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Teacher's Guide

Offerings and Their Meanings and Purpose



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Leviticus 2:1 through 7:38

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found." (Leviticus 6:4)

BACKGROUND

The Children of Israel were situated at the base of Mount Sinai and the Tabernacle had just been built. It was time for the people to learn how to worship, and this portion of Leviticus deals with Israel's approach to God.

A major part of their worship was to be through sacrificial offerings or sacrifices, and the established requirements in many ways pictured aspects of the believer's salvation today. The burnt offering illustrates that the only way for the Children of Israel to approach God and find forgiveness was through the shedding of blood. Only blood could atone for sin. In this passage, we see not only what God commanded the Israelites to observe, but also how their sacrifices and other practices look ahead to the sacrifice made on Calvary by our Savior, Jesus Christ.

One of the sacrifices God made provision for was the sacrifice of thanksgiving. It was called a *meat offering* which, at the time of the translation of our Bible, meant any kind of food. In this case it referred to grain. Like the burnt offering, it was brought voluntarily. There was to be no leaven, which was symbolic of sin, in the grain offering. The meat offerings included oil, which typifies the Spirit of God. These offerings also included salt, which preserves against corruption and denotes purification and healing.

Another sacrifice of thanksgiving, the *peace of-fering*, was taken from the herd—a male or female without blemish, typifying purity. The purpose of the peace offering was not to make atonement for sin, but to express gratitude for God's matchless and gracious care. It was also a voluntary offering and was both an act of worship and of communion.

The people were commanded to offer a *sin offering*; this was a sacrifice for unintentional acts that displeased God. God called these acts sins of ignorance. There were different animals to be sacrificed for each sin. These sacrifices made people cognizant of what God considered sin and were used to teach and guide the Israelites in God's way. This offering

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was not voluntary, but was required of all: the priests, the congregation, the rulers, and common individuals.

God commanded the people to make a *trespass* offering to atone for specific acts of sin, of which the individual was fully aware. Also, they were commanded to make restitution if they obtained anything that belonged to another through deceit or negligence.

There was a holy fire on the altar that was to burn continuously. Every morning the priest would put on different clothes and remove the ashes into a clean place outside of the camp. He was to lay fresh wood upon the fire to keep it burning continuously. This represented God's eternal presence among them.

SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1. The people were to make an offering of their firstfruits unto the Lord (chapter 2). How can we offer our first fruits to the Lord?

Usually the very best of the crop is what is harvested first. God expects our best. He wants us to put Him first in our thoughts, time, activities, and tithes. You may ask the class to discuss ways we can do this, making the point that we never want to offer God just what is "left over" of our time, energy, or resources.

2. God gave directions for the peace offering, which was an expression of thanksgiving and appreciation to Him (Leviticus 3:1-17). Have you ever considered thankfulness to be a sacrifice? What are some times when this may be the case?

It may seem difficult to be thankful during a trial, but we are to be thankful in the good times and the bad. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In every thing give thanks." Note that the words are "In every thing" not "for everything." It is possible to offer praise to God in the midst of a great trial, even though we may not be able to be thankful for the trial itself. Ask your class what the results will be when we offer this type of sacrifice, making the point that we will find a deeper connection to Him and greater blessings will follow. God responds to the sacrifice of praise!

3. The sacrifice of animals was required because blood was the only atonement for sin; even a sin done through ignorance needed a blood sacrifice (Leviticus 4:1-2). Yet in the New Testament, God said "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Why do we no longer need to make sacrifice for "sins of ignorance"?

The blood of animals foreshadowed the Blood of Christ, which would be shed later. While obedience to the law of sacrifice provided atonement, the blood of animals was not sufficient for the continuing perfection of the saints. (See Hebrews 10:1.) They needed to make the sacrifices over and over. Christ's Blood is powerful and covers Christians today unless they willfully sin and thus break the covenant between Christ and themselves.

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4. Leviticus 5:5 shows that a person not only needed to bring a sacrifice for sin but he needed to confess his sin. Why do you think confession is an important part of repentance?

Confession shows understanding of one's guilt before God, realization of the incomparable holiness of God, and provides proper humility before Him. Confession will often lead to repentance.

5. The focus verse clearly outlines the need to restore what has been stolen, embezzled, or destroyed of another's property. We know that God forgives us for all our sins at salvation. Why do we need to make restitution?

Discussion should bring out that when we restore the loss we have caused our fellowman (see Acts 24: 16). we are proving the sincerity of our repentance. The action of restoration is also a witness to unbelievers of the change of heart that has taken place. You may ask the class to tell about the times they made restitutions and of the blessings they received.

6. The holy fire on the altar represented God's abiding presence among the people. What did the priest need to do every day to keep the flame alive (Leviticus 6:8-13)? How can we liken this to our spiritual walk?

The priest needed to put on his linen garment and linen breeches and move the ashes from the altar to the side. Then he was to change clothes again and take the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. The priest was to put wood on it every morning and put the sacrifice on the altar, then burn the fat of the peace offerings. He was never to let the fire go out.

The fire is like God's presence in our lives when we are saved. Ask your class to develop how we can keep the flame burning. Discussion could bring out that we may need to clean out accumulated clutter from time to time. We need to keep our personal lives clean and to add "fuel" often by reading God's Word, communing in prayer, and gathering together with God's people.

7. What was the purpose of the wave offering? (Leviticus 7:30-36)

The purpose of the wave offering was to provide food for Aaron and the priests. In the New Testament, God also provided for the ministers of the Gospel to be sustained by the tithes and offerings of the people (1 Corinthians 9:4-14). Ask your group to develop an application to our day.

8. The sacrifices and offerings were part of the schoolmaster to teach us God's ways. They could have become rituals to those who undertook to follow them. It was important for the children of Israel to keep in mind the meaning of these rituals. How might our service to God become perfunctory and ritualistic? How can we avoid this? If we lose sight of the "vision" of the Gospel we can become indifferent in our service to God. We need to keep alive the goals, purposes, and love that ignited our hearts in the beginning. Discuss ways we can become indifferent and ways we can keep our first love burning.

CONCLUSION

God is holy, and He expects obedience and commitment from us. Even though it may take sacrifice on our part, we will receive abundant blessing as we honor Him with a complete "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1).

Teacher's Guide

Lessons from the Levitical Priesthood



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Leviticus 8:1 through 10:20

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people" (Leviticus 9:23).

BACKGROUND

Aaron had been chosen by God to be the high priest for Israel, to make offerings unto the Lord for the people, and his sons were to succeed him. Prior to the time of Moses, the heads of families offered sacrifices. Now the nation had been organized, the Tabernacle had been set up specifically as a place for sacrifices and worship, a ritual had been prescribed, and a ceremonial rank of officers were appointed to particular roles.

In these three chapters, we find that the consecration of Aaron and his sons was accomplished by a sin offering followed by a burnt offering. This was a ritual prescribed by God to prepare them for the office they were about to fill. The consecration service lasted seven days, the sacrifices being repeated each day. During this time, those being consecrated were not allowed to leave the sanctuary.

Nadab and Abihu, the two oldest sons of Aaron, were men with a great heritage. Not only were they the sons of Israel's high priest, but they were also the nephews of Israel's leader, and the heads of Israel's princely elders. They had been with Moses and Aaron on the mount of God, they had seen the glorious visions at Mount Sinai, and now they had been consecrated to the Levitical priesthood. All of this made their trespass, documented in chapter 10, all the more inexcusable and worthy of judgment.

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. What critical phrase is repeated in chapter 8, verses 4, 9, and 13? What do you suppose would have been the outcome if Moses had not operated in such a matter?

