and difficulties in the context of Adam's work regarding the plants. Plants which are invasive and compete with plants that you NEED for your food are "bad" in that sense! Certainly poisonous plants are "bad!" But the context seems to point to the increased labor involved in the production of food for sustaining human life. Point being: some plants are bad in that they are a nuisance, others are bad because they could kill you or make you very sick. But those plants that are "mildly bad" (those which are not toxic, but they do get in our way), can also be used as food and medicine. In fact, even some very toxic plants, can yield compounds which can serve man's health! Also, consider how the behavior of animals was changed! Animals which today prey on other animals, must be in several ways now different from their vegetarian predecessors. Comparatively, which would seem "Bad" to our sensibilities? A lion ripping flesh from a Gnu which is bawling with all it's might, while its entrails are being ripped out? Or a lion lazily and placidly grazing amidst the herd of Gnu that have no fear of him because there is no need? And, yet, predators are needed to keep the plant eaters in check.

When a species disappears for what ever reason, something else fills the void. There are parasitic plants and animals too! But even these serve a purpose in the way everything works by God's marvelous design. I do not recall God calling anything that he made "Bad" even after the fall of man. It would seem to me that he had built into the creation, ability to serve and sustain us, even in our damaged state. The creation is now much changed! Different than the original yes, but all to the glory of God! Try to rope a Leviathan! You could be badly injured, indeed, if you lived through the experience, you would not "Forget the battle" (Job 41:1,8). Is that "Bad?" God seems to me to be exulting in his creation when he talks to Job! He seems to have a different perspective than us! I hope this does not seem like a "rant, " just speaking about perspective that is all! If God, through the mouth of a prophet, can deliver a message with dual and even multiple meanings (immediate, long range and ultimate fulfillment - i.e Isaiah 7:14), then I believe he can make everything which was originally simply "Good" still "Good in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

Steven Wright:

I enjoyed writing this so much that I decided to save it as a document. Guess what? Word would not let me save it with the title: "Bad!" Hmmm! Thank you computer for giving weight to my point!

Linda Whitworth Davis:

Steven Wright my father-in-law, Glen Davis, used the complain about Adam & Eve after a day of clearing brush and thorny locust from his pastures.

Comment:

Lori Watt:

Really interesting comments! Thanks, all!

Comment:

Wendy Range:

"Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished." (2:1) That's it! I like the finality and clarity of this verse.

Comment:

Jamie Ingle:

Gen 2:19 I have always wondered what it would have looked like to watch all the animals coming to Adam and him naming them.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Considering "The Law," one extremely obvious but important correlation from our reading today is Day 7. God had finished creation. He ceased work on Day 7. Likewise, The Law of Moses taught there was to be no work on the 7th day. (Exodus 20:8-11: Sabbath day instructions)

Comment:

Nick Hermon:

Besides Genesis 1, one of my favorite verses to use when discussing the different "kinds" of bodies God created is actually in the New Testament:

1 Corinthians 15:38-40

38 But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39 Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. 40 There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.

Replies:

Steven Wright:
Me too Nick!

Jan 9: Genesis 4-7 (Butch O'Neal)

The reading for Monday, January 9, 2017

The Law

Genesis, chapters 4-7

Chapter 4 is an account of 'firsts' if you will.

(A) The first man born of woman "with the help of the LORD" [vs 1]

(B) The first sacrifices, at least recorded here, one acceptable, one not acceptable. Could this one be the first 'sign' of idolatry?[vs 3-4]

(C) First demonstration of anger which would result in the [vs 5]

(D) first murder. [vs 8]

I like GOD's analogy of sin. As if it were alive! [vs 7]

And that blood is life. [vs 10]

Now Cain was banished and he went out from the presence of the LORD. [vs 11-16]

Cain lay with his wife and began his own lineage. [vs 17-22]

Eve gave birth to Seth, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." [vs 25]

And men began to call on [or to proclaim] the name of the LORD.

I like that Eve honors GOD for the birth of her children.

Chapter 5 is an account of generations.

We see 10 generations, in about 1580 years, from Adam to Noah.

And all began to multiply. We can only imagine the number of the population at the time of Noah.

Chapter 6

The sons of God (descendants of Seth?) married the daughters of men. (descendants of Cain?) [vs 1-2]

Now God saw that every inclination of man's heart was only evil all the time and HE was grieved that HE had made man, and HE purposed to wipe out mankind from the face of the earth. [vs 5-7]

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. [vs 8]

Now God would have Noah build an ark to HIS exact specifications and to put two of every kind of creature, along with food for all, in it.

Noah, his three sons, and all four wives were to enter it and be saved as God would then flood the earth, wiping out all living things.

Noah did EVERYTHING just as God commanded. [vs 22]

Chapter 7

We see God telling Noah to also take with him 7 (or 7 pairs) of every kind of clean animal. [vs 1-2]

And Noah did ALL that the LORD had commanded him. [vs 5]

When everybody and everything that God had commanded was in the ark, God shut them in.
[vs 13-16]

And the waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

[vs 24]

We can see examples of faith in Abel's sacrifice, in Eve's births, and certainly in Noah's obedience to God's commands.

It took about a hundred years to build the ark and who knows the amount of ridicule that Noah and his sons endured while they were building that ark in the desert?

What will happen next?

Well, we can certainly begin to see that some kind of rules or law will be needed in the near future.

Comments or questions on this reading are welcome, and remember, the most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! In every generation, wicked and perverse though it may be, God is able to find steadfast men.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Butch O'Neal! Great summaries I will chip in more later! For now, "Two Brothers at Worship " eh Marc Hermon?

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Thank you, Butch! Time well spent!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Do you think that the flood is God's first attempt to eradicate sin? Was he hoping that Noah, as a righteous man, would beget a righteous nation more pleasing to the Lord? I don't think that the wickedness of the world pre-flood was worse than the wickedness of today's world. If God, being omniscient, knew that, then what really was the purpose of the flood?

Replies:

Marc Hermon:

The more I read, the more I feel that almost every story happened for the purpose of pointing us to Christ. In today's reading the thing that made me think the most of this was Lamech's "prophecy" about his son Noah,

"And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed."

While it is true that Noah means "rest" and that another son would mean someone else to carry the load for the family, I think there is a deeper spiritual meaning as Noah as another antitype of Christ.

Peter describes Noah as a "preacher of righteousness" who would provide salvation to people through the water. And even more poignant is that Christ himself in Luke 17 says,

"But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."

Through Noah's righteousness a remnant of people were saved through which the Savior would eventually come (as Charles Fry said) at the right time. And so Lamech's prophecy of comfort will come true as we escape the curse of this world and enter the everlasting "rest (Noah)".

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Marc!

Ginger Hermon:

Marc mentions this above but I had a message typed out already so I'm going to post anyways! :-) I also believe the purpose of the flood was to foreshadow baptism. Just as the Flood represented death for sinful humanity and Noah's Ark provided safe passage and salvation for Noah and his family, so Baptism in water represents death to sin, burial with Christ & resurrection of newness in life (Rom 6:3-5) During these events, water brings forth the destruction of something old, re-creates something new & saves! 1 Peter 3, "God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him."

Comment:

Charles Fry:

1. No. God always had one and only one plan to deal with sin, determined before the beginning of time. Remember 2 Timothy 1:9-10, Revelation 13:8, Galatians 4:4, Romans 5:5-6, Hebrews 13:20-21, Hebrews 1:1-3, Titus 1:1-3.

2. No, God knew very well that mankind after the flood was not going to be different than mankind before the flood. When Noah came out of the ark and presented sacrifices of thanksgiving we have God's thoughts noted:

Gen 8:21 The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

3. The wickedness of the pre-flood world may or may not have been worse than our current world. God, however, determined that a worldwide cataclysmic flood was a one time event. Jesus observed that the time of his 2nd coming would be like the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-38), in which people thought everything was normal and then were swept away in sudden judgment. Isaiah compared God's restraint in dealing with mankind after Noah with the restraint God showed in judging Israel (Isaiah 54:9-10).

I do note the language of Genesis describing those days of Noah:

Gen 6:5 ...that every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil all the time.

Gen 6:11 the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence.

Gen 6:12 all the people on earth had corrupted their ways

Gen 6:13 the earth is filled with violence because of them.

This is not only a quantitative observation, but qualitative. Godliness, righteousness, had almost disappeared from the earth. The "salt" and "light" was barely there, to borrow from Jesus description of his followers. God did a harsh reset, not so much to prevent sin as to preserve righteousness, slowing the progression of evil and giving the "right time" a possibility of occurring.

Suppose we lived in a world in which Da Vinci, Galileo, Newton, Curie, Einstein, and other notable mathematicians, physicists, botanists, chemists, astronomers, etc. had lifespans of about 1,000 years and spoke a common language or at least similar dialects of a single language. Da Vinci and Galileo could still be alive in our generation, just really in midlife. What if such brilliant, curious inquirers lived 1,000 years, and Newton not only facetiously stood on the shoulders of giants but actually was in the same club with Galileo and Da Vinci, and then along come young Edison and Einstein, etc. How quickly would men begin to push the boundaries of nature, of physics, of technology, of manipulation of life, in such circumstances? What if the names weren't Newton and Einstein, but Lamech and Jabal and Jubal and Tubal-Cain? What sort of downward spiral would a rapidly growing unrestrained amoral population of humans precipitate (consider Romans 1:18ff)? What sort of violence, against one another, against nature, against God, against moral restraint, might have prevailed and filled the earth?

4. Already alluded to above, the purpose of the flood was to reset the world, to curtail the flourishing wickedness and violence that was overwhelmingly preponderant and give righteousness a chance to survive until "just the right time". The flood, like the Law, was not a final solution, but a step in the progression leading to redemption when the time had fully come. Peter indicated that the good news of future redemption was preached to those people before they died in the flood (1 Peter 3:19-20, 4:6, 2 Peter 2:5).

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thanks, Charles! Certainly mankind is actively searching for ways to extend our lifespans again but without actively searching for moral purpose.

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles! Certainly a clear picture!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

I can't get past Gen. 6:8 without singing,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4cZqI16pzY>

Replies:

Charles Fry:

Yes, the first mention of God's grace (favor) in the Bible, a consistent part of the whole theme of redemption. I might have chosen the Statler Brothers version of the song, though. 😊

Marc Hermon:

I was going to but I'm more "old school"

Charles Fry:

Probably a good thing.

Do you all sing the children's song, "N O A H... Noah brave and good was told by God to build an ark..."?

Lori Watt:

I don't remember ever hearing this song before. Sounds like one that could easily get stuck in my head. Bless your little pea-pickin' heart. :-)

Marc Hermon:

Charles Fry <http://www.pleasanthillchurchofchrist.org/songbook.php>

Butch O'Neal:

Marc Hermon I think I may have seen that performance on TV many years ago. My mom loved T.E. Ford.

Charles Fry:

There is another, much more raucous, performance of the old "spiritual" by Tennessee Ernie on Youtube as well. Not sure whether it is more or less old school.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

No one knows for sure what the "gopher" wood referenced in Genesis 6:14 is, but many researchers today think the ancient Greek translation got it right when they rendered it "squared lumber." Not a particular species of tree, but lumber prepared for construction. (NETS) 14 Therefore make yourself an ark of squared lumber; you shall make the ark with nests and shall bituminize it within and without with bitumen.

Replies:

Steven Wright:

So method of construction not species of wood eh?

Charles Fry:

Steven Wright, yes, worked lumber rather than wood from a particular type of tree. On the other hand, those who guess at some particular species of tree have mistakenly presumed it would be some tree common in the Middle East, which is altogether assumption.

Steven Wright:

Right. Topography as well as distribution changed. Good point Charles Fry!

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

What was the purpose of Cain's great great great grandson making the statement in 4:23-24?

Replies:

Marc Hermon:

It seems weird to me too. I think it might just be evidence of how bad things were getting. He's killed these people and doesn't seem like there is any remorse. In fact, he seems to be sending a warning that God protected Cain with 7 times vengeance and God should protect him with 77 times vengeance. Basically, saying don't mess with me or God will mess with you. On top of that he's already a practicing polygamist

apparently. Another thing that I've found interesting is the similar names in Cain's lineage compared to Seth's lineage. I'm not sure what to make of that but it is interesting that the "good" Lamech, Noah's father lived 777 years. I don't know what any of that means but I thought I would throw out some interesting 7's in honor of our Bible study. :)

Charles Fry:

I think there is a purposeful contrast between all the "accomplishments" in technology and "culture" between Cain's lineage and that of Seth/Enosh, which are summarized in the observation that in that time men "began to call on the name of the Lord." Among the accomplishments of Cain's lineage we can include polygamy and the justification of revenge. That business about Lamech helps set the backdrop for the violence referenced in chapter 6, and the name of the daughter mentioned, "pleasant" or "lovely" also helps set the stage for the mixing to come, with the attractive daughters of men.

Charles Fry:

Also the statement justifying manslaughter or murder, along with the fruit of Cain's lineage, set the stage for the mandate in chapter 9 for capital punishment for murderers.

Joanne Caffie:

The light is beginning to come thru the tunnel. 🥰

Butch O'Neal:

Lamech's statement in 4:23-24 seems to imply that since he killed in retaliation rather than in cold blood, that he would not be under the same curse as Cain, and therefore should be protected, or avenged, even more than Cain would be.

Joanne Caffie:

But wouldn't he think that retaliation is more justifiable than cold blood and therefore a lesser sentence (if any at all) should be imposed rather than magnified?

Butch O'Neal:

When Cain was banished from the presence of God, he feared that someone may find and kill him. (We have to remember that people were living some 900+ years) So Cain may have felt that eventually there would come someone seeking vengeance for Abel...? In any event God addressed Cain's fear with: "Not so [very well]; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." (vs 15) Lamech must have known this, [at the mark on Cain] thus prompting his statement in vs 23-24. I would imagine that he knew that killing someone for any reason was wrong, so he sought to justify his deed. He felt that if someone killed Cain, and that person would have to suffer vengeance seven times over, then, if someone killed him (Lamech) then that person should suffer vengeance seventy-seven times over. This, of course, was Lamech's own idea. There is no indication in the Scripture that God agreed with Lamech, that I know of. Now, when we get to Numbers 35, we will learn about the 'avenger of blood' under the 'Law of Moses,' which did not yet exist at the time of Lamech.

Comment:

Denise Waits:

Any thoughts on the "sons of God and daughters of man", or the Nephilim?

Comment:

Charles Fry:

I totally agree with Butch's suggestion that "sons of God" in this passage refers to the descendants of Seth/Enosh in 4:26 who "began to call on the name of the Lord," and that the "daughters of men" refers to the descendants of Cain. The mixing of these folks after generations of separation produced "mighty men" or "nephilim". Some would say the "sons of God" refers to angels. However, not only is there nothing in scripture to suggest that spiritual beings, such as angels or demons, can breed with humans, that notion contradicts what Jesus said about the nature of angels in Matthew 22:30. Genesis 6:4 is very specific that the nephilim were men, mighty men, and men of renown, but men. Later in the land of Canaan there were Rephaim, Anakites, and a few other names of clans that were considered nephilim. Size and stature to be powerful warriors.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

<http://charlesfry.blogspot.com/2015/09/giants-in-bible-goliath-philistine.html>

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks for the blog, Charles. I've been educated. I wasn't aware of the discrepancy between 2nd century B.C. Greek translation of the Old Testament & the Septuagint. We just taught in VBS this past summer that Goliath was 9 feet tall.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal! What a blessing it is to study God's Word with you. I sincerely appreciate your thoughts above and everyone's comments, questions & responses. As I read passages today I was drawn to the following verses: Gen 6:6, "The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain." Gen 4:7, "Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

Jan 16: Genesis 8-11 (Butch O'Neal)

The reading for Monday, January 16, 2017

The Law

Genesis, chapters 8-11

In last weeks reading we had left Noah and his three sons and all of their wives on the ark, along with at least a pair of every kind of animal, bird, and insect of God's creation. And the waters had flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days. About 5 months.

Chapter 8

We see that God did not 'forget' Noah. (vs 1)

Not that God would, or could, forget Noah, but the idea seems to be: Now that the flood waters had accomplished God's purpose, the 'process of freeing' all the occupants from the ark, in which they had been saved, would begin.

Now we see that when God sent a wind over the earth, the waters receded. All sources of water had been closed/shut up, and the waters had gone down at the end of the hundred and fifty days. (vs 2-3) Now, soon the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, while the waters continued to recede. And about 73 days later the tops of the mountains became visible. (vs 4-5)

Now we see that after 40 days, (would that be after the ark settled?) Noah sent out a raven that seemed to have not returned, then a dove which did return, then another 7 days later that returned with an olive leaf. Then another 7 days later which did not return.

Now Noah knew that the waters had receded. (vs 6-12)

Now if we consider chapter 7:11-12 and 8:13-14, we will see that

1 year and 10 days had passed from the day that the flood started and the day that the earth was completely dry.

(A long time to be in that ark, and with the task, it would seem, of feeding and caring for all of the living creatures. It seems that by the time that all were fed, that it would be time to begin the next feeding. I am musing that this might have been a real test of Noah's patience. I can only imagine such possible circumstances.)

And only then did God tell Noah to come out of the ark with all of his family and every living creature that was with him.

God wanted His creatures to begin to multiply and increase in number. And so all forms of life came out of the ark. (vs 15-19)

It seems that the first thing that Noah did after he came out of the ark, was to build an altar to the LORD. then he sacrificed some of the clean animals and clean birds on it. And the LORD, after smelling the pleasing aroma, vowed to never again to curse the ground because of man. Even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. (vs 20-21)

And God promised: "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." (vs 22)

Chapter 9

God blessed Noah and his sons and commanded them to be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth, and He gave them all living creatures. (vs 1-2) Verse 3 is the first record in Scripture of man being allowed to eat meat. But not meat that has its lifeblood still in it. (vs 4)

This verse causes me to consider vs 10, chapter 4. "Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." Abel's physical self was dead! It also makes me to think of the account in the gospel of the Roman soldiers thrusting a sword into the side of our already physically dead Lord and Savior and causing a release of water and blood as our Lord hung on the cross. (John 19:34)

Was not this the same blood sufficient to cleanse the sins of the world?

verse 5-6 demands an accounting of each animal, and each man for the life of his fellow man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." I believe these verses to be the first 'rule' or law that God had set for man. Further, I believe this law to be in effect for all of time, because that God has made man in His own image is true for all time.

Again the command to be fruitful and increase in number. (vs 7)

Verses 9-17 covers the first covenant that God makes with man. God first spoke of this covenant in chapter 6:18 and now He establishes it. No more floods to destroy all life on earth. A rainbow in the clouds to remind us of God's everlasting covenant promise. This covenant is between God and all life on earth.

Verses 18-19 tells us Noah's 3 sons, from whom came the people who scattered over the earth.

Verses 20-29 covers the account of Ham walking in on his father when Noah was drunk and naked, resulting in Noah cursing Canaan, Ham's son, to be the slave of Shem and Japheth. Also, the death of Noah at the age of 950 years.

Chapter 10

This chapter is the account of the Table of Nations.

It tells us of the sons of Noah's 3 sons, the Japhethites, the Hamites, and the Semites (Shem's).

Now concerning the sons of Japheth, verse 5 tells us: (From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language.) (We want to recall this verse a little later.)

Now all these sons would become nations that would spread out over the earth.

Verse 31 tells us: These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations. (We will recall this.)

Chapter 11

Now, the first part of this chapter has to do men settling and purposing to build a city with a tower that reaches to the heavens,

so to make a name for themselves, and not be scattered all over the earth.

Now this is not being fruitful, increasing in number, and filling the earth. (Ch. 9:1)

Now at this time the whole world had one language. (vs 1)

What about verses 5 and 31 in chapter 10? Was this recorded after the time of the incidents of chapter 11?

So the LORD confused their language and scattered them all over the earth. And that is why it is called Babel. (Hebrew for confused?)

Verses 10-27 covers 9 Generations from Shem to Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot.

Now Terah took his son and daughter-in-law, Abram and Sarai, along with his grandson Lot, and settled in Haran.

Terah died in Haran at the age of 205.

Comments or questions on this reading are welcome, and remember, the important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently. (I hope I haven't pondered too much here)

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! Your musings on how the animals were fed made me think of God feeding manna to the people; perhaps He fed the animals. Possibly some of the animals went into hibernation so didn't need to be fed. And I don't even want to think about how the mosquitos got fed. Anyway, Noah and companions accomplished the deed with the help and Grace of God. Matt 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Steven Wright:

Mosquitoes still today, make use of plant juices, water, and liquids in feces of animals, besides siphoning blood. I think these other means must have been how it was done before Genesis 9.

Ginger Hermon:

While discussing passages this evening w/Marc and Nick I realized I had never pondered that animals had eaten only vegetation prior to the flood. Aha moment for me.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Gen 11:6-7 The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

I was wondering about the "nothing will be impossible for them" and question what that might be which would upset God. Then it occurred to me that by being so successful, they would no longer feel the need for a relationship with God and become arrogant and prideful. I further realize that in our current society with its obsession with technology, we often have the same mindset - that with time, we will solve all problems. "Man is the measure of all things."

Secondly, who is the "us" in "Come, let us go down. . ." ? Some heavenly council of decision-makers?

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Verse 6 may be a reference to 'as one' we are much more effective than we are when not working together.!? Verse 7, I would suggest considering chapter 18:1-2 for more insight.

Marc Hermon:

I would assume the same "Let us" mentioned in Gen. 1:26. God is a triune "us".

Charles Fry:

Notice how the phrase "let us" in in v3-4 three times, and then God's "let us" trumps man's arrogance in v.7.

That expression that "nothing will be impossible", actually nothing that they "purpose" (or "propose") to do, which speaks to again human will apart from God, apart from moral restraint. Some of the trends of our current technologies, not only in the areas of nuclear power and information technology, but even more so genetic manipulation, make me wonder if we aren't building toward another catastrophic intervention, perhaps the final one.

It is noteworthy that the names of Noah's descendants in Genesis 10 add up to 70 forefathers of the nations. The Jews saw significance in that, connected to the 70 descendants of Jacob that entered Egypt (Genesis 46:27, Exodus 1:5, Deuteronomy 10:22) with Moses's statement in Deuteronomy 32:8 where the Hebrew has "sons of Israel" and the Greek has "sons of God." The rabbis taught both of these, that the sons of Israel were to be light to the nations, and that the Lord assigned 70 angels to represent the 70 nations (see the angels and princes mentioned in Daniel 7-12).

Steven Wright:

God knew that the worst thing for man would be for man to trust only in himself - so he forced compliance with the dispersal directive which they now were completely contradicting. (Gen. 11:4c) ". . .lest we be dispersed (cf. Isaiah 5:20)

Ginger Hermon:

Unrestrained rebellion against God. :-(The city and tower of Babel were built by people who were rebelling against God, by directly contradicting His command to "Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth." The purpose of building the tower was to "make a name for themselves", and to prevent them from being "dispersed over the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4) By building a city to not be dispersed, and a tower to make a name for themselves, the people of Babel were defying God. At the end of time the curse of Babel, the division (peleg) of peoples, the separation of nations, and the confusion of tongues will end forever; and the wisdom and love of our great God, even

in His judgments, will be understood in a new way by those who have put their trust in Him!

Steven Wright:
Very well spoken sister Ginger Hermon!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

No doubt Noah and family had plenty of work to keep them occupied during that year in the ark, but the design of the ark was surely set up to facilitate the chores of food distribution and waste cleanup. Most animals do have a capacity to exist in a state of torpor, reduced metabolic rate, which would perhaps have been facilitated by general darkness of the ark below the top floor, and the cool that probably prevailed during that year on the waters.
<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torpor>

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:
I saw this a lot at work. :-)

Charles Fry:
Apparently NASA thinks it might be worth encouraging.

Steven Wright:
Yes, I too can see Torpor, as a factor, brother Charles Fry! I have thought about that a lot.

Michael Rogers:
Why do we have to try to find some "logical or physical" explanation to all miracles? God created all things and by Him we exist, there is no logical or physical explanation for any of that. Those who believe God and His word have faith. All the "logical" explanations in the world won't convince an atheist.

Steven Wright:
The logical and physical exist by miracle and THAT is the explanation! God is over all, Amen!

Steven Wright:
(Genesis 6:21) does mention good for Noah and his family as well as for the animals. Another thing not mentioned is reproduction.

Charles Fry:
I've seen efforts to explain away the miraculous, such as when folks try to say that there might have been a flood and an ark, but that it was a local event, perhaps in Mesopotamia, perhaps on the shore of the Black Sea. Those kinds of naturalistic explanations reduce the miraculous to mythology, with only a hint of historical reality. That isn't what we have in the Bible, and I haven't seen anyone here suggest anything like that. The Bible consists of true stories of real people and real events, historically connected and often verifiable. The miracles are not measurable or repeatable in a "scientific" way, but they make sense and are not illogical. We remember Peter's instructions:
1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; (NKJV)

This isn't an instruction to believe without reason, it is an instruction to know and be able to defend a reasonable faith. We have to have a reason for our hope in order to be able to defend our faith to those who ask. Biblical faith is always grounded in what really happened, what God and humans really did.

Remember when Peter spoke to the crowd at Pentecost? We know he didn't just say, "believe it." He presented three important lines of evidence so that they could believe what he was saying. He presented evidence from the prophets, he presented eye witness testimony, and he presented the evidence of what they saw and heard, the sound of wind, the appearance of tongues like fire, and the speaking in various native languages, and he affirmed the physical reality of the empty tomb within easy walking distance. When Paul preached to the Jews he presented similar evidence, from the scriptures, from the miraculous, and from eye witnesses (as in Acts 13:16-40). When Paul preached to gentiles who didn't have the scriptures, he presented evidence from the natural world and from their own history and philosophers (Acts 17:22-31). All of this was reasonable, and intended to inform and persuade. And sometimes reasonable presentation of evidence coupled with devout Christian behavior does in fact persuade atheists.

Steven Wright:
Amen brother Charles!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:
Principle of Uniformitarianism - "The Present is the Key to the Past"

"Uniformitarianism is a geological doctrine. It states that current geologic processes, occurring at the same rates observed today, in the same manner, account for all of Earth's geological features. Thus, it assumes that geological processes are essentially unchanged today from those of the unobservable past, and that there have been no cataclysmic events in earth's history. As present processes are thought to explain all past events, the Uniformitarian slogan is, "the present is the key to the past."

2 Peter 3:3-7

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

I take this as a prophecy being fulfilled in our times, that there are people who are WILLINGLY IGNORANT of two facts in the Word of God: Creation and the Flood. People who do not acknowledge God's world changing events in the past will not be prepared for His next one.

Comment:

Charles Fry:
The flood catastrophe, with both "the windows of heaven" opened and "the fountains of the great deep" broken up utterly changed the earth, including in some sense mitigating the curse on the ground (Gen 3:17-19, 5:29, 8:21). The "world that then was... perished." The relationship

between humans and animals fundamentally changed in Genesis 8. The lifespan of humans dramatically declined after the flood, and apparently precipitously again after the Tower incident (assuming 10:25 and 11:17-19 occurred in conjunction with 11:8, which seems very likely). The history of our earth and solar system is perhaps much more punctuated by world shaking events that modern man has wanted to believe.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

At this point we have read through the first 6 sections of Genesis, and started section 7, with the breaks at 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10 and 11:27, The first five sections, through 11:9, were about God dealing with mankind, and in section 6 the focus shifts to God and the family of Abraham.

It is noteworthy too that Abram left Ur of the Chaldees, to go to Aram and then to Canaan (11:31). The next time Chaldea is mentioned (Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon) is in the prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, and 2 Kings 24ff, where the Chaldeans are the oppressors of the Judah and take Jews captive to Babylon. Part of the message is that if God could bring a family out of the Chaldees and make a nation of them in Abram's day, he could do it again, saving the remnant and making it glorious, after the Babylonian captivity.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Hello all! And thank you Butch O'Neal for another nice summary! very well put together! As to your question regarding (10:5 - 31), yes I believe we can put the dispersion of the familial clans of mankind, subsequent to the Tower of Babel context in Chapter 11. the most precise time marker it would seem to me is the birth and naming of Peleg mentioned in (10:25 and, 11:16 - 18). the meaning of his name given in (10:25) "division" is given in the context of the forced dispersal in conjunction with the work stopping on the tower. other contextual clues to notice would be the use of the terms. "Nations, families (clans), languages and lands" repeated throughout chapter 10. I was struck with the use of the word "families in (8:19) this morning as I read from my ESV. It is actually the same word in the Hebrew "Miyn" that we find translated as "kind" in (Gen. 1). this word means, "to portion out, or sort" "species." It is Strongs # 4327. In the KJV of Gen. 10, we find the word "families" (the alternate for "Kind" used in the ESV in Gen. 8:19), but here it is a different word. It is "Mishpachah" Strongs #4940. it means, "A family i.e. circle of relations. Fig. a class (of persons) [as in "classification" S.L.W.] a species of animals [or the human species] - but designating family group S.L.W.) or sort (of things); by extens. a tribe or people: - family, Kindred [related to the word "kind" S.L.W.] I take this word to be a combination of the word "Miyn" (above) with the root "Shaphah" (see Strongs #'s 8142 and 8198) - by extension "Shiphchah" with the idea of "branching" that is, spreading out, - a "family tree" if you will.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Steven Wright

Charles Fry:

It is also very plausible that the dividing of the earth at that time, around the time Peleg was born, was not only the confusion of languages, which was huge, but may have been accompanied by catastrophic seismic/hydrological events. The earth itself may have literally had some dividing at that time.

Steven Wright:

"The great earthquake?" Charles Fry? Hmmmm? Ok!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

"If God could . . ." strikes me as a funny (weird) clause. God can make children of Abraham out of stones. It goes along with being Omnipotent. "If God could . . ." places God inside boundaries, a limitation on who He is. We, as humans, seem always try to define His powers and what He can do and usually (and by "usually", I mean "always") fail. We (I) have a great need to understand our world and there is nothing wrong about that - God gave us a curious mind, as you have said, and I believe it is a gift that we are expected to use to do His Will. I also suspect that we are to use this gift in "loving one another" rather than "trying to define God and what He might or might not be able to do."

Replies:

Charles Fry:

Not intending to question or limit God's ability, but trying to say, there is an inferred message all through the Bible, to doubters and despairing people, especially in the Babylonian Captivity generation, don't despair, what God has done before he can (and will) do again.

Kevin Crittenden:

Oh I knew you weren't intending any limitations.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Hey, Nick Hermon, your study topic is "History", and yet Butch O'Neal just covered 2000 years in three posts! Better step up your game! :)

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

No pressure there, right?

Comment:

Steven Wright:

I also like to talk about what in population genetics speak is called "the Founder Effect" related to (Genesis 10 and 11). Then as now, certain genetic markers would have been expressed variously in different family groups. these would onl become more expressive (Phenotypically as well as genotypically)

Comment:

Steven Wright:

with the isolation that ensued.

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

In true phenotypical fashion.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

The confusion of languages was a huge big deal, resulting in chaos and distrust and the scattering of peoples. Despite great efforts on the part of anthropologists/linguists to explain the origin of language in evolutionary terms, there is no common or credible explanation apart from design. Highly respected anthropologist Noam Chomsky observed decades ago that language seems to be innate in man. The apparent existence of "families" of languages completely distinct from each other seems to affirm the Babel and defy explanation from any other source.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you for your excellent instruction, Butch O'Neal! I feel like an educated student thanks to you & all my good brothers. :-) Very engaging study. I love reading Genesis.

Jan 23: Genesis 12-15 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, January 23, 2017

The Law Genesis, chapters 12-15

Chapter 12

We have come to God's calling of Abram. God tells Abram to leave his country, his people, and everything familiar to him. And to go to a land that the LORD will show him.

It seems that Abram does not even know where God wants him to go. And Abram left, with his wife, Sarai, his nephew, Lot, and all that he possessed.

This is a great show of faith! However, before Abram left, God told him these words:

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you;
I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." [vs 2-3]

So Abram headed toward Canaan and arrived there, and the LORD told Abram: "To your offspring [or seed] I will give this land." [vs 7]

So Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him. (This is significant to me, as this is the first account of God

'appearing' to anyone since the time that 'men began to call on the name of the LORD.' Ch. 4:26)

From there Abram moved on and pitched his tent somewhere between Bethel and Ai, and built another altar to the LORD and

'called on the name of the LORD.'

Thus far, Abram is doing everything right, but he winds up in a land toward the Negev where there is a severe famine, and so he went to live in Egypt for awhile, where he feared for his life if the Egyptians knew that Sarai was his wife, so he had her say that she was his sister. Now the Pharaoh had Sarai brought to his palace and gave Abram livestock, men and women servants, camels,

and treated him well because of Sarai.

Now the LORD inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household and caused Pharaoh to send Abram and Sarai away.

Abram, to me seems to have lost faith in the LORD being able to save him in these circumstances. But God did save Abram!

After all, God had made this great promise to Abram.

What was Abram thinking? We can learn a great lesson here.

Have faith in the LORD even in the most dire circumstances!

Chapter 13

Now we have Abram going up to the Negev, with his wife, Lot, and everything he had. He had become wealthy in livestock and silver and gold. From the Negev, he came to the place where his tent had been earlier and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.

Lot also had flocks and herds and tents, and the land could not support both he and Abram if they stayed together, so Abram told Lot to 'pick a side' from where they stood and that land would be Lot's, and Abram would take the other side.

Lot chose the plain of Jordan which included Sodom and Gomorrah. Abram lived in the land of Canaan. Then the LORD told

Abram that HE would give him all the land that he could see, and to his offspring forever, and only if the dust could be counted, then Abram's offspring could also be counted. (Too many to count.)

Abram moved near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

Chapter 14

Now a war was breaking out between four kings of Shinar, Ellasar, Elam, and Goiim, against five kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Bela. Now when the five kings fled, the four kings seized all the goods, food, and possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, including Abram's nephew Lot.

When Abram learned of this, he went out with 318 men and defeated the four kings and rescued Lot and the possessions and all the other people.

Now Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, brought out bread and wine. And he blessed Abram:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.
And blessed be God Most High,
who delivered your enemies into your hand." [vs 19b-20]

Abram gave him a tenth of everything, and gave all that was left to the king of Sodom, except what belonged to the men who went with him.

Chapter 15

Now the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram.
I am your shield, your very great reward." [vs 1]

Now Abram was concerned because he had no children.

(evidence of the impatience of man)

Abram feared that another in his household would become his heir but the LORD reaffirmed his promise to Abram.

His heir would come from his own body.

Abram fell into a deep sleep and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him, and the LORD told him that his descendants would become strangers in a country not their own, and would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years.

And Abram would go to his fathers in peace.

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said:

"To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates-- the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites." [vs 18-21]
We know that God has never broken a covenant, nor will HE!
Abram has built 3 altars unto God in these 4 chapters.

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Thanks Butch! The four part promise!

Comment:

Steven Wright:
As I read the text earlier this morning, I was struck with the thought of how Lot became a man of great means by way of his association with Abraham. although we know that Lot was a righteous man (2 Peter 2:7-8) English Standard Version (ESV)

7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); even the unrighteous reap benefits by association and/or proximity with the righteous, whether they realize that or not! Also, after God used language as the means of enforcing his will that human beings migrate and spread out over the whole earth, he continues to use economic motivation as a means to this end. Lot and Abram combined had grown to big to stay together. they were wise and considerate, responsible and conservation minded, in the use of the land and its resources. Staying together would mean the depletion of those resources due to overgrazing, so they had to separate. This also would become a means for god to receive the glory for the continued increase of Abram, since he would then have to make use of the lesser resource - rich land. And of course, the next chapter has the giving of the four part promise to Abram. God was not going to share the particulars of this with Lot. it was time now for God to be able to deal with Abram in a more direct way.

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:
Thanks for referencing 2 Peter, Steven. From Lot's example of being rescued we must trust the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials & to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgement. "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope."

Comment:

Janet Gordon Gentry:
Do we know if all of the land He gave Abram is still belonging to Abram's descendants?

Replies:

Steven Wright:
No it is not Janet. Even though Joshua affirmed that the Lord came through with everything HE promised, the Israelites had still not driven out all of the inhabitants of Canaan. The Israelites were in all of the territories, but it was only later under David and Solomon, that they successfully and briefly held all those lands. Their right to this promise was of course forfeited later because of their idololatriy. They lost their land.

After 70 A.D. they lost their nation. Now God's people are the citizens of the Kingdom of Christ!

Charles Fry:

I agree with Steven, God kept his oath and did give the promised land to them, however their refusal to keep his covenant (coming up in 17:9) resulted in consequences that included exile and captivity and dispersion. Even so, and knowing that a new covenant was put into effect by Christ for all humanity, I still would not want to be in the role of an oppressor or opponent of Abraham's descendants according to the flesh. God punished every nation that oppressed Israel, even when the oppression was a rod of divine judgment. Assyria was God's rod against Israel in Isaiah 10:5, but the prophet says "woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger," and then v12 says that once Assyria has been used to discipline Jerusalem, Assyria and her king would be punished. Considering historical outcomes, I think it unwise for a nation's policies to be antisemitic or anti-Israel to this day.

Steven Wright:

Agreed, Charles Fry!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

A couple of years ago I really came to appreciate the powerful story of Genesis 14-15, and the continuity from 14 into 15.

Abraham has been revealed as a man of peace, certainly not a warrior. He avoided conflict with Pharaoh, he avoided conflict with Lot. But he had to go to war to rescue Lot. This was a disruptive and disturbing experience to say the least. God provided counsel and encouragement to Abraham afterward in the person of Melchizedek (King of Righteousness), King of Salem (Salem = peace) and priest of God. After Melchizedek blessed Abram we see that Abram was profoundly affected by their encounter when Abram echoes the language of the king, speaking of "God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth," (14:19,22).

God was certainly evoking Abram's fresh memory of those recent events of conflict and negotiation when he said, "I am your shield, your very great reward" in 15:1 in the lead up to the promise of great posterity. His shield, as Melchizedek had noted, had preserved Abram through the battle, and God himself was Abram's great reward, transcending the tithe given to Melchizedek and the plunder restored to the king of Sodom.

Reading of God symbolically passing between the animal pieces, it is good to remember Jeremiah 34:18-20 for this ritual as a seal to a covenant, rather like saying, "may this be done to me if I don't keep my promise." God pledged his life to the fulfillment of the covenant.

Replies:

Wendy Range:

15:1 reminded me of how as a parent, we frequently have to reassure our children when they perceive a new experience as frightening. We tell them there is nothing to fear, usually adding that we will be right there the whole time. They can still be paralyzed by fear or even refuse us in disbelief. It is good to think of our Father during uncertain times and situations, remembering He is our "shield and great reward", a mighty protector who loves us.

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Charles Fry!

Comment:

Charles Fry:
And thank you, Butch O'Neal! Your time and effort and words of encouragement are appreciated.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:
It's interesting that God didn't allow Abraham to just go ahead and possess the land immediately but that it would be to his descendants. It seems that the reason is the long suffering of God that the Canaanites had not yet reached a threshold of evil that they could not return from. So Abraham always remained a sojourner looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. A great example of faith and an attitude we should have as we sojourn for this short time on the Earth.

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:
Hebrews 11: By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God....All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Joanne Caffie:
Great point Marc as the long suffering of God seems to still exist today for us until the coming of Christ.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thank you, Butch O'Neal! I cherish studying scripture with you and count it a blessing to search it daily with so many wise brothers & sisters-in-Christ. Very edifying! Abram is the "father of all who believe" (Rom. 4:11). In Genesis 15:6 we read the first specific reference to faith in God's promises. It also teaches that the Lord responds to a man's faith by crediting righteousness to him (Heb. 11:8)

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Ginger Hermon!

Jan 30: Genesis 16-19 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, January 30 2017

The Law

Genesis 16-19

We are at the account of Hagar and Ishmael.

Chapter 16

Now God had already told Abram that: "I will make you into a great nation" and "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

(chapter 12:2-3)

But Sarai was becoming impatient to have a child and she perceived that the LORD had kept her from having children. (vs 2)

It is interesting to me that she would think in those terms.

Nevertheless, Sarai purposed to have Abram sleep with her maidservant, in hopes of building a family through her. (Hagar)

So, Hagar conceived and Sarai became jealous because Hagar was despising her now that she was pregnant.

It should be noted here that to be able to bear children in these times was most important to all women. We can also see that when we veer from God's plan, things do not go well.

Now Sarai mistreated Hagar and Hagar fled from her.

The angel of the LORD found her near a spring in the desert and persuaded her to go back and submit to Sarai.

The angel of the LORD told Hagar that he would make her descendants to numerous to count, and that she would have son,

and that his name would be Ishmael. (which means 'God hears)

Hagar gave this name to the LORD who had spoke to her:

"You are the God who sees me, I have now seen [the back of the One who sees me.]"

That is why the well is called Beer Lahai Roi.

The name means: well of the Living One who sees me.

So Hagar bore Abram a son when he was 86 years old

Chapter 17

When Abram was 99 years old the LORD appeared to him and said,

"I am God Almighty [in Hebrew, El Shaddai] walk before me and be blameless.

God told Abram, as He confirmed His covenant with Abram,

You will be the father of many nations, instead of Abram,

[exalted father] you will be Abraham [father of many],

he would be very fruitful.

And their covenant would be everlasting. vs 7

God introduced Abraham to the covenant of circumcision.

Every male would be circumcised. This would be for generations to come.

(This rite, cutting around, was appointed by God to be the special badge of his chosen people, an abiding sign of their consecration

to him. It was established as a national ordinance. vs 10)

Now, since the sacrifice of our LORD Jesus Christ, when we are buried with Him in the waters of baptism, we become circumcised

by Christ. An abiding sign of our consecration to Him. [Col 2:9-12]

Now any male who had not been circumcised in the flesh would be cut off from his people, for he has broken God's covenant.

God told Abraham that Sarai [perhaps contentious] would now be

Sarah [a princess] and that she would bear Abraham a son and he

would be called Isaac [he laughs] because Abraham laughed when God told him this. He was already 100 years old and Sarah was 90.

And so Abraham was circumcised at the age of 99, Ishmael was 13.
And every male in Abraham's household was circumcised with him.

Chapter 18

Now Abraham looked up from the entrance of his tent and saw three men standing nearby. He 'recognized' them as from God, vs3,
and he wanted to get them water to drink, and to wash their feet,
and have them rest under a tree while he and Sarah prepared them something to eat. They agreed.

While they ate, they where Sarah was. Abraham said, "In the tent."

Then the LORD said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Sarah heard and she laughed to herself because she and her husband were so old already. The LORD said, "Why did Sarah laugh, is anything too hard for the LORD?"

Sarah was afraid and lied and said that she did not laugh.

Now when the men got up to leave, they looked toward Sodom and the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"
The LORD had purposed to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because of their great sin.

Abraham was concerned that God would destroy the righteous with the wicked. I'm persuaded that he was thinking of his nephew, Lot, and Lot's family. "Will you Sodom if 50 righteous people are there? No? How about 45? No? 40? No? 30? No? 20? No? 10?"

The Lord answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it."

Then the LORD left, and Abraham returned home.

Chapter 19

Now, when the two angels arrived in Sodom, Lot persuaded them to come and stay in the safety of his house, but before they went to bed, the men of the city surrounded the house and demanded that the two 'men' be sent out to them so they could rape them.

This is a very depressing story and it continues with Lot offering his very own daughters, who were virgins, to this brutal crowd rather than his two guests.

Thankfully the crowd refused and moved to break down the door to Lot's house, but the two angels struck the crowd blind and told Lot that they were sent to destroy this city, because the outcry to the LORD was too great, and that Lot should gather his family and flee.

Lot's sons-in-law thought he was joking and they stayed behind.

Lot took only his two daughters and his wife. (not even ten people.)

The angels said to flee and don't look back! But Lot's wife did look back and she was turned into a pillar of salt.

How terrible the penalty when one doesn't obey the LORD.

So God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah!

Now Lot and his two daughters had settled in the mountains and the daughters wanted their line of descendants to continue, so they got Lot to drink wine, and the older one laid with him. The next night they gave Lot wine again and the younger one laid with him.

Out of these unions was born a son to the older daughter named Moab [sounds like: from father] He is the father of the Moabites today. The younger daughter also had a son and he was named

Ben Ammi [son of my people] and he is the father of the Ammonites of today.

Questions and comments on this reading selection are welcome.

Charles reminds us that the most important thing here is to

read and ponder the Scriptures consistently.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Butch O'Neal! Quite a lot to talk about from today's reading! From me, for now, these: 1st, what Sarah did, giving Hagar to Abram in ch. 17, was all legal and acceptable, according to Man's law in those days. Not saying it was good law, or very emotionally and spiritually smart; not saying it pleased God either, just saying, it was not a concept Sarah came up with outta the blue. 2nd, "the LORD" still standing before Abram while the men, move on to the rest of their mission (18:22), I believe this was Melech YaHoWaH, the Angel of The LORD, a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ. The only member of the Godhead to ever appear in bodily form to men.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Steven Wright! I am blessed by your knowledge.

Steven Wright:

Thank you for your work here brother! And, I especially like being able to read your comments right away on your day!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Thanks, Butch, and Steven, for your thoughts and encouragement. These chapters are rich in examples of human weakness, God's faithfulness and mercy, the hard need for judgment, and God's deliverance of his people.

Hagar was greatly impressed to know that Abraham's God noticed and cared about her!

I do have a different perception on the phrase "angel of the Lord", and in particular I think Christ, the Word, was manifested once, and will come once more. The expression "angel of the Lord" is found 68 times in the English Bible. If we compare the Septuagint (Greek) Old Testament that was in common use in the days when the New Testament was written in Greek, we find that Luke's description of Gabriel in Luke 1:11 is the same words as the description of the angel in Genesis 16:7. The "angel of the Lord" who spoke to Hagar, and to Moses, and to Balaam, and to Zecharias, and to Mary, and to Joseph, and many others, who struck Sodom and Herod, the same language describes them all, before Jesus was born, specifically identified as Gabriel, after the death of Jesus, the Lord sent his angel to do his work. Jesus himself on the other hand is described as being God's revelator specifically in contrast to the angels, specifically in his incarnation (Hebrews 1:1-4ff). The angel of the Lord in Zech 3:1-2 did exactly what Michael did in Jude 9. I conclude that "the angel of the Lord" was an angel, not always the same angel, sent by the Lord, Yahweh, to be his representative, the medium through which he spoke and acted.

Notice in Genesis 18-19 the three "men" come to Abraham. v2. "They said" in v5, 9. "The Lord said" in v.13, "I" in v.14, "He said" in v.15. All three "men" apparently rose to go in v16 and the Lord ruminates in v19, "I". Then in in v20-21 "I will go down" to Sodom. So the "men" went, but "the Lord" continued to talk to Abraham, v.22ff, until "the Lord" went his way in v.33. We come into 19 and the "men" are now spoken of as "angels." and as "men" v1, 10. In 19:13 the angels said "we will destroy this place" and "the Lord has sent us to destroy it" but remember the Lord had said, "I will go down" in 18:21 and "If I find" in the conversation with Abraham. So the angels who said "the Lord sent us to destroy" Sodom in v13 also said "the Lord will destroy

this city" in v.14. Then when Lot is talking to the angels/men, "Lot said to them" in v18, but it is "he said to" Lot in v21 and "I have favored you" and "I will not" destroy Zoar and "I cannot do anything until you arrive there" in v22. It is "the Lord" who rained fire and brimstone in v24. So the one who lingered with Abraham spoke as the Lord, and the two who went to Sodom spoke as the Lord. What the angels do is what the Lord does, they are his messengers, all three of them in this story. The Lord is going down to Sodom at the same time he is conversing with Abraham. The angels are angels but they also speak in the first person singular as the Lord, the three, the one, the two.

<http://livwat.com/otherlw/angleoflord.html>

Replies:

Joanne Caffie:

I have so been seeking an explanation of this context. Thanks to both of you (Steven and Charles)

Butch O'Neal:

Ditto....what Joanne said!

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother Charles Fry! I must selfishly confess that I was hoping to flush you out! For years I have heard OF your explanation of this, but never have I actually seen it or heard it! Very thorough, and sensible and reasonable! I am re-submitting the subject to a re-consideration! Again, thank you! You are in fact the only person to date to have really and actually dealt with my question. I really appreciate that! Read the link too folks! Very good!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

LOL. You did spur me on, Steven>

Heb 10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Prov 27:17 As iron sharpens iron,
so one man sharpens another.
NIV

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Amen brother!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

2 Peter 2 calls Lot just and righteous and so we don't want to take that testimony away from him, but the environment that he kept his family surrounded by clearly had devastating effects. Lot's wife didn't survive the destruction and his daughters took forms of sexual immorality with them.

Malachi 2:15 says the "Lord seeks righteous offspring". Lot clearly did not offer that to the Lord. The Moabites and the Ammonites would not fall into this category with the exception of Ruth who rejected her people to follow God.

In stark contrast we read why God chose Abraham in 18:19. "For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

Abraham raised righteous offspring to the Lord culminating in the ultimate "Seed" ...the Christ.

Let this desire be constantly in the hearts of every Christian father.

Replies:

Charles Fry:

Environment matters! Since Lot went from being a nomadic herdsman in Abraham's company to being a city dweller who sat in the gate, he must have invested in Sodom, perhaps so much that he felt he couldn't leave it behind. But then he had to.

Marc Hermon:

The reading said "he hesitated" before the men of God literally took hold and dragged them away. Likewise Lot's wife clearly was holding on to it also. On the other hand Abraham continued to be a "sojourner looking for a city whose builder and maker was God"

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

My question, Butch, in this story it kinda reads like Lot may have had at least 4 daughters; 2 that had not known man and 2 that were married to his son-in-laws. Another story could tell that Lot's daughters were married to his son-in-laws but their marriages had not been consummated (which seems unlikely). Which scenario do you think best fits this story?

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Joanne, I had heard a lesson from Charles at our home congregation on this subject at one time, and his explanation below convicted me then, as now.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Betrothed was much stricter than our "engaged". It was a longer process and much more binding. Mary was "espoused" to Joseph and was even traveling with him to Bethlehem to be counted but he did not take her as his wife until the angel told him to do so and even then he "knew her not" until after the Messiah was born.

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

But the scriptures tell us that Mary and Joseph were "espoused". In Genesis it says "son-in-laws" which tells me that the marriage has already taken place.

Replies:

Charles Fry:

Joanne, the binding marriage contract makes it legitimate to refer to the espoused men as sons-in-law before the marriage had been consummated. Most interpreters have understood this story that way, that Lot had only two daughters, who were legally

bound to two men of Sodom. Your thought that Lot had other daughters, already married, is possible, but I've always understood the story as explained in this note from the NET Bible: (NET Bible Notes - Full Notes) 14 a sn The language has to be interpreted in the light of the context and the social customs. The men are called "sons-in-law" (literally "the takers of his daughters"), but the daughters had not yet had sex with a man. It is better to translate the phrase "who were going to marry his daughters." Since formal marriage contracts were binding, the husbands-to-be could already be called sons-in-law."

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Stop scaring the children! So many times I hear brothers &/or sisters claim we live in the worst of times. I don't understand that statement when I consider Genesis. I cannot imagine living in a time where "every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart was evil" (6:5) or live in sodomy where "sin was so grievous" (18:20). No matter what condition we live in, these examples do remind us to look ahead & be ready for Christ's 2nd coming. "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day no one who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." (Luke 17:30-33)

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal & everyone else. I imagine if we were in person we'd engage in discussion all night long. I thank God for each of you & for the Word! <3

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

All night long Ginger.... ALL night long 🥰🥰🥰

Feb 6: Genesis 20-23 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, February 6, 2017

The Law

Genesis 20-23

Chapter 20

Now Abraham had moved to Gerar, and there, he said of his wife, "She is my sister."

Then Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent for and 'took' Sarah.

Now, God said to Abimelech, in a dream, "You are as good as dead for the woman you have taken; she is a married woman."

Now the king had not gone near Sarah, and so he plead his case before God: "Lord, will you destroy an innocent nation?"

He said, "She is my sister," she said, "He is my brother."

"I have done this with a clear conscience and clean hands."

Now, God allowed that He kept Abimelech from sinning against Him, but he was to return Sarah, and he would live, (after Abraham prayed for him) but if he did not return Sarah, he and all of his would die.

The next morning Abimelech and all his officials, in fear, confronted Abraham as to why he would put the king in such a position. vs 8-10

Abraham explained that he felt that he would be killed for his wife because she was so beautiful, and that she really was his sister.

He and her had the same father, but different mothers.

And when they left their father's household, she could show her love for her husband by saying of him, "He is my brother." vs 11-13

So the king returned Sarah to Abraham, and gave to him also, sheep and cattle and male and female slaves, and told him that he could live wherever he liked, in the land. He also vindicated Sarah for any

'offense' that might be against her before the others. vs 14-16

Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and opened up the wombs of his wife and slave girls that He had closed because of Sarah.

Note: Abraham and Sarah had done this same thing at least once before, (chapter 12:10-17) Abraham apparently thought that this was a good idea.

Chapter 21

God kept His promise to Sarah, and she became pregnant and bore Abraham a son, whom he named Isaac, [he laughs] and Abraham circumcised him when he was eight days old, according to God's command.

Abraham was a hundred years old.

Sarah was happy, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me. Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him

a son in his old age." vs 1-7

On the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast.

Sarah saw that Ishmael was mocking, so she told Abraham to get rid of Hagar and her son, "that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

Abraham was distressed. Ishmael was his son, but God told him not to be so distressed, that his seed/offspring would be reckoned through Isaac, but He would also make Ishmael a great nation,

for he was Abraham's offspring. vs 8-13

So the next morning Hagar was sent off with Ishmael and some food and a skin of water, and she wandered the desert.

She thought the boy would die after their water was consumed, but God heard them crying and he told Hagar not to be afraid,

(I have found these encouraging words to 'not be afraid' about 87 times in the NIV translation. God never wants us to be afraid.)

that He would make Ishmael into a great nation. Then God gave them water and He stayed with the boy as he grew up.

He lived in the desert and became an archer. His mother got him a wife from Egypt. vs 14-21

Now, at that time Abimelech wanted to make a treaty with Abraham, and he knew that God was with Abraham in everything that Abraham did, but Abraham had a complaint about a well he had dug.

Abimelech's servants had seized it and so Abraham gave the king sheep and cattle and set apart seven ewe lambs as a witness that

Abraham had dug the well. The place was called Beersheba, maybe 'the well of seven or well of the oath' because the two swore an oath there. Abraham planted a tamarisk tree there, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Eternal God. Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines a long time. vs 22-32

Chapter 22

Some time later God tested Abraham. He told him to take his only son, Isaac, Whom Abraham loved, and to sacrifice him as a burnt offering on a mountain that God would tell him about.

The next morning he set out for that place with Isaac, two servants, and enough wood for the burnt offering. Isaac carried the wood, Abraham carried the fire and knife, and Isaac asked where the lamb was. "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."

This test was a sign or shadow, if you will, of the blessed sacrifice of God's only son, Jesus Christ, whom He loved, to pay the penalty for the sins of man.

When they reached the place, Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood, bound and laid Isaac on it, and took the knife to slay him.

But the angel of the LORD called out, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Do not lay a hand on the boy. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

Now Abraham saw a ram stuck in a thicket and sacrificed it instead of his son, and he called that place 'the LORD will provide.'

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time and swore to him, that because he had not withheld his only son, and had obeyed God, that He would bless him, and through his seed/offspring all nations on earth would be blessed.

Then Abraham went to Beersheba and he stayed there. vs 1-19
Some time later Abraham was told that his brother's wife had bore Nahor eight children, and his concubine bore four also.

Chapter 23

Sarah died at the age of a hundred and twenty-seven at Hebron, in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn and weep over her. When he asked the Hittites [the sons of Heth] to sell him some property for a burial site, they told him to bury his dead in the choicest of their tombs as they held him in high regard.

Abraham wanted to purchase the property and so they agreed on a price for Ephron's field and the cave that was in it, and these were deeded to Abraham and he buried Sarah in the cave.

Now remember that the most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently. Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Charles Fry:
Moriah:

Genesis 22:2 (NIV)

2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

2 Chronicles 3:1 (NIV)

1 Then Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles! I wasn't aware of this significance. I found the following in 'New Unger's Bible Dictionary': "The land of Moriah" is named (Genesis 22:2) as the place where Abraham went to offer up Isaac. It is thought to be the same as "Mount Moriah," one of the hills of Jerusalem on which Solomon built the Temple, on the spot once occupied by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Chronicles 3:1). The Jews themselves believe that the altar of burnt offerings in the Temple stood upon the very site of the altar on which Abraham intended to offer up his son.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Good morning! And, thank you for this vibrant summary brother!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! A wonderful summary!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Gen. 22:16 "I swear by Myself"

Heb. 6:17-18 "Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged."

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

God had already told Abraham: Gen 17:19: "Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him."

So Abraham had this assurance from God that his son, Isaac, would be the father of many nations BEFORE the test in Gen 22. So what was Abraham thinking as he took Isaac up to Moriah? Probably that God wouldn't make Abraham go through with this; that God would provide another sacrifice. It is possible that Abraham's trust in God's promise gave him the confidence that Isaac would not need to be sacrificed. And maybe it is that trust in God's covenant which was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Yes, Hebrews references God's previous explicit promises to Abraham about Isaac as part of his faith, his conclusion that he could trust God with the life of his son and obey him.

Hebrews 11:17-19 (NIV)

17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." 19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal, for helping me read and ponder the Scripture this evening! I cherish chapter 22 and the O.T. type (shadow) Abraham/Isaac provides of God the Father/God the Son. Here is a chart that I have kept. There are additional comparisons which could be added but it's a pretty good summary. Another set of verses which we may consider is James 2:20 - 24, "You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend. You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone."

Isaac had a miraculous conception. When he was conceived his mother was an old woman and his father was an old man.	Jesus was conceived in miraculous fashion. His mother was a virgin and he was conceived by the Holy Spirit.
Isaac was an only son, who was greatly loved.	Jesus was an only son who was greatly loved.
Isaac had to be sacrificed.	Jesus had to be sacrificed.
Abraham took Isaac to a hill or a mountain to sacrifice his son.	Jesus traveled to a hill or a mountain to be sacrificed.
Abraham tells his companions that where they are going his companions could not follow.	Jesus tells his followers that where he is going they cannot follow.
Abraham also told his companions that "they" would return to them. So even though Isaac was going to his death, he still said that Isaac would be returning.	Jesus also told his companions that even though he was going to his death, he would still return to them.
The duration of time when Abraham thought that he was going to kill his only son was three days.	The duration of time that Jesus was in the grave was three days.
Isaac carried the wood up the hill that he would be sacrificed on.	Jesus carried the wood up the hill that he would be sacrificed on.
Isaac submitted to his father's will	Jesus submitted to his father's will
Isaac was laid on top of the wood that he had carried and was bound.	Jesus was laid on top of the wood that he had carried and was bound.
Abraham proved how much he loved God by not withholding his only son from him.	God proved how much he loved us by not withholding his only son from us.
Abraham had faith that God would end up providing the burnt offering, he didn't know how, but he had faith.	Just as the story of Abraham predicted, God did provide the burnt offering. He provided his own Son.
This took place in the small mountain range of Moriah. Moriah is the place where Jerusalem would later be built.	Jesus was sacrificed in the same location, quite possibly, on the same large hill.
Genesis says that to this day the name of the mountain is, "on the mount of the lord it shall be provided."	God did provide at that same place.
Because of what Abraham did God said he would indeed bless him with descendents from all the nations of the earth.	Jesus dying at this same place, in the same way, opened up God to all the nations of the earth!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ginger, for the chart and your encouragement. I have only seen this chart, or one like it, once before. This time I downloaded it!

Feb 13: Genesis 24-27 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, February 13, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 24-27

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Chapter 24

Here we find Abraham old, well advanced in years, blessed in every way by the LORD, and wanting his chief servant to travel to Abraham's own country to get a wife for Isaac. He had his servant swear on oath, by the LORD, that he would not get Isaac a Canaanite wife. "Put your hand under my thigh," he said.

(In taking an oath it was an ancient custom to put the hand under the thigh. Abraham required it from his servant, ie, not to take a wife for Isaac from the Canaanite daughters, [Gen 24:2-9] And Jacob required it from Joseph when he bound him by oath to bury him in Canaan. [Gen 47:29-31] This custom, the so-called bodily oath, was, no doubt, connected with the significance of the hips as the part from which the posterity issued [Gen 46:26, marg.] and the seat of vital power. The early Jewish commentators supposed it to be especially connected with the rite of circumcision.)

The above info taken from New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

Abraham did not want his servant to take Isaac back to his country even if the girl chosen, by the angel, would not return with the servant, to the point that he would be released from the oath.

So, the servant traveled, with many gifts, to the town of Nahor, and when he stopped to water the ten camels, he prayed to the LORD to show him the right girl. And before he finished praying, there came Rebekah! She gave him water and she watered the camels, answering the servant's prayer. He then put a nose ring and two bracelets on Rebekah and asked whose daughter she was. She replied that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor. (Abraham's brother, Gen 11:26)

The servant then praised the LORD for HIS kindness in leading him to his master's relatives. Then Rebekah ran home to tell her mother's household of these things, and her brother, Laban, went out to the spring and found the servant and brought him home.

"Come, you who are blessed by the LORD," he said

And so, there at Bethuel's house, the servant explained everything.

Bethuel and Laban, on hearing everything said, "This is from the LORD," and, "Take Rebekah and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."

And they sent Rebekah, with her nurse and her maids on her way, with Abraham's servant and his men. But first, they blessed her:

"Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies."

When they returned, Isaac took Rebekah into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married her, and he loved her, and he was comforted after his mother's death.

Chapter 25

Abraham married Keturah and she bore him six children.

Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away to the east, and he left everything he owned to Isaac.

Abraham breathed his last at the age of a hundred and seventy-five.

Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron. He was buried with his wife Sarah.

God blessed Isaac after Abraham's death.

Now Ishmael had twelve sons, these were tribal rulers who settled in the area from Havilah to Shur, near the border of Egypt, as you go toward Asshur. And they lived in hostility toward each other.

Ishmael breathed his last at the age of a hundred and thirty-seven, and he was gathered to his people.

Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, and he prayed to the LORD on behalf of her because she was barren.

The LORD answered his prayer and Rebekah became pregnant.

The LORD said to her:

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you will be separated;
one people will be stronger than the other,
and the older will serve the younger." (recall blessing in 24:60)

She gave birth to twin boys, the first, Esau, then Jacob, and Isaac was sixty years old.

When they grew up, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for some of Jacob's stew. So then, Esau despised his birthright.

Chapter 26

Now because of a famine in the land, Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines in Gerar. The LORD told him to stay there for a while and HE would give him and his descendants all of these lands

and confirmed the oath HE swore to Abraham, (chapter 12:2-3) so Isaac stayed in Gerar.

Now Isaac told the men of that place that Rebekah was his sister because he thought they might kill him for his wife because she was beautiful. After a long time, Abimelech discovered the truth and ordered that no one molest Isaac or his wife under threat of death.

Isaac became rich in that land and Abimelech told him to move away, "you have become too powerful for us."

So Isaac moved to the valley and reopened the wells that his father had dug and the Philistines had stopped up. Isaac dug more wells but there were disputes with the herdsmen of Gerar over the water, so Isaac moved on and dug another well and no one quarreled over it.

He said, "Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land."

Isaac went up to Beersheba and that night the LORD appeared to him and confirmed HIS oath with Abraham.

Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD.

There he pitched his tent and his servants dug a well.

Now it appears that Abimelech feared the LORD and wanted to make a peace treaty with Isaac. He knew that Isaac was blessed by the LORD. Isaac made a feast, and they ate and drank.

In the morning they swore an oath to each other and Abimelech left in peace.

Now when Esau was forty, he married Judith daughter of Berri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite.

They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

Chapter 27

Now Isaac was old and could no longer see and he called for Esau to go and hunt some wild game, and to prepare a meal for Isaac so Isaac could give Esau his blessing before he died.

Now Rebekah was listening and she prepared two goats and had Jacob take it to his father so that Jacob would get the blessing.

Rebekah dressed Jacob with Esau's clothes and covered his smooth skin with the goatskins so Isaac would think he was Esau.

And so Isaac was deceived and Jacob got the blessing of the firstborn:

"Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed.

May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness-- an abundance of grain and new wine.

May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you.

Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.

May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed."

Now Esau returned, prepared some of his game, took it into Isaac, and learned that Jacob had deceived Isaac and gotten Esau's blessing. Esau did get the second blessing:

"Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above.

You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother.

But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck."

Esau planned to kill Jacob, and so Rebekah sent Jacob to live with her brother, Laban, and to stay there until Esau was no longer angry. Then she would send word for Jacob to return.

Then Rebekah said to Isaac,

"I'm disgusted with living because of these Hittite women.

If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living."

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Either Isaac's sensitivity to touch was greatly diminished in his old age or Esau was a very hairy person! One thing for sure Esau never "got it" spiritually; he just could not seem to put those things together!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Yes....I've always 'felt' that goatskin might have been a bit much.

Steven Wright:

I think Esau was quite capricious though!

Steven Wright:

Getting a wife for Isaac is one of my favorite stories in the Bible!

Kevin Crittenden:

I agree! Maybe we should follow this particular Biblical precept and choose spouses for our children. Arranged marriages are done in other countries, I've had students who were married this way and all of them are happy as compared to our current 50% divorce rate here.

Ginger Hermon:

Kevin Crittenden -Rick Sparks claimed Marc & my marriage was arranged by elders at Pleasant Hill church of Christ. ;-) I believe it's worked out pretty well & to God's glory.

<3

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Do you think the disgust with the Hittite women that Rebekah felt was because of their devotion to idols?

Replies:

Steven Wright:

yes I think so!

Charles Fry:

There probably were a number of issues that went along with the religious heritage. Different ideas about how to dress, about proper decorum and language, about discipline, family values, child rearing, work ethic, and more. Perhaps a substantially different worldview and expectations overall.

Comment:

Kimra Grantham Robinson:

I think the arranged marriages work mostly because they have that mindset and often no other option. I know of arranged marriages that were dismal failures once the couple moved to the West.

Replies:

Steven Wright:

The most impressive thing about this story for me, has always been, how everyone from start to finish is seeking God's guidance, and putting the important spiritual concerns first. THAT, is why it works! In this family, Isaac and Rebecca's marriage was the only

one that was arranged. It was also the only one that was completely monogamous! AND, because everyone sought the LORD from the start, God blessed them with "love at first sight" and throughout their marriage (24:62 -67)

Kevin Crittenden:
Yup, God knows how to pick 'em!

Charles Fry:
Not that their marriage was without struggle, as in their different favors toward the twins.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:
So I'm not seeing any consequence from God for either Abraham claiming that his wife was his sister (actually half-true) or Isaac claiming the same thing. Yet they are deemed righteous. Does this mean that a righteous man can tell such lies? Or were they not considered righteous until later in life?

Replies:

Kimra Grantham Robinson:
There's no affirmation of his actions either. I think the reprimand from the king may have made Abraham realize his sin.

Charles Fry:
I do see consequences for the lies of Abraham and Isaac regarding their wives. These stories ought to be seen as very negative about lying, and especially lying to people who have done you no harm and treated you well, lies told because of personal fear or suspicion.

In Genesis 12:10ff Abram went to Egypt as a "refugee" from famine, and was welcomed and treated well. Because of his own insecurity he created an abominable situation for himself and Sarai. Wonder how they both felt when she was inducted into the Pharaoh's palace as a potential member of his harem? Compounding the problem, Pharaoh enriched Abram on account of his "sister." When God protected Abram and Sarai from their own foolishness, and effectively rebuked the Egyptians for their heavy handed presumption, Pharaoh rightly asked, "What have you done to me?" (Gen 12:18 NIV). That confrontation, which resulted in Abram being run out of Egypt, was a very real consequence. Additional consequences included the subsequent separation of Lot and his people and herds from Abram and his group, plus the bonus of having an Egyptian handmaiden named Hagar in the company for additional adventures..

In Genesis 20, Abraham again obfuscated about his relationship to Sarah (and I'm pretty sure humorous irony is intended to be part of this story, given the bracketing of the promise of Isaac's birth, and then Isaac's birth, and the comments about the respective ages of Abraham and Sarah). Why was Abimelech (probably more a title than a personal name) attracted to Sarah? More likely because he wanted an alliance with Abraham than anything else, but whatever his personal motivation, God warned him off and again Abraham is asked, "What have you done to us?" (Gen 20:9). Once again we are shown that Abraham has wronged people who meant him no harm, that his fear has motivated a lie which was a harm to his neighbors and hosts. When Abimelech again approached Abraham, the episode is still hanging over their heads as Abimelech requests an honest deal from Abraham, reminding him they had welcomed him.

Gen 21:23 "Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you are living as an alien the same kindness I have shown to you."

Clearly Abraham deserves this rebuke, this reminder of bad behavior and unkindness when he lied. Distrust and broken relationships are normal consequences of lying, and Abraham experienced them at both ends of the story of his sojourn.

Sadly, Isaac, like many sons, picked up on some of his father's weaknesses as well as his strengths. Decades later, Isaac pulls much the same stunt with another Abimelech in the same area of Gerar. The sacred writer clearly wants us to remember and connect this episode with Abraham's previous folly in Egypt (26:1-2). Despite God's assurance in 26:2-5, Isaac has fears of these people nearby much like Abraham had shown, and lies about his wife. This Abimelech perhaps was less bold or capricious than his predecessor, but he clearly had an eye on Isaac and his "sister" and noticed the behavior when they behaved as lovers rather than siblings. When he confronted Isaac (again, an unhappy consequence of the lie) again the question is "What is this you have done to us?" (Gen 26:10). Abimelech didn't immediately run him out of town, he issued a hands off order, but what developed because of them living in that territory but being distrusted and separate was envy and hostility and mounting aggression until Abimelech did order Isaac to move on (v16). Nevertheless, the quarreling and hostility continued, apparently to the point of disturbance that God needed to again reassure Isaac of his safety (26:23). Once again, when the local residents who had initially accepted Isaac approach and ask for a treaty there is the previous distrust, we didn't hurt you, you treated us badly, promise you won't do us any harm, in 26:28-29. Isaac did welcome them, did show them hospitality, did come to peace with them. Too bad they had to initiate the process when he had all the promises of God on his side.

Anyway, I suggest there were lots of bad consequences from Abraham's and Isaac's lies, brought out in the text for our consideration, just like there are bad consequences for ourselves, for people around us, for relationships, for respect, and so forth, whenever a lie is told.

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Charles! It's comforting to know that there were consequences then as there always are now for our actions when we trust more in ourselves than in God. It is also comforting to know that these men were beloved of God in spite of their momentary lapses. Of course this doesn't mean that we can comfortably sin and scratch our worldly itches, knowing that we can repent later and be forgiven.

But how good, how perfect, does a person need to be to be deemed righteous? And, even as I wrote that question, I realized it's not a good question at all. By even asking that question, I'm looking for the boundary line (to here you may go and no further). This is not the correct attitude. It is best not to wonder if we are righteous; let God sort that out, and just do our best to live according to His will.

Between you and me and the wall, I still have issues of control and letting go and submission and pharisaicalism (is that a word?)

Marc Hermon:

My seven year old asked me how many good things he has to do to cancel out his mistakes so he can go to heaven. I told him the only people that don't get to go to heaven are the people that don't care enough to think about that question. And

eventually, you realize that the answer to the question is that God gives us grace to make-up the shortfall in our lists.

Joanne Caffie:

An eye opener for me is that Abraham was still around when this took place (chpt 26) so I'm wondering if he had a little sit-down with his son of the consequences such a lie could bring

Charles Fry:

Ditto for me on the issues and the struggle, except I'll limit my list to things I can spell. And though you and I are unique, Kevin, we are not altogether unique. It is good we are credited with righteousness beyond the "filthy rags" of our own efforts.

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

Chpt 25:1-2

Was Ketura considered a concubine or was it that Abraham had others besides her after Sarah's death?

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

Since Abraham's sons with Keturah were not privy to any inheritance from Abraham when he died - everything went to Isaac - it suggests that Abraham viewed both Keturah and Hagar as concubines. My NIV translation, though, says "Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah."

Charles Fry:

Keturah must have been a concubine, a servant wife, as Hagar had been. The word for wife in Gen 25:1 is also the word for woman, and translators use either wife or woman based on context. The indication is that Abraham sent Keturah's sons away before he died to avoid conflict over the inheritance, as he had previously sent away Hagar's son, so, "the sons of the concubines" as mentioned in v.6.

Butch O'Neal:

1 Chronicles 1:32 refers to Keturah as Abraham's concubine. Genesis 25:1 refers to this same woman as a wife. NIV Concubine translates to: 'secondary' or 'inferior' wife. According to New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

Joanne Caffie:

I can relate to her being Abraham's concubine and to the similarities to Isaac's situation but that word was plural with no reference going back to Hagar. So I guess I was wondering if Abraham (at this time) had more than 1 wife.

Charles Fry:

There is no evidence that Abraham had more wives and concubines than the three named, the free woman, Sarah, and the concubines, Hagar and Keturah. What Abraham did with the sons of the servant women is a practice documented in ancient records from the patriarchal era. The real emphasis in the opening verses of Gen 25 isn't Keturah, it is the sons of Abraham, progenitors of tribes the Israelites had to deal with. The list of sons (note that Ishmael is brought back to our attention in v9) is presented as complete, both here and in the Chronicles passage Butch referenced.

Abraham lived a long time after Sarah's death, long enough to have a second family, but cautious enough to avoid complications for Isaac.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal & everyone else. Engaging study. I am wondering about Esau "despising his birthright." In Hebrews 12 it says he was godless. He despised his birthright by valuing food for his stomach more than his birthright. In Philippians 3:19 it states destruction comes from a deep self-centeredness and setting minds on earthly things. Because Esau only regretted his loss, and didn't repent of his sin, he was rejected. Compromising spiritual blessings for temporary ease in this world deprives us of God's blessing. Worldly sorrow brings death; godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation.

Replies:

Joanne Caffie:

Amen Ginger, AMEN!

Feb 20: Genesis 28-31 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, February 20, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 28-31

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently.

Chapter 28

Now Isaac called for Jacob, blessed him, and commanded him: "Do not marry a Canaanite woman." Isaac told Jacob to go to his mother's father's house and take a wife from the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. In this blessing, Isaac seemed to pray that God Almighty would bless Jacob to make him fruitful, increase his numbers, and give to him the blessing given to Abraham, so that Jacob could have the land that God gave Abraham. So Jacob went

to Paddan Aram to Laban, son of Bethuel, brother of Rebekah, mother of Jacob and Esau. Now when Esau learned that Jacob obeyed Isaac and did not marry a Canaanite woman he realized how much Canaanite women displeased his father, he married Mahalath, daughter of Ismael, son of Abraham.

Now Jacob set out for Haran and stopped at a certain place for the night, setting a stone under his head and went to sleep.

He dreamed of a stairway reaching from earth to heaven with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Above it stood

the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father

Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and

to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land.

I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

When Jacob awoke, his thoughts were: "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." And in fear: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of

heaven." He set up the stone he had slept on as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel, (house of God) though it used to be called Luz. (almond tree)

Jacob made a vow, if God would be with him, watch over him, feed him, clothe him, and return him safely to his father's house, then the LORD would be his God. And the pillar he had set up would be God's house, and he would return back a tenth of all God gave him.