These verses tell us that Moses did, "as the LORD commanded him." The answer to the second part of this question can only be speculative. However, it is sure, that Moses would have drawn the displeasure of God if he had not obeyed. The sacredness of this ritual would have been destroyed. This was an extraordinary and significant time, because the high priest,

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once anointed and sanctified to this task, would stand between God and the sins of the people until the time of Christ. It was critical that every detail was followed through exactly as God had commanded in order for the nation to obtain God's blessing, forgiveness, and favor.

2. Why was it important for the people to observe the consecration of the priests? (Leviticus 8:2-3)

Since this was a new ritual for the Children of Israel, God commanded Moses to gather all the people together to observe this most-sacred event. What they witnessed in the sacrifices performed by Moses and Aaron, were significant because soon they, too, would be bringing their own sacrifices to the high priest to be offered for their own sins just as they had observed being done here. Thus, it was important that they knew that this entire ritual, from start to finish, was not only commanded by God but honored by God. In the offering of sacrifices, they were witnessing the door through which they must pass to find God's blessing.

3. In Leviticus 8:2, God commanded Moses to bring three animals to this ceremony. What were they? What was the specific use for each?

A bullock (young bull) and two rams. The bullock was for the sin offering, one ram was for the burnt offering, and the other ram was for the consecration (ordination) of Aaron and his sons.

4. What was the significance of each sacrifice?

The sin offering typified the sanctifying or cleansing of Aaron and his sons for the priesthood; they were unclean in God's eyes, and not worthy of the office, but God had deemed that by the shedding of innocent blood, their cleansing would be complete, their guilt slain as was the animal. They were then worthy to fill the office.

The burnt offering typified a complete offering of a person to the Lord, for the entire animal was consumed by fire. (In other sacrifices, the animals were only partially consumed.) There are many aspects of this ceremony that could be discussed with your class. The oil of anointing signified the anointing and power of God resting upon Aaron to fill the office of high priest, which God himself had selected Aaron to fill. God wants us to have this anointing upon our lives, not to be a high priest, but to have His power to fulfill the calling He has placed upon us individually. The high priest was to stand in the presence of God, holy, set apart, consecrated to the Lord's work, to make atonement for the sins of the people.

The ram of consecration was presented as a wave offering (Leviticus 8:29). This was a free-will offering, one of thanksgiving to God for His blessing of calling them into His service. Note that this offering was a sweet savor (scent) to the Lord, as there was obedience, willingness, and thanksgiving behind it.

5. Why do you suppose God wanted animals without blemish for the sacrifices? (Leviticus 9:2)

If there was a blemish in the sacrifices, it would not be accepted of the Lord, and therefore the offering would do no good for the bearer. The bringing of blemished animals indicated an indifferent attitude to what God required. An offering that was innocent and perfect (no blemishes) was necessary to make atonement. This blood would then be a substitute for the transgressions of the people. If there were blemishes on the animal, it was not a perfect sacrifice, and its blood was not sufficient in God's sight to atone for man's sin. All of this pointed forward to our Perfect Sacrifice, the Lamb of God, who had no sin, yet became sin for us that we might be made righteous (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

6. What promise is found in Leviticus 9:4-6? What application might we make regarding our approach to God today?

God promised Moses that His presence and glory would visit His people if they would follow through with the rites of the ceremony exactly as God prescribed. In answering the second question, your class should recognize that God will visit us with His presence, too, when we come in obedience to His requirements.

7. In Leviticus 9:22-24, something special took place, just as God had said. As God does not change, what can we learn from this, if we need something from God in our own lives?

The glory of the Lord appeared before all the people, and fire came out from before the Lord (commentators indicate flame came from the sky or from the Holy Place, where the Presence of God dwelt) and consumed the sacrifice. This show of God's power caused all the people to shout and fall on their faces. Note that it was exactly as God promised, if all was performed as He commanded. Discuss with your class the importance of doing whatever God asks in order that we might receive the blessings and answers to prayer He has for us. God will honor His promises to us if we follow through on every detail. This fire was a sign that God had indeed ordained the ceremonies that had taken place, and His approval was upon all who would be obedient to them. When our lives please the Lord, we can expect His glory to fill our lives.

8. Why were two sons of Aaron (Nadab and Abihu) slain by the Lord? (Leviticus 10:1-2)

Nadab and Abihu were presumptuous, not taking the commandments of the Lord seriously, as though they were exempt from what God had commanded. The text says that they offered "strange fire" unto the Lord; instead of taking the fire that was put into their censers from the brazen altar, they offered a common fire, and were content to do so without a scruple. God had miraculously ignited the fire upon the brazen altar, and it was to be kept continuously burning by the officiating priest, as the Lord commanded (Leviticus 6:12-13). The incense that was offered up with that fire was acceptable only if it was consumed, and the scent arose from the coals of the fire God himself had kindled. The sons of Aaron knew this, yet they disregarded things holy and sacred.

9. The offense and death of Nadab and Abihu was a tragic event in the midst of a special and celebratory time for Israel. What can we learn from it?

The point should be brought out that there are consequences for disregarding and disobeying God's commandments. We may not suffer instant physical death, as Nadab and Abihu did, but we will suffer eternal death unless we repent of our disobedience.

What God deems sacred is, indeed, sacred. The incense Nadab and Abihu offered was not acceptable because it was offered with a strange fire. God's work will go forward by His inspiration—by the fire of Heaven. There is no other fire we can obtain that will produce the results God requires in a life. When God's fire consumes a life, the "sweet savor" arises before Him; no coals other than the coals of God's fire will accomplish it. Discuss with your students the importance of keeping holy the things God has deemed holy, and off limits the things God has deemed off limits. Further, discuss what can be lost by taking the Gospel too casually, and what can be gained if we are careful to obey.

CONCLUSION

There are many lessons to learn about the importance of complete obedience to God. What He has said, He means. What He has promised, He will do. God's Word is sure, and the best way for us to inherit all of His blessings is to pay attention to the details of our own lives. If we live with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, we will be right in line for the Lord to reveal His glory to us too.

Teacher's Guide

Five Feasts that Celebrate Victory



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Leviticus 23:1-44

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons." (Leviticus 23:4)

BACKGROUND

Prior to this time, the Lord had given the Children of Israel guidelines and laws regarding different aspects of life—some as guidelines for daily living, and some as means of approaching His holiness and majesty. In this chapter, God established the religious calendar for the people by indicating that certain days were to be special national holidays and should be set apart.

Like the Sabbath Day, which the Lord had instituted previously as a day of rest in which people were to celebrate God's omnipotence as sole creator of Heaven and earth, these special days were also days of rest. They were to be observed as holy assemblies in which the people collectively and individually celebrated specific acts of God's goodness.

Israel's feasts contrasted greatly with the festivities (religious and secular) of the pagan nations surrounding them. Instead of being times of moral depravity, these celebrations were times when the people came together for fellowship and worship. These celebrations or feasts were meant to remind the Children of Israel that God was the Creator of their lives, that it was He who gave them their abundance and granted them freedom, and that it was He who was their spiritual Benefactor.

The feasts established in this chapter were:

- The Feast of the Passover This feast marked God's deliverance of the people from Egyptian bondage.
- The Feast of Harvest (also known as Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks) – A harvest festival, observed after the people had offered (the firstfruits) of their crops.
- The Feast of Trumpets This feast was a nineday-long preparation for the Day of Atonement.
- The Feast of the Day of Atonement The day in which sacrifices were made for the atonement of the people and priest.
- The Feast of Tabernacles This feast required the people to re-enact their wilderness experience by dwelling in tents (booths).

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SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. Why were the people required to celebrate the Day of Atonement? (Leviticus 23:26-32)

Sin is an abomination to the Lord, whether it is found in an individual or a nation. For the Children of Israel to find God's favor, a price had to be paid in anticipation of Christ's final sacrifice for sin. The Day of Atonement foreshadowed Christ's atoning sacrifice.

2. Each feast included rest. Why do you think God required rest as a part of the feasts?

God wanted the Children of Israel to understand that these feast days were holy and set apart from other days in their usual schedule. Stopping their normal labor enabled the Israelites to focus on God and on what each feast represented and how good He had been to them. Ask your class: What lesson does this teach us? The thought should be brought out that it is to our benefit to set aside special times when we cease our normal routines for the purpose of focusing on God. Camp meeting would be a good example of this concept.

3. Why do you think sacrifice was featured in each feast? Why is personal sacrifice important today?

Sacrificing to God involved worship, dedication, and adoration. It was a way the Children of Israel could honor God who had done so much for them.

Personal sacrifice is important today for many of the same reasons and it helps us see our smallness next to God's greatness. As we submit to God, our communion with Him and our appreciation of Him will grow. Ask your class: What might be some wrong reasons for sacrifice?

4. These feasts were times set aside for the Lord. What are ways we can set aside time for him in these busy days?

We can set aside time for God by having a place in our schedule for Bible reading, prayer and meditation. We can take time to frequent His House for worship and fellowship. We can be willing to take a few moments to be of service to others in His name, whenever we see a need.

5. God wanted the Children of Israel to keep the Passover celebration as a remembrance. Why is it good for us to recall present and past blessings from the Lord? Name some ways we can do this.

God loves to hear the thanksgiving of His people. Not only does thanksgiving please God, but it does us good as well. As we go through difficult times in our lives, the memories of past blessings and answers to prayer help our faith to remain strong. Remembering also helps us to appreciate God more and to know how much He loves us. Lead your class in compiling a list of practical ways we can remember our blessings.

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6. Looking at verse 22, how does God regard the poor?

God has compassion on the poor and needy. He desires that His people look out for those who are less fortunate. It is interesting that, rather than commanding the Children of Israel to reap and divide among the poor, He told them to leave a portion in the field to be gleaned by the poor, showing His desire for all who are able to work for what they consume.

7. God asked the Children of Israel to bring an offering of the firstfruits of the crop. How can we do this today?

God always desires our best. The firstfruits were the very finest of the crops. God expects us to honor Him by putting Him first in our love, devotion, time, and tithe.

8. Why do you think God commanded the Children of Israel to dwell in booths to remind them of the time Israel spent in the wilderness? Why should we recall Israel's wilderness experience?

God wanted Israel to remember the hard lessons as well as the blessings. The Children of Israel dwelled in the wilderness for forty years because of their unbelief in God's promises and because of their murmuring and complaining. If we are tempted to complain or doubt God's plan for our lives, we should stop and remember that it displeases God. This can encourage us to submit to His plan and then focus on the blessings that are ahead.

CONCLUSION

God ordained special days for the Children of Israel as times for them to focus on Him and worship Him. Let us make sure we set aside time in our busy lives to do the same. THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Teacher's Guide

Battling Discouragement and Opposition



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Numbers 11:1 through 12:16

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp." (Numbers 11:1)

BACKGROUND

This week's text centers around three complaints. Israel complained about their food and longed for meat; Moses poured out to God how weary and overwhelmed he felt; and Aaron and Miriam fretted against Moses' leadership. God met two of Aaron and Miriam's complaints with His judgment. In answer to Moses' cry, however, He gave instruction for establishing a structure that helped reduce the stress of leadership, not only for Moses but also for succeeding leaders.

The Children of Israel had no reason to complain. God had performed many miracles for them in their recent past. He had punished the Egyptians with ten dreadful plagues, while protecting the Israelites in Goshen. Then He had liberated the Israelites from bondage and started them on their way toward the Promised Land. Along the way, He had taken them through the Red Sea on dry land. Then, as the army of Egypt foolishly pursued them, He had closed the sea over the pursuers.

In the wilderness, God had provided water as needed. God had solved the issue of food by miraculously sending a daily supply of manna without fail as they traveled in the wilderness. Yet at the time of today's lesson, Israel complained that they were tired of manna and wanted meat. In response, God sent them meat as they wanted, but He sent punishment along with this. Many people died with the meat still in their mouths.

Moses himself had seen God work miracles and deliver the people. God had never failed, but the complaints of the people became a weariness to him. In mercy, God gave him seventy men to share his responsibilities.

Miriam and Aaron complained about Moses' marriage. The true root of the complaint, however, was jealousy of Moses' authority. God's judgment was swift and evident, causing Aaron and Miriam to regret that they had ever complained.

OPENER

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. What was the focus of the Children of Israel when they asked for meat? (Numbers 11:4) Describe the provision they already had been given.

Your group should conclude that the Children of Israel were focused on their wants. They had food from Heaven; that food came in a daily supply; it was adaptable in how it could be used; and there was no need to store or preserve it.

2. Name at least three outcomes that can happen to us if we focus on what we do not have rather than on what we do have.

Class responses will vary, but the point should be made that if our focus is on our wants, we probably will become dissatisfied and complain. Continuing in this attitude can cause irritability, impatience, and even bitterness. Your class could give other results of a self-centered perspective.

3. It may be easy to murmur and complain when things do not go our way. How can we keep a right perspective when faced with circumstances that may be unpleasant?

On a board, list your class's suggestions on how to keep a thankful attitude. Possibly their comments could include making a list of our blessings; if you start to complain, stop and say thanks instead; appreciate the small blessings in your life.

4. Why would a murmuring or complaining Christian be ineffective at winning the lost to Christ?

Class discussion of this question should bring out that our own goodness is not what will win others to Christ, but rather our joy and peace. Regardless of what a complainer feels inside, he does not radiate much joy and peace to a lost world.

5. God responded to Israel's complaint by sending quail that flew about three feet above the ground so they were easily caught (Numbers 11:31). Scripture is clear that everyone took many, since the ten homers referred to in the text equaled about sixty bushels. But then God sent punishment upon Israel. (Numbers 11: 31-33) Will He punish us today if we lust after worldly things? How?

If we do not keep our desires under God's control, they will lead us astray. Psalm 106:15 says that God gave Israel their request but sent leanness into their soul. The same could happen to us. Other possible references could include Luke 21:34; Colossians 3:2; and 1 John 2:15.

6. Numbers 11:10-15 reflects Moses' frustration and weariness with his responsibilities in governing Israel. Do you think our church leaders ever become weary like Moses did? If so, what might we do to help prevent that?

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Our church leaders are human and subject to the same frailties and feelings as Moses and everyone else. The how-to-help suggestions from your class may include: pray for them, do not criticize them, say Amen when they preach, do what you are asked to do, and go to the prayer room before services.

7. Chapter 12 tells of a series of actions that God took when Miriam and Aaron complained against Moses. List each action by the noted verses.

God's actions were as follows:

- Verse 2: He heard what Aaron and Miriam said.
- Verse 4: *He spoke suddenly, giving precise directions.*
- Verse 5: *He came and stood in the door of the Tabernacle.*
- Verse 5 again: He called for Aaron and Miriam.
- Verses 6-8: *He defended Moses and reprimanded Aaron and Miriam.*
- Verses 9-10: *He departed the camp, as indicated by the cloud moving off the Tabernacle.*
- Verse 10 again: *He sent punishment: Miriam became leprous.*

8. Why do you think God was so angry with Aaron and Miriam? What application might God's anger have for our day?

God was angry because Moses was the leader He had ordained and anointed. Aaron and Miriam knew that. God expected His people to obey and follow Moses. This was especially true of Aaron and Miriam, who were also in leadership positions under him. Our leaders today are also ordained and anointed by God. He wants us to respect them and their positions of leadership. He also expects them to honor their standing and their calling before God. Your class discussion could include how we can show respect.