Chapter 29

Jacob arrived in Paddan Aram, the land of the eastern peoples, where he saw a well in the field with flocks of sheep lying near it, for that is where they were watered. When all the flocks were there, the large that covered the well's mouth would be rolled away and the sheep would be watered, then the shepherds would return the stone to its place. As Jacob inquired of the shepherds about Laban, here came Rachel with her father's sheep. The shepherds wanted to wait for the rest of the flocks before moving the stone, but Jacob was on a mission of urgency, so he rolled the stone away and he watered his uncle's sheep. He had told Rachel that he was a relative and he kissed her and began to weep aloud.

Rachel ran to tell her father of these things. Laban hurried out to meet Jacob and said: "You are my own flesh and blood."

Now Laban had two daughters, Leah, and Rachel, the youngest.

It was agreed that Jacob would work seven years in return for Rachel, for she was beautiful and Leah, not so much.

Now after seven years Laban gave Jacob Leah, not Rachel, which was not known to Jacob until the next morning when Jacob asked Laban why he had deceived him. (just desserts?) Laban replied that it was not the custom to marry off the younger daughters first and so Laban would wait one week before he would give Rachel to Jacob. Jacob would work another seven years for Laban.

The LORD opened Leah's womb because she was not loved.

Rachel was barren.

In time, Leah gave birth to four sons, Reuben, (he has seen my misery, see, a son) then Simeon, (one who hears) then Levi, (attached..?) then Judah, (praise..?)

Chapter 30

Now Rachel wanted children, she was jealous of her sister, so she gave Jacob her maidservant, Bilhah, so that she could build a family through Bilhah. Bilhah bore a son and Rachel felt vindicated and named him Dan, (he has vindicated) Then Bilhah bore a second son and Rachel said, "I have had a struggle with my sister and won," so she named him Naphtali, (my struggle).

Now Leah had given Jacob her maidservant, Zilpah, and Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Leah said, "What good fortune!", or "A troop is coming!" So she named him Gad. (good fortune, or a troop)

Zilpah bore a second son, Leah said, "How happy I am!" So she named him Asher, (happy) Jacob lay again with Leah and God

listened to her and she bore a fifth son and she said, "God has rewarded me for giving my maidservant to my husband." So she

named him Issachar. (reward...?) Leah bore a sixth son and she said, "My husband will treat me with honor." So she named him

Zebulun. (probably means honor) Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah. (justice)

Now God remembered Rachel and opened her womb and she gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my disgrace." So she named him Joseph, (may he add) and said, "May the LORD add to me another son." Now Jacob wanted to go home with his wives and children, but Laban wanted him to stay, so they worked out a plan that would allow Jacob to keep the spotted and speckled goats and dark-colored lambs in turn for tending Laban's flocks, but it appears that Jacob resorted to a little trickery regarding the mating of the animals which caused Jacob's flocks the stronger and Laban's the weaker.

Chapter 31

Now Laban's sons had accused Jacob of taking what their father owned but the LORD told Jacob to "go back to the land of your fathers and your relatives and I will be with you."

Now after Jacob had explained to Leah and Rachel why God had given Laban's stock to him, they wondered if they still had any inheritance of their father's estate, and they reasoned that what Jacob had gained from Laban, belonged also to them and their children, so they encouraged Jacob to do what God had told him.

Now, more accusations of deceit when Jacob left for his homeland with his wives and children, and accusations of theft of Laban's gods after Laban had caught up with Jacob.

Now Laban searched Jacob's tents for his gods which Rachel had taken but he could not find them because Rachel tricked him.

Jacob was angry that Laban had "hunted him down" and told Laban that Laban had mistreated him for twenty years and if it wasn't for his God, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac, that Laban would have sent him off with nothing.

Laban said, your wives are my daughters, their children are my children, the flocks, my flocks, but what can I do about it?

(God had told Laban not to say anything, good or bad, to Jacob.)

So they made a covenant. They set up a stone as a pillar and took some stones and piled them in a heap, and ate by the heap.

Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, (witness heap, Aramaic) Jacob called it Galeed, (witness heap, Hebrew) The heap was also called Mizpah, (watchtower) and they agreed that neither would cross over to the other's side of the heap to harm each other.

Jacob took an oath in the name of the Fear of his father Isaac and offered a sacrifice there.

In the morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. Then he left and returned home.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Butch! This section has always been a favorite of mine. Several points that I will report in on later in the day!

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Ok, some thoughts! First, regarding (28:3, 4) Isaac was pronouncing blessings upon his son Jacob. here are some note of mine on the topic; I will try it in parts here, as it is lengthy: (part one) • The Lost Work of Blessing

- o Namaste
- o Salam
- o Shalom
- o Charis
- How does the apostle Paul begin all of his letters?
- o Taanshi
- o Osiyo
- o Alohad

- o The society we find ourselves living in, is a deeply secular one.

- o How are “blessings” (and I do mean spoken ones – more in a bit) viewed in such a society?

- Merely as polite speech

 - This is not the view expressed in the Bible.

- o A question: putting aside that the New Testament reveals that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was to go out to the Gentiles as well – and much of the New testament deals with that perspective – if you had to boil it down to one culture of people to which, and from which the perspective of the Bible came, what would that culture be? A; The Hebrew

- For the Hebrews (then and now), speaking a blessing to a person, assumed that God is an active player in the universe, that human words spoken in such a way, are spoken to God and release God’s power for doing good.

 - Where did they get this perspective? From God and His word.

- I dare say that was and is the Greek perspective as well.
- In fact, is the perspective of every culture that abides from ancient times.
- It is the cultural mindset of indigenous people of North America.
- But unfortunately, it is a concept and practice which has been murdered by the modern world.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

(part two) o Consider the book of Ruth:

- It is a book that is permeated with words of blessing.

 - Ten different times in the book, different people or groups, bless one another.

- I think there is a pretty strong suggestion by the author of the book of Ruth, that we should see we are supposed to know something about blessings.
- This is true of the whole Bible.
- o The Western/Modern world is perhaps more familiar with the concept of negative blessings, which in reality are actually curses.
- ☐ A curse is a prayer that something would go wrong.
- ☐ It uses the power of words to try to destroy.
- o A blessing, however, uses the power of words to create.
- ☐ It is a prayer, a request for God in his mysterious way to bring good into another person's life!
- o A blessing (or a curse) assumes that:
 - ☐ (1) words have power.
 - ☐ (2) our world is connected in unseen ways.
- Discouragement so often colors our lives.
- o In the face of discouragement, a blessing is an encouragement.
- o Jesus often encouraged people before he healed them.
- ☐ Before he brought the widow of Nain's son back to life, (Luke 7:13), he encouraged her with, "Do not weep."
- A blessing isn't just feel-good words.
- o A blessing is not just a way of being polite.
- o A blessing is divine energy doing work.
- o A blessing is providing a gift to someone, that we, the giver, cannot afford.
- o A blessing, bridges the gap between my large desire and my small ability.
- o A blessing connects the person blessed with God's largest of desire and greatest of ability.
- o A blessing DOES something.
- o A blessing is the leading edge of love.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

(Part three) • The how and why of blessing is opaque

- o Because of this, it is easy for us to diminish its working by chalking it up to "luck" or "talent."

❓ Because we can't see the cause, we assume that there is none.

- But all of the best things in life are like this:

- o Love, hope, etc... ALL unseen!

- o So it is with the presence of God

❓ (Psalm 77:19)

Psalm 77:19

English Standard Version (ESV)

19 Your way was through the sea,
your path through the great waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.[a]

Footnotes:

a. Psalm 77:19 Hebrew unknown

- Jesus told Nicodemus and he tells us, that God's activity is like the wind he even demonstrated this to his apostles

John 3:8 English Standard Version (ESV)

8 The wind[a] blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Footnotes:

- John 3:8 The same Greek word means both wind and spirit

John 20:22

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

- o Spirit/wind and the triune God.

- o Spirit/wind and the triune man.

- o The Native American concept

❓ You breathe your blessing, your prayer into the winds, and the winds take them where you want them to go.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

(part four) • We don't take blessing seriously because in the eighteenth-century

- o Became the age of "Enlightenment" which has divided the world into non-real spiritual, and real physical:

❓ If you can't measure something, then it isn't real.

- God might as well be Santa Claus or Frosty the snowman.

- And blessings are then relegated to being nothing more than happy thoughts that we send in someone's direction.
- o If there is no God (atheism) or God is distant (deism), then blessings ARE nothing more than meaningless talk.
- o But if God IS a sovereign and loving God shaping our lives, then to bless someone is to pray that God's power would come into their lives.

- A suggestion: STOP SAYING "Goodbye"
- o Do you know where that phrase comes from?
- ❓ Before the demise of Christian thought as the prevailing influence of the spoken cultural mindset, we used to bless each other regularly – we would say "God be with you!"
- This was shortened to the secular "Goodbye"
- o Or the even shorter, just plain "bye"
- So, don't say "goodbye" or, "bye" but say instead, "God be with you!"
- This is life, not Oprah, we are talking about here; this is the real.
- o Blessings are not warm words to make someone feel better.
- o A blessing is asking the real and living God to act, to incarnate.
- o A blessing is an act of mini-creation.
- o Think of a blessing as mimicking the Creator, in calling for things for things that are not yet (that's what "create" means).
- o It is more than wishing – it is invoking the goodness of God to be made manifest – and to be the instruments in his hands to manifest it.
- To have the courage to move out boldly in strength and effectiveness, is to know that God's blessing is real.
- o In this way, we, and those we bless, and those who bless us, will be able to face the most overwhelming of life's circumstances.
- This should be a daily part of our experience no matter where we are or who we are with – but being with the saints wherever and whenever they are assembled together, is the best place for the giving and receiving of blessings.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Steve! I needed this!

Steven Wright:

Butch O'Neal typing up a bit on the Mandrakes now.

Steven Wright:

Butch O'Neal May the LORD indeed bless, defend, deliver and protect you brother!

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Now, on to the mandrakes!

Comment:

Steven Wright:

(Genesis 30:14 - 19 - 21) A member of the potato family Solanaceae (which also includes of course the deadly Nightshade). It bears potato-like bluish/violet flowers, which are usually kind of bell-shaped. These flowers are followed by a globe-shaped berry (fruit). The mandrake in this text is probably *Mandragora officinarum*, locally referred to as "devil's apples" because of their "love potion" reputation. They are yellow and pulpy, usually about the size of a plum. They are said to have exhilarating aphrodisiac qualities and it is believed in the East that they stimulate fertility in women. It still grows commonly today, especially around the lower ranges of Mount Hermon.

Replies:

Steven Wright:

One thing I have wondered about? Since Leah "hires" Jacob for the night with the fee of Reuben's mandrakes being paid to Rachel (in the hopes of boosting her fertility), does this all imply, that the reason Leah had stopped conceiving was due to a lack of sexual attention from Jacob? He was "busy" with the concubines during this interim! Just makes me wonder if Leah was being left neglected in this regard for a time, and that is why she left off from bearing children for a bit? Any thoughts? Anyone?

Steven Wright:

Regarding chapter 31 and the spotted sheep; there is a variety still today, which supposedly traces its lineage back to these of Jacob's

Steven Wright:

<http://www.jsba.org/history.htm>

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch O'Neal! As always, excellent summary. I really do love the verse in Genesis 29:20 when it states that Jacob served for 7 (14) years to marry Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days because of his love. Thankfully, because of Jacob's love for Rachel and his stronger faith, he helped to purify her character & raise noble sons who had great reverence for the Lord. That's a great love story.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

The stairway to heaven.

Genesis 28:12 (HCSB)

12 And he dreamed: A stairway was set on the ground with its top reaching heaven, and God's angels were going up and down on it.

The Lord at that confirmed the covenant promises to Jacob, as he had done previously with Abraham and Isaac.

John 1:51 (HCSB)

51 Then He said, "I assure you: You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Jesus identified himself with the stairway between heaven and earth, the one way to the Father, the one mediator between God and man; and also identified himself with the fulfillment of the covenant blessings God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Feb 27: Genesis 32-35 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, January 27, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 32-35

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently.

Chapter 32

Now when Jacob and Laban had parted and went their own way, angels of God met him. When he seen them he said, "This is the camp of God!" He named that place Mahanaim. (two camps)

Jacob sent messengers to tell Esau that he had been staying with Laban until now and that he had cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, and men and maidservants, and he hoped to find favor in Esau's eyes.

The messengers returned to tell him that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was fearful of Esau, so he separated his people and livestock into two groups so that if Esau attacked one, the other could escape. Then Jacob prayed to God to

save him from Esau, and reminded Him of His promise:

"your descendants will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted." He then selected a gift of over 500 animals from his herds

and sent his servants ahead of him with them, with instructions to tell Esau, when he arrived, that they were a gift from Jacob, who is coming behind them. Jacob hoped to pacify and soften his brother

Esau, so that he might be well-received.

That night Jacob sent his family and all of his possessions across the ford of the Jabbok, and he was left alone.

Now a man wrestled with Jacob until daybreak and could not overpower him so the man wrenched Jacob's hip by touching his hip socket, and the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

The man asked, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered.

The man told him his name would not be Jacob, but Israel, (he struggles with God) because he had struggled with God and men and had overcome. And the man blessed him there.

Jacob called the place Peniel (face of God) "because I saw God face to face and my life was spared." He limped because of his hip.

To this day Israelites do not eat tendons attached to the hip socket.

Chapter 33

So Jacob met Esau and Esau was glad to see him, and Jacob was

thankful that Esau seemed pleased with him. Jacob likened seeing Esau's face to seeing the face of God, (remember in 32:30 Jacob said he had seen God 'face to face'. Perhaps he may have been reminded of that encounter.) and Esau accepted Jacob's gift, thereby effectively 'sealing' their friendship.

Esau wanted to travel with Jacob to Seir, (rough, hairy) but Jacob convinced Esau that he would have to travel much slower because of his children and still nursing animals. So Esau went ahead.

Jacob however, went to Succoth (shelters) and built a place for himself and shelters for his livestock. Later, he arrived at Shechem in Canaan and camped. He bought a plot of ground, pitched his tent, and set up an altar. He named it El Elohe Israel.

(God, the God of Israel or mighty is the God of Israel)

Chapter 34

Now Dinah, borne to Jacob by Leah, was out visiting the women of the land when she was seen, taken, and violated by Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite. Shechem loved her and asked his father to get her for his wife. Hamor pleaded with Jacob to give Dinah to Shechem for his wife, but Jacob's sons were filled with grief and fury

by what had been done to their sister. Hamor enticed Jacob by opening the land to them, but the brothers would only give consent if all the males in the land would become circumcised.

(There was deceit in these words) At the urging of Hamor, all of the men agreed and were circumcised. Three days later, while the men were still in pain, Simeon and Levi attacked and killed every male in the city, took Dinah from Shechem's house and the sons of Jacob looted the city, taking with them all of their livestock, their wealth, and their women and children. Jacob was concerned,

"You have brought trouble on me by making me a stench to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the people living in this land."

Jacob feared that his household would be attacked and destroyed.

Simeon and Levi replied, "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?"

Chapter 35

God told Jacob to go to Bethel and to settle there and build an altar to God, who appeared to you when you were fleeing from Esau.

So Jacob told his household and all who were with him to get rid of all their foreign gods and to purify themselves, so they could go to Bethel, where Jacob would build an altar to God, who had answered

him in his day of distress and who had been with him wherever he had gone. So the foreign gods and the rings in their ears were collected and Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem.

When they set out, the terror of God fell upon the towns all around them so that no one pursued them. Jacob built an altar where God had revealed Himself to him when he was fleeing Esau.

He called that place El Bethel (God of Bethel)

Rebekah's nurse, Deborah, died and was buried under the oak below Bethel. It was named Allon Bacuth. (oak of weeping)

After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram, God appeared and blessed him and changed his name from Jacob to Israel.

God told him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number." God told him that nations and kings would come from his body, and that he would have the land given to Abraham and Isaac.

And his descendants after him. Then God went up from him.

Jacob set up a stone pillar at that place, and poured out a drink offering and oil on it. Jacob called the place where God had talked to him Bethel. (house of God)

They moved on from Bethel and Rachel began to give birth with great difficulty. As she breathed her last, she named her son Ben-Oni. (son of my trouble) But Jacob named him Benjamin.

(son of my right hand) Rachel was buried on the way to Ephrath, where Jacob set up a pillar which marks her tomb to this day.

Israel moved on and set up a tent, where Reuben went in and slept with Bilhah, Israel's concubine and Israel heard of it.

Jacob had twelve sons: six with Leah, two with Bilhah, two with Zilpah, two with Rachel. These were born in Paddan Aram.

Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre. Isaac lived 180 years and he died, and Esau and Jacob buried him with his people, old and full of years.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Even Rachel's death in childbirth near Bethlehem is prophetic of the coming Savior.

Jeremiah 31:15 says...This is what the LORD says: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."

This of course is used again in Matt. 2:18 as a prophecy of Rachel weeping for the lost children as Herod tried to kill Jesus.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

That correlation between seeing "the face of God" in 33 and 34 has made me suspect that the face of the angel Jacob wrestled with was his own face, reflected in the face of his fraternal twin Esau. Jacob's most persistent "opponent" was his own scheming competitiveness.

Also in these chapters Jacob's three eldest sons let him down, jeopardizing his family from within and without.

Hosea 12:3-5

3 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel;
as a man he struggled with God.

4 He struggled with the angel and overcame him;
he wept and begged for his favor.

He found him at Bethel
and talked with him there—

5 the Lord God Almighty,
the Lord is his name!

Replies:

Steven Wright:

Whoa!

Roman Roger Mallari Wanasen:

Hmmmm let me think abt that manong Charles....

Ginger Hermon:

Charles Fry- You definitely stirred me to read this over again. Thanks for bringing to attention Hosea.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal! It's a great blessing to study with you & everyone else. After reading these passages I was thinking about how important names are and the deep meaning for each in the Bible. The Lord acknowledged Jacob as His servant and changed his name. Here the nation of Israel got her name and her characterization: people who struggle with God (Israel) and with men (Jacob) and have overcome. You mentioned this above but I've just been ruminating it. (Steven - I'm still using this word from your instruction after the 2 week mtg in 2014 :-))

Comment:

Steven Wright:

I am praying Ginger, that you "cud" keep up the practice, as it is very good for you!

Mar 6: Genesis 36-39 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, March 6, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 36-39

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently.

Chapter 36

Now Esau took three Canaanite wives who bore him five sons in Canaan. Adah bore Eliphaz, Basemath bore Reuel, and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

Esau moved all of his family, household, goods and livestock some distance from Jacob, as both men had possessions too great for the land to support them all. So Esau (Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir. Now Eliphaz had six sons: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, Kenaz, and Amalak. Reuel had four sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

Chief@ 'cupbearer', 'officer', 'priest', 'minister'. etc. Also head of Edomite divisions. "leader of a thousand" (New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

These were the chiefs among Esau's descendants:

All six of Eliphaz' sons. All four of Reuel's sons. And the three sons of Oholibamah.

Verses 20-30: The sons, wives, and chiefs of Seir the Horite.

Kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king:

Bela son of Beor, Jobab son of Zerah, Husham, Hadad, Samlah, Shaul, Baal-Hanan, and Hadad.

These were the chiefs descended from Esau:

Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibama, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom.

Chapter 37

Now Joseph was a young man of seventeen years, the eleventh son of Jacob, who tended flocks with his brothers. His brothers hated him because Jacob loved him more. Now Joseph had dreams

that suggested that he would someday rule over his brothers and his parents, and when he shared them, his brothers sought to get rid of him. So they plotted to kill him, but instead, sold him to a band of Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. Meanwhile, the brothers had slaughtered a goat and soaked the ornamented robe, that Jacob had made for Joseph, in its blood, and told Jacob that they had found it, and thereby deceived their father into concluding that his eleventh son had been killed by a wild animal. Meanwhile the Midianites (Ishmaelites) sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

Potiphar ("whom Re," i.e., the sun-god "has given,")
Unger's New Bible Dictionary.

Chapter 38

Now at this time, Judah left his brothers, met and married a woman who bore him three sons, named Er, Onan, and Shelah.

Judah got a wife for Er, whose name was Tamar.

The LORD put Er to death because Er was wicked in HIS sight.

Judah told Onan to fulfill his duty as a brother-in-law, and lie with

Tamar to produce offspring for his brother, but Onan spilled his seed on the ground to keep from producing offspring. This was wicked in

the LORD's sight, so he was put to death also. Now Shelah was just a boy, so Tamar went to live in her father's house.

A long time later, Judah's wife died and Judah grieved. Afterward he went up to shear his sheep at Timnah. When Tamar was told this,

she shed her widow's clothes, disguised herself with a veil, and sat

at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah was now grown and she had not been given to him as a wife. She looked like a prostitute to Judah and he asked her to

sleep with him. "What will you give me?" "I'll send you a young goat."

"Give me a pledge until then." "What pledge should I give you?"

"Your seal with its cord and the staff in your hand."

So he did, and slept with, and impregnated her.

She left and put her widow's clothes back on and when Judah sent the young goat, Tamar was not to be found. Later, Judah was told that Tamar was guilty of prostitution and pregnant. Judah was going to burn her to death but she showed him his pledge and told him that he was the father.

Judah said, "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah."

Tamar gave birth to twin boys, one who put his hand out first, (and the midwife tied a scarlet thread on his wrist) but came out last. The first,

Perez, ("breach") then Zerah. ("dawning, rising, shining").

Chapter 39

Now we will see that the LORD was always with Joseph, and that Joseph trusted and loved the LORD always, as we study him over the remaining chapters of Genesis.

Joseph prospered and lived in Potiphar's house. Potiphar could see that the LORD was with Joseph, so he entrusted everything he owned to Joseph's care, concerning himself only with what he ate.

Now Joseph was desirable to Potiphar's wife and she wanted to go to bed with him. (I think that she may have been young, and that Potiphar may have been older and too busy with his duties, as the

commander of the guard, to pay enough attention to his bride.)
Of course, Joseph refused. His concern was:
"How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"
Not that he wasn't concerned about sinning against his master.
Now Potiphar's wife persisted with her desire for Joseph.
Day after day she spoke to him about it, but he refused.
One day she caught him by his cloak, but he slipped out of it, and so she used his cloak as 'evidence' that he had intended to "make sport" of her and convinced her husband, who put Joseph in prison. But while Joseph was in prison, the LORD was with him.
Now the prison warden could also see that the LORD was with Joseph, so Joseph was put in charge of all the prisoners, and made responsible for all that was done there.
Now we can see that Joseph's duties in Potiphar's house certainly was helpful in preparing him for these responsibilities given to him in prison. It seems that he was still a young man at this point.
Do you think that he realized yet, that God had a plan for him?
The warden, like Potiphar, paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD gave Joseph success in everything that he did. The LORD was with Joseph!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Could Judah have married Tamar when he found he was the father?

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

I found nothing in the Law that wouldn't have allowed that, except his own actions, that he defiled her when he slept with her, believing that she was a prostitute. I'm sure that he felt unworthy. "She is more righteous than I". Then we have to wonder why he didn't give her to Shelah for a wife. This, under the Law, I believe, may be a violation. If so, then for Judah to take her as his wife, would be wrong. Other thoughts?

Marc Hermon:

Technically, the Law of Moses had not been established yet although I think large parts of laws given to the patriarchs by God eventually became codified with Moses. Marrying Tamar would be like marrying his daughter and would have been wrong, although he was wrong in the first place by marrying a Canaanite woman. Did he worship her gods? Some of the pseudopigraphical books say that Er was trying to avoid having children with Tamar because she wasn't Canaanite and he was being influenced by his mother. Clearly his sons were not raised correctly. The law of "Levirate" marriage was established under Moses but was already being practiced here and probably dictated by God. Onan didn't respect this law of God either and was put to death because of it. Judah was then again guilty for not following through and giving his third son to Tamar as he promised and was required to do according to the Levirate law. Judah was again guilty engaging in fornication with who he thought was a prostitute.

The point of all of this is that only God can take such an awful situation and despite the disgracefulness of our sin provide salvation. Through this unholy union of Judah and Tamar came the most holy and righteous of all offspring...Jesus Christ our Lord.

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Marc!

Charles Fry:
When the Law of Moses was written, it was forbidden for a man to take his daughter in law as wife, or have sex with her, which is consistent with civil laws already on the books. The Law Code of Hammurabi was inscribed on stone in the days of the Patriarchs, in the region Abraham came from. One provision of that code said: 155] If a man betroth a girl to his son, and his son have intercourse with her, but he (the father) afterward defile her, and be surprised, then he shall be bound and cast into the water (drowned).

"Surprised" = caught. In the eyes of his "civilized" contemporaries, Judah had committed a capital offense by defiling his son's wife. Of course, he thought she was a prostitute at the time, but he had no legitimate recourse to continuing having sex with her, in the eyes of the world he lived in.

On the other hand, this is the fourth mention of sins of Jacob's four oldest sons. Reuben defiled his father's bed, Simeon and Levi broke their father's oath and their own when they slaughtered the Shechemites. While Judah's sin is grave, it is not in the same category of rebellion against his father's authority, and we see the rights of the firstborn passing to him (though Jacob preferred Joseph, and his son Ephraim).

Charles Fry:
Reference in the Law, consistent with the older code of Hammurabi, Leviticus 20:12 (NASB)
12 If there is a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Charles!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:
I wonder if Esau's wife, Basemath was base 10 or base 2 or maybe even hexadecimal?

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:
She may have been a daughter of one of the Octalites.

Marc Hermon:
The Octalite people were very rare. Never found much purpose in life. I wonder what the base of the Octalites ate?

Kevin Crittenden:
Maybe they became the American Indians. Then they had a papoose in life.

LuAnn Woody:
Great exchange! Thanks!

Kevin Crittenden:

This is a top-notch educational thread, LuAnn!

Mar 13: Genesis 40-43 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, March 13, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 40-43

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Chapter 40

Last week we left Joseph in prison, but in very good hands!

"The LORD was with Joseph" (39:2, 21, and 23)

Now it should be apparent to the reader that Joseph knew this. At such a young age, Joseph did not despair over the situations that he found himself in, and God gave him success in all he did.

I am reminded of Job 1:22. After Job had lost everything, for no apparent reason to him, the passage tells us that, "In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing."

Now some time later, the cupbearer and baker were imprisoned for offending the Pharaoh, where they were assigned to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, (they and Joseph probably became familiar and comfortable with each other.)

the cupbearer and baker had troubling dreams, and Joseph saw their sadness the next morning and asked them about it.

"We both had dreams, but there is no one to interpret them."

Then Joseph said, "Do not interpretations belong to God?"

Tell me your dreams." So, they told Joseph their dreams.

First the cupbearer, and Joseph told him that Pharaoh would reinstate him, but when you are released, please mention me to the Pharaoh and get me out of here.

Then the baker, and he liked the interpretation that Joseph gave to the cupbearer, but the interpretation for the baker was that he would be executed and these things would happen in three days.

Three days later, the cupbearer was restored and the baker was hanged. Now, the cupbearer forgot Joseph!

Oh....this seems terrible, but I'm persuaded that we'll see that God has a plan.

Chapter 41

Now two years later, Pharaoh had a dream. Then he woke up.

When he fell asleep again, he had a second dream, very similar to the first dream, and in the morning his mind was troubled.

He sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt, but no one could interpret his dreams.

About this time, the cupbearer thought

of Joseph, and told Pharaoh of the events that occurred two years earlier in the prison, and Pharaoh sent for Joseph.

(I like to think that Pharaoh probably would not have responded favorably to Joseph's circumstance, had the cupbearer remembered to speak to him about Joseph, but now, the cupbearer's prison account was very much of interest to him.)

"I am told that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

"I cannot do it," Joseph replied, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires." So Pharaoh told Joseph his dreams. Joseph told Pharaoh that his dreams meant Egypt would have seven years of great abundance and then seven years of severe famine, and that the dream was given in two forms because God has firmly decided on the matter, and that HE would do it soon. Now Joseph had a good plan for storing up much of the abundant years so that Egypt would not be ruined in the famine years. This, and Pharaoh's faith that God was with Joseph, caused Pharaoh to place Joseph in complete charge of these matters for at least the next fourteen years. Joseph would be second only to Pharaoh in all of Egypt. Now Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah, ("sustenance of the land is the living one"). And he gave him Asenath (who belongs to Nieth," i.e. the Egyptian Minerva). Daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, ("strength"). to be his wife. Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh. (This is thirteen years since he was thrown into the cistern by his brothers. He must now, probably have the appearance of a man who should be respected, and not that of a youth.) Joseph's wife bore him two sons, Manasseh ("causing to forget") and Ephraim. ("fruitful") Now Joseph collected and stored all the food of the abundant years until there was too much to measure. Now when the famine came it was severe in all the world, and Joseph sold grain to the Egyptians and to all the world.

Chapter 42

Now Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain and, of course, they had to go to Joseph. Joseph recognized his brothers but they did not recognize him. (It had been about 22 years since they had seen Joseph, plus, he probably looked very Egyptian.) Now we see Joseph formulating a plan to bring his father and Benjamin to Egypt. Now this plan did involve some deception on Joseph's part, but nothing to bring any harm to his brothers. So he accused them of being spies and held them in custody for three days, then he sent nine brothers back with instructions to bring back Benjamin so that he could believe their story. Joseph put grain and their silver back in their sacks. When they got home and discovered the pouches of silver in their sacks they were afraid, and Jacob, now having 'lost' two sons, refused to let them take Benjamin back with them. They all seemed to be very fearful of these unfavorable circumstances. But they were going to need more grain!

Chapter 43

Now, while they had grain, they put off going back to Egypt, but when it was gone, Jacob said, "Go back and buy us a little more food." Now after much attempts at reasoning with their father, Judah personally guaranteed Benjamin's safety, and so Jacob agreed. However he told his sons to take worthy gifts and a double amount of silver with them. Then Jacob said, "May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so he will let your other brother and Benjamin Come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved." So they set out for Egypt, and when Joseph saw Benjamin, he told his steward, "Take these men to my house, slaughter an animal and prepare dinner; they are to eat with me at noon."

Now the brothers were fearful at Joseph's house, thinking that there was going to be trouble over the silver that was put back in their sacks, so the steward calmed their fears. He told them, "It's all right, don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver." In the house the steward took care of the brothers and tended their donkeys, while the brothers readied their gifts for Joseph when he came home at noon. When Joseph came home they gave him their gifts as they bowed down before him. Joseph wanted to know about 'their' father. They told him that he was alive and well. When Joseph saw Benjamin, he was deeply moved and he went to his private room and wept. After recovering, he came out and said, "Serve the food." Joseph was served by himself, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians. And so, Joseph's brothers ate at Joseph's house, and when portions were served them, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's. So they feasted and drank freely with him. Everyone is comfortable now, but Joseph has more surprises in store for his brothers. Joseph wants his father to come to Egypt! And we see that God has caused Pharaoh to put Joseph in a position to make that happen!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

I like how in Stephen's summary of these events he states that God facilitated Joseph finding grace (favor, Gk charis) in the sight of Pharaoh. Grace in the eyes of the Lord gave Noah the opportunity to save his family, and begin anew in a transformed world. Grace in the sight of Pharaoh gave Joseph the opportunity to save his family and set the stage for a new nation and future redemption.

Acts 7:9-13 (NASB)

9 "The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him, 10 and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.

11 "Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it, and our fathers could find no food. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time. 13 On the second visit ..."

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

Morning Butch, thank you for your diligence in presenting these thoughts for us weekly. It sounds like Joseph may have only been between 13 & 14 years old when his brothers considered killing him (just a little boy). WOW! No wonder they felt guilty seeing not only still alive but successful too.

But that would also mean that Potiphar's wife was trying to have a relationship with a young boy as well (shameful). Thoughts anyone?

Comment:

Yvonna Hartman:

Joanne, in Gen. 37:2 it says Joseph was 17 when tending to the flocks with his brothers.

Replies:

Joanne Caffie:

Thanks Yvonna for helping me better understand. I "think" I knew that Joseph was 17 when this all took place but I allowed my mind to take me elsewhere and my tiny brain is still struggling to pull this timeline all together. If Joseph was 17 at the time he was sold and even if he spent 3 years in prison (1 from Potiphar and 2 more after the butler was released) that would still only make him 20 years old at this time.

However, Gen 41:46 says that he was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. So now there are 10 years that I can't account for.

Is it possible that his age of 30 included the 7 years of prosperity and at least 3 years of famine before being reunited with his family? #so many questions

Charles Fry:

Joanne Caffie, I'd say he spent more time as a servant of Potiphar than you are thinking. Potiphar would not have put an untried 17 year old Hebrew slave in charge of his household. The text says that Potiphar "saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did." (Genesis 39:3). Because of that, Joseph "found favor in his eyes" and was given more responsibility. He must have spent several years in that household, gaining his master's trust and confidence, before his position and appearance led to the failed seduction and accusations by Mrs. Potiphar. And then he also spent some time in jail before he was again promoted there due to the Lord's blessing so that he had "favor in the eyes of the prison warden" (Genesis 40:21-22). Both of those processes took time, even before the cupbearer neglected to speak up in his behalf for two years. It's not hard to account for about 13 years in servitude and prison before he was brought to Pharaoh's attention, at the age of about 30.

Joanne Caffie:

Thanks Charles for more clarification. My numbers are starting to add up. 😊

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

The butler's head was lifted up and the baker's head was lifted off!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Strategy to always remember which one, the cupbearer or baker was put to death:

The Egyptians were very well known for their baked goods. Many "oven"/bakeries have been discovered in archaeological excavations. When God eventually leads his children out of Egypt he requires the Passover to be made of unleavened bread to separate them from the "sin" yeast bread of the Egyptians. The blood of the Lamb on the doorposts is eventually represented by the fruit of the vine which hopefully we bear in our cups. The cupbearer lives when the sin of the baker is put to death.

Comment:

Randy Ingle:

Great summary! These have always been some of my favorite chapters to read

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Thank You, THANK YOU, Butch! I couldn't put my Bible down last night. I read to the end of Genesis. Love these stories of old.

Mar 20: Genesis 44-47 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, March 20, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 44-47

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Chapter 44

Now, as Joseph's brothers prepared to return home, Joseph had his steward fill their sacks with food and their silver, but to also put Joseph's own silver cup in Benjamin's sack.

Then as the brother's were on their way, Joseph had his steward overtake them, accuse them, and 'discover' Joseph's cup in the sack of Benjamin. (A little more trickery deceit on Joseph's part, but with no harm to his brothers.) So the brothers went back with the steward to Joseph's house, where they expected Benjamin to be made Joseph's slave.

However, Judah would make every effort to convince Joseph to keep him rather than Benjamin so that their father, Jacob, would not be heartbroken.

Oh, how he pleaded! Benjamin simply must return with his brothers.

Chapter 45

Now Joseph was unable to control himself anymore and so he had everyone leave his presence except his brothers, and he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard of it.

Then Joseph said, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?"

But they could not answer him because they were terrified.

Joseph had them come closer as he encouraged them to not be distressed and angry with themselves for what they had done by selling him into Egypt. Joseph explained to them that it was God that had brought him to Egypt, and the reason for it was to save lives, and to save the lives of his own family also, by a great deliverance. Oh, the brothers must have been stunned!

Pharaoh was pleased when he heard of Joseph's brothers and he encouraged Joseph to bring his whole family to Egypt and they could enjoy the fat of the land.

So Joseph provided provisions for his brothers journey and also carts for all the families to ride in on the way to Egypt. And he instructed them to bring twenty donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt and grain and bread for his father's journey.

And as they left Egypt for Canaan, Joseph said to them,

"Don't quarrel on the way!" Joseph knew them still.

Now when they came to Jacob and told him everything, Jacob was stunned and did not believe them. But as he considered all that Joseph had sent to him, Jacob/Israel became convinced and was

very excited that he would see his son Joseph before he died.

Chapter 46

Now Israel/Jacob set out with all he had and when he reached Beersheba he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

God spoke to Jacob in a vision at night and told him,

"I am God, the God of your father,

Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

And Israel/Jacob and his sons continued on to Egypt.

They had with them, all that they had acquired in Canaan, and all of Jacob's offspring. All who traveled with Jacob numbered sixty-six

persons, plus all of the brothers wives. Including Joseph's family,

Jacob's family numbered seventy. (Acts 7:14 says seventy-five)

Joseph met his father in the region of Goshen, threw his arms around him and wept for a long time. Israel told Joseph,

"Now I am ready to die,

since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

Joseph told his brothers and his father's household that he would explain to Pharaoh that they were all shepherds and that they should tell Pharaoh that when he called them in and they would be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen,

"for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians."

Chapter 47

Now Joseph took five of his brothers to present them to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh asked them, "What is your occupation?"

They explained that they were shepherds and that they had come to live in Egypt because Canaan had no pasture for their flocks, and could they please settle in Goshen. (Apparently Goshen still had pasture even though the land was two years into the famine.)

So Pharaoh told Joseph to settle them and their father, Jacob, in the land of Goshen, the best part of the land, and if any of the brothers had special abilities, to put them in charge of his own livestock.

Then Joseph brought Jacob before Pharaoh and Jacob blessed him. Pharaoh asked Jacob his age and Jacob told him a hundred and thirty years, which were not as many as his fathers, but they had been difficult. Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh again and left.

Then Joseph settled his father and brothers and provided them all with food according to the number of their children.

Now over the next several years Joseph traded grain for the money of the Egyptians. Then for their livestock. And then for their land and their very selves.

Joseph did not acquire the land of the priests for the Pharaoh because they were receiving an allotment from the Pharaoh that sustained them.

So, but for the land of the priests, Pharaoh owned all of Egypt and all of the Egyptian's livestock in Egypt, under the governing of Joseph.

And the people were grateful to Joseph for 'saving their lives'.

Meanwhile, the Israelites acquired property in Goshen and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

Now Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years and when his time to die drew near, he called for Joseph and said to him,

"If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness.

Do not bury me in Egypt, but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried."

"I will do as you say," Joseph said.

"Swear to me," Israel said. Then Joseph swore to him,

and Israel worshipped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! Joseph's ability to truly forgive his brothers for "killing" him for the sake of the father, Israel, reminds me of Jesus' ability to truly forgive those who crucified him for the sake of the Father. Not only that but to prosper them as well.

Luke 6:35-36 "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal! Most excellent summary of an excellent example for all of us! I couldn't stop last week and what a joy it was to read it again tonight. :-) What an amazing understanding Joseph had of God! He was in control. Joseph did not see himself as the victim of his brothers' cruelty & sin. He didn't allow bitterness & revenge to blind him to the overall purposes of His God. All that had happened to him had been part of the plan of Almighty God. Three times Joseph told his brothers, "God sent me ahead of you" and "It was not you who sent me here but God." Later in Genesis 50:20 he makes the remarkable statement, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." May we be more like Joseph and repay evil for good!

Mar 27: Genesis 48-50 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, March 27, 2017

THE LAW

Genesis 48-50

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Chapter 48

Joseph was told that Jacob was ill and so he took his two sons and went to his father. Israel/Jacob rallied his strength and said to Joseph:

"God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.' "now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine;

Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the name of their brothers. As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

Now Israel's eyes were bad and he could hardly see, so he had Joseph bring his children close so that he could bless them.

Joseph placed his children in front of Israel so that when Israel reached out, his right hand would be on Manasseh and his left on Ephraim. But Israel put his right hand on Ephraim and crossed his arms so that his left hand was on Manasseh.

Then Israel blessed Joseph and said:

"May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day.
the Angel who has delivered me from all harm--may he bless these boys.
May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac,
and may they increase greatly on the earth."
Now Joseph tried to change the positions of Israel's hands, so that Israel would have his right
hand on Manaseh, but Israel refused,
saying that the younger brother would become greater and he blessed them, saying:
"In your (singular) name will Israel pronounce this blessing:
'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'
So Ephraim was ahead of Manasseh.
Then Israel told Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you (plural) and take you back
to the land of your fathers. And to you, as one who is over your brothers, I give the ridge of
land (Or, And to you I give one portion more than to your brothers--the portion)
I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow."

Chapter 49

Jacob/Israel called for his sons to gather around so that he could tell them what would happen
to each of them in the days to come.
This was in the form of his blessings to them, in accordance to what was appropriate to each
son.
All these are the twelve tribes of Israel.
Then Jacob/Israel gave instructions to his sons to bury him with his fathers in the cave which
Abraham had bought as a burial place for the family. Then he breathed his last and was
gathered to his people.(Consider closely the blessings in this chapter, we reap what we sow!)

Chapter 50

Joseph threw himself over his father and wept, and kissed him.
Then the physicians embalmed Israel, as per Joseph. This took forty days.
(reminds me of the rain in the flood at Noah's time. [Gen. 7:12]
And the Israelites eating manna. [Ex. 16:35] And Moses on the mountain. [Ex. 24:18] And the
Israelites wandering in the desert.
[Nu. 32:13] And JESUS fasting. [Mt. 4:2] The word 'forty' is in the NIV translation over a
hundred times. I believe it compares with the word 'seven' in GOD's Holy Word.)
And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.
Then Joseph, with Pharaoh's blessing, went up to bury his father, and all Pharaoh's officials
accompanied him, as well as all of Joseph's household and all of Israel's household and
charioteers.
It was a very large company. This certainly speaks of Joseph's regard in Egypt.
They stopped at the threshing floor of Atad, where lamented loudly and bitterly, and Joseph
observed a seven day period of mourning.
When the Canaanites saw this they said, "The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of
mourning." Now that place is called
Abel Mizraim. (mourning of the Egyptians)
So Jacob's sons buried their father and returned to Egypt.
Now, Joseph's brothers feared that Joseph might hold a grudge against them so they sent this
word to Joseph.
"Your father left these instructions before he died:
'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the
wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of
the God of your father."
Joseph wept at this message.
His brothers said, "We are your slaves."
Joseph said, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?"

Joseph acknowledged that they intended to harm him but that God intended their treatment of Joseph to produce good, the saving of many lives, which, ironically, seems to have included them.

So Joseph reassured them and promised to provide for them.

And Joseph stayed in Egypt and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. He also saw the children of Makir son of Manasseh and they were placed at birth on Joseph's knees.

(That is, were counted as his)

Now Joseph was a hundred and ten and was about to die.

Joseph told his brothers that God would take them out of this land and to the land that HE had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

And he made his brothers swear an oath to carry his bones up from 'this place'.

Then Joseph died, was embalmed, and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

This account of Joseph's life has remarkable similarities to the life of JESUS. JESUS was treated badly by many as HE steadfastly continued to obey HIS Father's Will to save many, and HE suffered much.

Joseph's life, as fruitful as it was, could only be a sign and shadow of what the life of our LORD and SAVIOR would accomplish, while HE was here on earth!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Butch, thank you for taking us through this great first book of God's Word. I hate to see it come to an end although I like how it ends....with God gathering Jacob and Joseph to His people. It should be our highest hope of how our story ends also.

Comment:

Lori Watt:

Very good comments, Butch! Thank you for your work!!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

I, too, am sad we are finished with this great book. Thank you so much, Butch, for your devotion to this study. What a blessing it has been! Lord willing, let's do it again next year if the Lord has not returned. :-) This set of verses gives me goosebumps, "You intended to harm me but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives!" In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28)

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

I agree with you, Ginger! I would like to do it again! Your 'goosebump' set of verses always has amazed me, in that Joseph was so mature as to see that. While the indication is that his brothers may still have not understood. It also seems to me that this work that GOD had for Joseph to do may have taken a great physical toll on him, since he seems to be the first of the twelve brothers to be gathered to his people although he was the second to the youngest. Just a thought.

Joanne Caffie:

Not to lift myself up in any way but this sounds a lot like my life. I am the youngest of 9 yet the responsibility of 5 generations rest on my shoulders (even the caring of my 93 yr

old mother). May I too realize that God in His infinite wisdom had a plan bigger plan for ke all along.

GREAT job Butch!

Butch O'Neal:

Joanne, you have long been an inspiration to me, and I'm sure to many others. You are a fine example of a Christian's love and obedience to GOD's Will.

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Law

April 3 : Exodus 1-4 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, April 3, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 1-4

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently.

Last week we finished the accounts in Genesis, (the book of origins)

including Joseph having brought his whole family from Canaan to Egypt because of the severe famine. And including the passing of Joseph.

Now, continuing in the Book of Exodus.

(from the Gk. ex, "out," and hodos, "way," "a going out")

Chapter 1

We are reminded that the number of Jacob's descendants who came to Egypt numbered seventy, (or 75 @ Acts 7:14) And we see that Joseph, his brothers, and all that generation died, but they had multiplied greatly, so that the Israelites had become exceedingly numerous in the land.

Now a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt and was fearful of the number of Israelites in his land.

So the Israelites were put under forced labor by the Egyptians to keep them controlled, and from overwhelming the Egyptians.

They oppressed and worked them ruthlessly and made their lives bitter, but still they multiplied and spread.

So the king told the two Hebrew midwives to kill all the newborn boys, but to let the newborn girls live. But the midwives feared God

and let all the newborns live. And when the king questioned them about it, the midwives explained that the Hebrew/Israelite women

were more vigorous than Egyptian women and gave birth before the midwives could arrive.

So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And God gave the midwives families of their own because they feared HIM.

Then the king/Pharaoh gave this order: "Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

Chapter 2

Now a Levite wife gave birth to a son. She saw that he was a fine child and she was able to hide him for three months, but when she

could no longer hide him she got a papyrus basket and coated it with tar and pitch and put her child in it and placed it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile.

His sister watched from a distance to see what would happen to him.

Now Pharaoh's daughter came down to the Nile to bathe and saw the basket among the reeds, and when she opened the basket, she saw the baby and he was crying and she felt sorry for him.

"This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

Then the boy's sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

"Yes, go, she answered, and the sister went and got her and her brother's mother. Pharaoh's daughter gave the baby to her to nurse and paid her as well. When he was older she took him back to Pharaoh's daughter to become her son, and she named him Moses, ("drawn out" in Hebrew, "child" or "son" in Egyptian) saying,

"I drew him out of the water."

Now it seems that Moses knew his history because one day, after he had grown up, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and after looking around and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. The next day he saw two Hebrews fighting and asked the one in the wrong why was he hitting his fellow Hebrew.

The man said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?"

"Oh oh," Moses thought, "What I did must have become known."

When Pharaoh heard of it he tried to kill Moses but Moses fled to Midian to live there, and he sat down by a well.

A priest of Midian had seven daughters and they came to draw water for their father's flock, but some shepherds drove them away.

Moses got up, rescued them, and watered their flock.

When their father, Reuel, asked them why they had returned so early, they told him about Moses and what he had done for them.

Reuel told them to invite him to have something to eat.

Moses agreed to stay with Reuel, who gave his daughter, Zipporah, to Moses in marriage. Zipporah gave Moses a son and he named him Gershom. ("sojourner") saying,

"I have become an alien in a foreign land."

During that long period, the Pharaoh died.

And the Israelites, groaning in their slavery, cried out for help in their slavery and their cry went up to God.

God heard their groaning and HE remembered HIS covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.

God looked and was concerned about the Israelites.

Chapter 3

Note: (ru'el; "friend of God's," or "God is a friend").

[A priest of Midian and a herdsman, who gave a hospitable reception to Moses when he fled from Egypt, and whose daughter

Zipporah became the wife of Moses (Ex 2:18)

Reuel is undoubtedly the same person as Jethro, the first being probably his proper name and the latter a title or surname, indicating his rank.]

Source: New Unger's Bible Dictionary

Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, priest of Midian, and he led them to Horeb, the mountain of God.

There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush and Moses saw that the bush did not burn up, and so he went closer to the bush to see why this bush was not burning up.

When the LORD saw this, HE called him from the bush. "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer,"

God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then HE said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of

Jacob." And Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God. The LORD told Moses that HE had come down to rescue the Israelites from the hand of the Egyptians and bring them to a land of milk and honey--home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And God told Moses to go Pharaoh and bring God's people out of Egypt. But Moses resisted saying, "Who am I, that I should go Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" God told him that HE would be with him and the sign that God had sent him would be this:

"When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you (plural) will worship God on this mountain." Moses wanted to know what he should tell the Israelites if they wanted to know the God of their father's name. "I AM WHO I AM." This is what you say to them.

"I AM has sent me to you." God said to Moses. God also told Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, (The Hebrew for LORD

sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for I AM in vs 14)

the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.' This is my name forever,

the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

God told Moses to assemble the elders of Israel and tell them what

the LORD, the God of their fathers, had told him about God's concern for Israel, and the land of milk and honey.

God would have Moses and the elders go to the Pharaoh and ask to be allowed to take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, Knowing that the king would not allow it lest he was compelled by a mighty hand.

So the LORD would strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that

HE would perform among them. After that, he would let them go.

And God would make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the Israelites, so when they left, they would silver and gold and clothes.

In this way they would plunder the Egyptians.

Chapter 4

Moses wanted a sign that the Israelites would believe that God had sent him, and so God had him to throw down his staff and it became a snake. When Moses grabbed it by the tail it became a staff again. This was the sign that Moses was sent by God.

The LORD also had Moses to put his hand inside his cloak and when he took it out it was leprous, and when he did that again it

was restored. And if neither of those signs convinced them, then

Moses was to take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground and it would become blood on the dry ground.

Now Moses was concerned for his lack of verbal ability but the LORD said, "I'll help you to speak and will teach you what to say."

"O LORD, please send someone else to do it.", said Moses.

The LORD's anger burned against Moses, and so HE had Aaron,

Moses brother to help him, and God would be with them and help both of them to speak and to know what to say. Aaron would be as Moses mouth and Moses would be as God to Aaron.

So said the LORD!

And Moses was to keep the staff to perform miraculous signs.

Moses asked Jethro to let him go back to Israel to see if any of his people were still alive and Jethro said, "Go, and I wish you well."

Now LORD had told Moses to go back to Egypt because all those who had wanted to kill him were dead.

So Moses, with his family, and the staff of God in his hand, headed back to Egypt. God told him to perform before Pharaoh all of the wonders that he had been given the power to do, even though God would harden Pharaoh's heart so he would not let the people go.

God told Moses to tell the Pharaoh that: "This is what the LORD says, Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, "Let my son go, so that he may worship me." But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son."

At a lodging place the LORD met Moses and was about to kill him, but Zipporah circumcised her son and said to Moses, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me."

And so the LORD let him alone.

The LORD had Aaron to meet Moses at the mountain of God, and Moses told everything that God had sent him to say, and about all the miraculous signs he was commanded to perform. So they brought together all the elders and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said, and he performed the signs and they believed him. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

It's so hard to stop at chapter 5! Thank you, Butch O'Neal! "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. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Heb. 11:23-26

April 10 : Exodus 5-8 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, April 10, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 5-8

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the scriptures consistently

Chapter 5

We left off with Moses and Aaron gathered with the elders of the Israelites, with the elders bowing down and worshiping God. 4:29-31

Now Moses and Aaron told the Pharaoh that the LORD says,

"Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert." But the Pharaoh would not, saying, "Who is the LORD,

that I should obey him and let Israel go." Moses and Aaron told Pharaoh that if he didn't allow them three days in the desert for the LORD, that HE may strike them with plagues or with the sword.

But Pharaoh's attitude was, "Forget it, and you and all the people, get back to work." And he put on the people the extra work of gathering their own straw for making bricks. This took more time, as they had to find the straw, and Pharaoh had them beaten when they couldn't produce the same quota of bricks as when the straw was brought to them. When the Israelite foremen complained,

Pharaoh called them lazy, and that that was why they kept saying, "Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD." Pharaoh told them to get to

work and produce the full quota of bricks, gathering their own straw. So the foremen blamed Moses and Aaron for making the Israelites a 'stench to Pharaoh and his officials' and causing them to want to kill the Israelites. And so, Moses returned to the LORD, saying, "O LORD, why have you brought trouble upon this people? Is this why you sent me? Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all."

Chapter 6

The LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country." God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, (Hebrew=El-Shaddai) but by my name the LORD (I AM @ 3:15) I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant." The LORD told Moses to tell the Israelites that HE would bring them out from under the yoke and free them from slavery to the Egyptians. That HE would redeem them with outstretched arms and mighty acts of judgment. That they would be HIS people, HE would be their God. And HE would bring them to the land that HE swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD." Moses told this to the people but they were discouraged and did not listen. Then God told Moses to tell the Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, but Moses said, 'If the Israelites won't listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I cannot speak well.' The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and commanded them to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. Verses 13-25 is a list of the heads of the families/clans of the Israelites, and I won't list them here. Now when the LORD spoke to Moses in Egypt, Moses said, "Since I speak with faltering lips, why would Pharaoh listen to me?"

Chapter 7

God told Moses that HE had made him like God to Pharaoh, and Aaron as Moses prophet. Moses was to say all that God commanded and Aaron was to tell Pharaoh to let the people go. But God would harden Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen even after miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt. But God would lay HIS hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment HE would bring HIS people out of Egypt. And the Egyptians would know that HE is the LORD. Moses was 80 years and Aaron was 83 when they spoke to Pharaoh. Moses was to tell Aaron to throw down his staff before Pharaoh and it would become a snake, when Pharaoh told them to perform a miracle. And Aaron did, and it was so. Then Pharaoh summoned wise men, sorcerers and magicians who did the same by their secret arts, but Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Yet Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen, as God said. Then God had Moses meet Pharaoh by the river and inform him that because he would not listen, that God would turn the Nile into blood. This, by way of Moses staff. And Aaron would stretch out his staff over all the streams, canals, ponds and reservoirs, and they would turn to blood, including the water in wooden buckets and stone jars. Blood would be everywhere in Egypt. But Pharaoh's magicians did the same things by their secret arts. Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen.

The Egyptians dug along the Nile to get drinking water.
Seven days passed after the LORD struck the Nile.

Chapter 8

The LORD told Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me.'"

Moses told Pharaoh that if he would not do it, that God would plague the whole country with frogs, and they would be everywhere. In the palace, and bedroom and bed. In the official's houses, on the people, in the ovens and kneading troughs.

And so Aaron would stretch out his staff over the waters of Egypt, (Had the plague of blood ended?) and the frogs covered the land.

But the magicians did the same things by their secret arts.

Nevertheless Pharaoh asked Moses and Aaron to pray to the LORD to take the frogs away and he would let the people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD. Pharaoh is learning who the LORD is!

Moses told Pharaoh to choose when Moses should pray and Pharaoh said, "Tomorrow."

Moses replied, "It will be as you say,

so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God."

Moses and Aaron cried out to the LORD about the frogs and the LORD did what Moses asked, and the frogs died, except those in the Nile. They died where they were, and they were in heaps and the land reeked of them, but when Pharaoh saw there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen, just as the LORD had said.

Then the LORD brought the plague of gnats. All the dust in all Egypt became gnats, but the magicians could not do this by their arts, so they told Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God."

Pharaoh's heart was hard, he would not listen, just as God had said.

The LORD would give Pharaoh another chance to let HIS people go and then HE would send the plague of flies, but none in the land of Goshen, so that Egypt would know that the LORD was in that land.

The flies were everywhere and they ruined the land.

Pharaoh told Moses & Aaron, "Sacrifice to your God here."

Moses said, "That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the LORD our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us?"

We must take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, as he commands us."

Pharaoh told them that he would let them go and offer sacrifices, but they must not go far. But first pray for Pharaoh.

Moses told Pharaoh that he would pray to the LORD as soon as he left Pharaoh and the flies would leave, and not to act deceitfully again. And it happened as Moses told him. The flies left and not one remained. But Pharaoh hardened his heart again and would not let the people go.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Thank you, Butch. Glad you noted the role of the elders. They are mentioned many times in this series of events, having a crucial role in guiding and informing of the people, a function carried over even into the church.

There seem to be three major reasons highlighted for God's actions as described. 1, his covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; 2, his compassion for the suffering of Israel; 3, the demonstrative judgment of Pharaoh and Egypt and their gods.

Steven Wright:
Thank you Butch!

Ginger Hermon:
Butch - So thankful for your faithfulness to the study! These are some of my favorite stories to teach children & I, too, marvel over the finger of God!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
Thankful for your encouragement, Ginger. And thankful for Charles and Marc encouraging me to get involved. So many stories to learn from, and the patience that GOD demonstrates is incredible!

April 17 : Exodus 9-12 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, April 17, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 9-12

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

We are at where Moses and Aaron are asking Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, GOD is providing plagues to help convince Pharaoh.

The plagues have been Blood, Frogs, Gnats, and Flies thus far, reflective of the number of times that Pharaoh has refused, or consented, then changed his mind.

Chapter 9

After Pharaoh had refused again, GOD told to tell Pharaoh that the LORD said, "Let my people go, so that they may worship me."

And if Pharaoh refused, the LORD would bring a terrible plague on all of Pharaoh's livestock. Horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, sheep and goats. But only Egypt's animals. No harm would come to any of the Israelite's animals. The LORD set the time for tomorrow, but Pharaoh did not comply, so all of Egypt's animals died, but Pharaoh

was still unyielding. So the LORD told Moses and Aaron to get some soot from a furnace and toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. The LORD said it would become fine dust covering the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils would break out on men and animals everywhere.

Now here we want to be careful. We might wonder where these animals came from? Surely not the Israelite's animals? That doesn't make sense. From where then? Weren't all of Egypt's animals dead? One possibility is that Pharaoh bought, or otherwise acquired, livestock from the Israelites, or sent men to another land to purchase livestock. We just don't know, but I like these two possibilities. Maybe someone has other thoughts?

So they tossed the soot before Pharaoh, and men and animals everywhere had festering boils, so that even the magicians could not stand before Moses. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen, just as the LORD had told Moses.

Now, the LORD told Moses to go early in the morning to Pharaoh and tell him the LORD, the God of the Hebrews says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or you will feel the full force of my plagues against all of you. By now I could have struck you and your people and wiped you off the earth. But I have spared you for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. This time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm ever to fall on Egypt. Give an order to bring your livestock and everything from the field to a place of shelter as the hail will kill every man and animal not under shelter. Some believed the LORD and brought their slaves and animals to shelter, some ignored the LORD and left theirs in the field.

The LORD had Moses stretch out his staff toward the sky and hail fell all over Egypt, along with thunder and lightning, and Egypt was devastated. The hail beat down everything in the fields and stripped every tree. It did not hail in the land of Goshen, on the Israelites.

Pharaoh told Moses and Aaron, "This time I have sinned, the LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong." Pharaoh asked Moses to pray to the LORD to end the hail and he would let them go. Moses said that he would pray as soon as he had left the city and the thunder and hail would stop.

But Moses knew that Pharaoh still did not fear the LORD.

Moses did pray and the hail, and all, did stop. When Pharaoh saw this, he sinned again. He hardened his heart and would not let the people go. Just as the LORD had said through Moses.

Chapter 10

The LORD told Moses that HE had hardened Pharaoh's heart so that HE may HIS miraculous signs among them, and so Moses could tell his children and grandchildren of these things, and so Moses would know that HE was the LORD.

Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and told him that if he refused to let the people go to worship the LORD that the LORD would bring locusts into Egypt the next day and they would cover the ground completely and devour what little was left from the hail. It would be of the likes that none had ever seen.

Then Moses left Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's officials urged him to let the people go so Pharaoh told Moses and Aaron to go, worship the LORD, but he wanted to know just who would go.

Moses said, our young and old, sons and daughters, flocks and herds.

We will celebrate a festival to the LORD.

Pharaoh refused, "Have only the men go." then he drove Moses and Aaron out of his presence.

The LORD had Moses stretch out his hand and caused an east wind to blow all day and night and the brought the locusts by morning. They covered everything and devoured all that was left from the hail. Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron to say, "I have sinned again, forgive me once more, and pray to take this plague away. So Moses left and prayed, and the LORD caused the wind to go west, which caught up all the locusts and carried them to the Red Sea. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not let the Israelites go.

Now the LORD had Moses to stretch out his hand to the sky and caused total darkness to cover all Egypt for three days, but the Israelites had light.

Pharaoh told Moses, go worship the LORD, take the women and children, but leave the flocks and herds here. Moses said no, all of their livestock must go with them so that they would sacrifices and burnt offerings to present to the LORD. The LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he refused again. This time he told Moses to go from his sight and if he seen Moses face again, Moses would die. Moses said, "I will never appear before you again."

Chapter 11

The LORD told Moses that HE would bring one more plague on Pharaoh and Egypt and after that Pharaoh would not just let them go but would drive them out completely, so Moses was to tell the people, men and women alike, to ask all their neighbors for articles of silver and gold, as the LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people.

Moses told Pharaoh that the LORD had said that all the firstborn in all of Egypt would die, including Pharaoh's own firstborn down to the slave girls firstborn, and all of the firstborn of the cattle. There will be loud wailing, then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. All of your officials will come bowing to me saying, go, all of you, and I will leave.

Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

The LORD told Moses that Pharaoh would refuse so the LORD's wonders would be multiplied in Egypt. Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders but the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not let the people go.

Chapter 12

The LORD gave explicit instructions to Moses and Aaron: This month would be the first month of their year, every man from the community of Israel was to take a lamb for his family, one per household. If a household was too small for a whole lamb, then it should share with their nearest neighbor, dependent on the number of people there are. The amount of lamb needed would depend on what each person would eat.

The animals chosen must be year-old males, no defects, sheep or goats.

They would care for them until the fourteenth of the month when all the people would slaughter them at twilight. Then they were to put some of the blood on the sides and the tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.

On that night they were to eat the meat roasted over fire, with bitter herbs and bread without yeast. No raw meat or meat cooked in water. Head, leg, inner parts roasted over fire. If any is left till morning, burn it. Eat it with your tucked in your belt, sandals on your feet, staff in hand, and eat it in haste.

It is the LORD's Passover.

On that night the LORD would pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn, men and animals, and there will judgment on all the gods of Egypt.

The blood would be a sign. The LORD would pass over all the houses that had blood on the doorframes. This day would be commemorated. For generations to come, it would be celebrated as a festival to the LORD--a lasting ordinance.

Eat bread without yeast for seven days. On the first day remove all yeast from all houses. No one eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh, or be cut off from Israel. The first day hold a sacred assembly, on the seventh, another. No work on these days except to prepare food. That's all.

Verses 17-20, more of the same.

Moses called the elders and told them all these things, and to go quick, get animals and get blood on your doorframes so the destroyer will pass over you.

These instruction are a lasting ordinance, observe this ceremony in the land that the LORD will give you. when your children ask of this ceremony, tell them all these things. The people bowed down to worship and did all that the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

At midnight it happened as the LORD had said and Pharaoh told Moses and Aaron to go and worship the LORD, take your flocks and herds and go.

And also bless me. The Egyptians urged the people to hurry for they were afraid for their lives.

The people took their dough without yeast and the silver, gold, and clothing they were given.

The Israelites numbered about six hundred thousand men, besides women and children. Many other people, as well as large droves of livestock, flocks and herds went up with them from Rameses to Succoth.

The Israelites lived in Egypt 430 years, and on the very day that 430 years passed, the LORD's people left Egypt. The LORD kept vigil that night and on this day the Israelites are to keep vigil to honor the LORD for generations to come.

Regulations for the Passover: No foreigner is to eat of it. A circumcised slave may eat of it. It must be eaten inside one house, none outside. Do not break any bones. All Israel must celebrate it. No uncircumcised male may eat of it.

All the Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

On that day the LORD brought all Israel out of Egypt.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch! Very powerful chapters showing God's power and how His name would be proclaimed in all the earth. Last week Marc and I chatted about which plague seemed the worse (aside from #10). Very hard choice! In the end I think we both agreed boils and darkness.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ginger! I would agree with you and Marc's choices. Boils make me think of Job, and darkness reminded me of 'outer darkness.'

April 24 : Exodus 13-16 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, April 24, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 13-16

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 13

GOD told Moses to consecrate to HIM every firstborn male of every womb, whether man or animal. Moses told the people that they were to commemorate this day that they came out of Egypt by

the LORD's mighty hand. They were to eat nothing with yeast in it.

Today, in the month of Abib ("an ear of corn") you are leaving.

When the LORD brings you into the land of milk and honey that HE swore to your forefathers to give you, you are to observe this ceremony in this month: Eat bread without yeast for seven days,

on day seven hold a festival to the LORD. No yeast is to be among you nor anywhere within your borders. On that day tell your son,

"I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt." 9) This observance will be like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that the law of the LORD is to be on your lips. You must keep this ordinance year after year.

(also in 12:1-2) Verses 11-14 reiterates the above except they were to redeem every firstborn donkey with a lamb, or if they did not redeem it, break it's neck. And to redeem every firstborn among their sons. Vs 15, "When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn in Egypt, both man and animal.

This is why I sacrifice to the LORD the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons." Vs 16, same as 9.

When Pharaoh let the people go, GOD led them around the Philistine country toward the Red Sea. Though they left Egypt armed for battle, GOD had concerns about their willingness to face the Philistines. Moses took Joseph's bones with him because Joseph had made the sons of Israel/Jacob swear an oath.

He had said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place." (Gen. 50:25)

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud, and by night, a pillar of fire to give them light. They could travel day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night

left its place from in front of the people.

Chapter 14

The LORD told Moses to camp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol (Canaanite word for "watchtower") and the sea. Encamp directly opposite Baal Zephon. (belonged to Egypt, on the border of the Red Sea) Pharaoh will think you are wandering around in confusion, hemmed in by the desert. GOD would harden Pharaoh's heart to pursue them. But GOD would gain glory through Pharaoh and his army, "and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD."

When Pharaoh was told that the people had fled, he and his officials changed their minds, realizing they had lost the services of the Israelites, so he took his army and went after them.

Pharaoh took all of Egypt's chariot's with officers over all of them.

With hardened heart, Pharaoh pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. All Pharaoh's horses and chariots, horsemen/charioteers and troops pursued and overtook them as they camped by the sea. When the Israelites saw the Egyptians coming, they were terrified and cried out to the LORD. They complained to Moses that he had brought them out to the desert to die, that they never wanted to leave Egypt, that it would be better to serve Egypt

than to die in the desert. Moses told the people to stand firm and not to be afraid and the LORD would bring deliverance, that after today they would never see these Egyptians again. they needed

only to be still. The LORD would fight for them. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to

divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen."

Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, moved to the rear along with the pillar of cloud, so that they were between the armies of Egypt and Israel. All night the cloud

brought darkness to one side, and light to the other so that neither went near the other. Moses stretched out his hand and all through the night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The Israelites went through, between the great walls of water and all of Pharaoh's army pursued them until GOD ruined the wheels of their chariot's and they realized that the LORD was fighting against them, they turned to flee but the LORD

closed the sea, through Moses, and the Egyptian army was no more. Not one man survived. Can you imagine being a witness?!

When the Israelites saw the great power the LORD had displayed, they feared the LORD and put their trust in HIM and Moses, HIS servant.

Chapter 15

Then Moses and the people sang a song to the LORD. It began,
"I will sing to LORD, for he is highly exalted.

The horse and it's rider he has hurled into the sea."

For 18 verses the song was of great praise and honor for the LORD and HIS power, recounting HIS dispatch of the Egyptians, their salvation, HIS power over rulers and more.

Vs 18, "The LORD will reign for ever and ever."

Then Miriam, Moses and Aaron's sister led all the women in dancing with tambourines, and sang to them:

"Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted.

The horse and it's rider he has hurled into the sea."

Miriam was a prophetess.

Moses led Israel into the desert of Shur. ("wall fortification"). For three days they found no water. In Marah, the water was bitter.

(Marah means "bitterness"). "What are we to drink?" They grumbled against Moses. Moses cried out and the LORD showed him a piece of wood, which he threw into the water and made it sweet to drink.

Here, the LORD made a decree and a law for them, and HE tested them: "If you listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."

They camped in Elim ("trees") where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees.

Chapter 16

The people set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, between Elim and Sinai. It was the fifteenth day of the second month after they had com out of Egypt, and the community was grubling against Moses and Aaron: "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert

to starve this entire assembly to death." The LORD told Moses HE would rain down bread from heaven for them, and each day they were to gather just enough for that day. This way GOD would test them to see whether they obeyed. On the sixth day they were to gather twice as much as on the other days, and they were to prepare it all. Moses and Aaron told the people that they were grumbling against the LORD and not them, and in the morning they would see the glory of the LORD because of it. Aaron said to the entire community, "Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling." While he was speaking, they looked toward the desert

and saw the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud.

The LORD told Moses to tell the people that they would eat meat at twilight and be filled with bread in the morning, then they would know that HE is the LORD their God. And it was so. But the people wondered what the thin flakes were that were left on the ground after the morning dew was gone. Moses told them it was the bread

that the LORD had provided and that each of them were to gather only as much as each one would need each day, about two quarts per person, and the people did as they were told, and Moses told them not to keep any of it until morning. However, some did keep some until morning but it was full of maggots and began to smell.

Each morning, each gathered what was needed, and when the sun grew hot, the rest melted away. The sixth day they gathered twice as much, for the LORD had commanded: "Tomorrow is to be a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning." So they did and Moses told them not to go out to gather on the Sabbath as there would be none on the ground.

Nevertheless, some went out and the LORD said to Moses: "How

long will you (plural) refuse to keep my commands and my instructions?" So the people rested on the seventh day.

The people called the bread manna. (manna means What is it?

see vs 15) It was white like coriander seed and tasted like honey.

The LORD commanded Moses to save an omer of manna (2 qts)

and keep it for the generations to come, so the Israelites could see the bread that the LORD provided when HE brought them out of Egypt. Aaron put an omer of manna in a jar and placed it before the

LORD to be kept for the generations to come. As the LORD commanded, Aaron put the manna in front of the Testimony,

that it might be kept. The Israelites ate manna for forty years,

until they reached the border of Canaan.

References from New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

I always smile when I read the meaning of the word, "manna!"

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Yes, how amazed they probably were. :)

Comment:

Charles Fry:

The repeated grumbling of the Israelites would be funny, if it weren't such a real and typical problem of human nature.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch! I agree... an amazing site to witness. One of my very favorite testimonies of the Lord's power of deliverance. Moses answered, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the great deliverance the Lord will bring you today...The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." Hebrews 11:29, "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though (they were passing) through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned."

May 1 : Exodus 17-20 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, May 1, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 17-20

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 17

As the Israelites set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place, they camped at Rephidim, where they found no water.

So, they quarreled with, and grumbled against Moses, saying:

"Give us water to drink." They complained that Moses brought them out of Egypt only to die of thirst.

Moses cried out to the LORD as to what he should do as the people were almost ready to stone him.

So the LORD had Moses to take some of the elders, and his staff, with which he had struck the Nile, and to go on ahead of the people, to the rock at Horeb ("dryness, desert,") where the LORD would be, and to strike the rock and water would come out of it. And Moses did so with the elders as witnesses. Moses called the place Massah (testing) and Meribah (quarreling) because the people had tested the LORD. "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Now the Amalekites attacked the Israelites and Moses had Joshua choose some men to fight them.

Now Moses sat on a stone while Aaron and Hur held his arms upraised. They did this until sunset and Joshua overcame the Amalekites with the sword. The LORD had Moses to record this because HE intended to eventually blot out the memory of Amalek.

Moses built an altar and called it the LORD is my Banner. He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD. The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

Chapter 18

Now Jethro, priest of Midian, and Moses' father-in-law had heard of all that God had done for Moses and his people, including bringing them out of Egypt. Jethro wanted to bring Moses' wife and children

to Moses. Moses had two sons, one named Gershom, (Hebrew for, an alien there?) the other named Eliezer (my God is helper).

Jethro came to meet Moses in the desert and brought Moses family with him. When Moses told Jethro all that God had done for him and the Israelites, Jethro said "Praise be to the LORD, now I know that the LORD is greater than other gods." Then Jethro brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron and all the elders came to eat bread with Jethro in the presence of God.

The next day as Moses sat as the judge for all the people, Jethro saw that the people would soon wear Moses out because there were so many, so he suggested to Moses to select capable men as officials, each over a number of people, to be judges, and bring only difficult cases to Moses. And Moses did as Jethro suggested and then he sent Jethro back to his own country.

Chapter 19

Three months to the very day that the Israelites came out of Egypt, they came to the Desert of Sinai. They entered the desert and camped there in front of the mountain and Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him and said to remind the people of all that they had seen as the LORD brought them out of Egypt. And to tell them that if they would obey the LORD fully and keep HIS covenant, that they would be the LORD's treasured possession out of all nations. They would be, for the LORD, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Moses went back and set before the elders all the words of the LORD, and the people responded: "We will do everything the LORD has said." Moses brought the peoples answer back to the LORD. The LORD told Moses that HE would come to him in a dense cloud and the people would hear the LORD speaking to Moses and they would put their trust in Moses.

Now the LORD had Moses to consecrate (set apart as sacred) the people and to have them ready on the third day with washed clothes on and having abstained from sexual relations, for the LORD, on the third day, would come down on the mountain in sight of all the people. Limits were to be put around the mountain and no one was to go up the mountain or even touch the foot of it. Any man or animal who did would be put to death. Only when the ram's horn sounded a long blast could they even go up to the mountain.

On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, a thick cloud over the mountain, a very loud trumpet blast. The people trembled. Moses led the people to meet God at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was covered in smoke because God had descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up and the whole mountain trembled violently and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. WOW! what an incredible sight to have been able to witness! One can not help but wonder how the Israelites could become discouraged so soon, and easily, after this.

The LORD descended to the top of the mountain and called Moses to come up, then the LORD told Moses to go down and again warn them not to try to come up or they would surely perish. Even the priests, who approach the LORD, must consecrate themselves.

Then Moses was to come back up the mountain with Aaron.

And Moses obeyed these commands.

Chapter 20

The Ten Commandments

And God spoke all these words:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

1) "You shall have no other gods before me. you shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments."

2) "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."

3) "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

4) "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

5) "You shall not murder."

6) "You shall not commit adultery."

7) "You shall not steal."

8) "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

9) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house."

10) "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

The people trembled with fear at the thunder, lightning, and the smoke on the mountain. They stayed at a distance. They were afraid that they would die if God spoke to them. Moses told the people not to be afraid, that God had come to test them so that the fear of God would keep them from sinning.

God told Moses to make an altar of earth for HIM, and sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings (peace offerings) on it. If they were to make an altar of stones for the LORD, they were to use no dressed stones, nor any tool on it because that would defile it. And not to go up on steps to the altar lest their nakedness be exposed on it.

Wherever the LORD caused HIS name to be honored, HE would come and bless them.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

I agree with you, Butch! WOW!!!... There were so many wow moments for the Israelites & us to reflect upon! Good reading! Thanks for your post. <3

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Exodus 19:5-6 (NIV-WS)

5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

Hebrews 12:25-26 (NIV-WS)

25 See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV-WS)

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles!

May 8 : Exodus 22-24 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, May 8, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 21-24

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 21

Now, in addition, GOD gave Moses a list of the laws that he was to set before the Israelites, including explicit rules about purchased Hebrew servants with fair treatment of females. Males were to be set free after serving six years but if they didn't want to be set free, then his ear would be pierced with an awl and he would serve for life. Females had the right to be redeemed, and other rights if she were not found pleasing to her master.

If one killed another, the penalty was death. If it was unintentional, the man was allowed to flee to a designated place.

(more about this place further on in the study)

Death to all for an attack on, or cursing, one or both parents.

Death for anyone who kidnaps another.

There are several more laws in this chapter concerning fair treatment and compensation for all, including animals.

Essentially it was, 'life for life,' 'eye for eye,' 'tooth for tooth,'

'hand for hand,' 'foot for foot,' 'burn for burn,' 'wound for wound,'

and 'bruise for bruise.'