CONCLUSION

Even though God answered Israel's immediate grievance, He wanted them to see that complaining would eventually bring them problems and punishment. Sadly, they did not learn their lesson on this occasion, for the Bible tells of other times when they complained rather than having an attitude of gratitude. What perspective are we choosing for the situations that face us today? THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Numbers 13:1 through 14:45

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." (Numbers 13:30)

BACKGROUND

Many significant events happened in the land of Kadesh. Moses had disobeyed God in this same land. Both Aaron and Miriam had died there. The Children of Israel had wandered in the land forty years—one year for each day the spies were in Canaan exploring the land. In today's text, the Children of Israel waited there, near Canaan's border, for news from the twelve spies.

The "Promised Land" (the Land of Canaan) was relatively small: 150 miles long, 60 miles wide. The spies would have traveled about 500 miles during the forty-day survey of the land. The lush hills were covered with figs, dates, and nut trees. Some of the cities visited had thick, high walls.

In Numbers 14:22, God referred ten times to the people tempting Him. They had:

- Doubted at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:11-12)
- Complained about the bitter water at Marah (Exodus 15:24)
- Complained, again, in the wilderness of Sin (Exodus 16:3)
- Collected more than a day's portion of manna against the Lord's instructions (Exodus 16:20)
- They tried to collect manna on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:27-29)
- Chided and murmured against Moses for water at Rephidim (Exodus 17:2-3)
- Committed idolatry by worshiping a golden calf (Exodus 32:7-10)
- Complained (Numbers 11:1)
- Complained about the lack of food variety (Numbers 11:4)
- Failed to trust about entering the Promised Land (Numbers 14:1-4)

God judged those who complained, doubted, and refused to believe His promises. All who were twenty years of age and older—except Caleb and Joshua were told that their "carcasses" would be wasted in the wilderness.

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SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

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1. Read Numbers 13:17-20. What information were the spies to find out?

The spies were to find out about the people who lived there, their capabilities, and their numbers. Did they live in tents or fortifications? How was the land agriculturally? Did it have trees for wood? They were told to bring back evidence of the "fruit of the land."

2. The Lord promised to bring the Israelites to a land "flowing with milk and honey" (See Exodus 3:8,17; 13:5; and 33:3). How did this compare with the report given by the spies after they returned? What conclusions should have been made from this report?

Numbers 13:27 proves that God's Word is true: the spies brought back the report, "surely it floweth with milk and honey." They should have concluded that God also would drive out the inhabitants and give them the land as He had promised. God's promises are just as sure today. Discuss with your class the effects of answered prayer and the confidence we can have that we will receive what God has promised if we meet His conditions.

3. What can we learn from the doubting of the Children of Israel?

The Children of Israel made the mistake of comparing the task to their own abilities rather than the promises of God. Their doubt then turned into rebellion, which led to punishment from God. They had seen many mighty victories, and yet were overcome by doubt. We must be careful not to let doubt rob us of God's blessings. If we place our trust in God, we know all things are possible.

4. In Numbers 14:6, we read that Joshua and Caleb "rent their clothes." What does this mean and why did they do this?

It was a custom to tear your clothes to show sorrow, mourning, or despair. Despair overcame Joshua and Caleb as they realized the people were refusing to follow God's direction and obtain the Promised Land.

5. How did the Israelites react when Joshua and Caleb urged them to enter Canaan? (Numbers 14:10)

Not only did they contradict what Joshua and Caleb said, but they spoke of stoning them.

6. Why did Moses intercede for the people (Numbers 14:13-19) after they rebelled? What did his prayer spare them from? How can we intercede for others?

God said He would destroy all of the Children of Israel and give Moses a new people. Moses truly loved these people and did not want to see them destroyed. His intercessory prayer spared them from destruction. We, too, need to intercede in prayer for those who have "rebelled" against God and have rejected His plan of salvation. Discuss with your class the range of feelings Moses had toward these people, from fierce anger to loving compassion. Ask your students, "Do we pray only for those we love?"

7. Describe the punishment God placed on Israel. (Numbers 14:34, 37)

God punished the Children of Israel by making them wander for 40 years—one year for each day the spies were in Canaan. The spies who gave the bad report died in a plague.

8. When the Israelites realized their error, they attempted to enter the Promised Land anyway and were defeated by the Amalekites and Canaanites (Numbers 14:40-45). What caused their defeat? How can we avoid "spiritual" defeat in our life?

Once again, they rejected God's instructions and attempted to do battle in their own strength. We, too, must follow the Lord's direction and let Him fight our battles. Like Caleb, we are "well able to overcome" when we wholly follow God's instructions. Ask the students to list ways that we can overcome.

CONCLUSION

The promises of God are just as sure today as they were in the time of Joshua and Caleb. With God, victories can be won before the battle ever takes place—they are won when we simply trust Him. THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

A Remedy Is Lifted Up



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Numbers 21:1-35

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." (Numbers 21:9)

BACKGROUND

By this time, the Children of Israel had wandered in the wilderness for almost forty years. As recorded in the previous chapter, Aaron had died and his son Eleazar had become the high priest.

When King Arad in the southern part of Canaan heard that the Israelites were nearby, his army attacked them and took some as prisoners. God gave Israel victory in the ensuing battle and the Israelites destroyed them and their cities completely. This was Israel's first victory in twenty years; their vow of faith to God (verse 2) was the key to their success.

The Children of Israel continued their journey through the wilderness and again they became weary and discouraged. They complained to Moses, chiding him for delivering them from Egypt and grumbling about the manna and scarcity of water. God was angry with the unthankful spirit of the people and He sent venomous snakes that caused many of the Israelites to perish from their poisonous bites.

One of the most striking illustrations of God's redemptive plan lies in the brass serpent that God instructed Moses to lift up on a pole in the midst of the camp. Anyone who was bitten by a snake needed only to look at the brass serpent and he would be healed—foreshadowing the time when one "look" at Christ, who was lifted up on Calvary, would bring healing from sin's curse.

After this momentous occurrence, the Children of Israel continued their journey, traveling from place to place. When Israel approached the land of the Amorites, they sent a message to Sihon the king, asking permission to pass through and assuring him they would disturb nothing along the way. Permission was denied. Instead, Sihon gathered his army together to fight against Israel. The Israelites won the victory and gained many cities and much land. Thus they were able to dwell in the land of the Amorites, which was on the east side of the River Jordan.

After this, Og, the king of Bashan, and his army attacked Israel, but again Israel won the victory and acquired their land.

OPENER

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

NOTES

1. Why do you think God wanted the Israelites to completely destroy the cities of southern Canaan?

God wanted the wicked Canaanites completely destroyed because He knew their sinful life styles would be a temptation and stumbling block to the Children of Israel. Also, God knew if allowed to live, they would come back in revenge and attempt to destroy Israel. Ask your class: What does this suggest regarding our connection with worldly influences?

(You may also wish to point out that the Canaanites were descendants of Ham—a son of Noah. Their destruction was a fulfillment of the curse Noah had directed at Ham, as recorded in Genesis 9:22-27.)

2. Verse 4 of our text says that the people were "much discouraged because of the way." Times of discouragement can come to all of us, but what tragic mistake did the Children of Israel make in how they reacted? (Numbers 21:5)

They spoke against God, and against Moses, complaining that Moses brought them up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, and that they loathed the food God had miraculously provided for them.

3. God dealt harshly with the complaining Israelites. What was His response? What do you think God saw in their hearts that motivated their complaints?

God sent "fiery serpents" among them, and many of those who were bitten died. Discussion of the second question will likely bring out there was a lack of commitment to God; they refused to obey His law and they forgot the miracles God had done for them.

You may wish to refer your group to Psalm 78, which called these Children of Israel a "stubborn and rebellious generation" and said their "spirit was not steadfast with God" (verse 8). God also said they did not obey His testimonies and they were full of unbelief.