Chapter 22

This chapter deals with laws regarding protection of property.

Thieves were to make restitution of up to five times, and all were to be responsible for the actions of their animals.

Also, social responsibilities.

If a man seduces a virgin, he must pay the bride-price and marry her.

Death to a sorceress.

Death for having sexual relations with an animal.

Death to all for sacrificing to any god but the LORD.

No mistreatment of aliens.

Possible death for taking advantage of a widow or orphan.

Charge no interest for lending among you.

Do not blaspheme God or curse your rulers.

Do not hold back offerings.

"You must give me the firstborn of your sons. Do the same with your cattle and your sheep. Let them stay with their mothers for seven days, but give them to me on the eighth day."

"You are to be my holy people. So do not eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts; throw it to the dogs."

Chapter 23

Laws of justice and mercy

No false reports. Do not help a wicked man.

Don't follow a wrong-doing crowd.

Help your enemy with his ox or donkey, lost or fallen down.

Do not deny justice to your poor people.

Do not put to death an innocent person.

"I will not acquit the guilty."

Do not accept a bribe. Do not oppress an alien.

Also, Sabbath laws.

Give your fields, vineyards, and olive groves a rest for a year after six years of use. Do not work on the seventh day.

Do not let the names of other gods be heard on your lips.

Also, laws for festivals.

Celebrate three festivals each year to the LORD.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, for seven days, in the month of Abib, the month you came out of Egypt.

"No one is to appear before me empty-handed."

The Feast of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops.

The Feast of Ingathering, when you gather in your crops.

All men appear before the LORD three times a year.

No blood sacrifice with anything containing yeast.

Do not keep the fat of festival offerings until morning.

"Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God."

"Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk."

GOD tells the Israelites that HE is sending HIS angel ahead of them to guard them along the way to the place HE had prepared.

They are to pay attention, rebellion will not be tolerated.

The LORD will wipe out all in the land who worship other gods.

The Israelites were to demolish all their sacred stones.

Worship GOD only, and the LORD would establish their borders from the Red Sea (Sea of Reeds) to the Sea of the Philistines, (Mediterranean) and from the desert to the River. (Euphrates)
The Israelites were not to make a covenant with the people in the land as the LORD would drive them out little by little. "Keep them out of your land or they will cause you to sin against me."

Chapter 24

Now, the LORD had Moses bring Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel up to the LORD to worship at a distance.

Only Moses was to approach the LORD.

Moses told the people all the words and laws and they all said:

"Everything the LORD has said we will do."

Moses wrote down everything the LORD had said.

Early in the morning Moses built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars, one for each tribe of Israel.

Young men offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings (peace offerings) to the LORD. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Moses read the Book of the Covenant to the people. They said, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."

Moses sprinkled the blood on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

The LORD told Moses to Come up to HIM on the mountain and stay there, and HE would give him the tablets of stone, with the law and commands that the LORD had written.

Moses and Joshua set out, and Moses went up on the mountain.

When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.

Then Moses entered the cloud as he went up on the mountain.

And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Brother Butch! The Israelites said "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." And, of course, we say the same thing today. But, alas, words are cheap. And so we fail. I can see a similarity between the Serpent in the Garden and a Fancy-Pants Lawyer. Both are smooth-talkers. Both find (or create) cracks in the Godly order of our days in order to insinuate sin into our lives. Did God really say that you shouldn't eat that pretty fruit? Did God really say that you shouldn't gossip? Did God really want you to stay in this awful marriage with Stupid? Don't you think that God wants you to be happy because you're such a good Christian?

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

Apologies to any lawyers in the readership - obviously lawyering is a necessary vocation in our society and most of them are good, I'm sure. As with everything else, the few bad apples taint the entire barrel.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch. As always, such a blessing to study with you. Tonight's reading made me sincerely appreciate the age I live in. I'd much rather be under the law of love than law of retaliation. There is a foreshadowing of Christ with Moses being on the mountain for 40 days & 40 nights. Both were mediators between God and His people. Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant. (Heb 12:24)

Comment:

Charles Fry:

The glory of the Lord came down on the mountain. It looked like a consuming fire. The first time they saw the glory of the Lord was back in 16:7ff in connection with God giving them food, bread from heaven. This time it is the giving of the Law, words to live by, because man does not live by bread alone....

May 15 : Exodus 25-28 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, May 15, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 25-28

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 25

Last week we left Moses on Mount Sinai with the LORD, where he stayed forty days and forty nights.

GOD had Moses tell the Israelites to bring HIM an offering from each man whose heart prompted him to give, including: gold, silver and bronze, blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, goat hair, rams skins dyed red and hides of sea cows (dugongs), acacia wood, olive oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece.

They were to make a sanctuary for the LORD with furnishings just exactly as the LORD showed Moses. This reminds me of Gen. 6:22 where Noah did exactly as the LORD commanded in the building of the Ark. We will see that it is extremely important to follow the LORD's commands exactly.

The LORD gave exact measurements and instructions for building the ark/chest that would be the Testimony which GOD would give to Moses.

It was to be made of acacia wood with two rings attached on either side with poles through the rings and it would be carried by men at both ends of the poles. It had an atonement cover (mercy seat) of pure gold with a cherub on each end of the cover, all one piece.

The cherubim faced each other with spread wings.

It must have been beautiful to behold.

They made a table to exact specifications, with acacia wood and gold. It also had four rings with two poles by which it was carried.

Its plates and dishes and pitchers and bowls were gold as well.

The bread of Presence would be on this table before the LORD at all times.

They made then, the lampstand and its description is incredibly beautiful. It had buds, blossoms, six branches, three on either side, and seven lamps. Most, if not all, made of one piece. About 75 pounds of pure gold was used for the lampstand and its accessories.

Chapter 26

They would build the tabernacle in this chapter and the specifications are just as exact as those in chapter 25.

It would have ten finely twisted linen curtains with blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them. Five curtains were joined together, and the other five were also. They were fastened together with loops clasped together to make the tabernacle a unit. There were eleven curtains of goat hair used for the tent over the tabernacle. These were looped and clasped together, and the frame was made with acacia wood, and the crossbars also.

The frames were overlaid with gold and gold rings held the crossbars. They made another curtain just as fine to separate the

Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, where the ark of the Testimony would be, the table outside the curtain on the north side, and the lampstand on the south side.

Chapter 27

Now they would build an altar to exact specifications with a horn on all four corners, all one piece, and overlaid with bronze. All utensils were bronze; pots, shovels, bowls, forks, and firepans. A bronze grating with four rings, so it too, could be carried by poles.

And they would make a courtyard to exact specifications.

GOD told Moses to command the Israelites to bring clear oil of pressed olives for the light so the lamps may be kept burning.

In the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain that is in front of the Testimony, Aaron and his sons are to keep the lamps burning before the LORD from evening till morning. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for the generations to come.

Chapter 28

The LORD had Moses to gather all the skilled garment makers to make sacred garments for Aaron and his sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar so they may serve the LORD as priests.

They were to make a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash for Aaron and his sons. The ephod would be of gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn. It would have two shoulder pieces and a skillfully woven waistband of one piece with the ephod. There would be two onyx stones the names of the sons of Aaron engraved on them in the order of their birth. Six on one stone and six on the other. these stones would be fastened to the shoulder pieces as memorial stones for the sons of Israel.

Aaron would bear the names on his shoulders as a memorial before the LORD. The breastplate would be like the ephod, of gold and colored yarns. Nine inches square and folded double. there would be four rows of precious stones on it. In the first row, a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl; second row a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald; third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. These would be representative of the twelve tribes of Israel. The breastpiece and ephod would be connected together with blue cord. Over his heart Aaron would have the names of Israel's sons, and the Urim and Thummim whenever he enters the presence of the LORD.

The robe would be entirely of blue cloth with pomegranates and bells alternating around the hem. Aaron would wear it when he ministered. The bells would be heard when he entered the Holy Place before the LORD and when he came out, so that he would not die. They would make a plate of pure gold engraved with:

HOLY TO THE LORD. It would be fastened to the turban with a blue cord. It would rest on Aaron's forehead so that he would bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelite would consecrate.

It would be on Aaron's forehead continually so that the gifts would be acceptable to the LORD. The tunic and the turban would be of fine linen. The sash would be embroidered. Moses was to anoint and ordain Aaron and his sons after they had put these garments on. They would be consecrated to serve the LORD as priests. They would wear linen undergarments from the

waist to the thigh whenever they entered the Tent of Meeting or ministered in the Holy Place so that they would not incur guilt and die.

"This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants."

Now, all of these four chapters are just the instructions that Moses was to follow. Moses is yet, still on the mountain.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

This was a lot of work for the children of Israel. Doing good hard work and being busy for the Lord is good. It's when we start being consumed by our own work and business that we many times lose focus. What we might call a great work ethic could actually be a form of idolatry. We can spend a lot of our time working on our own special project golden calves.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch! Even now the tabernacle would have been an amazing site! So much symbolism and object lessons of God's redemption can be made. My favorite is the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Thanks be to Christ for believers having direct access to the presence of God!

May 22 : Exodus 29-32 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, May 22, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 29-32

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 29

Moses is still on Mount Sinai receiving information and instructions/commands to bring to the Israelites.

GOD continues. To consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests, they were to take a young bull and two rams without defect, along with bread made with fine wheat flour without yeast and cakes mixed with oil and wafers spread with oil. Then they would present them in a basket along with the bull and rams.

Then they were to Aaron and his sons at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, then dress them in the priestly garments that are described in chapter 28. In this way they would be ordained.

The priesthood would be theirs by a lasting ordinance.

They were to bring the bull to the front of the Tent of Meeting, where Aaron and sons would lay hands on its head and it would be slaughtered there in the LORD's presence. Some of the blood would be put on the horns of the altar and the rest would be poured out at the base of the altar. All the fat and the kidneys would be burned on the altar. The flesh, hide, and offal would be burned outside the camp for a sin offering. They would take a ram, after laying hands on its head, slaughter it and sprinkle its blood against all sides of the altar, then cut it into pieces, washing the inner parts and the legs, then burn the entire ram on the altar as a burnt offering to the LORD. A pleasing aroma to the LORD. After the laying of their hands on the other ram, it would be slaughtered and some of its blood would be put on

the lobes of the right ears, the thumbs of their right hands, and the big toes of their right feet of Aaron and his sons. Blood would be sprinkled on all sides of the altar and some blood and some of the anointing oil would be sprinkled on Aaron and sons and their garments. Then he and sons and garments would be consecrated. From this ram the fat, fat tail, fat around the inner parts, covering of the liver, kidneys with the fat, and the right thigh would be taken. (the ram for the ordination) From the basket before the LORD, a loaf, a cake, and a wafer, along with the ram parts would be put in the hands of Aaron and sons to be waved before the LORD as a wave offering, then burned on the altar with the burnt offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Aaron and sons were to eat the bread of the basket and the meat of the ordination ram, which had been cooked in a sacred place, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. Anything left over would be burned up because it was sacred.

For seven days they would continue with sacrifices to ordain Aaron and sons. One bull a day as a sin offering, two lambs a day, a year old, specially prepared, as a pleasing aroma to the LORD, an offering made by fire. This would be a regular offering made for generations at the entrance to the Tent of Meetings.

GOD would consecrate the Tent of Meetings, the altar, and Aaron and sons as priests.

"Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God."

"I am the LORD their God."

Chapter 30

This chapter deals with explicit instructions/commands regarding the altar of incense, atonement money, basin for washing, anointing oil, and incense. The LORD is exact and precise in all of HIS instructions to Moses in these items. Any variations would not be tolerated. The extensive instructions/commands in these chapters, 25 through 31 gives me a better understanding of why Moses was on the mountain for as long as he was. Not that the LORD needed 40 days and nights to relay HIS instructions/commands, but that Moses needed the time to be able to take it all in and comprehend it all. Just a thought.

Chapter 31

The LORD told Moses that HE had filled Bezalel (in the shadow of God) and Oholiab (tent of his father) with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts, able to do the work required, and that HE had also given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything that GOD had commanded him.

They were to observe the Sabbaths. Six days they would work and the seventh would be Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD.

It would be a sign between the LORD and the Israelites forever.

When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, HE gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of GOD.

Chapter 32

The people became impatient that Moses was on the mountain for so long that they besieged Aaron to make them gods because they didn't know what happened to Moses.

So Aaron collected all the gold that the Israelites were wearing and Aaron fashioned it into an idol shaped like a calf and they said: "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." Aaron built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD."

The people sinned in their worship the next day, and the LORD told Moses to go down the mountain while HE prepared to destroy them. Then HE would make Moses into a great nation.

But Moses sought the favor of the LORD and reasoned with HIM not to bring disaster on the people that HE would look bad to the Egyptians. And to remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.

Then the LORD relented.

Moses went down the mountain with the tablets, inscribed on both sides, front and back, by the finger of God.

When Moses saw the calf and the people reveling, his anger burned and he threw the tablets to the ground, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.

Moses questioned Aaron and Aaron told him all that had happened, except for the part that Aaron himself had fashioned the calf.

At the entrance to the camp Moses said: "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." Then Moses had those go back through the camp, each slaying his brother, friend, and neighbor.

The Levites did as commanded and about three thousand people died. Moses pleaded again with the LORD to forgive them their sin, but if not, then blot him to out of the book YOU have written. The LORD said that HE would blot those who had sinned against HIM from the book. Moses was to lead the people to the place GOD had spoke of, and HIS angel would go before them. GOD would punish when the time came.

And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Paul Rutherford:

This aspect of God's dealings with Israel, namely justice, is the part of his being that men wish to ignore, and not talk about. Consequently, uncounted people over the millineum have found out the eternally hard way. Yes our Creator loves us as he gave his Son as a propitiation for our sins and desires that "no man should perish but that all should come to repentence." ~2 Peter 3:9. Yet, God's love will sometimes take us through firey trials in order to strengthen us for his purpose. James 1:1-8

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

I apologize for being late on this, Butch O'Neal! I read your post Monday and also read the study but it was very late. I'm very grateful for your good works in encouraging us in the study of the law. Chapter 32 brings great sadness. Although Moses tried to be a mediator no sacrifice that Moses might bring could atone for this sin. Only Jesus, the Great Mediator, can offer himself as an atonement for His people.

May 29 : Exodus 33-36 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, May 29, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 33-36

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 33

Now the LORD told Moses to leave that place and to take the people with him and go to the land of milk and honey that the LORD had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The LORD

would send an ahead to drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. But the LORD would not go with them, for he might destroy these stiff-necked people on the way. The LORD had them take off their ornaments while HE decided what to do with them.

Now Moses used to pitch a tent some distance from the camp and he called the "tent of meeting." People inquiring of the LORD would go there. And when Moses went there, all the people would stand at the entrances to their tents until Moses went in. When Moses went in, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. When the people saw the pillar of cloud, they all stood and worshipped. When the LORD finished speaking with Moses, he returned to the camp, but his young aide Joshua did not leave the tent.

Now Moses wanted to know who the LORD would send with him to lead the people, and he wanted the LORD to teach him HIS ways. The LORD said, "My Presence will go with you. and I will give you rest."

Moses wanted to see the LORD's glory, and the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

Then the LORD covered Moses as HE passed by, then HE removed HIS hand and Moses saw the back of GOD;s glory!

Chapter 34

Now the LORD had Moses chisel out two stone tablets like the ones he broke, and bring them up on the mountain in the morning, and GOD would write on them the words that were on the first tablets. Moses was to come by himself. There was to be no one anywhere on the mountain, not even flocks or herds grazing in front of the mountain. So Moses went up, and the LORD came down to Moses in the cloud and proclaimed HIS Name, the LORD, and proclaiming,

"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 sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." Moses bowed and worshipped and asked forgiveness for the people. The LORD told Moses that HE would make a covenant, and that HE would do wonders never before seen in the world. Only obey what HE commands today. They were not to make a treaty with any of the people left in the land, they were to destroy everything associated with false gods, and they were not to worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. They were to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the month of Abib, the month that they came out of Egypt.

The first offspring of every womb would be the LORD's.

No one would appear before the LORD empty-handed.

They would work six days and rest on the seventh.

There were a few more commands including.

"Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk."

The LORD told Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water.

And HE wrote tablets the words of the covenant-- the Ten Commandments.

When Moses came down from the mountain, his face was radiant and Aaron and all the Israelites were afraid to come near him, but he called to them and they came near and Moses told them all the commands that the LORD had given.

Then Moses wore a veil until the times that he went in to speak to the LORD.

Chapter 35

Verses 1-3 has to do with the Sabbath regulations.

This was covered in chapter 31.

Verses 1-29 has to do with materials and construction of the tabernacle. This was covered in chapter 26.

Verses 30-35 has to do with the LORD's choosing Bezalel and Oholiab and giving them great skill and ability in all kinds of crafts. This was covered in chapter 31.

Chapter 36

This chapter has to do with the skilled craftsmen constructing the sanctuary and tabernacle with the material that the people provided. In fact, the people had to be told to stop bringing material because they had already brought more than what was needed.

The people built the tabernacle just exactly the way the LORD had commanded Moses when he was on the mountain the first time, for forty days and forty nights.

Comment or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Butch! When hearts submit to God, great things happen!

June 5 : Exodus 37-40 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, June 5, 2017

THE LAW

Exodus 37-40

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 37

This chapter has to do with the crafting of the Ark, the Table, and the Lampstand.

These were to be made exactly to the specifications that the LORD commanded Moses on the mountain.

Exact in every detail. (Complete details in chapter 25)

Also in this chapter is the crafting of the Altar of Incense.

This would also be made to exact specifications of the LORD.

Exact in every detail.(Complete details in chapter 30)

Chapter 38

This chapter has to do with the crafting of the Altar of Burnt Offering and the Courtyard.

These also would be made to the exact specifications of the LORD.

Exact in every detail. (Complete details in chapter 27)

Also in this chapter is listed the amounts of materials used for the Tabernacle and the tabernacle of Testimony.

A little over 1 ton of gold. A little over 3 3/4 tons of silver, and about 2 1/2 tons of bronze.

Collected from a total of 603,550 men. WOW!

Chapter 39

This chapter has to do with the crafting of the priestly garments, the ephod, and the breastpiece.

All to the exact specifications of the LORD.

Exact in every detail. (Complete details in chapter 28)

Also in this chapter Moses inspected all the work when it was completed, in every detail, and when he saw that the Israelites had done all the work just as the LORD commanded, Moses blessed them.

Chapter 40

The LORD had Moses set up the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, on the first day of the first month. Put the ark of the Testimony in it and shield it with the curtain. Bring in the table and what belongs on it. Bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. There were many more instructions pertaining to the gold altar of incense, altar of burnt offering, basin, the courtyard and the curtains.

They were to anoint the tabernacle and everything in it and it would be holy. Then anoint the altar of burnt offerings and it would be most holy. Aaron and his sons would be washed with water. Aaron would be dressed in the sacred garments, anointed and consecrated to serve as priest. The sons would be dressed in tunics and anointed also, to serve as priests.

A priesthood to continue for all generations to come.

And so, Moses set up everything just as the LORD had commanded him. Everything was in its proper place.

Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

Moses could not enter the

Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out--until the day it lifted.

So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night,

in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.

And so, next week, LORD willing, we begin the Book of Leviticus.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch O'Neal! We're so grateful for your faithfulness to the study! Just think... you covered 2,730 years with us in 5 months time! 😊 We are blessed by your efforts. ❤️

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ginger Hermon! Wow, I hadn't really looked at it like that. In the start I was somewhat apprehensive, but now I am constantly thankful for the encouragement from Charles Fry and Marc Hermon to get involved. I thank you for your kind words and encouragement! You are a blessing!

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

I'm so grateful you made the commitment! The Holy Spirit has been working through you. "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we asked or imagined, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen!"



The Feasts of the Lord

The liturgical calendar also holds a significant place in the book of Leviticus. In ancient Israwl there were seven annual religious festivals especially ordained by God:

1. Passover (*pesah*, Heb.).

Ex. 12:1-28, 43-49; Lev. 23:5; Num. 28:16; Deut. 16:1-8

Time: The evening of the fourteenth day of Nisan (Abib), the first month of the biblical year (March/April).

Purpose: (1) To commemorate Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. (2) To remind the children of Israel that God "passed over" their houses, i.e., spared the firstborn of the Israelites (Ex. 12:27).

Prophetic Significance: (1) Christ is our Passover (cf. John 1:29; 19:36; 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19). (2) The Passover is the foundation for the Lord's Supper (cf. Matt. 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:1-20). (3) The Passover foreshadows the marriage supper of the Lamb (cf. Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:16-18).

2. Feast of Unleavened Bread (*matsot*, Heb.).

Ex. 12:15-20; 13:3-10; Lev. 23:6-8; Num. 28:17-25; Deut. 16:3-8

Time: It began on the fifteenth day of Nisan (Abib) and continued for one week (March/April).

Purpose: To commemorate the hardships of Israel's hurried flight from Egypt (Ex. 12:39). The absence of leaven symbolized complete consecration and devotion to God.

Prophetic Significance: (1) Unleavened bread is a type of Christ (cf. John 6:30-59; 1 Cor. 11:24). (2) Unleavened bread is a type of the true church (cf. 1 Cor. 5:7, 8).

3. Day of Firstfruits (*bikkurim*, Heb.).

Lev. 23:9-14

Time: On the day after the Sabbath of Passover week (March/April).

Purpose: To dedicate and consecrate the firstfruits of the barley harvest.

Prophetic Significance: (1) Firstfruits is a type of the bodily resurrection of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-23). (2) Firstfruits is a guarantee of the bodily resurrection of all believers (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-23; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). (3) Firstfruits is a type of the consecration of the church.

4. Feast of Pentecost (or Weeks: *shabuot*, Heb.).

Lev. 23:15-22; Num. 28:26-31; Deut. 16:9-12

Time: The day after the seventh Sabbath after the Day of Firstfruits (May/June).

Purpose: To dedicate and consecrate the firstfruits of the wheat harvest.

Prophetic Significance: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church occurred on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The two loaves, representative of the Jew and Gentile, contained leaven because sin is found within the church.

5. Day of Trumpets (*rosh hashanah*, Heb.).

Lev. 23:23-25; Num. 10:10; 29:1-6

Time: The first day of the seventh month (Tishri), the sabbatical month (September/October).

Purpose: To usher in and consecrate the seventh month as the sabbatical month.

Prophetic Significance: In the N.T. the blowing of the trumpet is associated with the return of our Lord (cf. Matt. 24:31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16).

6. Day of Atonement (*yom kippur*, Heb.).

Lev. 16; 23:26-32; Num. 29:7-11

Time: The tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri—September/October).

Purpose: To make annual atonement for the sins of the priests and the people; and for the tabernacle (temple).

Prophetic Significance: The Day of Atonement finds its ultimate fulfillment in the crucifixion of Christ (cf. Heb. 9). It represents the redeeming work of Christ more adequately than any other O.T. type.

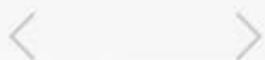
7. Feast of Tabernacles (Booths or Ingathering; *sukkot*, Heb.).

Lev. 23:33-43; Num. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-17

Time: The fifteenth through twenty-first of the seventh month (Tishri), with an eighth day added as a climax to all the feasts (September/October).

Purpose: (1) To commemorate God's deliverance and protection during the wilderness wanderings (23:43). (2) To rejoice in the completion of all the harvest (23:39).

Prophetic Significance: The Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows the peace and prosperity of the millennial reign of Christ (Zech. 14:16).



Seven Bible Studies 2017

Law

June 12: Leviticus 1-3 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, June 12, 2017

THE LAW

Leviticus 1-3

*The most important thing here is
to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently*

The key theme in Leviticus is holy:

"I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground." (Lev. 11:44)

The word "holy" appears more times in Leviticus than in any other book in the Bible. (74)

Chapter 1

The LORD spoke to Moses from the Tent of Meeting, saying:

"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When any of you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.'"

If the offering was a burnt offering from the herd, it would be a male without defect, presented at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to be acceptable to the LORD. The Israelite would lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it would be accepted as atonement for him. He was to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, then Aaron's sons (priests) would bring the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He was to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. Aaron's sons were to put fire on the altar, arrange wood on the fire, then arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat on the burning wood on the altar. He was to wash the inner parts and the legs with water, and the priest was to burn all of it on the altar.

It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire,
an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

If the burnt offering was to be from the flock, the procedure would be exactly the same, (except no mention of skinning)

resulting in an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Again, if the burnt offering was to be a dove or young pigeon,
a strict procedure would be followed exactly, resulting in
an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Chapter 2

This chapter has to do with grain offerings which also require strict procedures. It could be baked in an oven, prepared on a griddle, or cooked in a pan, but in all cases it would be made of fine flour with oil poured on it, salted, and without yeast, also no honey in any offering made to the LORD by fire.

After it was prepared it would be given to the priest who would take it to the altar. Incense would be involved in the burning of the memorial portion of the offering, resulting in an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

The rest of the grain offerings belong to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings made to the LORD by fire.

Chapter 3

This chapter has to do with fellowship offerings.

It could be from the herd or the flock, it could be male or female, an animal without defect. Preparations were like that of the burnt offerings, including all the fat that covers or connects to the inner parts. Then Aaron's sons would burn it on the alter on top of the burnt offering that was on the burning wood, as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

The priest shall burn them on the alter as food, an offering made by fire, a pleasing aroma.

All the fat is the LORD's

"This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood."

The Israelites were to follow the LORD's instructions for these offerings exactly as the LORD commanded.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother Butch! Being in the holiness of the LORD is indeed what we seek!

Comment:

Cherris Lehman:

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Galatians 3:24. I am grateful that Jesus came to bring in a better way to serve Him. Thank you for your words!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Cherris!

Ginger Hermon:

Amen, Cherris!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Butch O'Neal- this weekend I thought of you and all our brothers who lead the 7 Bible studies. John Morris encouraged those who participate in public worship to do it with all their might!

(Ecc. 9:10, Col. 3:23) I'm so thankful & I trust God is well pleased with each of your efforts. ❤️

As I read through tonight's study I appreciated my chart on types of Old Testament sacrifices. I get lost in the details! It's noteworthy to consider only one sacrifice allowed the offerer to eat a part. Fellowship with God, the priest and Multitudes came to the temple for this communal meal. I was reminded of nick's recent post of the Fellowship offering at the dedication of Solomon's temple. 20,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats over 14 days. Hard to imagine.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Ginger Hermon. It IS hard to imagine. Sometimes I lose sight of just how many Israelites that Moses led, and the work that must have been involved to prepare a huge number of sacrifices in just the way that the LORD commanded. I am indeed, learning much in this study. I am interested in the chart that you mention. That would be helpful to me. Is that something that you might be able to post so that I could download it? I thank you in advance for your consideration. I'll have to read Nick's post again.

June 19: Leviticus 4-6 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, June 19, 2017

THE LAW

Leviticus 4-6

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 4

This chapter has to do with the sin offering.

If the anointed priest sinned, bringing sin on the people, he was to bring a young bull, without defect to the LORD, as an offering for his sin. He was to slaughter the bull before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then the priest was to bring some of the blood into the Tent of Meeting, dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of it several times before the LORD in front of the sanctuary. Then he would put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense in the Tent of Meeting. The rest of the blood was to be poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Then the priest was to remove all the fat from the bull, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver. Then the priest was to burn them on the altar of burnt offering. Then he was to take all the rest of the bull outside the camp to a place ceremonially clean, where the ashes are thrown, to be burned in a wood fire on the ash heap.

If the whole community sinned unintentionally, they were still guilty, and as soon as they were made aware of the matter, then the sin offering was to be a young bull, offered in just the same way as the sin offering made for the priest, including burning the rest of the bull outside of the camp.

When a leader sinned unintentionally, and was made aware of it, he was required to bring a male goat without defect for his sin offering. It would be slaughtered, some of its blood would be put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering with the priests' finger and the rest would be poured out at the base of the altar. Then all the fat would be burned on the altar to atone for the man's sin, and he would be forgiven.

If a member of the community sinned, the procedure for the sin offering would be the same as was for a leader, except that the sin offering would be a female goat without defect.

If a lamb was brought as a sin offering, it was to be a female without defect, and the procedure was to be the same as the procedure followed with the female goat.

All these sacrifices were an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

(vs 31)

Chapter 5

If a person had information regarding a public charge and did not speak up, he would be held responsible.

If a person touched anything ceremonially unclean, even though he wasn't aware of it, he became unclean and was guilty.

If a person touched human uncleanness, even though unaware, he would be guilty when he learned of it.

If a person thoughtlessly took an oath to do anything, good or evil, he would be guilty when he learned of it.

When one was guilty, he must confess in what way he sinned. He would bring a female lamb or goat to the LORD as a sin offering, and the priest would make atonement for his sin.

If he could not afford a lamb, he must bring two doves or two pigeons to the LORD. The priest would wring the neck of one bird, sprinkling some of the blood against the side of the altar, and the rest of the blood drained out at the base of the altar.

It is a sin offering. The priest would offer the other bird as a burnt offering in the prescribed way, and the man would be forgiven.

If the man could not afford two doves or pigeons, he was to bring a tenth of an ephah (probably about two quarts) of fine flour. No oil or incense on it. The priest would take a handful of it as a memorial portion and burn it on the altar on top of the offerings made to the LORD by fire. It is a sin offering.

The person would be forgiven.

The rest of the offering would belong to the priest.

If a person sinned unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, he was to bring a ram without defect, and of the proper value in silver. It is a guilt offering.

He must add a fifth of the value to his offering for restitution and give it all to the priest, who will make atonement for him, and he would be forgiven.

Chapter 6

The LORD told Moses, if anyone sins by deceiving his neighbor about something left in his care, or cheats him, or if he finds lost property and lies about it, or swears falsely, or commits any such sin as people may do--then he is guilty.

He must return what was stolen, or extorted, or what was entrusted to him, or the lost property he found, or whatever it was he swore falsely about. He must make restitution in full, plus a fifth of the value to it, and give it to the owner on the day he presents his guilt offering. And as a penalty, he must bring to the priest, or LORD, a ram without defect and of the proper value, for a guilt offering. The priest will make atonement for him before the LORD and he will be forgiven.

The LORD told Moses to tell Aaron and his sons the regulations for the burnt offering. It was to remain on the altar till morning with the fire kept burning. The priest, then, dressed in his linen clothes, would remove the ashes from the altar and place them beside the altar. Then he would change clothes and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place ceremonially clean. The fire on the altar must be kept burning. The priest would add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it.

Regulations for the grain offering: In front of the altar, before the LORD, the priest would take a handful of fine flour and oil, together with all the incense on the grain offering, and burn the memorial portion on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. Aaron and his sons would eat the rest of it, without yeast, in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting.

It is most holy. Any male descendant of Aaron may eat it.

Whatever touches them will become holy. (or, Whoever touches them must be holy; similarly in vs. 27)

On the day each were anointed, Aaron and his sons were to bring to the LORD a tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half in the morning and half in the evening. It would be prepared with oil on a griddle, mixed well, and presented in broken pieces as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. The son who would succeed him as the anointed priest would prepare it. It is the LORD's share and must be burned completely. None must ever be eaten.

Regulations for the sin offering: It would be slaughtered before the LORD in the place the burnt offering is slaughtered;

it is most holy. The priest who offers it must eat it in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting, a holy place.

Whatever touches the flesh will become holy, and any garment splashed with blood must be washed in a holy place.

If cooked in a clay pot, the pot must be broken.

If cooked in a bronze pot, the pot must be scoured and rinsed.

Any male in the family may eat it; it is most holy.

But any sin offering whose blood is brought into the Tent of Meeting must not be eaten. It must be burned.

All of the explicit instructions and commands in just these three chapters show to me how very difficult it was/is to even be able to get remotely close to GOD. @ Sin repels GOD!

And we have read these very same words at least a couple of times already, and we will read them again before this study ends. Much like the New Testament with commandments and encouragements given us repetitiously, the rules and commands are given several times. This should reveal to us the very importance of following GOD's laws and CHRIST's commands as completely as we are able. GOD be with you.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Randy Ingle:

We should take note of the detail of the things they were to do. God had specific instructions to be followed and if they weren't met it was unsatisfactory. Many people teach that all religion is good if we make an effort that is what counts. Not so.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Yes, thank you, Randy!

Marc Hermon:

Reading this again makes me extremely thankful that we live in the time where we worship "in the spirit and in the truth".

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Butch O'Neal: I forgot to send you the chart I used last week & this week. I hope you can read it. As always, thanks for being diligent in presenting each Monday's study. Amen to your final paragraph. It is better to obey than to sacrifice!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Yes, I can read it. :) Thank you, Ginger Hermon.

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

Thanks Butch for providing such details. I've read Leviticus numerous times & never realized that "female" animals were also used in some of their sacrifices. Thanks again for opening my understanding.

Comment:

Lori Watt:

I like that there are exceptions given for those who can't afford the more expensive sacrifice. Also makes me wonder how many tried to get by with the less expensive one when they didn't need to.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

It seems certain that there were, at least, many more than we might think. Of the first two men born of woman, one tried to get by with less. And I would imagine that most of those who exhibited little faith and trust in the LORD, (complaining and bemoaning their particular circumstances, etc.) may probably be likely candidates. Consider Malachi 1:6-14 for one.

June 26: Leviticus 7-9 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, June 26, 2017

THE LAW

Leviticus 7-9

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 7

GOD is still speaking to Moses:

Regulations for the guilt offering, which is most holy:

It was to be slaughtered in the place where the burnt offering was slaughtered, its blood sprinkled against all sides of the altar. All its fat would be offered, the fat tail, fat covering the inner parts, the kidneys with their fat, and the covering of the liver. The priest was to burn these on the altar as an offering made to the LORD by fire. It is a guilt offering.

Any male in a priest's family may eat of it, but it must be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy. The same law applies to the sin offering. These belong to the priest who makes atonement with them. The priest may keep the hide for himself. Grain offerings baked in an oven, cooked in a pan, or on a griddle belonged to the priest who offered it, and every grain offering, whether mixed with oil or dry, belonged equally to all the sons of Aaron.

Regulations for the fellowship (or peace) offering:

If offered as an expression of thankfulness, then it must be accompanied with cakes of bread made without yeast and mixed with oil, wafers without yeast and spread with oil, and cakes of fine flour well-kneaded, mixed with oil. Along with this, an offering of cakes made with yeast, must be presented to the LORD. An offering of each kind, and it would belong to the priest who sprinkled the blood of the fellowship offerings.

This meat must be eaten on the day it is offered. None must be left till morning. However, if the offering was a freewill offering or the result of a vow, the meat not eaten on the first day may be eaten on the next day, but if any is eaten on the third day, the offering would not be accepted. It has become impure. Any who eats of it will be held responsible.

Meat that touched anything ceremonially unclean must be burned up. Anyone unclean, eating any part of the fellowship offering belonging to the LORD would be cut off from his people.

Anyone eating fat or blood would be cut off from his people.

The LORD said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites: 'Anyone who brings a fellowship offering to the LORD is to bring part of it as his sacrifice to the LORD. With his own hands he is to bring the offering made to the LORD by fire; he is to bring the fat, together with the breast, and wave the breast before the LORD as a wave offering. The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast belongs to Aaron and his sons. You are to give the right thigh of your fellowship offerings to the priest as a contribution. The son of Aaron who offers the blood and the fat of the fellowship offering shall have the right thigh as his share. From the fellowship offerings of the Israelites, I have taken the breast that is waved and the thigh that is presented and have given them to Aaron the priest and his sons as their regular share from the Israelites.'"

This would be the priest's regular share for the generations to come.

Chapter 8

The LORD told Moses to bring Aaron, his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread without yeast, and also gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. As commanded, Moses washed Aaron and sons with water. He put the tunic, the sash, the robe, and the ephod on Aaron. He put the breastpiece on him with the Urim and Thummim in it. He put the turban on Aaron's head and set the sacred diadem on the front of it. Moses anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, consecrating them. He sprinkled oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar, its utensils, and the basin with its stand, consecrating them. He anointed Aaron's head to consecrate him. Then he put tunics, sashes, and headbands on Aaron's sons, as commanded.

The bull was presented as a sin offering. Moses put some of its blood on the horns of the altar to purify it, and poured the rest of the blood at the base of the altar, consecrating it. Moses presented a ram for the burnt offering, sprinkling the blood against the altar on all sides. He cut it into pieces, burning the head, the pieces and the fat. He washed the inner parts and legs and burned the whole ram as a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

The other ram was presented for the ordination, and as they did with the bull and the first ram, Aaron and his sons placed their hands on the head of the ram. Moses put some of its blood on Aaron's right ear lobe, the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot. He did the same with Aaron's sons. Moses sprinkled blood against the altar on all sides.

Moses took all the fat, the covering of the liver, both kidneys and the right thigh, and put on these, a cake of bread without yeast, one made with oil, and a wafer. Aaron and his sons waved them before the LORD as a wave offering. Then Moses burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordination offering, A pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Moses took the breast, his share, and waved it before the LORD, as commanded.

Moses sprinkled anointing oil and blood from the altar on Aaron and his sons and on their garments, consecrating them and their garments.

Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Cook the meat at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and eat it there with the bread from the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons are to eat it.' Then burn up the rest of the meat and the bread. Do not leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for your ordination will last seven days. What has been done today was commanded by the LORD to make atonement for you. You must stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days and do what the LORD requires, so you will not die; for that is what I have been commanded." So Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD commanded through Moses.

Chapter 9

The priests begin their ministry.

On the eighth day Moses had Aaron to take a bull calf for his sin offering and a ram for his burnt offering, both without defect and present them to the LORD. Moses had the Israelites take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old, without defect, for a burnt offering, and an ox and a ram for a fellowship offering, together with a grain offering mixed with oil to sacrifice before the LORD.

Today the LORD will appear to you.

They all did as commanded. The entire assembly came near to stand before the LORD and all the sacrifices were made as the LORD commanded.

Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

I am with mixed feelings! 1) I would have loved to be there in those times and witnessed these most incredible rituals, and to see what I have just described. 2) I am very thankful that our GOD has given us JESUS CHRIST as both, our SAVIOR and our mediator/high priest. Praise be to GOD ALMIGHTY!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother Butch!

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you for your good effort in edifying us!!

Ginger Hermon:

Amen, Butch O'Neal! The tabernacle and ministry of priests served as a type of Christ and His redemptive work on the cross. Leviticus shows how a sinful man can worship a holy God. An important picture was given to Israel through this plan. Those sacrifices foreshadowed the Lamb of God who would one day be sacrificed for you and me!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ginger Hermon!

July 3: Leviticus 10-12 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, July 3, 2017

THE LAW

Leviticus 10-12

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Everything had been done as the LORD commanded, regarding the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests, and now, they begin their ministry.

Chapter 10

Now Aaron's sons, Nadab and Elihu had put fire and added incense in their censers and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command.

So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them. Then Moses told Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said:

"Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored."

Aaron remained silent.

Moses had two of the son's cousins carry them outside the camp, away from the sanctuary, and they did. Nadab and Elihu were still in their tunics. The LORD would not allow Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar to mourn Nadab and Elihu, but, the other relatives, and all of Israel were allowed to mourn them. Aaron was not to leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting or he would die, because the LORD's anointing oil was on him. The LORD told Aaron that he and his sons would if they ever went into the Tent of Meeting after having drunk wine or any fermented drink. They needed to distinguish between the Common and the holy, between the unclean and the clean. And they had to teach the Israelites all the decrees of the LORD. Moses told Aaron and his sons to take grain offering left over and to eat it in a holy place because it was holy, and it was their share, as Moses had been commanded.

When Moses learned that the goat for the sin offering had been burned up and not eaten, he was angry.

Aaron told Moses, "Today they sacrificed their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, but such things as this has happened to me. Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?"

When Moses heard this, he was satisfied.

Chapter 11

In this chapter the LORD tells Moses and Aaron which animals are clean for food and which animals are unclean and cannot be eaten. The details in these instructions are numerous and they include animals on land, fish in the sea, birds of the air, and even insects. The Israelites were told again, not to make themselves unclean.

"I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy."

Chapter 12

This chapter has to do with instructions for purification after childbirth. The birth of a son would render the mother unclean for seven days, just as her monthly period. The boy would be circumcised on the eighth day, the mother would wait thirty-three days, without touching anything sacred or going to the sanctuary, to be purified from her bleeding. If she birthed a daughter, she would be unclean for fourteen days, and would wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding.

At the end of the days of her purification, she was to bring to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a dove or a young pigeon for a sin offering. The priest would offer these before the LORD, for her and she would be ceremonially clean from her flow of blood. If she could not afford a lamb, she could bring two doves or two young pigeons.

Again, I find remarkable all of the details and exactness of all of the LORD's commands and decrees given to the Israelites.

We must also be very careful to follow and obey the commands and decrees that our LORD has set for us.

The LORD wants the very best for us!

HE wants us to be holy, as HE is holy!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

I think the chapter break for Lev 10 has been inserted at an unfortunate place. There is no break in the story; the exit of Moses and Aaron from the tabernacle, the glory of the Lord appearing, the fire coming out from the presence of the Lord (the most holy place) and Aaron's sons putting fire/incense on their censers and going in "before the Lord" deviating from the ordained plan they had been following. Perhaps intoxicated at the time, considering the promptness of that injunction.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

I am so glad Christ brought in the new law! I don't think we would do well under the old!!

Thanks so much! I find Leviticus a rather dry book to read so I'm happy you are taking it on

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

I am really glad for the new law also, and I am getting a better understanding of how much of a demand it was to 'do well' under the old law. I started with some apprehension, and I'm thankful that I soon warmed to this. Appreciate your encouragement.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, brother Butch! As you always write, "The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently." So grateful for your faithfulness to this study and encouraging example in the Kingdom. Holiness is the key theme for the book of Leviticus. According to a footnote in my Bible, the word "holy" appears more often in Leviticus than in any other book of the Bible. Israel was to be totally consecrated to God - expressed in every aspect of their life. We, too, should fully dedicate ourselves to God. Consider the great things He has done for you!

July 10: Leviticus 13-15 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, July 10, 2017

THE LAW

Leviticus 13-15

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 13

This chapter is about regulations for infectious skin diseases, and regulations about mildew.

1) Skin diseases:

"When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a bright spot on his skin that may become an infectious skin disease, (traditionally leprosy) he must be brought to Aaron the priest or one of his sons who is a priest. The priest is to examine the sore on his skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep, it is an infectious skin disease. When the priest examines him, he shall pronounce him ceremonially unclean. If the spot on his skin is white but does not appear to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has not turn white, the priest is to put the infected person in isolation for seven days. On the seventh day the priest is to examine him, and if he sees that the sore is unchanged and has not spread in the skin, he is to keep him in isolation another seven days. On the seventh day the priest is to examine him again, and if the sore has faded and has not spread in the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a rash. The man must wash his clothes, and he will be clean. But if the rash does spread in his skin after he has shown himself to the priest to be pronounced clean, he must appear before the priest again. The priest is to examine him, and if the rash has spread in the skin, he shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infectious disease." (vs 1-8)

This process was typical in regards to raw flesh appearing on the skin, or a spot appearing in the place where a boil was,

or a spot appearing in the raw flesh of a burn, or a sore on the head, or an itch. Anyone of these required the person to go and show themselves to the priest and follow the process required. Further, some infectious diseases required a person to live alone, outside of the camp.

2) Mildew:

Much the same as the above. In most cases the garments affected had to be burned up. There were some cases where a garment could be rid of mildew by washing at least twice.

In all cases, both infectious diseases and mildews, the priests were the deciding authorities.

Chapter 14

This chapter is about regulations for cleansing from infectious diseases, and cleansing from mildew.

1) Cleansing from infectious skin diseases:

"These are the regulations for the diseased person at the time of his ceremonial cleansing, when he is brought to the priest: The priest is to go outside the camp and examine him. If the person has been healed of his infectious skin disease, the priest shall order that two live clean birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought for the one to be cleansed. Then the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over fresh water in a clay pot. He is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the infectious disease and pronounce him clean. Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields." (vs 1-7)

Further, the person must wash his clothes, shave off all of the hair on his body and bathe in water, and he would be clean.

On the eighth day he was to bring a sin/guilt offering to the priest who would present it before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. After following the required process with this offering, the person would be clean.

2) Cleansing from mildew:

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "When you enter the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your possession, and I put a spreading mildew in a house in that land, the owner of the house must go and tell the priest, 'I have seen something that looks like mildew in my house.' The priest is to order the house to be emptied before he goes in to examine the mildew, so that nothing in the house will be pronounced unclean. After this the priest is to go in and inspect the house. He is to examine the mildew on the walls, and if it has greenish or reddish depressions that appear to be deeper than the surface of the wall, the priest shall go out the doorway of the house and close it up for seven days.

On the seventh day the priest shall return to inspect the house. If the mildew has spread on the walls, he is to order that the contaminated stones be torn out and thrown into an unclean place outside the town. He must have all the inside walls of the house scraped and the material that is scraped off dumped into an unclean place outside the town. Then they are to take other stones to replace these and take new clay and plaster the house." (vs 33-42)

If it reappeared and spread, as destructive, then the house must be torn down and taken to an unclean place.

But if it doesn't reappear, the house is pronounced clean.

The purification of the house is the same as for the diseased person.

Chapter 15

This chapter is about discharges causing uncleanness:

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When any man has a bodily discharge, the discharge is unclean. Whether it continues flowing from his body or is blocked, it will make him unclean. This is how his discharge will bring about uncleanness.'" (vs 1-3)

Anything he lays or sits on will be unclean, and anyone coming in contact with these unclean things, or the unclean man, must wash his clothes and himself and he would still be unclean till evening. It would be the same if the unclean man spit on you or touched you. When a man with a discharge was cleansed, it would be seven days for his ceremonial cleansing. On the eighth day he would take two doves to present before the LORD, one for a sin offering, the other for a burnt offering.

An emission of semen would make both the man and woman unclean till evening, after bathing themselves.

"When a woman has her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening." (vs 19)

During her period, whatever she lies or sits on will be unclean, and whoever touches these will be unclean till evening, after they bathe. Much the same as the requirements for touching the man with a discharge. After she is cleansed from her discharge, she would make the same

offerings to the LORD as did the man with the discharge, and she would have atonement before the LORD for the uncleanness of her discharge. Also, the LORD said: "You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place, (or my tabernacle) which is among them." (vs 31)

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Cherris Lehman:

I'm still grateful for my Lord ushering in a New Covenant that would make a better way to serve God. I realize the laws were to keep the Children of Israel healthy and to bring order and direction.

Replies:

Debbie Bolinger:

Me too!! I agree completely!!

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

I agree! I found it most interesting that the LORD himself would cause a house to grow mold. HE certainly had a reason, I'm sure. This causes me to examine myself within, (my heart, mind, attitude, etc.) and strive harder to correct what may be amiss. We already know that GOD wants the very best for us.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you brother Butch O'Neal!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Lev. 13:40 is now my new favorite verse. It will make a great memory verse for my boys for children's class.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch. This was another reading with graphic language. I try to see the big picture and consider the spiritual application. The ceremonial unclean were excluded from the camp. This results in separation from God. Sin separates people from a holy God and results in death unless atonement is made. Prescribed cleansing included sacrifice as well as washing. There are some analogies for us today.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Good points, Ginger! Thank you!

July 17: Leviticus 16-18 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, July 17, 2017

THE LAW

Leviticus 16-18

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 16

This chapter is about regulations for the day of atonement.

The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the LORD. The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. (vs 1-2) To enter the sanctuary area, Aaron was to bathe himself, put on undergarments of linen, the sacred linen tunic, tie the linen sash around himself, put on the linen turban

and bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. From the community he was to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

The bull would be atonement for Aaron and his household.

He was to take the two goats before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

Lots would be cast, one for the LORD,

the other for the scapegoat. The goat for the LORD would be sacrificed as a sin offering, the other goat would be presented before the LORD alive and would be used for atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat. He was to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense behind the curtain. He was to put the incense on the fire and the smoke would conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he wouldn't die. With his finger he would sprinkle some of the bull's blood on the front of the atonement cover, then seven times before the atonement cover. He was to do with the goat's blood as he did with the bull's blood. This would make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion

of the Israelites. He would do the same for the Tent of Meeting. No one was to be in the Tent of Meeting from the time that Aaron went in until he came out. He would do to the altar with the bull's and goat's blood as he did to the atonement cover, putting some blood on all the horns of the altar. Aaron was to confess the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites while he held both hands on the live goat's head. Their sins would be put on the goat's head and the goat would carry them to the desert. The man who released the goat in the desert must wash his clothes and himself before he could come back into the camp.

"This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites."

And it was done, as the LORD commanded Moses. (vs 34)

Chapter 17

This chapter is on the subject of blood.

Anyone sacrificing an animal without first bringing it before the LORD would be guilty of bloodshed and would be cut off from his people.

Anyone who eats blood would be cut off from his people, because the life of a creature is in the blood.

This makes me think of when the LORD told Cain, "Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground." (Gen 4:10)

And of course we know that the blood of Christ gives us life!

Anyone who eats anything found dead or torn by wild animals must wash his clothes and bathe himself, and he would be ceremonially unclean till evening.

Chapter 18

This chapter is about unlawful sexual relations.

Now we generally believe that there were, at least, brother and sister relationships in the beginnings of man's procreation, but now, God has given Moses the Law.

No sexual relations with any close relative, your mother, your father's wife, your sisters, daughters-in-law, your aunts, your sisters-in-law, a woman and her daughter, a woman on her period, your neighbors wife, another man, or an animal.

"Everyone who does any of these detestable things-- such persons must be cut off from their people.

Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them.

I am the LORD your God." (vs 29-30)

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:
Thank you, Butch!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch! After I read chapter 17 I read Hebrews 9:14-10: 14. It added so much to my understanding. These offerings in the OT were preparatory and temporary, looking forward to the one perfect and final offering of Christ. I encourage everyone to read Hebrews along with today's study.

Replies:

Denise Waits:

Hebrews 10:14 (ESV Strong's)

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

July 24: Leviticus 19-21 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, July 24, 2017

THE LAW

Leviticus 19-21

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 19

This chapter records various laws.

God instructs Moses to "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel." Moses was to relate these laws, and also remind the Israelites of existing laws. In these instruction to Moses, God states,

"I am the LORD your God." eight times, and also,

"I am the LORD." eight times.

16 times in 37 verses! They should not forget!

God first tells them to be holy because HE is holy.
Then, respect parents, and observe HIS Sabbaths.
Do not turn to idols or make gods for themselves.
A reminder to sacrifice a fellowship offering the correct way,
one could be cut off from his people if it was desecrated.
When you reaped your land or your vineyards,
leave some for the poor to glean.
"Do not steal, do not lie, do not deceive one another."
"Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD."
Do not defraud or rob your neighbor.
Pay a hired man on the day he works.
Do not curse the deaf,
nor put a stumbling block in front of the blind.
Do not pervert justice; judge your neighbor fairly.
Do not slander. Do not endanger your neighbor's life.
Do not hate your brother in your heart.
Rebuke your neighbor so you will not share in his guilt.
Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge, love your neighbor as yourself. "I am the LORD. Keep my decrees."
Do not mate two kinds of animals.
Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.
Do not wear clothes made with two kinds of material.
Explicit instructions concerning a man sleeping with a slave girl who had been promised to another man in verses 20-22
Explicit instructions concerning the planting of any kind of fruit tree in verses 23-25.
Do not eat meat with blood still in it.
Do not practice divination or sorcery.
Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or the edges of your beard.
Do not cut your bodies or tattoo yourselves.
Do not make your daughter a prostitute.
Observe my Sabbaths, have reverence my sanctuary.
Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists.
Rise in the presence of the aged,
show respect for the elderly and revere your God.
Do not mistreat an alien, love him as yourself.
Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity.
"Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them."
"I am the LORD."

Chapter 20

This chapter deals with punishments for sin.
Anyone who sacrifices any of his children to Molech must be put to death. (No form of ancient Semitic idolatry was more abhorrent than Molech worship. New Unger's Bible Dictionary)
Cursing either of your parents resulted in death.
Committing adultery resulted in death.
Verses 11-16 covers a man sleeping with his father's wife,
sleeping with his daughter-in-law, another man, marrying a woman and her mother, and a man or a woman having sexual relations with an animal. All these resulted in death.
Other sinful unions would result in being cut off from your people or/and being childless.
Anyone who was a medium or a spiritist would be put to death, and anyone who turned to these, would be cut off from his people.
"I am the LORD your God,

who has set you apart from the nations." (vs 24b)

These offenses and punishments are severe in the eyes of our CREATOR! In today's world many folk treat this type of behavior as acceptable, and I cannot help but believe that many who suffer severe misfortunes in their lives are simply "paying the costs" for their behavior. My thoughts.

Chapter 21

This chapter regards rules for priests.

The LORD had Moses to tell the priests:

Not to make themselves unclean for any of their people that die, except for a close relative, mother, father, son, daughter, brother, or an unmarried sister. For these he may make himself unclean.

Not to shave their heads or the edges of their beards, nor cut their bodies. They must be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God. Because they present the offerings made to the LORD by fire, the food of their God, they are to be holy.

If they marry, she must be a virgin from his own people.

If a priest's daughter becomes a prostitute, she must be burned in the fire.

Any descendants of Aaron who had a physical defect would not be allowed to come near to the curtain or the altar.

This would be for the generations to come.

"The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and who has been ordained to wear the priestly garments, must not let his hair become unkempt [or not uncover his head] or tear his clothes.

He must not enter a place where there is a dead body.

He must not make himself unclean, even for his father or mother, nor leave the sanctuary of his God or desecrate it,

because he has been dedicated by the anointing oil of his God
I am the LORD."

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Paul Rutherford:

"Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly, and revere your God."

How often do we see this in today's society?! As an elderly man or woman slowly exits their vehicle, do we ask if they need assistance, as they unload groceries from their cart, as they approach a door to exit, as an elderly, Vietnam, Korea, or WW2 wearing his ball cap, do we thank them with a smile(for me a salute and a handshake) for their service,?etc., etc.?

Let us all seek to display our respect, privately or in public as it makes no difference and sets an example for all to see, not to bring notice to ourselves, but rather to give due respect to those that came before us.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you Paul !!!

Paul Rutherford:

Roger that Bro!!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch. The priests were to draw nearer to God than any of the people, and to be close with sacred things, and therefore it was required of them that they should keep at a greater distance than others from every thing that was defiling and might diminish the honor of their priesthood. They were to teach the statutes of God; making clear what was clean and unclean. In chapter 20 there are sins which were made capital: 1. Giving their children to Moloch 2. Consulting witches 3. Cursing parents 4. Adultery 5. Incest 6. Relations with animals and same sex. If men will not avoid practices because the law has made them sin, surely men will avoid them when the law has made them death!? You'd think. In Mal 2:1 it says the priests were warned. We too should heed warnings and be holy. For God's eyes are too pure to look on evil and cannot tolerate wrongdoing (Hab. 1:13)

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Absolutely! I hadn't realized that there were so many sins that were punishable by death. Thank you, Ginger!

July 31: Leviticus 22-24 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, July 31, 2017

THE LAW

Leviticus 22-24

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 22

The LORD told Moses to tell Aaron and his sons to treat with respect the sacred offerings that the Israelites would consecrate to the LORD, so that they would not profane HIS holy name. And for the generations to come, if any of Aaron's descendants are ceremonially unclean, and come near the sacred offerings, that person must be cut off from the LORD's presence. While unclean, no descendant could eat any of the sacred offering. Uncleanness would include infectious disease, bodily discharge, touching something defiled by a corpse, anyone who has an emission of semen, touching any crawling thing or any person who makes him unclean. The uncleanness would last until the sun went down, then he would be clean after he bathed with water and he could then eat of the sacred offerings.

He must stay away from anything dead or torn by wild animals.

Failure of the priests in keeping the requirements would result in death for contempt.

Only a priest's family and his slave(s) could eat of the sacred offerings. If a priest's daughter married outside of the priesthood, she could not eat of it. But, if she became a widow or divorced with no children, and moved back into her father's house, then she could eat of it. If eaten by mistake, the offender was to make restitution plus a fifth of its value. Vs 15-16) "The priests must not desecrate the sacred offerings the Israelites present to the LORD by allowing them to eat the sacred offerings and so bring upon them guilt requiring payment. I am the LORD, who makes them holy."

Animals with defects presented to the LORD as a burnt or fellowship offering would not be accepted.

Newborn calves, lambs, or goats were to remain with their mothers for seven days. After eight days they would be acceptable as an offering made to the LORD by fire.

Do not slaughter a cow or sheep and its young on the same day. When you sacrifice a thank offering to the LORD, eat it on the same day.

Vs 31-33) "Keep my commands and follow them, I am the LORD. Do not profane my holy name. I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who makes you holy and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD."

Chapter 23

Moses was to tell the Israelites of the LORD's appointed feasts, and to proclaim them as sacred assemblies.

The Sabbath.

A day of rest, and of sacred assembly.

The Passover and Unleavened Bread.

The LORD's Passover began at twilight on the 14th day of the 1st month. On the 15th day of that month, the LORD's Feast of unleavened Bread began. This lasted for seven days with a sacred assembly and offerings to the LORD.

Firstfruits.

A sheaf of the first grain harvested was to be brought to the priest to wave before the LORD on the day after the Sabbath. On that day, a lamb a year old would be sacrificed as a burnt offering together with its grain offering, made to the LORD by fire, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

This would be a lasting ordinance for generations to come.

Feast of Weeks.

This came 7 weeks after the wave offering. An offering of new grain, baked into 2 loaves with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD. Also 7 male lambs a year old, 1 young bull and 2 rams would be presented as a burnt offering to the LORD. An aroma pleasing to the LORD. Then a male goat for a sin offering and 2 lambs a year old for a fellowship offering. The priests were to wave the 2 lambs and the bread of the firstfruits before the LORD.

They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest.

This was to be a lasting ordinance for generations to come.

Feast of Trumpets

The 1st day of the 7th month, a day of rest, and a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. and an offering made to the LORD by fire.

Day of Atonement

The 10th day of the 7th month hold a sacred assembly and deny (or fast) yourselves and make an offering to the LORD by fire. Whoever does not deny themselves will be cut off from his people. whoever works on that day will be destroyed.

This would be a lasting ordinance for generations to come.

Feast of Tabernacles

On the 15th day of the 7th month the LORD's Feast began and it lasted 7 days. The 1st day and the 8th day were days of sacred assembly, but offerings were made to the LORD on all days.

Vs 44) So Moses announced to the Israelites the appointed feasts of the LORD.

Chapter 24

Oil and Bread Set Before the LORD

Clear oil from pressed olives was to be brought so that the lamps could be kept burning continually. Aaron was to tend the lamps before the LORD from evening till morning continually, outside the curtain of the Testimony in the

Tent of Meeting.

This would be a lasting ordinance for generations to come.

12 loaves of bread was to be baked, each with two-tenths of an ephah. They were to be set on the table of pure gold in 2 rows of 6, before the LORD. Pure incense would be along each row as a memorial to represent the bread and to be an offering to the LORD made by fire. This bread was to be set out in front of the LORD regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath,

as a lasting covenant. Aaron and his sons were to eat it in a holy place. It is a most holy part of their regular share of the offerings made to the LORD by fire.

A Blasphemer Stoned

Now during a fight with an Israelite, the son of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian father, blasphemed the Name with a curse and he was brought to Moses and held in custody until the LORD's will was made clear to them. The LORD told Moses to have the entire assembly stone him outside the camp, and this would be the punishment for anyone who blasphemed the Name. If you killed someone you were put to death. If you killed someone's animal, you made restitution.

Whatever you did was done to you. Life for life, fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, injury for injury.

And the Israelites did what the LORD commanded Moses.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thanks Butch!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you brother Butch

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Sabbath -- Hebrews 4:9-11 (NIV-WS)

9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;

10 for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.

11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

Passover & Unleavened Bread--1 Corinthians 5:7-8 (NIV-WS)

7 Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

First fruits-- 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 (NIV-WS)

20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

Feast of Weeks, Harvest, Pentecost-- Acts 2:1-4 (NIV-WS)

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

..... Acts 2:41 (NIV-WS)

41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Trumpets --Joel 2:15-16 (NIV-WS)

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly.

16 Gather the people,
consecrate the assembly;
bring together the elders,
gather the children,
those nursing at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 (NIV-WS)

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

17 Therefore,

“Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”

18 And,

“I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

Atonement-- Hebrews 9:11-12 (NIV-WS)

11 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

Tabernacles or Ingathering-- 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 (NIV-WS)

1 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

6 Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 For we live by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch O'Neal and Charles Fry! Lots of good notes from both of you. 😊 I have a chart in my Bible that's very helpful. I went online to find a similar one. Came across this. Thought it was good. http://www.caperoadchurch.co.za/images/Charts/feasts_in_the_ot.jpg

Also, something popped out at me in chapter 23... A day of sacred assembly. I like that verbiage in the NIV.

August 7: Leviticus 25-27 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, August 7, 2017

THE LAW

Leviticus 25-27

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 25

The Sabbatical Year

The land given to the Israelites would be sown, pruned, and reaped for six years, but in the seventh year it was to have a Sabbath of rest. Whatever the land yielded in this year, could be eaten by the landowner, his household, his livestock, as well as the hired hand, temporary resident, and the wild animals. Whatever the land produced could be eaten, but there would be no tending of the land in the seventh year.

The Year of Jubilee

This would be after seven Sabbaths of years. (49 years)

The 50th year would be consecrated and liberty would be proclaimed for all the inhabitants of the land. Nothing would be sown or reaped in this year. Under most circumstances, any land, or people that had been sold during those 50 years would be returned to the original owners because God considered the land as His and the Israelites as tenants.

Further, the Israelites were God's servants and were not to be sold as slaves. Every transaction was to be fair and just. There was no profit involved. Anyone not able to be redeemed would be released in the year of Jubilee.

All the Israelites belonged to God as servants, and not to one another.

Chapter 26

God promises a reward for obedience. There would be rain, crops would be yielded, threshing would continue until grape harvest, grape harvest continue until planting. There would be plenty of food and safety in the land. There would be peace in the land. Savage beasts would be removed from the land.

Their enemies would be dispatched with easily, there would be harvests left over when the new came in.

And the LORD would dwell among the Israelites.

But, God promises punishment for disobedience.

If they failed to keep God's commands and His covenant,

there would be sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever to destroy sight and drain away life.

Enemies would eat of their crops, and defeat and rule over them. Wild animals would take their children, cattle, and their very selves. There would be a plague among them, and God would punish them seven times over. There would be bodies piled on the forms of their idols, Their cities would be made ruins, their land laid waste, and they themselves would be scattered among the nations. The LORD would abhor them!

Wow....what a horrible punishment this seems to be,
but we know that God is just!

However, if they would confess their sins, God would remember His covenant with their
ancestors for their sake.

They would pay for rejecting God, but they would be given
yet another chance.

How patient and faithful is the LORD!

These are the decrees, the laws and the regulations that the LORD established on Mount Sinai
between himself and the Israelites through Moses. (vs 46)

Chapter 27

Redeeming what is the LORD's

In the case of anyone making a special to dedicate a person to the LORD by giving equivalent
values, those values would be determined by various amounts of shekels of silver, dependent
on the age and/or gender of the one dedicated.

If it was an animal acceptable to the LORD, that was vowed,
that animal becomes holy. If the owner wishes to redeem the animal, he must add a fifth to its
value. If it is a house, the priest will determine its value. If the man wishes to redeem it,
he must add a fifth to its value. Similar requirements are made for dedicated lands.

No one may dedicate the firstborn of any animal because it already belongs to the LORD.

A tithe of everything from the land belongs to the LORD;

it is holy to the LORD. A tithe can be redeemed if a fifth is added to its value. The entire tithe of
the herd and flock, every tenth animal, will be holy to the LORD. If a substitute is made, both
the animal and the substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.

These are the commands the LORD gave Moses on Mount Sinai for the Israelites. (vs 34)

This concludes the Book of Leviticus and, LORD willing, we will begin the Book of Numbers
next Monday.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! There were certainly a lot of rules to live by back then; some people like to
live by rules today, I suppose, because it gives them a metric by which to measure themselves
(and others!). It's much harder to "measure" the Grace by which we are saved so we can
"know" how we stand with Christ. We need to remember, though, actually we need to allow
this Biblical Truth to infuse us to our innermost being: Christ loves us (even me) and the Bible
teaches us to trust God's forgiveness through Christ.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you Butch O'Neal! I appreciate your thoughts!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Another book in the records! Thank you, Butch O'Neal! You have been very faithful to this
study, diligent to present scripture and encouraging to all of us. It's greatly appreciated! 😊

Replies:

Thank you for your encouragement, Ginger Hermon! :)

Comment:

LuAnn Woody:

Thank you for your proverbosity!

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Law

August 14: Numbers 1-4 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, August 14, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 1-4

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

The English name of the book comes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT)

and is based on the census lists found in chs. 1; 26.

The Hebrew title of the book (bemidbar, "in the desert")

is more descriptive of its contents. Numbers presents an account of the 38 year period of Israel's wandering in the desert following the establishment of the covenant of Sinai.

Chapter 1

This chapter has to do with taking a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families.

The LORD had Moses and Aaron to number and name all the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army. I'll record some of the names, a man from each tribe to assist Moses and Aaron. From the tribe of Reuben, 46,500,

the tribe of Simeon, 59,300, the tribe of Gad, 45,650, the tribe of Judah, 74,600, the tribe of Issachar, 54,400, the tribe of Zebulun, 57,400. From the sons of Joseph: Ephraim, 40,500, Manasseh, 32,200, the tribe of Benjamin, 35,400, the tribe of Dan, 62,700, the tribe of Asher, 41,500, the tribe of Naphtali,

53,400. Total count of twenty year-old or more men: 603,550.

This census did not include the tribe of Levi, whom we know were set aside as priests to serve the LORD for the people.

The Israelites did all this just as the LORD commanded Moses. (vs 54)

Chapter 2

Now the LORD had Moses and Aaron to have the Israelites set up their camps around the Tent of Meeting, but at some distance from it, each man under his standard with the banners of his family. The first camp was the camp of Judah,

which numbered 186,400, on the east. Next would be the camp of Reuben, numbering 151,450, on the south.

Now, the Tent of Meeting and the Levites would set out in the middle of the camps, in the same order as they encamp, each in his own place under his standard.

Next, the camp of Ephraim, numbering 108,100, on the west.

On the north, the camp of Dan, numbering 157,600.

These camps accounted for all of the tribes in chapter one.

The total of the numbers here is the same, @ 603,550.

Now, let us reason that each of these young men that are numbered here have a set of parents which would make this number at least 1,810,650. And who knows how many siblings there

may be? Consider: The LORD knows exactly how many, (certainly in excess of 2 million) and each of their names and everything else about each one, just as HE knows everything about each one of us now.

I am reminded of what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth:

"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace,
as in all the churches of the saints." (1 Cor. 14:33 NKJV)

The Israelites did everything the LORD commanded Moses.

Chapter 3

This chapter has to do with the Levites. The LORD had Moses bring the Levites to Aaron to assist him. They were to do the work of the tabernacle, but could not approach the sanctuary. The LORD decreed that all firstborn males of the Israelites were HIS, but HE took the Levites in place of the firstborn. So HE said: "The Levites are mine."

Moses was to count every male, a month old or more, among the Levites. The text, of course, names the heads of the clans who were counted. (I'll let you read those) The number of the Levite males a month old or more was 22,000, however, the number of firstborn males a month old or more of the Israelites was 22,273. And the LORD allowed the 273 to be redeemed at a cost of five shekels each, and so Aaron and his sons received 1,365 shekels of silver for the redemption of the 273, according to the LORD's command.

Chapter 4

This chapter records the duties of three branches of the Levites: The Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites.

Each clan was to assist in the moving of the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, and the holy items, whenever required.

The men of each clan, from thirty to fifty years of age were to be counted. The number of the Kohathites were 2,750, the Gershonites, 2,630, the Merarites, 3,200. The number of men involved in this work were 8,580.

At the LORD's command through Moses, each was assigned his work and told what to carry. Thus they were counted, as the LORD commanded Moses.

(vs 49)

These are incredible numbers! I knew they were high but reading and considering it anew really brings it home!

I can remember working on projects in my trade that were sometimes million dollar undertakings several stories high,
and we had nowhere near 8,000 men on the job!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother! Here at the Hospice House with John, just now had a chance to read your study! John's is an "hours to days " situation.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you for summing up Numbers for us, Butch!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Num 1:51 says "When the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down, and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. And if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death."

This leads me to believe that Levites, (at least), were not allowed to marry non-Levites, for any children would then not be considered "Levite enough" to carry on the care of the tabernacle. But I don't know if there was a specific commandment against such marriages.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Leviticus 21: 10-15 addresses whom a high priest may marry. Also vs, 7&8 indicates whom a priest may not marry. There may be other references on this subject but I haven't found them.

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch!

Charles Fry:

It is interesting that John the Baptist's parents were both of the lineage of Aaron, the priestly lineage (Luke 1:5). I'm not aware of a rule to that effect though. The passage Butch pointed out mentions the high priest marrying a "virgin of his own people" (NASB), which I would understand to mean an Israelite, not necessarily another Levite.

The two most prominent Levites of all were Moses and Aaron, whose parents were both of the family of Levi (Ex 6:14-20), but Moses had a Midianite wife (Ex 2:21) and a Cushite wife (Num 12:1 -- the time and circumstance of this marriage are not given), while Aaron married a woman of the family of Judah (Ex 6:23).

The modern Jew considers that anyone born of a Jewish mother is Jewish, but the ancient reckoning was patronymic, and anyone born of an Israelite father was Israelite, and belonged to the ancestral tribe of the father, not the mother. This had an interesting legal test in Moses's day, when a family head died before entering Canaan, leaving only daughters and no son. The daughters petitioned to receive their father's inheritance, and appropriate rules were set forth (Num 27:1-11). A detail that concerned the tribe involved in this particular question was what happened to the inheritance received by a daughter? If she married a man from another tribe, would the inheritance pass to the other tribe? For the sake of inheritance, the ruling was that a daughter heir must marry within her own tribe to receive the inheritance (Num 36:1-12), preserving the patronymic identification of tribal membership and property rights.

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you Butch

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ryan, for your encouragement.

Comment:

LuAnn Woody:

I enjoyed thinking about how the Children of Israel are described as 'wandering' the desert for 40 years which sounds haphazard. But God, through Moses and his tribal leaders, knew exactly where everyone was, where they were to camp, down to tribal banners to indicate the camping divisions. Everyone had a job assignment as well. Numbers is more interesting than I had remembered.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Great summary, Butch! Israel's amazing growth from the 70 who entered Egypt (Exodus 1:5) was evidence of God's great blessing & faithfulness to His promise to Abraham. I agree with your thoughts above. This large number of men counted for the military roster suggests a population for the entire community in excess of 2 million. Wow!

August 21: Numbers 5-8 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, August 21, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 5-8

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 5

Purity of the Camp

The Israelites were to send anyone who had a discharge or was ceremonially unclean, outside the camp, so as not to defile where the LORD dwelt among the Israelites.

They did just as the LORD had instructed Moses.

If a person wronged another, and so, became unfaithful to the LORD, they must confess that sin and make full restitution, plus a fifth to the person wronged.

Each man's sacred gifts are his own, but what he gives to the priest will belong to the priest.

Test for an Unfaithful Wife

This section is about a man feeling that if his wife has been unfaithful, then he must take her to the priest, along with an offering on her behalf.

(An offering of jealousy) The priest would have her stand before the LORD.

Then there would be a mixture of bitter water and an oath made by the woman involved, and after drinking the bitter water, it would either harm her, or not, depending on the truthfulness of her oath. Not guilty, no harm. Guilty, a swollen abdomen and her thigh to waste away. (Barren and a miscarrying womb)

There is more to this procedure and if the woman is found guilty, she would be accursed among her people. If not, she would be cleared and able to have children. This, then, is the law of jealousy.

Chapter 6

The Nazirite

One of either sex who was bound by a vow of a peculiar kind to be set apart from others for the service of God. The obligation was either for life or for a defined time. (New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

This chapter covers the rules for a Nazirite while serving under that vow:

He/she must abstain from wine or any other fermented drink, including vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. No grape juice, grapes or raisins.
Nothing that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins.
No razor may be used on his/her head during the period of the vow.
He/she must not come near a dead body. If someone dies suddenly in his presence, defiling his hair, he must shave it off on the day of his cleansing--
the seventh day. On the eighth day, he must bring two doves to the priest, one for a sin offering, the other as a burnt offering because he has sinned by being in the presence of a dead body. That same day he is to consecrate his head.
There is more in the way of sacrifice and offerings to be made when the period of separation is over, including burning his hair in the fire under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering.
All sacrifices and offerings are typical of those that I have described in earlier posts and all were to be done just as the LORD commanded Moses.

Priestly Blessing

The LORD had Aaron and his sons to bless the Israelites with these words:

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace"

Chapter 7

Offerings at the Dedication of the Tabernacle

This chapter has to do with the gifts of the leaders of the twelve tribes.

After setting up the tabernacle, Moses anointed it, consecrated it, all its furnishings, the altar and all its utensils. Then the leaders of Israel, tribal leaders, made offerings. They brought before the LORD six covered carts and twelve oxen. The LORD had Moses to give these to the Levites as each man's work requires. Then the LORD said to Moses: "Each day one leader is to bring his offering for the dedication of the altar." And so it was done.

The offering on the first day was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old; for a burnt offering; one male goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering.

The offerings on the second through the twelfth days were exactly the same as the offering on the first day.

These were the offerings for the dedication of the altar after it was anointed.

When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony. And he spoke with him. (vs 89)

Chapter 8

The LORD told Moses to have Aaron set up the seven lamps to light the area in front of the lampstand and Aaron did so.

The Setting Apart of the Levites

The Levites were to be ceremonially clean. This required the sprinkling of cleansing water on them along with shaving their whole bodies and washing their clothes. Then a grain and a sin offering would be made and the Levites would be brought before the LORD, and the Israelites would lay their hands on them. Aaron would present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering and they would be ready to do the work of the LORD.

And the Levites would be set apart from the Israelites and they would be the LORD's. The Levites would be gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the Tent of Meeting on behalf of

the Israelites. Moses, Aaron, and the whole community did with the Levites just as the LORD commanded Moses.

The LORD said to Moses, "This applies to the Levites:

Men twenty-five years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the Tent of Meeting, but at the age of fifty, they must retire from their regular service and work no longer." However, they would be allowed to assist their brothers.

"This, then, is how you are to assign the responsibilities of the Levites." (vs 26b)

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you brother Butch! So many rules to keep track of...

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Yes, brother Ryan. Before this study I didn't really realize this. It gives me a much better understanding of sinning unintentionally.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

We do have more freedom in Christ, and don't have those rules of ritual, for which I am grateful!

Do you ever wonder how many rules we live by every day? Just something to think about, as we appreciate the covenant of Christ.

According to the Jewish Talmud the Torah, the law of Moses, contains 613 commandments (I've never personally counted). 365 positive commands, and 248 prohibitions. I'll let the rabbis' count stand.

Meanwhile, the California Vehicle Code is a volume over 1000 pages long, with new rules added annually. The building code is massive, the criminal code is huge, the tax code is mind boggling... Our daily lives are fenced in by thousands and thousands of regulations, local, state, and federal. Israel had 613 commandments for everything, while they were a theocracy.



Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

And ignorance of the law is no excuse in this country.