4. When things in our lives appear to be out of control and we feel overwhelmed, what are ways we can keep a thankful heart?

We can keep a thankful heart when we remember that God will give us grace for every trial if we seek for it. He has promised a way of escape and victory for every battle. We need to stay focused on Him and count our past and present blessings. Ask for class input as to how they maintain a thankful spirit.

5. What are some parallels between the brass serpent that Moses erected on a pole and Jesus hanging on the cross?

Parallels include: The effect of the bite from the poisonous snake stood for sin; both Jesus and the serpent were suspended in the air so that many could behold them for deliverance; and there is no respect of persons with God. Whoever looked on the serpent was healed; in the same way, whoever looks to Jesus for salvation will find it.

6. Tucked away in this story of Israel's wanderings in this seemingly forsaken wilderness are two little verses (verses 17 and 18) telling that the Israelites stopped to dig a well and then sang a song, "Spring up, O well." Why do you think these verses are important?

It had been a long time, indeed, since the people sang unto the Lord (see Exodus 15). We can be encouraged to know that in dry times we may have to dig a little as we seek the Lord, but that the spring is there waiting to be tapped; there is a song of joy just waiting to be sung. This might be a good time to ask your class to share examples of times when encouragement came their way after a dry spell.

7. What did the Children of Israel offer to do in the message they sent to Sihon, king of the Amorites? What does his refusal tell us about the heart of this king? What did his failure to honor God's people cost him and his people?

Israel told the king of the Amorites that they would not eat of their crops or drink from their wells or even camp in their fields in return for safe passage through the land. The king must have had a hard heart toward God and His people to refuse this. The king lost his life and Israel settled in his land because of this decision.

8. Do you think God would have wanted Israel to destroy the Amorites if they had been gracious to Israel? Explain.

God gave the Amorites every chance to show kindness to Israel. He wants all people to have a chance. It is when people reject God and His plan that they are punished.

CONCLUSION

God will turn His back on those who are rebellious and bitter toward Him. Yet God will bless those who trust and obey Him with a thankful heart. THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Teacher's Guide

Balaam, the Double-Minded Prophet



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Numbers 22:1 through 25:18

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19)

BACKGROUND

Balaam was a somewhat mysterious character whose story occupies three complete chapters in the Numbers narrative. He was a Gentile whose home was a city called Pethor near the Euphrates River (Deuteronomy 23:4). He had a reputation for divination (predicting the future) and incantation (using occult power to cast blessings and cursings). He also was quite willing to sell his services (2 Peter 2:15).

By this time, the Children of Israel had successfully defeated several enemies after leaving Egypt, including Amalek, the king of Arad; the Amorites; and Og, king of Bashan. Upon arriving in the plains of Moab they faced a different kind of enemy. Balak, king of Moab, recognized his inability to defeat Israel without supernatural help. From the text we conclude that Balaam's reputation was widely known, since Balak sent for him from a great distance and offered a great price for his services.

Balaam offers four blessings upon God's people, each from a different physical location. Each of these blessings pointed to the blessing of following God and the surety of His promises. However, New Testament references to Balaam all seem to imply his greed and lust for money. It was this greed that led him to look for ways to circumvent the revealed will of God to him. It seems that this greed not only caused deceitful behavior but also blinded his eyes and heart from the real truth of God's message, which could have been applied to his own heart.

Eventually, even after expressing, "let me die the death of the righteous" (Numbers 23:10), Balaam was slain when Israel defeated the Midianites. (Numbers 31:8)

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. How was the approach of Moab and the Midianites different from that of the previous enemies Israel had faced (Numbers 22:2-6)? What different approaches does the enemy of our souls use to try to defeat us spiritually?

OPENER

NOTES

The students should grasp that rather than an open frontal attack and physical battle, the Moabite king Balak called for someone to invoke a curse against God's people. Israel may not have even realized they were under attack at this time, yet this attack was just as real as the previous ones upon the battlefield. God protected them and turned the requested cursing to blessing because of His great love and care for His chosen people.

In discussing Satan's tactics, the students may respond with several specific items such as temptation, discouragement, pride, etc. They should understand that the essence of the battle with Satan is more than just physical. They should also understand that Satan operates in the realm of deceit and deception and that his desire is to destroy humanity. Job 18:18 states: "He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world."

2. God's instructions to Balaam are very clear in Numbers 22:12. What were those instructions? Why does the story continue past this point?

God's instructions to Balaam were: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed" (Numbers 22:12). The discussion should center on the persistence of the Moabite king, Balak, and his repeated offers of honor, greatness, power, and material gain to influence Balaam. Satan does not give in easily when trying to discourage or dissuade the child of God. Discussion should then note Balaam's willingness to entertain more discussion on the matter and even to return to God and try to get Him to change His revealed will.

3. In the light of God's directions, what seemed to be Balaam's desire?

It becomes painfully obvious that, while Balaam acknowledged: "I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more" (Numbers 22:18), his desire was for the honor and material gain offered by Balak. He was reticent to accept God's instructions and sought the Lord for more instructions because he didn't care for the first ones. Note in Numbers 22:21 that he goes out to meet the elders when God said he could go only if they came to call upon him again.

Balaam seems to be a classic example of what James refers to as a "doubleminded" man (James 1:8; 4:8). He wants to have the approval of God and the material honor and gain offered by the world. Ask: What are the dangers of this type of thinking? Jesus makes it very clear in the Sermon on the Mount that, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24)

4. In reading Numbers 22:21-31, Balaam's desires led him not only to make poor choices, but also blinded

him to the providence and warning of God. How does this happen to people today?

Balaam flew into a rage when his donkey would not take him farther along the path he had chosen. The donkey recognized the angel of the Lord when Baalam did not. Many people today do not recognize the providence of God on their behalf.

You may want to have your students list specific ways in which God tries to warn people and yet many continue on in that direction to their own destruction. We understand that those outside the light of the Gospel may not recognize the leading and warning of God but what about those who claim to know of Christ or even to know Him personally? I Samuel 15:23 says: "stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Discuss how Satan might use the desire to have one's own way more often than a temptation to open sin.

5. Numbers 22:34 records Balaam's acknowledgement of sin. Is this repentance on his part? Why or why not?

Simple acknowledgement of sin is not repentance. Ask your students to suggest Biblical examples. Judas acknowledged his sin (Matthew 27:4), as did Pharaoh (Exodus 9:27), and King Saul (1 Samuel 15:24, 30; 26:21) yet we do not find that they returned to God for mercy. Even with a talking donkey and an angel from the Lord, Balaam offers to turn back "if it displease thee." Your students may also note that Balaam's actions throughout the rest of the narrative bring his sincerity into serious question.

6. What was the general message of each of the four blessings (Numbers 22:30 through 24:14) pronounced by God through Balaam upon the Children of Israel?

The first blessing (Numbers 22:39-23:12) emphasized the chosen and blessed nature of Israel because of God's love toward them. The second blessing (Numbers 23:13-26) emphasized Israel as a conquering people because of the faithfulness of God and the surety of his promises and covenant. The emphasis of the third blessing (Numbers 23:27-24:14) is on the contentment of Israel after they enter and possess the Promised Land. This land is beautiful and bountiful because of the blessing of the Lord. The final blessing offered by Balaam speaks directly to the promise of the Messiah and His victories in the latter days. This blessing also included visions of the destiny of nations other than Israel.

7. The New Testament refers to the way of Balaam (2 Peter 2:15), the error of Balaam (Jude 11), and the doctrine of Balaam (Revelation 2:14). What seems to be the sense of these three Scriptures and their warning to early-day Christians and to us today?

Both 2 Peter 2:15-16 and Jude 1:11 refer to the greed and covetousness of Balaam, which led him to seek wealth and honor rather than obedience and

truth. This temptation is evident in the world today, particularly in those societies where wealth is abundant. Sometimes morals and ethics are either bent or broken for the sake of material gain or promotion. Jude indicts Balaam along with the murderer Cain who was marked for life and Korah who rebelled against the authority given to Moses by God and was swallowed up by the earth.

The warning to the Church of Pergamos concerning the "doctrine of Balaam" (Revelation 2:14) is apparently not a direct reference to Balaam's greed but rather to his later instructions to Balak concerning a way to trip up the Children of Israel. These instructions were for an idolatrous feast (eating food offered to idols) and encouraging sexual immorality between the men of Israel and women of Moab and Midian. What Balaam could not accomplish by cursing Israel for Balak he did accomplish by giving counsel that helped encourage them into compromise with the idolatrous nations of Moab and Midian. Students should be made aware that even after resisting the enemy's attacks, they must be on their guard against compromise in areas of idolatry and morality.

8. God sometimes proves His sovereignty by overruling and/or using even the ungodly to fulfill His own purposes in the world. Give several Biblical examples and some modern-day examples.

Students may list Biblical examples such as King Nebuchadnezzar, Joseph's brothers, or Saul of Tarsus, all of whom God used for His own purposes while yet ungodly. They should then try to name others from more modern history or even current events which have been used by God to further His sovereign plan for humanity.

CONCLUSION

How good it is to embrace the truth of the King of the Universe and to follow His precepts with both our words and our lives. His blessings are available to us today even though there is a battle to be fought. The battle is spiritual so we must be on guard and vigilant until the Lord calls us. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (Numbers 23:10)

Teacher's Guide

Remembering to Observe God's Commandments



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Deuteronomy 6:1 through 8:20

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." (Deuteronomy 7:9)

BACKGROUND

Moses had given Israel the second edition of the Ten Commandments, and he had taught the people what God commanded him to teach. If Israel obeyed the Lord, they would conquer the enemy, possess the Promised Land, and enjoy a long life with God's blessing. However, God knew the dangers that Israel would face when they came into that land of prosperity. He was going to give them great blessings, but He knew their thoughts could become so engrossed in those blessings—houses, vineyards, olive trees, etc.—that they would forget Him.

Moses knew this risk of prosperity, too, and he charged Israel to be diligent to keep up their service to God after they were in Canaan. He reminded them that there is only one God, and their first duty was to love Him with all their hearts. He cautioned them against those things that would be the ruin of their religion—to forget the Lord who brought them out of the land of Egypt, the abuse of plenty, and the inclination to idolatry.

One of Israel's great challenges was to pass along their heritage and an understanding of God's commandments to their children and grandchildren. God was explicit in how this was to be accomplished: by teaching, by removing the inhabitants from the land, and by rehearsing what God had done. Theirs was a glorious and miraculous history of God's mercy and love, a history of great deliverances and providential care. Teaching their children would help them remember God's faithfulness and great works.

Moses had already emphasized God's love for Israel and the importance of Israel's love for God. He reminded them that all of their blessings came from the Lord because of His covenant with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. What is the first commandment? (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) Is it possible to command a person to love? Explain your answer.

OPENER



The first Commandment is "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Jesus referenced this commandment and added another. (Matthew 22:37-39). Discuss with your class what Jesus said about these commandments. (Matthew 22:40). If a man truly loves God, he must also love his brother and his neighbor. All the law is summed up by the command to love. (Romans 13:8-10) In the life of a believer, love is an act of will. You choose to relate to God and to other persons in a loving way, no matter how you feel. You should not be controlled by feelings.

2. Moses gave Israel specific directions about diligently teaching God's Commandments to their children. (Deuteronomy 6:7-9) List six actions he told Israel to take. Then give an example of how three of those actions might be implemented in families today.

The six instructions were:

- Talk of them when sitting in your houses.
- Talk of them when walking by the way.
- Talk of them when lying down.
- Talk of them when getting up.
- Put a sign on the hand or before the eyes.
- Put a sign on the posts and gates of the house.

Make a list of the students' suggestions on how to teach children today. This list could include:

- Make the Gospel a subject of dinner-table conversation—discuss a missionary story or recount someone's testimony.
- As you go about the activities of life, apply Christian truths.
- Have daily devotions. Study the Bible!
- Bring your children to Sunday school and church.
- Put a Scripture verse on a card and stick it in your lunch sack or car visor.
- Post verses in your home on the wall, bathroom mirror, refrigerator magnets, etc.

3. A literal understanding of Deuteronomy 6:8 has led many people to place copies of verses 4-9 on their foreheads, hands, or doorposts. What was Moses' intent? How does that intent relate to us today?

Moses' intent was that Israel would know the Law of God so well that it would become impressed on their minds and be in their hearts (6:6). God wants to write His Word upon our hearts and make us "living epistles" for others to read. Then our lives can influence them to trust Christ.

4. What steps can we take to pass on the history of God's Word to the next generation?

Answers could include: teaching your children or grandchildren the Bible, teaching Sunday school, and giving your testimony. You could amplify this discussion by asking students to relate lessons they have learned from members of the previous generation. **5.** God knew the temptations Israel would face in the Promised Land, and His commandments to them were for their protection. List four of God's commands. (Deuteronomy 7:2,3,5,25) Name two commands that God has given us that could result in spiritual protection in our day.

God commanded that Israel:

- Destroy the inhabitants
- Not allow marriages with the inhabitants
- Destroy their idolatrous paraphernalia
- Not take the silver or gold from the idols

Class discussion should compile a list of numerous commands God gave for our protection. These may include:

- Not marrying unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14)
- Not owing money (Romans 13:8)
- Seeking God first (Matthew 6:33)

6. What was one reason that God said the inhabitants of the land of Canaan should be destroyed? (Deuteronomy 7:4)

God said intermarriage would turn Israel away from following Him. It may seem that God's judgments on these inhabitants were cruel and unmerciful. However, these people had defiled the land with their wickedness and idolatry.

More than four hundred years had expired since the time God had made the covenant with Abraham to give him this land. During that time, if even one of these seven nations had made any overture toward repentance, it would surely have been noted by the evermerciful God. Yet no instance of repentance on their part was ever shown, and so God decreed that these people should be cut off from the earth. This severity was appointed to prevent the mischief they would do to Israel if they were left alive.

7. List three of the blessings that God promised Israel if they would obey. (Deuteronomy 7:13-24)

God promised offspring, healing, and miraculous deliverance from their enemies. Ask your class: Does God give similar promises today?

8. Chapter 8 contains more warnings to remember God. Why do you think so many warnings were necessary? Do you think people today need fewer or more warnings? Why?

God knew how easy it would be for Israel to forget when the good things of this life surrounded them. Forgetting is just as easy today. An old adage is: "Prosperity is no friend to grace." Discuss with your class ways we might help ourselves remember to keep God first.

9. Several themes are repeated throughout these three chapters of Deuteronomy. Note two of those themes and tell how they apply today.

The four major themes include:

- Love God first.
- Destroy the inhabitants and all their idols or they will be a snare.
- Teach your children.
- Obey and be blessed, or disobey and be punished.

Class discussion should revolve around why and how these principles apply to our lives today.

CONCLUSION

Love for God is the first and greatest commandment of all, and it is the summary of all the commandments. Our love for Him must be a strong love. We must *love* him in the most intense degree, with *all that is within us*. He that is our all must have our all. To love Him this way will bring rest and satisfaction to the soul. If we obey and walk in God's good way, we will find His benefits and blessings.

Civil and Social Legislation



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Deuteronomy 16:1 through 26:19

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments." (Deuteronomy 26:18)

BACKGROUND

It had been forty years since God had given the first covenant to Moses at Mount Sinai. In this portion of Deuteronomy, Moses reiterated the Covenant between God and Israel to a new generation of Israelites. He explained the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. He then commanded the appointment of officers and judges, and explained the procedure of judgment.