Comment:

Cherris Lehman:

I would be lost without "Just a little talk with Jesus". What a blessing we have in God's word!

August 28: Numbers 9-12 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, August 28, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 9-12

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 9

The LORD told Moses, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of Egypt, to have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. At twilight on the fourteenth day of this month, according to all its rules and regulations. Some previous scriptures concerning these rules and regulations are Ex. 12:11, 48, 34:25, Lev 23:5-8.

The Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Now some could not celebrate the Passover because they were ceremonially unclean because of a dead body.

They petitioned Moses and Moses learned from the LORD that they could celebrate the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight. They must eat the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and not leave any of it till morning nor break any of its bones, and all regulations must be followed.

If a ceremonially clean man failed to celebrate the Passover, he would be cut off from his people and bear the consequences of his sin.

The same regulations applied to the alien living among them as to the native-born.

The Cloud Above the Tabernacle

On the day the tabernacle, the Tent of the Testimony, was set up, the cloud covered it. At night the cloud looked like fire, and whenever the cloud lifted, the Israelites would set out, and whenever the cloud settled, they would camp.

And the Israelites would encamp or set out in accordance with the cloud of the LORD settling or lifting.

They obeyed all that the LORD commanded through Moses.

Chapter 10

The LORD had Moses to make two trumpets of hammered silver to be used for calling the community together and for having the camps set out. When both were sounded the whole community assembled before Moses at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. When one was sounded the leaders were to assemble before Moses.

When a trumpet blast was sounded, those camped on the east were to set out. At the second blast, those camped on the south were to set out. Verse 7 indicates that the manner of blasts on the trumpets could suggest different signals.

Only the sons of Aaron were to blow the trumpets.

This would be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.

The trumpets were to be sounded when they went into battle in their own land and the LORD would rescue them from their enemies. And at times of rejoicing, appointed feasts and new moon festivals, the trumpets were to be sounded over the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. They would be a memorial for the Israelites before their God.

"I am the LORD your God." (vs 10b)

The Israelites leave Sinai

On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle of the Testimony.

The Israelites set out from the Desert of Sinai and traveled from place to place until the cloud came to rest in the Desert of Paran. They set out, this first time, at the LORD's command through Moses.

From vs 14 down through 28 records a very orderly setting out of all of the divisions of the camps, one after another, under each of their standards, until all were on the move.

This is certainly evidence, to me, of no chaos present in the forty years of 'wanderings' for the Israelites.

Now Moses persuaded his father-in-law to come with them because he knew the desert.

And Moses would share with him what the LORD gave.
Whenever the ark set out, Moses said,
"Rise up, O LORD!
May your enemies be scattered;
may your foes flee before you."
Whenever it came to rest, he said,
"Return, O LORD,
to the countless thousands of Israel."
(vs 35-36)

Chapter 11

Now the LORD's anger was aroused when HE heard the people complaining about their hardships and fire came down from the LORD and burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp until the people cried out to Moses and Moses prayed to the LORD and the fire died.

Quail From the LORD

Now the people were complaining that they had no meat to eat. No fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.

Only the manna.

The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin.

It could be cooked in a pot or made into cakes.

When the dew settled at night, the manna also came down.

Moses heard the people complaining, the LORD was angry, and Moses was troubled. He asked the LORD why HE had brought this trouble on him. "Did I give these birth, am I a nursemaid, Why all this burden, Where can I get meat for all these people?" "This burden is too heavy for me."

The LORD had Moses to pick seventy elders and bring them to the Tent of Meeting. There, the LORD would come down, speak with Moses and take of the Spirit that was on Moses, and put the Spirit on the seventy elders so that they could help Moses bear the burden of the people.

The LORD subsequently, overwhelmed the people with quail, up to three feet deep all around them, and the people gathered all they could in a night and a day, but while they were still eating, the LORD's anger burned against them and HE struck them with a severe plague. Therefore the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah, (graves of craving) because there they buried the people who had craved other food. From Kibroth Hattaavah the people traveled to Hazeroth and stayed there.

Chapter 12

Oh, oh! Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because he had married a Cushite.

"Hasn't the LORD also spoken through us and not only Moses?"

And the LORD heard this.

Verse 3 (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

At once the LORD had Moses, Aaron and Miriam come to the Tent of Meeting. The LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and had Aaron and Miriam stand before him and HE said,

"Listen to my words:

"When a prophet of the Lord is among you,

I reveal myself to him in visions,

I speak to him in dreams.

But this is not true of my servant Moses;

he is faithful in all my house.

With him I speak face to face,

clearly and not in riddles;
he sees the form of the LORD.
Why then were you not afraid
to speak against my servant Moses?"
The LORD's anger burned against them, and HE left them.
When the cloud lifted, there stood Miriam--leprous, as snow.
Aaron pleaded to Moses, not to hold their sin against them, and to plead for Miriam.
So Moses cried out to the LORD,
"O God, please heal her!"
And so, the LORD confined her outside the camp for seven days till she could be brought
back, presumably clean.
After that, the people left Hazereth and encamped in the
Desert of Paran.

Now one might wonder why there was no apparent punishment for Aaron, just Miriam, so I
offer this:

Adam Clarke's Commentary
Numbers 12:10

Miriam became Leprous--It is likely Miriam was chief in this mutiny; and it is probable that it
was on this ground she is mentioned first, (see verse 1), and punished here, while Aaron is
spared. Had he been smitten with the leprosy, his sacred character must have greatly suffered,
and perhaps the priesthood itself have fallen into contempt. How many priests and preachers
who deserved to be exposed to reproach and infamy, have been spared for the sake of the
holy character they bore, that the ministry might not be blamed! But the just God will visit their
transgressions in some other way, if they do not deeply deplore them and find mercy through
Christ.

Nothing tends to discredit the work of God so much as the transgressions and miscarriages of
those who minister in holy things.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Thank you Butch!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:
Mucho gracias Butch O'Neal!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
Por nada Randy Ingle!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thank you, Butch! I missed most of last week's posts. It's unfortunately the busiest time of
year for me. I was able to stay up on all the readings, though. It's good to be back and hear
your voice. 😊 lots of pieces in today's reading that I forgot about. I can only imagine how
overwhelmed Moses was leading 2 million Israelites. I love the Lord replying Is my arm too
short? What seems impossible always leads to God's power being demonstrated.

September 4: Numbers 13-16 (Butch O'Neal)

Butch O'Neal, thanks for your good efforts in this project of fellowship and encouragement in the word week by week. Thank you for spending the time and work in a late night/early morning session after traveling to Bakersfield for our Labor Day weekend meeting, to provide direction in the reading for 9/4 in Numbers 13-16! Sometimes this technology that lets us share also lets us down, and it is very disappointing to lose the carefully prepared message before it has been passed along to build up the readers!

I won't try to duplicate the effort already made by Butch his preparation for the reading of Numbers 13-16, but I will offer a few quick and brief comments.

Num 13-14 the fascinating story of Israel's failure to enter the promised land because of unbelief. We are reintroduced to the young man Joshua, mentioned previously in Exodus as a war leader and assistant to Moses, who served as a representative of the (half) tribe of Ephraim I in spying out the land, along with 11 others from each tribe of Israel. We learn of the agricultural abundance available in Canaan, along with the fact the land is occupied by people well entrenched in fortified cities, including unusually large warriors including some described as Nephilim or Anakites.

The report of powerful people in the land was accurate, but misleading. According the two of the selected spies, Caleb from Judah and Joshua from Ephraim, with God's help victory was assured. According to the other ten, the cause was hopeless. As folk often do, the people of Israel favored the pessimism of human failure rather than the optimism of faith in God. The outcome was God's judgment that a whole generation of Israelite men would die in the wilderness in a total time frame of 40 years (2 years of which had already passed). An attempt to avoid the consequences of their rebellion only led to failure, and Israel became wandered for a generation.

Chapter 15 presents supplementary ceremonial laws for life in Canaan, plus the story of a man who violated the 4th commandment (in the 4th book of the law) and was condemned to death.

Chapter 16 has the account of Korah's rebellion, a cousin of Moses and Aaron, with a very important principle taught in Moses's words to Korah and other Levites who joined him , 16:18-10. Order and delegated authority are very important in the service of God among his people, and it is a grievous error to envy or aspire to what God has given to others, not appreciating the work and honor God has given to each of us in our own calling. The people were not happy with God's enforcement of his will in the matter of authority in worship, but their resistance was tragic, not helpful in any way.

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

I thank you very much, Charles! :)

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Charles!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Charles Fry: it has been a great blessing for all of us to benefit from your knowledge. Thanks for this post and your insightful comments throughout the study this year. I'm glad you brought attention in the last paragraph. Very good take away and application for us.

September 11: Numbers 17-20 (Charles Fry)

Reading for Monday, September 11, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 17-20

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 17

Now the LORD told Moses to get twelve staffs, each from the leader of their ancestral tribes, with the man's name written on each staff. Place these in the Tent of Meeting in front of the Testimony. The man I choose, his staff will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites. So, Moses did this, and Aaron's staff was among them. When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting the next day, he saw that Aaron's staff, from the tribe of Levi, not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed, and produced almonds. Then Moses brought out all the staffs from the LORD's presence and each man took his own staff. But the LORD had Moses to put Aaron's staff back in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. "this will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die."

Moses did just as the LORD commanded him.

This miraculous growth on Aaron's staff was to show the Israelites that the Divine appointment of Aaron should never again be questioned or challenged such as had occurred in chapter 16. The Israelites said to Moses, "We will die! We are lost, we are all lost! Anyone who even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD will die. Are we all going to die?"

(Excerpt from Bible Knowledge Commentary):

Characteristically the people overreacted and assumed that the presence of the staff would forever endanger anyone who even came close to the tabernacle.

Chapter 18

The LORD told Aaron that he, his sons, and his father's family were to bear the responsibilities for offenses against the sanctuary, but he and his sons alone would bear the responsibility for offenses against the priesthood. They were to have their fellow Levites to join and assist them when they ministered before the Tent of the Testimony. The Levites were responsible to Aaron and were to perform all the duties of the Tent, without going near the furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar, lest they and Aaron both die.

Aaron was responsible, the Levites were a gift to Aaron from the LORD, to do the work at the Tent of Meeting.

Only Aaron and his sons could serve as priests in connection with all at the altar and inside the curtain.

The priesthood was a gift to Aaron & sons from the LORD.

All others who came near the sanctuary would be put to death. The LORD put Aaron in charge of all the offerings presented to HIM by the Israelites, and the LORD gave them to Aaron and his sons. Holy offerings were to be eaten as most holy, every male would eat it. Other offerings could be eaten by anyone in the family who were ceremonially clean. All that was devoted to the LORD would be Aaron's. But the firstborn had to be redeemed, except for the ox, sheep, or goat. They were holy. Aaron had no share among the Israelites. The LORD was his share. Only the Levites could go near the Tent of Meeting, all others would die if they went near.

The LORD gave to the Levites the tithes that the Israelites presented to the LORD, as an inheritance for the Levites.

Now, in turn, the Levites were to present to the LORD a tenth of the tithes they received and the best and holiest part of everything given to them, so they would not defile the holy offerings of the Israelites, and not die.

Chapter 19

The Water of Cleansing

The LORD told Moses and Aaron: "this is a requirement of the law that the LORD has commanded: They were to bring a red heifer without defect or blemish that had never been under a yoke, to be taken by Eleazar the priest, outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. Eleazar was to sprinkle some of its blood, from his finger, seven times toward the front of the Tent of Meeting. Then, as he watched, the whole heifer was to be burned. Eleazar was to take some cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool and throw them onto the burning heifer. Then Eleazar was to wash his clothes and bath himself with water. Then he could come into camp but he would be ceremonially unclean till evening. The man who burns it must also wash with water, and he too, would be unclean till evening. A man who is clean would take the ashes of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially clean place outside the camp.

They would be kept for use in the water of cleansing, for the purification of sin. The man who gathered the ashes must also wash his clothes, and he would be unclean till evening.

This would be a lasting ordinance for the Israelites and the aliens living among them.

Anyone touching a dead body would be unclean for seven days. He must purify himself on the third and the seventh days and he would be clean. But if he did not, then he would not be clean and he would defile the LORD's tabernacle and must be cut off from Israel.

If a person died in a tent, anyone who is in the tent or enters it would be unclean for seven days.

Any open container without a lid on it would be unclean.

Verses 16-20 has to do with much of the same procedures to follow to make one clean again, particularly with the sprinkling of the ashes mixed with water on the affected person/s.

This is a lasting ordinance for them.

Vs 21-22:

"The man who sprinkles the water of cleansing must also wash his clothes, and anyone who touches the water of cleansing will be unclean till evening. Anything that an unclean person touches becomes unclean, and anyone who touches it becomes unclean till evening."

Chapter 20

Water From the Rock

Here, at the Desert of Zin we find that Miriam died and was buried.

We also see the community had no water and, once again, they gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron.

Moses appealed to the LORD and the LORD had Moses to take Aaron's staff, and Aaron, gather the assembly together, and speak to a certain rock, and it would pour out its water, so the Israelites and their livestock could drink.

Moses took the staff as commanded, gathered the people in front of the rock as commanded, but then Moses sinned by saying: "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" (as if the LORD was not involved!?) Then he struck the rock twice with his staff. (he was told to speak to the rock, not strike it.) Nevertheless, water gushed out, but Moses and Aaron were told they would not enter the promised land because they failed to trust in, and honor the LORD in the sight of the Israelites.

Edom Denies Israel Passage

Verses 14-21 has to do with Israel being denied the privilege of passing through the country of Edom on their journey.

Edom refused, and came against them with a large and powerful army, and Israel turned away.

The Death of Aaron

The LORD told Moses and Aaron that Aaron would be gathered to his people, and to take Aaron and his son Eleazar up Mount Hor. There, remove Aaron's garments and put them on Eleazar, for Aaron would die there.

Moses did as the LORD commanded.

When the community learned that Aaron had died, the entire house of Israel mourned him for thirty days.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

I want to thank Charles Fry for posting on last week's reading, and rescuing me.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you brother Butch!

September 18: Numbers 21-24 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, September 18, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 21-24

the most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 21

When the king of Arad heard that Israel was coming along the road, he attacked and captured some of them.

So Israel vowed to the LORD: "If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy (The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in vs 3.) their cities." So the LORD gave the Canaanites over to Israel, so the place was named Hormah. (destruction)

Now as they traveled along the route to go around Edom, they grew impatient, and again, spoke against GOD and Moses.

"There is no bread, no water, miserable food, we are going to die in this desert."

So the LORD sent venomous snakes among them, who bit the people and many died. The people came to Moses and they acknowledged their sin and asked Moses to pray the LORD to take the snakes away. The LORD told Moses to make a snake and put it up on a pole so anyone who is bitten can look at it and live. So Moses made a bronze snake, and any who were bitten, looked at it and lived. I suppose that these snakes were a much bigger concern to the Israelites than those things that they grumbled about.

They moved on and camped at Oboth.

(O'BOTH (o'both). The forty-sixth station of the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to Canaan, near Moab (Numbers 21:10-11; Numbers 33:43-44), probably the oasis el-Weiba.)

(New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

Wow! When we recall that these people numbered about two million, and consider the number of times that they camped on their journey, along with their hardships, we can probably come to, at least, a little better understanding of the grumbling, not that it was right!

They went from Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim (#47)

From there they moved on to Zered Valley. (#48)

Then along the Arnon, a river in the desert. (#49)

The Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. That is why the Book of the Wars of the LORD says: (I'll leave you to read that. However, here's this.)

("Book of the Wars of the Lord" represents a memento of a larger literary development in early OT times than is represented in the canonical books. This early literary work, probably poetical, existed in Mosaic times [Numbers 21:14].

It was likely a collection of odes celebrating God's glorious acts toward Israel and recited over campfires, just as the Bedouin do today. New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

They continued on to Beer (#50) There was a well there, and the people sang a song. Then they went to Mattanah, then to Nahaliel, then Bamoth, then to the valley in Moab.

They asked for permission to pass through the land of the Amorites but they were refused, and the king brought his entire army against Israel, but Israel put him to the sword and captured all their cities up to the Ammonites, because their border was fortified. So they settled in the land of the Amorites, and went on to defeat Og of Bashan with the help of the LORD. They struck him, his sons, and his army down.

Leaving no survivors. And they took possession of the land.

Chapter 22

Now Balak king of Moab saw what the Israelites had done to the Amorites, and how many they were, (about two million) and he was terrified.

So he sent for Balaam to come and put a curse on them.

But the LORD would not let Balaam put a curse on Israel.

Balak tried again. He sent more noble messengers with a promise of a handsome reward.

"Come, curse these people"

Balaam wanted the reward but he could not defy the LORD.

So he went to inquire of the LORD again. This time GOD told him to go with these people but only do what GOD tells him.

Balaam started out on his donkey but the angel of the LORD stood in the road with a drawn sword and only the donkey saw him and would not go forward. Balaam beat his donkey three times until the LORD opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel of the LORD. The story continues with the angel of the LORD allowing Balaam to proceed, but "speak only what I tell you." Balaam explains this to Balak.

After sacrificing cattle and sheep, Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, where he saw part of the people.

Chapter 23

Now Balaam and Barak offered a bull and a ram on each of seven altars that Balaam had Balak to build.

But the LORD gave to Balaam a message for Balak which was a blessing, rather than a curse, for Israel.

Balak was angry! Balaam said: "I must speak what I'm told"

Balak tried again, from another area, with seven more altars,

seven more bulls and rams, and wanted Balaam to curse Israel from this place. Again, the LORD put a message in the mouth of Balaam, which was essentially another blessing.

Balak said: "Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all!"

Balaam: "I must do what the LORD says."

Balak tried again, at yet another place, seven more altars,

seven more bulls and rams. Balak was hoping that at one of these chosen places, it would please the LORD to let Balaam curse Israel. He's just not going to give up.

Chapter 24

Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, so he did not resort to sorcery as at other times, but he turned his face toward the desert and saw Israel camped tribe by tribe, and the Spirit of God came upon him,

and he uttered his oracle. This was his third oracle. I believe that each was the message the LORD gave him for Balak.

Balak was angry! Balaam did not curse, but blessed Israel three times. He told Balaam to go home. No reward.

Balaam told Balak that he told Balak's messengers that he could only obey the LORD's commands, no matter what the reward. But before Balaam went home, he warned Balak of what Israel would do to Balak's people in days to come.

Then he uttered his fourth oracle.

Balaam saw Amalek and uttered his oracle.

Balaam saw the Kenites and uttered his oracle.

He uttered one more oracle, then he returned home.

And Balak went his own way.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you sir!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Great chapters! Thanks, Butch O'Neal!

September 25: Numbers 25-28 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, September 25, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 25-28

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 25

Now the men of Israel began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women while they were staying in Shittim.

They also ate of the sacrifices to the Moabite gods, and bowed down before them, joining in the worshipping of Baal of Peor.

(Peor, a mountain in Moab, the top of which Balak took Balaam to view the Israelites.

New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

So the LORD had Moses to kill all the leaders of the people, and to kill all the men who joined in the worship of Baal.

Then a man took a Midianite woman into the tent of his family in front of Moses and the whole assembly. When Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest saw this he took a spear into that tent and killed the man and the woman with one thrust.

Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped; but those who died in the plague numbered 24,000.

Because of the zeal of Phinehas for the honor of the LORD, the LORD made a covenant of peace with him. He and his descendants would have a covenant of a lasting priesthood.

The man put to death in the tent was Zimri son of Salu, and the woman was Cozbi daughter of Zur, a tribal chief.

Vs 16-18: The LORD said to Moses, "Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them, because they treated you as enemies when they deceived you in the affair of Peor and their sister Cozbi,

the daughter of a Midianite leader, the woman who was killed when the plague came as a result of Peor."

Chapter 26

The LORD had Moses and Eleazar to "take a census of the whole Israelite community by families--all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel."

Vs 5-50 are the names, and numbers of those counted in the census. The total number of Israel men were 601,730.

The land was to be allotted as an inheritance to each of the clans in accordance to their number.

The male Levites a month old or more numbered 23,000.

They were not counted along with the other Israelites because they received no inheritance among them.

Vs 63-65: These are the ones counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest when they counted the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho. Not one of them was among those counted by Moses and Aaron the priest when they counted the Israelites in the Desert of Sinai. For the LORD had told those Israelites they would surely die in the desert, and not one of them was left except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Chapter 27

Now Zelophehad, from the clan of Manasseh, was one who had died in the desert, leaving five daughters but no sons.

The daughters appealed to Moses and Eleazar before the whole assembly for a rightful share of the inheritance, saying that their father's name should not disappear from his clan just because he had no sons. Moses took their case to the LORD and the LORD said they were right and told Moses to give them their Father's share of the inheritance. Further, this was to be a legal requirement for the Israelites. If who died left no son, give to the daughter, if no daughter, give to his brothers, if no brothers, give to his father's brothers, if none, give to the nearest relative. This as the LORD commanded Moses.

Then the LORD had Moses go up on a mountain to see the land that he would not enter because of the disobedience at the Desert of Zin. Moses would be gathered to his people, but he was concerned that his successor would be capable to lead the Israelites and expressed this concern to the LORD.

So the LORD had Moses to stand Joshua before Eleazar and the entire assembly to witness Moses commissioning Joshua as their leader while laying hands on him.

Eleazar would obtain decisions for Joshua, as leader, by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD.

Chapter 28

This chapter has to do with

Daily Offerings

Sabbath Offerings

Monthly Offerings

The Passover

Feast of Weeks

We have read these very explicit instructions regarding each of these Offerings in past chapters.

What stands out to me is the very importance of doing everything properly so as not to dishonor the LORD's holiness.

Also I am pleased that at least some of these Offerings would produce an "Aroma pleasing to the LORD."

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:
Thank you Butch O'Neal!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thanks, Butch O'Neal! It's very good to review these lessons again. The numbering (census) of the Israelites really set me up to be wowed again. Only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promise Land from that generation. Wow, wow, wow! And you are so right on chpt 28. God expects us to follow His commands. I couldn't help but also remember that obeying is better than sacrifice.

October 2: Numbers 29-32 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, October 2, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 29-32

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 29

The sacred assemblies in this chapter were also mentioned in Leviticus 23, but here the requirements are more detailed.

The Feast of Trumpets

First day of the seventh month, do no work and sound the trumpets. Vs. 2-5 lists what is required for the offering to the LORD. These were to be in addition to the monthly and daily offerings made to the LORD by fire.

An aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Day of Atonement

Tenth day of the seventh month.

Vs. 7-10 lists the requirements for the offerings to be made to the LORD, including one male goat as a sin offering.

An aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Feast of Tabernacles

Fifteenth day of the seventh month. Do no work.

Celebrate a festival to the LORD for seven days.

Vs. 13-16 lists the requirements for the offerings to be made to the LORD, including one male goat as a sin offering.

An aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Vs. 17-38 lists the requirements for the offerings to be made to the LORD for the next seven days, including one male goat as a sin offering for each day.

All these were an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Vs 39: "In addition to what you vow and your freewill offerings,

prepare these for the LORD at your appointed feasts: your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and fellowship offerings."

Moses told the Israelites all that the LORD commanded him.

Chapter 30

This chapter has to do with vows made to the LORD by a man and also vows made to the LORD by a young woman still living in her father's house, also vows made to the LORD by a married woman. Now if any of these vows were heard by the father or husband, they could nullify the vow and the LORD would release her. But if a husband hears the vow and says nothing and the wife fails, then the husband is responsible for her guilt. But a widow or divorced woman's vow to the LORD would be binding.

Vs. 16: These are the regulations the LORD gave Moses concerning relationships between a man and his wife, and between a father and his young daughter still living in his house.

Chapter 31

The LORD told Moses to take vengeance on the Midianites.

Twelve thousand men went into battle and killed every man.

But they took all the plunder and brought back captives.

Moses was angry. "Have you allowed all the women to live?"

"They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the LORD in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the LORD's people. Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man."

The cleansing and purification of the plunder and the soldiers was undertaken and the spoils were divided.

The plunder remaining was 675,000 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys and 32,000 women who had never slept with a man. Vs. 36 through the rest of the chapter lists how the spoils were divided, including that given to the LORD.

Chapter 32

Now the Reubenites and Gadites didn't want to cross the Jordan and go to war. Moses chastised them and reminded them of their father's attitudes, which resulted in the LORD causing the Israelites to wander in the desert for 40 years.

So the Reubenites and Gadites asked if they could build pens for their livestock, and cities for their women and children, and then they would arm themselves and go ahead of the Israelites until every Israelite received his inheritance, and only then would they return to their women and children.

This was agreeable to Moses, and so the Reubenites and Gadites crossed over and did all that they had promised Moses and Moses gave them the properties that they built their cities on. And everyone began to build up and rebuild that which was their inheritance.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! There were a lot of sacrifices to be offered to the Lord with all these festivals. Were these instructions for everybody (like Passover) or just for the priests? I'm not sure everyone could afford to part with so much of their livestock. Also, where did the priests get these animals from? I know people brought them as sacrifices to the priests but those animals were to be sacrificed for a different purpose.

Replies:

Charles Fry:

The daily, monthly, and festal offerings were community sacrifices, not individual obligations (except for something like the Passover lamb consumed under those special pilgrimage circumstances). We get a glimpse of this 700 years later in

Hezekiah's time when the king and officials provided supplies of animals for the festival offerings.

2 Chronicles 30:24 (NIV)

24 Hezekiah king of Judah provided a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep and goats for the assembly, and the officials provided them with a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep and goats. A great number of priests consecrated themselves.

An early example of this reliance on free will offerings for community obligations is in the gifts for the construction of the tabernacle, and then we see the leaders of the people stepping up and making offerings for the service of the priests and Levites. Being a community leader required making such provision for the sacred rites.

Numbers 7:2 (NIV)

2 Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of families who were the tribal leaders in charge of those who were counted, made offerings.

Kevin Crittenden:

Charles Fry -Thank you!

Butch O'Neal:

Yes.....thank you, Charles!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch O'Neal! Marc read these chapters to me on the way home from stl Sunday night. We decided chpt 30 should still stand today. It is God's intention that every man should bear rule in his own house, and have his wife and children in subjection with all gravity.

October 9: Numbers 33-36 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, October 9, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 33-36

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 33

This chapter records the stages of Israel's journey, from when they left Egypt, while the Egyptians were burying their firstborn. Vs 5-39 lists about 33 places where they camped, up to the time when Aaron died at the age of 123 years, on Mount Hor, in the fortieth year after coming out of Egypt.

By then, the Canaanite king of Arad heard they were coming.

The Israelites camped eight more times. Then the LORD told Moses to have the Israelites to drive out all the people in the land before them, and to destroy all the places where they worshipped false gods, and to destroy their carved images and their cast idols. And then to distribute the land by lots, according to their clans.

Vs 55-56: "But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them."

Chapter 34

The LORD told Moses to tell the Israelites that there would be boundaries in the land of Canaan. Vs 3-12 lists these borders.
South, West, North, and East.

This land was to be assigned by lots, and a leader from each tribe, (vs 18-28) including Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun, were appointed to help assign the land.

Chapter 35

The Israelites were to give the Levites towns to live in with pastureland on all sides of every town. Six of these towns were to be cities of refuge, in addition to forty-two other towns. These six towns were where one could flee from the 'blood avenger' if they killed someone accidentally.

Those who killed on purpose were to be put to death.

The one who killed accidentally could have a trial, or he could remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest.

If he was caught outside of that city, the avenger could put him to death.

Two or more witnesses were required for one to be found guilty of anything.

Vs 33-34: "Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it. Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the LORD, dwell among the Israelites."

Chapter 36

This chapter has to do with Zelophehad's daughter's (whom we met in the 27th chapter) inheritance.

They were to receive their father's inheritance, but if any, or all, of these five sisters were to marry, they would have to marry within their father's tribal clan, as no inheritance may pass from tribe to tribe.

And so they did marry their cousins on their father's side.

This concludes the Book of Numbers.

(NUMBERS, BOOK OF. The fourth book of the Pentateuch, continuing the redemptive history of Israel where Exodus leaves off. As Genesis is the book of origins, Exodus the book of redemption, and Leviticus the book of worship and fellowship, Numbers is the book of the service and walk of God's redeemed people.

Taken from New Unger's Bible Dictionary.)

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you Butch O'Neal

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

You're welcome, Ryan Ingle.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

I almost posted a sad emoji. We are on our last book with you now, Butch. The Lord has blessed us beyond measure with your faithfulness to this study. Thank you for serving with all your heart! As for tonight's study marc & I mentioned it's interesting when you read a passage

with a new perspective. Ours was the Israelites leaving Egypt, "they marched boldly in full view of all the Egyptians, who were burying their firstborn." Quite a visual laid out in this chapter.

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Law

October 16: Deuteronomy 1-3 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, October 16, 2017

THE LAW

Deuteronomy 1-3

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF.

The name comes from the LXX through an inaccurate translation of Deut. 17:18 which is correctly rendered,

"This is the copy (or repetition) of the law"

(cf. NASB, KJV, NIV).

It is apparent that the book is not a "second law" distinct from the law given at Sinai, as the name of the work might suggest.

It is simply a partial restatement and exposition of former laws to the new generation that had been reared in the wilderness.

The Jewish name of the book is 'Elleh haddevarim,

"These are the words" or simply 'Devarim, "Words."

In Jewish tradition it is called Mishneh Torah, meaning

"repetition" or "copy of the law" (Deut. 17:18).

(Taken from New Unger's Bible Dictionary).

Chapter 1

This chapter recounts, first, the words Moses spoke to Israel, regarding the command to leave Horeb. They were to go and take possession of the land that the LORD had given them.

Second, the appointment of leaders from every tribe to aid Moses with the burdens and disputes among them.

All the leaders were commanded to judge fairly!

Third, when the spies were sent out, one from each tribe, and they came back and reported:

"It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us."

Fourth, and last in this chapter, concerned the rebellion against the LORD because they were afraid to go up and take the land. They did not trust in the LORD!

Moses recounts the LORD's anger with them and himself,

as HE decreed that only Caleb and Joshua would enter the promised land. Moses remembered that Israel had a change of heart and decided to go up and take the land, despite being told that they would be defeated because the LORD would not be with them. They were defeated and wept before the LORD,

but HE paid no attention to them or their weeping.

Chapter 2

This chapter first recounts the wanderings in the desert for some thirty-eight years until all of the original fighting men from the rebellion had perished.

Second, now, is the defeat of Sihon King of Heshbon, because he would not allow Israel to pass through his land.
They left no survivors, but took all of the plunder and livestock.

Chapter 3

First, in this chapter is the defeat of Og King of Bashan.
They did the same to Og as they had done to Sihon.
Left no survivors, but took all of the plunder and livestock.
And they took over the land of these two kings.
Only Og was left and his bed was over thirteen feet long and six feet wide.
Second, was the division of the land that was taken over.
Third, Moses forbidden to cross the Jordan.
Moses commanded Joshua to not be afraid of any of the kingdoms that he would encounter in the promised land.
"God himself will fight for you."
Moses pleaded with the LORD to allow him to go over the Jordan and see the good land, but the LORD would not hear of it and commanded Moses to commission Joshua, and to encourage and strengthen him, for Joshua would lead this people across and cause them to inherit the land that Moses would see from the mount.

It saddens me that Moses was not allowed to reach the promised land, but I am heartened when I read the account of the transfiguration in Matt. 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9.
TRULY, GOD is GOOD!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Thank you very much brother Butch!

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:
You're very welcome, brother Steve!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:
Thank you, Butch! In 1:40, after telling Moses that these rebellious people would not enter the land but would continue wandering, God gives travel directions to Moses. I'm thinking that the pillar of fire and column of smoke stopped appearing and that Moses was given the route by God. Is that your understanding as well? And was manna still provided?

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
Kevin! We see that they did not follow those directions, but rather went up against the opposition, without GOD, and were soundly defeated. Joshua 5 tells us that the manna stopped a few days after the celebration of the Passover, which was after the whole nation had crossed over Jordan. (Josh. 4:1) Exodus 13:21 tells us that the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud were for light, so that they could travel by night or day. So, it would seem, that once they had reached their destination, (crossed over Jordan) their travels were over.!? Hope this helps.

Kevin Crittenden:
Butch O'Neal - Thank you!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:
Thank you Butch!

Comment:

Cherris Lehman:
Duet. 34:1 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gileads far as Dan.....vs4
Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying "I will give it to your descendants." I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thanks, Butch O'Neal! Thought I posted last night. Anyhow, very much appreciated your thoughts! The defeat of Og and Sihon was a praiseworthy event in Israelite history. It's referenced in Psalm 135:5,10, 11; and Psalm 136:17-21.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you, Ginger Hermon!

October 23: Deuteronomy 4-6 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, October 23, 2017

THE LAW

Deuteronomy 4-6

*The most important thing here is to
read and ponder the Scriptures consistently*

Chapter 4

Moses continues to remind the Israelites of the laws and decrees that the LORD had him to teach them.

Obedience to these was commanded. They were to follow them in the land they were entering. In doing so, other nations would see the Israelites wisdom and understanding.

Moses reminded them that the LORD is near whenever they prayed to HIM, and that their decrees and laws made their nation great. They were told to hold fast to these teachings, and to teach these laws and decrees to their children, and their children's children.

Moses would not enter the promised land, but they should not forget the covenant of the LORD.

Idolatry was forbidden! Moses reminded them that they saw no form, when the LORD spoke to them out of the fire.

They were not to make an image of any kind!

Vs 24, For the LORD your God is a consuming fire,
a jealous God.

If, after generations had passed and they had grown corrupt,

with idols and doing evil, they would be destroyed and lose their land. Only a few would survive and they would be scattered, where they would worship idols.

But, if from there, they would seek the LORD with all their heart and soul, they would find HIM.

GOD always gives us another chance, even when it may seem that we're undeserving. GOD will always keep HIS covenant, even when we don't. All praise to our LORD!!!

Vs 32-40 is Moses reminding Israel that the LORD is GOD, and how great HE is, and that HE is to be revered, obeyed.

Moses reminded them of the cities of refuge, where anyone who had killed another unintentionally, could flee and be safe.

Now, the introduction to the Law.

Chapter 5

Vs 1-21 record the Ten Commandments.

Moses reminded Israel where these came from and under what circumstances. He reminded them that they heard the LORD's voice from the fire. And they lived!

The LORD liked what they said, and the LORD sent them to their tents, while HE finished giving Moses all the commands, decrees and laws that he teach to the Israelites.

Chapter 6

This chapter is an encouragement to remember to obey all of the LORD's commands so that they might enjoy long life.

The key passage: vs 4-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

We would all do good to follow these commands, even today, to the best of our abilities.

Moses reminded them to tell their children of their times in Egypt, in slavery, and how the LORD brought them out with a mighty hand.

Vs 24-25

"The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness."

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you Butch!!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

You're very welcome, Ryan!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch! I'm going to bed singing this!

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=0qEQ9HEOF4o>

"Hear O Israel"

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Pleasant Hill just finished teaching the 10 commandments to the kids. Marc spent at least an hour with our boys memorizing them. I found a good visual for the kids in my class to memorize each commandment. It's a little silly but it really worked! 3 other kids memorized them all in 3 minutes through number visualization.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=tU0C1E4WzPs>

"Learn the Ten Commandments"

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ginger!

October 30: Deuteronomy 7-9 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, October 30, 2017

THE LAW

Deuteronomy 7-9

*The most important thing here is to

read and ponder the Scriptures consistently*

Chapter 7

Moses continues to remind the Israelites to remember all that the LORD has done for them.

Now he wants them to know that when the LORD drives out the nations (seven) that are in the land that the Israelites are entering and delivers them over to the Israelites, they are to destroy them completely.

There should be no treaty, no mercy, no intermarrying, lest these people turn Israel away from the LORD, and the LORD's anger would burn and HE would destroy Israel.

They were to smash and burn everything idolatrous.

Vs 6, "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God.

The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."

If they would pay attention to, and follow carefully, all of these laws, the LORD would keep HIS covenant of love with them.

They would be blessed more than any other people, they would increase in number, have rich crops, great flocks,

Kept free from every disease.

But only if they destroyed all that the LORD hands over to them. Israel was not to pity them nor serve their gods,

lest they be snared.

Moses ends this chapter by reminding Israel of what the LORD did with Egypt, and HE can do the same with these enemies. The LORD would drive these nations out, little by little. Israel was to continue to destroy them, burn their images

and take nothing from what they destroy, lest they be ensnared by it, for it was detestable to the LORD.

Chapter 8

Moses continues to encourage Israel to follow every command and to remember that their clothes did not wear out, and that their feet did not swell during their forty years in the desert.

(This is an amazing fact to me!)

Vs 5, "Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you."

Moses stresses to Israel to not forget the LORD as their holdings begin to grow and multiply, and not to let their hearts become proud.

Vs 17, You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me."

Vs 18, But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Chapter 9

Moses assures the Israelites that the LORD would be going ahead of them like a devouring fire, destroying the larger and stronger enemies. Moses reminds Israel that it is not because of Israel's righteousness that the LORD has brought them to this land, but rather because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is giving Israel this land.

Moses reminds them that they are a stiff-necked people.

Moses reminds them to never forget how that they provoked the LORD to anger in the desert. At Horeb, with the golden calf, the LORD was so angry that HE purposed to destroy them, but the LORD listened to Moses, and spared the Israelites. Moses also prayed for Aaron's life, and the LORD spared Aaron.

Moses convinced the LORD that the enemies, in Egypt, would believe that the LORD was unable to bring the Israelites into the promised land, and that was why the LORD destroyed the Israelites, if HE were to do it.

The LORD certainly loved Moses!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

It's so crazy that the Israelites remind us of how we act so often towards God. It's easy to see how the Israelites strayed so many times from God and think, at least we aren't like that. We at times I think are worse then what they were!!