Moses went on to give rules for future kings of Israel, outlined the offerings for the priest, and emphasized the importance of shunning wicked pagan ways. Next came the prophecy of a prophet to come who would speak the words of God, and then a warning was given about false prophets.

In chapter 19, Moses established cities of refuge for those who had shed a man's blood, and he gave more rules regarding courts of law. Chapter 20 deals with rules for the military. Chapter 21 deals with unsolved murders and laws concerning captive wives and laws about rebellious sons. Chapters 22-25 explain miscellaneous laws including sexual conduct and marriage. Chapter 26 explains offerings of first fruits and tithes.

It was important that the Israelites completely knew and understood the law because not only did adherence to the law assure respect and harmony among the people, but also God's blessing or judgment depended on the people's obedience to the law. It dealt with life or death matters, physically as well as spiritually.

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. Deuteronomy 24:7 indicates that man's value has no monetary price. What principle concerning the treatment of others can you infer from this law?

God puts a premium on human beings. Each person deserves respect, kindness, and humane treatment. You might want to discuss proper and improper ways to treat others: children, the homeless, elderly, physically disabled, etc.

OPENER

NOTES
2. God designated a stiff penalty for false witnesses. (Deuteronomy 19:16-19) What do you think He feels about those who speak words damaging to someone else's reputation?

God hates the spreading of discord, and He will not overlook malicious gossip among His people. Ask your group to name things that should be considered before speaking of another. These may include: Is it kind? Is it true? Is it helpful? Is it necessary? What might be the potential outcome?

3. God was against cruel and inhumane punishment. Deuteronomy 25:2-3 limits the number of lashes a condemned person could receive. What was the number? What principle is indicated for parents or persons in authority?

The condemned were to receive no more than 40 stripes. Today those in authority should remember forgiveness and mercy and that the punishment should fit the crime. Proactive discipline is always better than reacting after the fact. Our purpose should be to improve behavior.

4. What principle regarding another person's property is developed in Deuteronomy 22:1-4? What should we do if we cause damage?

God wants us to respect the property of others and treat it with care. If we damage someone's property we should be quick to restore or replace the item.

5. Honesty is a universal and ageless law. Guidelines are given to us in Deuteronomy 25:13-14. How can we apply this principle today?

We must be honest in all our dealings. Bring out that whether it is in our business dealings, interaction with the IRS, or a matter as simple as being undercharged at the grocery store, we will always be blessed if we are careful in these matters.

Honesty can also be a testimony to onlookers and may provide an open door for a witness for Christ. Some in your class may be willing to share examples from their knowledge or personal experience of when honesty provided an opportunity along this line.

6. Deuteronomy 23:21-23 addresses the subject of vows. What two principles are brought out in these verses? What might be a better alternative than making a vow?

The principles are:

1) A vow that has been made must be paid, and

2) It is not a sin to refrain from making a vow.

A better alternative in most cases is consecration. This is also a promise to God, but it leaves the choice of payment in God's hands. We tell God we are willing to go or do if He should ask us. Whatever He asks us we will do—but the choice is His. **7.** What godly principle does Deuteronomy 24:19-21 reinforce?

God wants us to have compassion on the poor. During harvest the reapers were to leave some of the crop behind for the poor people. The poor were expected to work for what they ate by gleaning what was left behind. We should be quick to see a legitimate need and show compassion as well.

You could have your class generate a list of ways this could be done. Some options: Support your church's benevolent outreaches, give unneeded items to organizations that help the poor or homeless, volunteer time at this type of organization, ask your pastor if there are needs he is aware of that you could help out with.

8. Deuteronomy 17:1 says that the people were not to offer unto God a blemished sacrifice. In Deuteronomy 26, God asked for an offering of the firstfruits of the crops. What does this tell of God's expectations from His people?

God wants our best. Whether it is our time, our energy, or our love, He wants to be first in our lives. He wants to be the center, the hub. Other things can then fit around Him. The class may want to give examples.

9. God concluded the final chapter in this week's text by commissioning the people to be holy and to keep His commandments. He called them to be a peculiar people. Describe what God meant by "peculiar." How should we fit that profile today?

In this usage, the word "peculiar" did not mean odd, but rather God's very own, special, set-apart people. He considered His followers a treasure. We can be God's special treasures as we serve Him and keep ourselves separate from the sins of the world. Discussion can involve ways to do this.

CONCLUSION

The precepts and direction given in these chapters are not only important from a historical perspective, but also contain valuable and essential advice for us today. Essentially, if we want to be one of God's people, we too, have to follow all His commandments.

DISCOVERY

Teacher's Guide

Last Instructions from a Faithful Leader



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Deuteronomy 29:1 through 31:30

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." (Deuteronomy. 31:6)

BACKGROUND

Moses addressed the people by relating the Covenant between God and the Children of Israel that had been made forty years earlier at Mount Sinai. Though the Covenant had been extensive, it could be summed up with the promise by God to bless the Children of Israel and make of them a great nation if Israel would honor, love, and obey God.

Moses reviewed how God had already blessed and protected Israel, but observed that the Children of Israel had turned from the Lord and had not kept their part of the Covenant. Moses warned the people that it would not be well with them if they continued to turn from God's commandments, but assured them that God would be waiting to receive them back and would restore their blessings if they would turn back to Him.

Moses then presented a challenge to the Children of Israel. He said they had the choice of good or evil, life or death, before them. They must decide either to love and serve God or to be drawn away by false gods and worldly sins.

Moses told the assembled people that he was old and would not enter the Promised Land with them, but that God would go before them and conquer the enemies of Israel. Moses admonished them to have courage and to trust God at this time, for God would not fail them.

Every seven years, the entire nation, including the children, were admonished to gather together to hear the Law read. By doing so, they would know how to obey and please the Lord.

God gave Joshua the commission to lead the Children of Israel after Moses' death, which was imminent. Along with the charge for Joshua to have courage, God promised to be with him.

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. What were some of the miracles Moses reiterated to remind the Children of Israel that God would take care of them and bless them? (Deuteronomy 29:1-8)

OPENER



Moses recounted several miracles including the great signs in Egypt before Pharaoh, the trek in the wilderness when their shoes and garments did not wear out, the victory over Kings Sihon and Og, and the yielding of the land of Heshbon and Bashan to certain tribes of Israel.

2. God's covenant of blessing was conditional. What would happen if the Children of Israel refused to keep their side of the covenant? (Deuteronomy 29:14-28)

God's promised punishment included: God would not spare the man who disobeyed; all God's curses written in the Book would afflict him; God would blot out his name; God would give him evil; the land would become burning brimstone and salt, with no plants growing; God would take the land away from Israel and the people would be cast adrift into other lands.

3. Moses spoke of secret things belonging to God. Why do you think God does not always share His reasons or reveal His complete plan for our lives?

One reason that God does not always reveal His complete plan to us could be so we can learn to walk by faith. Also, our earthly minds cannot understand the infinite reasoning of God and we must trust Him to do the right things. There may be some things we will understand more as we mature in the Gospel, which may not be good for us to understand earlier, just as we do not reveal every bit of information to children.

4. What do the verses in Deuteronomy 30:1-10 reveal about the character of God?

These verses reveal a God of great mercy. Even in God's foreknowledge that the people would forget and rebel against Him, He already was offering a place of repentance, restoration, and blessing. This shows a God of great compassion, patience, and love.

5. While we may not know God's long-term plan for our lives, how can we be sure we can know God's expectations for us today as we seek His will? (Deuteronomy 30:14)

Deuteronomy 30:14 assures us that God will not keep us in the dark regarding what steps we should take for today. We may need to spend time in prayer, and maybe fast with our praying, but God will always be faithful to show us the way to go in time.