Thanks brother Butch O'Neal

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

Yes...one would think that the Israelites would have had some concept of trials and tribulations, and the personal growth that came from them, after having lived under slavery for so long.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother Butch! I have always been intrigued about the mentioning of "hornets" I think this is the only place that is mentioned. The Witch in the Wizard of Oz steals the line also. I had forgotten that the LORD said the Israelites would "dig for copper" in Canaan.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Brother Steve, the first mention of "hornet" is in Ex. 23:28 and the third mention is in Jos. 24:12. NIV. This is also referred to as, "pestilence", "despair", "terror", and "panic" in various other translations, according to my Bible Discovery 4 program.

Steven Wright:

Very good! THANKS! For that!

Comment:

Jack Dyer:

"Memory is the first thing to go." Perhaps, this is why we so often need to be "refreshed" with His word and man's continual rejection of it. Thanks Butch.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch! Excellent summary. Moses teaches us so much in these short chapters! Man does not live on bread alone, God's discipline humbles us and casts total dependence on Him, and intercessory prayer can save.

November 6: Deuteronomy 10-12 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, November 6, 2017

THE LAW

Deuteronomy 10-12

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 10

Moses continues to remind the Israelites of things that the LORD caused to occur on their journey to the promised land.

Moses tells of when the LORD had him to chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and to make a wooden chest. (ark)

The LORD would write on the tablets, the same as before.

The Ten Commandments HE had proclaimed to them on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly.

Then the LORD had Moses put the tablets into the ark, as the LORD had commanded him.

Moses tells of Aaron's death and burial, and of Eleazar, Aaron's son succeeding Aaron as priest.

Moses tells of the setting apart of the Levites to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to stand before the LORD

to minister and to pronounce blessings in HIS name.

Moses encourages the Israelites to love and serve the LORD with all their hearts and souls, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees.

Moses reminds them that the LORD chose them, and that they should circumcise their hearts and not be stiff-necked

any longer. (words that fell on deaf ears?)

Vs 17-21, Moses tells of more praises to be made for the LORD their GOD.

Vs 22, "Your forefathers who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky."

Chapter 11

Moses tells Israel again to love and obey the LORD.

He reminds them of what the LORD did in Egypt, and what the LORD did to the Egyptian army, (swallowed by the Red Sea)

and also, what the LORD did to Dathan and Abiram.

(swallowed by the earth).

Moses reminded them that they were witnesses of these great things.

Moses continues to exhort the Israelites to obey all the commands of the LORD that are given them, and all would be good for them in the land that the LORD is giving them to possess.

Vs 16, "Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them."

There are many warnings like this in this book, as well as in all of Scripture. And I believe that it is a warning that still applies

for all of us today. We can get caught up in many interests in the world, or our lives, today!

Examples: Television programs,

sports, hobbies, school, and many extracurricular activities.

Most all of these things are fine, in and of themselves, but if we begin to regard any of these or other endeavors as something that impedes our service to the LORD, then we are headed for trouble. Let us never regard anything here on earth

as more important as serving our LORD 100 percent!

Now the Israelites are warned that disobedience would result in them perishing from the good land.

Despite these many warnings, many of GOD's children succumbed to this temptation.

Vs 18-21, "Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds;

tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give to your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth."

Vs 22-32, more exhortations from Moses to obey all the laws and decrees being set before Israel today.

Chapter 12

Israel is commanded to completely destroy all the places where the nations who are being dispossessed worship their gods.

And Israel must worship the LORD their GOD at a place where the LORD would choose.

Once they had entered the promised land, they were to bring all their burnt offerings and sacrifices, tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions they had vowed to the LORD.

They were to bring these only to the place that the LORD would choose, and there they would observe everything that they had been commanded.

Israel could eat their regular meals wherever they liked, but they could only eat their offerings made to the LORD

in the presence of the LORD, at the place that the LORD would choose.

They were not to neglect the Levites.

They were not to eat any blood.
Again, more warnings to stay away from false gods.
Vs 32, "See that you do all I command you;
do not add to it or take away from it."

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.


Comment:

Ryan Ingle:
Thank you brother Butch O'Neal

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
Your very welcome, brother Ryan Ingle!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Thanks, Butch! Marc wood burned Deut.11:18-21 on a wood piece above our fireplace. I really love these verses. 

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
Yes, Ginger, these are among my favorites also!

November 13: Deuteronomy 13-15 (Butch O'Neal)

Hi, everyone! I'm just a little early with this post because I have a full schedule in the morning. I hope this doesn't inconvenience anyone. Sincere apologies if it does.

Reading for Monday, November 13, 2017
THE LAW
Deuteronomy 13-15
*The most important thing here is to
read and ponder the Scriptures consistently*

Chapter 13

Moses now tells the Israelites the LORD will be testing them in regard to false prophets leading them away from the LORD.

The LORD wants Israel to love HIM with all of their hearts and their souls. "Put those who preach rebellion against the LORD, to death." The LORD is adamant when HE includes ones closest friend, and even ones family, to be put to death for attempting to lead the LORD's people to worship other gods.

The Israelites were told that if they determined that a town of the land that the LORD had given them, had been led away by wicked and false prophets, then they were to destroy that whole town and all the people and livestock in it. Further, they were to burn the whole town and all of its plunder as a burnt offering to the LORD. And that town would remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt.

The LORD still wants HIS children to love HIM with all their hearts and with all their souls! I believe that it is our duty to work at 'learning' to 'grow' into being fully able to really be able to

do this. I also know that to be able to actually totally achieve this is, at the very least, a lifetime requirement of constant and diligent work and study. We must, at all times, do the very best that we can, and even that will fall short! Praise GOD for HIS mercy and grace!

Chapter 14

This chapter starts with the command to not cut themselves nor shave the front of their heads for the dead.

We know that when a loved one passes this life, that many will mourn the loss.

However, if that one is a child of the LORD, then there is no loss. There is only a continuation of the promise of "It is appointed once, for man to die, and after this, the judgment." GOD is totally interested in having all of HIS children home.

I am very thankful for all who have gone on, but not before leaving many of us with fine examples of how to love and please our CREATOR! And now, fittingly, it is mine and your calling to do our very best, to do the same for the time that our FATHER has allotted us, that we may be fine examples, also!

Vs 3-21 gives detailed instructions on clean and unclean food.

The end of vs 21 says, "Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk."
(See Mark 7:1-23 for more clean and unclean food.)

Vs 22-28 gives detailed instructions on tithes.

The LORD told Israel to set aside a tenth of all their fields produced each year.

The LORD told Israel to eat the tithe of their grain, new wine, oil, and the firstborn of their herds and flocks, in the presence of the LORD, at the place that HE would choose as a dwelling for HIS Name,

"so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always."

If the place that the LORD chose was too far to carry their tithes, then they could exchange their tithes for silver, and then use the silver to buy whatever they liked, to eat in the LORD's presence, and rejoice!

And they were told not to neglect the Levites, the fatherless, the widows, nor the aliens. Make sure that all would eat and be satisfied.

Chapter 15

At the end of seven years, all debts among the Israelites would be cancelled as the LORD had proclaimed. Not so, the debts of foreigners.

These cancellations would be without a grudging heart.

Further, any fellow Hebrew who had sold himself to serve another, must be given his freedom in the seventh year, and he would be supplied as his former master had been blessed.

But if the servant did not want to leave, then he would have an awl pushed through his earlobe and remain the man's servant for life.

Vs 19-23: A reminder to set apart for the LORD every firstborn male of the herds and flocks. Do not work the firstborn oxen, nor shear the firstborn sheep.

Do not sacrifice any defective animal to the LORD.

Do not eat any blood; pour it out on the ground like water.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
You're welcome, Kevin!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:
Thank you Butch O'Neal!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
You're welcome, Ryan Ingle!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Butch: thanks for your faithfulness to this study. May God bless your Monday! I look forward, Lord willing, to studying these passages Monday p.m.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
Bless your day also, Ginger! You are such an encourager! :)

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:
"Praise GOD for HIS mercy and grace!" Thx Butch!!!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
You're welcome, Sister!

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Thanks brother Butch!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
You are welcome, brother Steve!

Comment:

Cherris Lehman:
Thank you Butch.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
You're welcome, Cherris!

Comment:

Steven Dallas Thompson:
No need to apologize, like your comments.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
Thank you!

Comment:

Ina Van Hulzen:
Enjoyed!

Comment:

Ina Van Hulzen:
Great stuff Brother!

November 20: Deuteronomy 16-19 (Butch O'Neal)

Just a little early again. Busy morning coming.
Reading for Monday, November 20, 2017
THE LAW
Deuteronomy 16-19
*The most important thing here is to
read and ponder the Scriptures consistently*

Chapter 16

Moses reminds the Israelites to observe the Passover in the month of Abib, because in that month the LORD brought them out of Egypt. Here they are reminded not to eat it with bread made with yeast, nor to eat or have any bread made with yeast for seven days. And they were to eat the Passover at a place that the LORD would choose. Not just anywhere. Also, any meat sacrificed of an evening should not remain until the following morning. Exodus 12 gives explicit instructions and restrictions on the observance of the Passover.

Moses reminds the Israelites of how to celebrate the Feast of Weeks, with a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings they have received from the LORD. And to rejoice before the LORD at a place HE would choose as a dwelling for HIS Name. Leviticus 23:15-21 is more explicit.

Moses reminds them to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days at a place that the LORD would choose, and to be joyful at the Feast. Each one must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD has blessed them. Numbers 29:12-40 is more informative.

Israel was to appoint judges and officials for every tribe in every town, based on justice alone.

Vs 21-22: Do not set up any Asherah pole (or do not plant any tree dedicated to Asherah) beside the altar you build to the LORD your God, and do not erect a sacred stone, for these the LORD your God hates.

Chapter 17

Moses reminds Israel not to sacrifice any animal with a defect to the LORD as that would be detestable to HIM.

Any person found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD, thereby violating the LORD's covenant, in particular, the worship of other gods, or the stars, or the moon, and it can be proved, that person must be stoned to death.

Remembering, two or more witnesses constitutes proof.

In cases too difficult to judge in court, these are to be taken to a place that the LORD would choose. Then the priests and the appointed judge would decide on the verdict of the case. This verdict must be honored and obeyed. Anyone who shows contempt for the priests or judge who stands ministering to the LORD must be put to death.

Moses warns that if Israel wants a king over them, they were to appoint the king that the LORD chooses.

No foreigner, no non-brother. No one who would acquire great numbers of horses, nor many wives, nor large amounts of silver and gold.

I'm reminded that Solomon did these things when he was king, and in his later years certainly seemed to have regretted it (The Book of Ecclesiastes)

This king was to keep a copy of this law to remind him on a daily basis to revere the LORD his God.

Chapter 18

Moses reminds the Israelites to take care of the Levites and the priests, whose only inheritance is the LORD.

They were to live on the offerings made to the LORD by fire.

Israel is reminded to adopt no detestable practices.

No sacrificing sons or daughters in the fire, no divination or sorcery, interpreting omens, witchcraft, casting spells, or consulting the dead.

All these things are detestable to the LORD.

Vs 13: You must be blameless before the LORD your God.

Moses foretells of a prophet, like himself, to be raised up from among their own brothers, and they must listen to him,

for this is what they asked of the LORD at Horeb.

(They did not want to hear the voice of the LORD, nor see the great fire anymore). Those were too frightening.

Moses told them that this pleased the LORD, and that the LORD said that they would be able to determine a false prophet by noticing if what they proclaimed in the Name of the LORD did not take place or did not come true.

They were told to not be afraid of him.

Chapter 19

This chapter has to do with the 'cities of refuge'.

These are cities that one can flee to if they have killed someone unintentionally, or without malice aforethought,

and be safe from the 'avenger of blood'

(More on the 'avenger of blood' in Numbers 35)

But if anyone lies in wait for someone he hates, and assaults and kills that person, and then flees to a 'city of refuge,' then the elders of his town can bring him back from that city and hand him over to the 'avenger of blood' to die.

Only if one's intention was to kill, are they themselves deserving of death.

Another reminder that it takes two or three witnesses to convict a man of a crime or offense.

One will not do.

If a malicious witness accuses a man of a crime, the two involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of

the LORD before the priests and the judges. If after a thorough investigation the witness proves to be a liar,

then it shall be done to him as he intended to do to his brother.

You must purge the evil from among you.

Vs 21: Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! Since God finds blemished sacrifices detestable to Him, we need to ensure that what we do for the Lord is done whole-heartedly, nothing held back. That is a high standard indeed.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Great observation, Kevin! Thank you!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you Butch O'Neal

November 27: Deuteronomy 20-22 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, November 27, 2017

THE LAW

Deuteronomy 20-22

*The most important thing here is to

read and ponder the Scriptures consistently*

Chapter 20

Moses reminds the Israelites that when they go to war against their enemies, the LORD will be with them. They need not fear any army with horses and chariots and who are greater than themselves because the LORD would give Israel victory.

Anyone who had built a new house and not yet dedicated it,

or had recently planted a vineyard, or was pledged to marry,

were advised to go home (exempted) lest they may die in battle. (Those who were faint-hearted were exempted also,

as it was thought that these would not be much help in battle.

Those with the new houses were exempt for at least a year,

and those with new vineyards were exempt for up to four years, as the fruit of the first three years was unfit for use,

so not till the fourth year would it produce 'first-fruits'.

And a man with a new wife was deemed to not be able to have his heart and mind concentrated on battle.

Source: Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary)

It seems that these were the only grounds for exemption.

If a city accepted an offer of peace, then they would be subjected to forced labor. If the city chose to fight, then all the men were to be put to the sword and all the women, children, livestock, and everything else could be taken as plunder.

And they could use the plunder that the LORD gave them.

This applied only to cities that were a distance away and not to any belonging to the nations nearby.

Now, in cities that the LORD was giving the Israelites as an inheritance, every living thing that breathed was to be completely destroyed.(ie. given over to the LORD.)

The LORD did not want the Israelites to be exposed to any detestable practices. (worshipping false gods, idols, etc.)

The LORD commanded the Israelites to not cut down any fruit trees to be used for siege works against a city.

That would be a waste.

However, they could cut down any other trees for the work.

Chapter 21

If a man was found slain in a field by an unknown killer, the elders and judges would determine which town the body was nearest to. Then the elders of that town would take a

heifer, that had never been worked or yoked, down to a valley that had not been plowed or planted and where there was a

flowing stream. There the heifer's neck would be broken and with the priests and Levites ministering, the elders of that town

would wash their hands over the heifer and declare:

"Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it done.

Accept this atonement for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, O LORD, and do not hold your people guilty of the blood of an innocent man."

And the bloodshed would be atoned for.

If an Israelite chose to take a captive woman for a wife, he was to take her home, have her shave her head, trim her nails, and put aside her captive clothes, and be allowed to mourn her parents for a full month. Then the man may go to her and be her husband and she, his wife.

If the man was not pleased with her, he was to let her go wherever she wishes. He could not sell her nor treat her as a slave, because he had dishonored her.

If a man had two wives, but loved only one, and they both birthed sons, the unloved one first, that son would get the firstborn rights, not the son of the wife he loved.

A rebellious son who does not obey nor accept discipline would be taken to the elders at the gate of the town.

The parents would tell the elders of this problem, and the son would be stoned to death. He would be an example to all of Israel.

If a man sentenced to death and hung on a tree, must not be left on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day,

because anyone hung on a tree is under GOD's curse.

The LORD did not want this land to be desecrated.

Chapter 22

Verses 1-12 are various commandments to the Israelites.

If a man is not pleased with his new wife after lying with her, and gives her a bad name, saying, "I did not find proof of her virginity," then the girl's parents shall bring proof to the town elders at the gate. Then the elders would punish the man by fining him a hundred shekels of silver, to be given to the girl's father, and not allowing him to divorce her as long as he lives.

But, if no proof of the girl's virginity can be found, then the girl would be brought to the door of her father's house and stoned to death. "You must purge the evil from among you."

If a man sleeps with another man's wife, he and her must be put to death.

If a man meets a virgin, pledged to be married, in a town, and sleeps with her, both shall be taken to the gate of that town and stoned to death--the girl for not screaming for help in a town, and he for violating another man's wife.

But if out in the country a man meets a girl pledged to be married and rapes her, only the man shall die. For no one could hear the girl's screams out in the country, where there was no one to rescue her.

If a man rapes a virgin who is not pledged to be married and they are discovered, he shall pay her father fifty shekels of silver. The man must marry the girl and he can never divorce her as long as he lives.

Vs 30 A man is not to marry his father's wife;
he must not dishonor his father's bed.

Wow! There are an almost unbelievable number of procedures (commands) to be adhered to and followed that I am sure that many mistakes were made. What do you think?

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

So true, Butch. The Law of Moses regulated almost every aspect of life. There are so many Old Testament rules about crimes and punishments, sacrifices, etc. I'm so thankful to live in a new covenant of faith and love. Yet both teachings call for self-discipline. Wide is the gate but narrow is the way. We must obey rather than sacrifice. Thanks for covering these tough chapters.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you so much Butch!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

You're very welcome, Ryan!

December 4: Deuteronomy 23-25 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, December 4, 2017

THE LAW

Deuteronomy 23-25

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 23

Exclusion From the Assembly

No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the LORD. Nor any born of a forbidden marriage or illegitimate birth, down to the tenth generation. Nor any Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants, even down to the tenth generation. Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not abhor an Egyptian, because you lived as an alien in his country. The third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

Uncleanness in the Camp

When encamped against your enemies keep the camp clean. Use a hole dug outside of the camp to relieve yourselves, and cover it up. Keep your camp holy in the eyes of the LORD. Do not do anything indecent, that the LORD may turn away from you.

Miscellaneous Laws

Do not turn a slave, who has taken refuge with you, over to his master. Let him live wherever he likes, among you. Do not oppress him. No shrine prostitutes, nor any of their earnings allowed in the house of the LORD. Do not charge a brother Israelite interest. You may charge a foreigner interest, but not a brother. If you make a vow to the LORD, be quick to pay it or you will be guilty of sin when the LORD demands it. If you have not made a vow, you will not be guilty. Whatever your lips utter, be sure to do. If you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you like, but do not put any in your basket. In your neighbor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with your hands, but do not take a sickle to his standing grain.

These things to be honored so as not to desecrate or bring sin to the land that the LORD God has given the Israelites.

Chapter 24

More, on marriage and divorce, having to do with a man putting away a wife because he finds her 'displeasing'.

She remarries and the second husband puts her away for the same reason. Now she has two certificates of 'divorce'.

The first husband may not marry her again.

(The LORD God of Israel says, "I hate divorce." @ Mal. 2:16)

A man recently married must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be allowed to stay home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.

Do not take a pair of millstones as security for a debt, as that would be taking a man's livelihood as security.

If you kidnap a brother and treat him as a slave or sell him.
you must be put to death. Purge the evil from among you.
Warnings to do exactly as the priests say, in cases of leprosy.
Vs 10-14: More on the proper way to treat one who owes you.
And a poor man who works for you. (GOD's love is evident!)
Fathers and their children not to be put to death for each other's sins. Each to be put to death
for his own sin.
Vs 17-21: More on justice for the alien and the poor.
Leaving some sheaves in the fields during harvesting for the
alien, fatherless, and the widows, and leave some olives in your trees for these also. And
grapes in the vineyard.
Remember that you were slaves in Egypt.
That is why I command you to do this.

Chapter 25

When men have a dispute, the judges will try the case.
If a man deserves to be beaten, he must not receive more than forty lashes, or he will be
degraded.
(GOD is not in the business of degrading people!)

Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.

If brothers are living together and one dies without a son,
his widow must not marry outside the family.
The brother must marry the widow, and their first son shall carry on the name of the dead
brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.
Vs 7-10: describes the consequences of a brother refusing to marry his dead brother's widow.

If two men are fighting, and the wife of one comes to rescue her husband and seizes his
assailant by his private parts,
she is to have her hand cut off. Show her no pity.
(This seems pretty severe.)

Vs 13-16: deals with differing weights in one's bag. (dishonesty) One must have accurate and
honest weights and measures, "so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is
giving you."

Vs 17-19: "Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of
Egypt. When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and cut off all who
were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. When the LORD your God gives you rest from all
the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance,
you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.
Do not forget!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:
"The Family of the Unsandaled" - ancient trash talking.

Comment:

Charles Fry:
Jesus is his own kinsman redeemer.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch! You've had a few weeks of difficult chapters. 🙄

I believe Ruth is an exception of Moabite exclusion (Deut. 23:3).

I'm grateful for Christ's sermon on the mount that clarifies divorce in the new law.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:
Thank you Butch!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
You're very welcome, Ryan!

December 11: Deuteronomy 26-28 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, December 11, 2017

THE LAW

Deuteronomy 26-28

*The most important thing here is to
read and ponder the Scriptures consistently*

Chapter 26

Moses tells the Israelites, after they have entered into, and settled in the land that the LORD has given them as an inheritance, to take some of the firstfruits of all that they produce from the land and put them in a basket. Then take the basket to the place that the LORD would choose as a dwelling for His Name. There, they would declare that they had come to the land that the LORD had promised to their forefathers. The priest would take the basket and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD. The man would then declare a brief history before the LORD, as to how he came to be now, standing before the LORD, bringing now, the firstfruits of the soil in the land that the LORD had given him.

After setting aside a tenth of all their produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, they would give it to the Levites, aliens, and the fatherless and the widows. That they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. Then they could declare to the LORD that they had done all that the LORD commanded them, in that regard.

Moses reminds the Israelites of the LORD's commands to follow all of the decrees and laws with all their heart and soul.

If they do, then the LORD would set them in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations He has made, and they would be a people holy to the LORD.

Chapter 27

Moses and the elders remind the people to keep all these commands. Further, when they crossed the Jordan, they were to set up some large stones and coat them with plaster.

They were to set up these stones on Mount Ebal.

There, they were to build an altar to the LORD, an altar of stones, using no iron tools. They were to build the altar with fieldstones and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD.

They were to sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the LORD their GOD.

Vs 8: "And you shall write very clearly all the words of this law on these stones you have set up."

Ebal @ stony

A mountain 3,076 feet above the level of the sea, and 1,200 feet above the level of the valley, on the north side of which stood the city of Shechem (q.v.). On this mountain six of the tribes (Deut. 27:12, 13) were appointed to take their stand and respond according to a prescribed form to the imprecations uttered in the valley, where the law was read by the Levites (Deut. 11:29; Deut. 29:4, 13). This mountain was also the site of the first great altar erected to Jehovah

(Deut. 27:5-8; Jos. 8:30-35). After this the name of Ebal does not again occur in Jewish history.

Source: Easton's Illustrated Dictionary

Curses From Mount Ebal

Moses and the priests declared to the Israelites that they had now become the people of the LORD their GOD.

And again, be sure to follow HIS commands and decrees.

Vs 11, On the same day Moses commanded the people:

Vs 12, When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people:

Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin.

Vs 13 And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses:

Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

Note: There was a distance of about two miles between the summits of Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim.

Source: Easton's Illustrated Dictionary

Vss 14-26 has the Levites reciting the curses for the various offences to the LORD and to fellow Israelites.

Chapter 28

Vss 1-14 has to do with the blessings for obedience that the Israelites would enjoy. These blessings would be in abundance and seems to include everything they could need, and much more.

Vss 15-68 has to do with the various curses the Israelites would suffer for disobedience. This list goes from bad to absolutely horrifying.

As I sit here typing, I can't imagine knowingly putting myself in a position to be so cursed. But how might I think if I lived at that time, and was a part of one of the tribes? Would I be one of those who might think: "Oh, that'll never happen to me."?

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Some may be interested in the modern story of Joshua's altar on Mt Ebal.

<http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-altar-of-joshua.htm>

“Joshua’s Altar On Mt. Ebal Discovered”

Replies:

Butch O’Neal:

Thank you, Charles!

Comment:

Joanne Caffie:

Is 27:8 speaking literally or figuratively?

Replies:

Steven Wright:

Literally.

Charles Fry:

After they entered Canaan, Joshua led Israel in doing what God had said through Moses.

Joshua 8:32 32 There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses.

Joanne Caffie:

WOW!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch O’Neal, Charles , Steven and Joanne. It's been such a blessing to study with you all. I've especially appreciated Butch's efforts!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you Butch

Replies:

Butch O’Neal:

Your very welcome, Ryan!

December 18: Deuteronomy 29-31 (Butch O’Neal)

Reading for Monday, December 18, 2017

THE LAW

Deuteronomy 29-31

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 29 Renewal of the Covenant

Moses reminds the Israelites of the terms of the LORD's covenant with them, both at Horeb and in Moab.

Moses first reminded them of all that they witnessed while leaving Egypt, all that their eyes seen both then, and during the forty years in the desert, reminding them that their clothes and sandals did not wear out in that time.

These things were to show that I AM is the LORD their God.

But even as Moses was speaking, the LORD had not yet given the Israelites a mind that understands, nor eyes or ears that see or hear.

Moses reminds them of the wars fought and won, with the help of the LORD, to bring them here at this point.

Moses tells them to carefully follow the rules of this covenant that the LORD is renewing with them, and sealing with an oath on this day.

Moses reminds them of how they lived in Egypt, and he warns them not to turn away from the LORD to worship gods of the nations that they are entering.

Those that do will suffer ALL the curses that are written in The Book of The Law.

The future generations will see the devastation, calamities and diseases afflicted on the land by the LORD, and they will ask:

"Why has the LORD done this to this land?

Why this fierce, burning anger?"

And the answer will be:

"It is because this people abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, the covenant HE made with them when HE brought them out of Egypt."

Vs 28, "In furious anger and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now."

Vs 29, The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Chapter 30 Prosperity After Turning to the LORD

Now the Israelites are told that, if after they turn away from the LORD, they then return to the LORD with ALL their heart, then the LORD would return them back to the land that HE gave their fathers, and make them most prosperous again.

The LORD would even circumcise their hearts and the hearts of their descendants, so that they would love HIM and live.

Vs 9-10, Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers, if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

The Offer of Life or Death

Vs 11-20 Further reminding to obey and live!
Don't be disobedient and die!

Chapter 31 Joshua to Succeed Moses

Moses reminds the Israelites that he will not cross the Jordan. The LORD and Joshua will cross over before them, the LORD first, to destroy the nations before them, then Joshua for the Israelites to follow now, as the LORD would not allow Moses to cross. Moses encourages them to be strong and courageous. Moses tells them that the LORD their God goes before them and that HE will never leave them nor forsake them. Then Moses tells Joshua the same words in the presence of all Israel.

The Reading of the Law

So Moses wrote down the law, gave it to the priests, and commanded that it be read to all Israel at the end of every seven years, the year for canceling debts, during the Feast of Tabernacles, at the place that the LORD chose. Everyone must hear it, even children, so they could learn.

Israel's Rebellion Predicted

The LORD had Moses and Joshua to come to the Tent of Meeting where HE commissioned Joshua. After telling Moses that the day of his death was near, the LORD told him that these people would forsake HIM for other gods and they would be destroyed.

Now the LORD had Moses to write down a song for all Israel to sing and learn. This song would be a witness for the LORD against the Israelites.

So Moses wrote down a song and taught it to the Israelites.

Vs 23, The LORD gave this command to Joshua son of Nun:

"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."

When Moses finished the Book of the Law, he commanded the Levites to place it beside the ark of the covenant, as a witness against the Israelites.

Moses was very concerned that the Israelites would become even more rebellious and stiff-necked toward the LORD after he died, than they had been while he was with them.

There is one more verse in this chapter, but I am going to count it as the first verse in next week's reading.

I pray that this won't be an inconvenience for anyone.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! Hope you are feeling better today.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Kevin. I do feel better each day, it seems.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you Butch. One more week left ~ can you believe it?

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Wow! I have been thinking about just that, Ryan. I was feeling daunted at the start of this study, and here we are with one week left. Now, I find myself wishing that we all had one more book to go! :D

Comment:

Charles Fry:

A generation has passed since Horeb, the covenant is renewed, God continues constant.

Deuteronomy 29:20-21

20 The Lord will never be willing to forgive them; his wrath and zeal will burn against them. All the curses written in this book will fall on them, and the Lord will blot out their names from under heaven. 21 The Lord will single them out from all the tribes of Israel for disaster, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law.

This summary of the consequences for violating the covenant commandments is what Paul refers to as "the curse of the Law".

Galatians 3:12-13

12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The person who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Thank You, THANK YOU, Butch, for today and each week. I think I will forever think of you on Mondays! 😊 The reading today had many great verses. I absolutely love, "Be strong and courageous." By trusting in God and obeying Him, His followers (including us) can be victorious in spite of great obstacles!

Comment:

Denise Waits:

🎵 Be strong and courageous! 🎵

December 25: Deuteronomy 32-34 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, December 25, 2017

THE LAW

Deuteronomy 32-34

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 32

Last week we left off at vs 30 of the 31st chapter of this book, and now we will start from right there.

The Song of Moses

Vs 30:

"And Moses recited the words of this song from the beginning to end in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel."

Now, remember that this song was to be taught to the Israel, so they could sing it and it would be a witness for the LORD against the Israelites. (31:19)

This song is 43 verses long, contains 144 lines, and is composed with more than 900 words. (reminding the Israelites of much)

This song references the LORD as Israel's 'Rock' 5 times.

In vs 15, Jeshurun means 'the upright one', that is, Israel.

In vs 18 the LORD charges the Israelites with:

"You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth."

Pondering the Scriptures comes to mind when reading this!

After Moses, with Joshua, spoke all the words of the song to all of the Israelites, he told them to take to heart all of the words, command their children to obey all the words of this law, and, "They are not just idle words for you-- they are your life." (vs 47)

Moses to Die on Mount Nebo

The LORD told Moses that here he would die, and not enter the promised land, because he had broken faith with the LORD in the presence of the Israelites.

As I type this I am reflecting on all that Moses was charged to do during this journey of many years while leading hundreds of thousands, who gave him constant trouble for the whole time. And even though Moses knew he could talk with the LORD for more support at any time, he failed this once.

A harsh punishment for this failure, but certainly a sobering example to the Israelites!

GOD is just! And this is shown to us clearly regarding Moses in Matthew 17:1-3, Mark 9:1-4, and Luke 9:28-31.

Chapter 33

Before he went the way of his fathers,

Moses blessed the tribes.

Vs 5, remember Jeshurun means 'the upright one', Israel.

Moses spoke about Reuben, Judah, Levi, Benjamin, Joseph, Zebulun, Gad, Dan, Naphtali, and Asher.

These blessings are 29 verses long, contain 100 lines, and are composed with about 660 words.

Chapter 34

From the top of Mount Nebo, the LORD showed Moses all of the promised land, the whole land, and then Moses, servant of the LORD, died there in Moab.

Now vs 6 indicates to me, that the LORD, or an angel of the LORD, buried Moses because this verse tells us that to this day, NO ONE knows where his grave is.

There is also Jude 1:9 to consider. It says:

But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

By the way, this verse serves as a good lesson for us.

If GOD's angels don't dare to bring a slanderous accusation

against the devil, who is man to even think that he might have the authority to do so?

The Israelites mourned for thirty days, and then listened to Joshua, who was full of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him.

Vs 10-12,

Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, who did all those miraculous signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt-- to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land.

For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

I have learned much from this study, some on my own, but much more from the posts and comments of my fellow contributors, and I am very thankful for all of you for this.

Most weeks, for me, took an effort, and at times a chore,

but on this, my last night, I seem to not want it to end. :)

I'm looking forward to this coming year of more study!

The following is some additional notes from New Unger's Bible Dictionary:

GEN'ESIS

(jen'e-sis, the book of origins; Gk. genesis, "origin")

Traditionally the introductory book of the entire body of Hebrew sacred literature and of revealed truth in general.

Design. As the book of beginnings Genesis recounts the beginning of the physical creation of all plant, animal, and human life, as well as human institutions and social relationships. The book illustrates (as does the entire Bible)

the principle of selection. Those events necessary to introduce the drama of human redemption are narrated: the Creation,

the Fall, the Flood, the call of Abraham, and mention of the promised Redeemer (Genesis 3:15-16, 12:1-3, 49:10)

EX'ODUS, BOOK OF.

(ek'so-dus; from the Gk. ex, "out," and hodos, "way,"

"a going out") Whereas Genesis is the book of origins,

Exodus is the book of redemption. Delivered out of Egyptian bondage, the newly constituted nation is endowed with the law, priesthood, and sacrificial system, providing for the worship and regulation of a redeemed people.

Aim. The book of Exodus deals with the great event of the redemption from Egypt. It typifies our redemption and traces the constitution of Jacob's descendants as a theocratic nation at Mt. Sinai. God, who until this time had been related to the Israelites only through the Abrahamic covenant, now brings Himself in relationship to them nationally through redemption. As a people selected to bring forth the promised Redeemer, they are put under the Mosaic covenant. The divine Presence resides among them under a cloud of glory. The constitution, Tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrificial system are minutely typical of the Person and work of Christ.

(note the message of the book of Hebrews)

Exodus is preeminently the book of redemption.

LEVITICUS. As Exodus is the book of redemption,

Leviticus is the book of the cleansing, worship, and service of the redeemed people.

Name. The name describes its contents, for it deals with the law of the priests, the sons of Levi, Leviticus being taken from the Vulgate Leviticus (through the LXX Leueitikon).

The designation sets forth the book as a manual of the OT priesthood (Hebrews 7:11). The Jews, however, commonly designate the book from its opening phrase wayiqra, "and He called." Leviticus sets forth the way of the priestly approach to God. Its inspired NT commentary, the epistle to the Hebrews, describes the same approach in the dispensation of grace. Being a handbook of Levitical directions, it has little narrative, and such brief passages as the episode of the strange fire offered by Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2) are most intimately connected with the illustrations of the law given.

(Leviticus 10:1-2) are most intimately connected with the illustrations of the law given.

NUMBERS, BOOK OF.

The fourth book of the Pentateuch, continuing the redemptive history of Israel where Exodus leaves off. As Genesis is the book of origins, Exodus the book of redemption, and Leviticus the book of worship and fellowship, Numbers is the book of the service and walk of God's redeemed people.

Aim. Numbers continues the journey commenced in the book of Exodus, beginning with the events of the second month of the second year (Numbers 10:11) and ending with the eleventh month of the fortieth year (Deut. 1:3).

The thirty-eight years of wandering deal with the failure of the redeemed people in the face of every divine provision for their

welfare and success. The book is typically significant in warning against the dangers of unbelief. The people disobeyed at Kadesh-barnea (Numbers 14) and suffered repeated defeat and eventual death in the desert.

(Numbers 20:1--33:49)

DEUTERONOMY, BOOK OF.

The last book of the Pentateuch, completing the five books of Moses. The Jews called it "five fifths of the law." It follows logically after Numbers; Numbers carries the history of the nation Israel to the events in the plains of Moab to the E of Jericho, and Deuteronomy winds up the Mosaic age with three discourses from Moses just before his death and the entrance of the people into the land of Canaan.

Name. The name comes from the LXX through an inaccurate translation of Deut. 17:18 which is correctly rendered,

"This is the copy (or repetition) of the law"

(cf. NASB, KJV, NIV). It is apparent that the book is not a

"second law" distinct from the law given at Sinai, as the name of the work might suggest. It is simply a partial restatement and exposition of former laws to the new generation that had been reared in the wilderness. The Jewish of the book is

'Elleh haddevarim, "These are the words" or simply

Devarim, "words." In Jewish tradition it is called Mishneh Torah, meaning "repetition" or "copy of the law" (Deut. 17:18)

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Beverly Schoonover Wattenbarger:

Thank you, Butch, for all your efforts and time put into this study. You posted once that you have to type with one finger so that makes it all the more impressive and must have been quite a chore. It has been an interesting year and I'm looking forward to 2018. God's blessings.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Beverly, for your encouragement! Yes, I do type with one finger, but I now know where all the keys are and that helps me to be a little quicker. Still, I like to allow about four hours to post. If I start at about 8 or 9 Sunday night, that works out well for me. GOD's blessings to you also!

Comment:

Steven Wright:

A labor we loved brother! Thank you so very, very, much! You are a rich a wonderful treasure my brother! God's abundant peace be with you Butch O'Neal!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

I need to be thanking you, brother Steve, for a great study in the Book of Psalms! Your tireless notes has helped me to understand Psalms a great deal more than I had understood. Truly, this study was a labor of love! And I so appreciate your encouragement. May GOD's abundant peace be with us all!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Excellent Butch! Thank you for all you efforts in this study! God has richly blessed all of us!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, too, Ryan! We HAVE been richly blessed! Looking forward to the 2018 study!

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

I'm so encouraged by you Butch O'Neal! You have proven to be a good and faithful servant and have brought much edification to Christ's church in 2017. I know how difficult this has been for you at times but I also know that you (probably more than others) have had more experience with perseverance. Below is what I call Butch's verse!

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him." James 1:12

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Marc, I am thankful for you, and to you for encouraging me to participate in this study. I have been exceedingly enriched in GOD's Word! Also, Marc, thank you again for that wonderful week long lesson in technology at the last two-week meeting at Nixa. That lesson is why I got on Face Book. James 1:12 will now always be special to me. :)

Comment:

Charles Fry:

👍👍 "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." (2 Tim 2:15)
Good job, brother Butch! Thank you for for your handling of the word this year.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles, for recommending and encouraging me!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

You are very welcome, Kevin!

Comment:

Yvonna Hartman:

Thank you Butch. I have been blessed by your efforts in this study.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Yvonna! I, too, have been blessed.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

What a wonderful journey it has been, Butch! I'm so grateful to have studied with you each week. The law, the Lord and life are bound together. These words are our life! Thank you for encouraging me and so many others to read & ponder scriptures consistently! May we continue to hold fast to the Lord all the days of our life. Thanks again for your tireless efforts. Your labor prompted by love produced faith and endurance. I thank God for you! ❤️

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

It has been a wonderful journey, Ginger, and I have learned much! I have grown! And I thank GOD for you! You are a wonderful encourager! Yes....these words Are Our Life! <3