6. Verses 15-20 of Deuteronomy 30 offer a choice between good and evil, and between life and death. Do you think this was a one-time choice or a daily choice? Parallel your answer to the choice(s) we face regarding serving the Lord.

Your students will likely respond that, after an initial determination to serve God, the Children of Israel faced a daily choice. We must make a choice to serve the Lord at the time He calls us and we feel conviction for our sins. However, after our salvation we have daily and often hourly choices to make concerning things that could draw us closer or pull us away from God. What we choose in those little decisions will influence greatly the ultimate result of life or death.

7. God told the Children of Israel to go in and possess the land of Canaan (Deuteronomy 31:3-8), and He promised that He would secure victory for them from the inhabitants of the land. How does this compare to us as we approach the promises of God?

God has many promises for us in His Word. In most cases we must reach out and take hold of the promise. Sometimes, we must seek and wage warfare against the enemy to secure the fulfillment of the promise. However, God has all power over our enemy Satan, and as we persevere and claim the promise, the victory will be won.

8. God commanded the Children of Israel to have courage and not be afraid as they faced the Canaanites. Israel had proved God before, so why might they be tempted to fear now?

God had performed many miracles for Israel in the past, but this time something was different-Moses would not be there to guide the people to victory; a new leader, Joshua, would be in charge. It was a time for the people to make sure their trust was truly in God rather than in a man.

9. God emphasized the importance of teaching the children the commandments and precepts of His Word (Deuteronomy 31:10-13). What are ways we can do this today?

In this ungodly world, it is imperative that our children learn about God and the Gospel. A family altar is very important, and the class may have suggestions for interesting ways to conduct this. Bedtime Bible stories are loved by children. Regular Sunday school and church attendance teach by content as well as example. Talking about the Lord often on nature walks, or in everyday conversation, reminds children of how present and important God is.

10. God lamented the fact that when Israel was blessed and prosperous, the people would forget Him (Deuteronomy 31:20). How does that relate to us to-day? What can we do to reverse this tendency in our own lives?

To those of us who are blessed with abundance, it is so easy to let the cares and pleasures of life rob us of our spiritual vision. We need to make time for God and be willing to deny ourselves those things that would take up too much time, energy, or passion in our lives. The class likely could give personal examples.

11. Moses was soon to die and God appointed Joshua to take his place (Deuteronomy 31:23). Why do you think Joshua was the man chosen?

Joshua was chosen because he had proved to be a man of faith. He was among the twelve spies who had scouted throughout the land of Canaan forty years before and he had been one of two to bring back a good report. Joshua had also proved to be a faithful follower of Moses in the years since then.

12. Moses drew this chapter to a close with a warning for the Children of Israel to keep their covenant with God or suffer severe consequences. Why do you think God pled with them even though He knew they would continue to be rebellious?

God doesn't want anyone to perish and He will do everything He can to prevent such a thing. Israel could never say they didn't have enough chances. And perhaps there was a remnant—a soul here or there—who did heed the warnings and were saved. God will "go the extra mile" for even one soul.

CONCLUSION

The basic message of these chapters is that God will punish those who forget and disobey Him, but He will greatly bless those who love, honor, and obey Him. The same choice is ours today!

DISCOVERY

Conquering the Land



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Joshua 1:1 through 8:35

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Joshua 1:9)

BACKGROUND

God gave Joshua a monumental job after the death of Moses: He was to assume a leadership position and direct the Children of Israel in an extended military campaign in an unfamiliar land filled with fortified cities and multiple enemies. Fortunately, along with this great commission, God gave Joshua the encouragement he needed to succeed.

The first eight chapters of the Book of Joshua narrate the events surrounding the Israelites' entry into the Promised Land and the beginning of their conquest of Canaan. After God provided a miraculous crossing of the Jordan River, the people camped near the mighty city of Jericho. God outlined a unique battle strategy for conquering the walled fortress; by following God's instructions precisely, the people won a tremendous victory.

After the destruction of Jericho, the Children of Israel set out to take the small town of Ai. To their shock, the forces sent against the town were driven back and lives were lost. Their hearts were melted, not because of cowardice, but because, clearly, the Lord's strong hand, upon which they had relied, had been removed from them. The cause was sin in the camp—Achan had disobeyed God's instruction and taken of the spoils of Jericho. When this matter was dealt with according to the instruction of God, the Israelites succeeded in capturing Ai.

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. How do you think Joshua may have felt when God called him to lead the Children of Israel into Canaan? Briefly describe the ways that Joshua was encouraged, directly or indirectly, before he led the Children of Israel into battle.

Joshua was given a great responsibility with serious risks involved: he may very well have felt overwhelmed and inadequate for the task. God understood that, just as He understands when we feel overwhelmed or inadequate.

OPENER

NOTES

Your class may come up with the following ways that Joshua was encouraged:

- Joshua 1:1-9: God spoke directly to Joshua with words of encouragement
- Joshua 1:16-18: The people of Israel promised to obey Joshua, and told him to "be strong"
- Joshua 2:23-24: The spies told Joshua that the Lord had delivered Canaan into their hands
- Joshua 3:10-17: The waters of Jordan were parted as a sign that God was working for Israel
- Joshua 4:14: God magnified Joshua before all the people of Israel

2. God promised to be with Joshua as He had been with Moses (Joshua 1:5). Why would this promise have been an encouragement to Joshua?

Joshua was following in the footsteps of a great leader whom he had watched under many circumstances. He could rehearse the many ways that God had been with Moses (in the exodus from Egypt, at the parting of the Red Sea, upon Mount Sinai, during the wanderings in the wilderness) and realize that God would work the same way in his own life. Ask your students to share examples of how God's moving in the lives of other Christians has encouraged them in their own Christian walk.

3. When God promised to be with Joshua and the Children of Israel, He asked Joshua to do two things: to obey His word (Joshua 1:7-8) and to be courageous (Joshua 1:9). What is the relationship between obeying God and having courage?

Discussion should bring out that when we obey God's Word, we can have confidence that we are in His will. Conversely, when we disobey the Lord, we suffer not only the outward consequences of our actions, but also the inward pain of condemnation. Inevitably, disobedience leads to discouragement. Right actions, however, will help us to have courage.

4. After their miraculous crossing into Canaan, Joshua had the Children of Israel set up "memorial stones" from the Jordan River so that their children and "all the people of the earth" might be reminded of God's mighty power (Joshua 4:21-24). Rehearse, in your mind, ways that God has worked in your life or the lives of your family members. What kind of "memorial stones" can you establish?

Ask your students to develop a list. Note that God can use these events to encourage others if they, like the Children of Israel, will take time to remember God's blessings and to share these blessings with others.

5. When the Children of Israel entered Canaan, God stopped the supply of manna (Joshua 5:12). How do you think the Israelites felt when the manna, which

they had depended on for so many years, ceased? How might you respond if God should suddenly change His provisions and make the "manna cease" in an area of your life?

Since we do not know how the Israelites felt about the cessation of the manna, student answers may vary. Note that it takes a certain measure of courage to step out in faith when God eliminates something in our lives that we have come to depend on.

6. After the great victory at Jericho (Joshua 6), Joshua and the children of Israel were soundly defeated at Ai due to the disobedience of one man, Achan (Joshua 7). Give an example of how disobedience in one area of a person's life can significantly impact others.

Some examples are: a driver disobeys a traffic law, and the lives of all in the car are lost; a chemistry student disobeys a safety guideline, and all in the class are put at risk; a contagious patient disobeys quarantine regulations, and many are exposed to a fatal disease. End this discussion by pointing out that because of Achan's sin, his entire family was destroyed (Joshua 7:24-26). What impact may our choice to obey or disobey have on our families?

7. Note how thoroughly Joshua and the Children of Israel destroyed the city of Ai (Joshua 8:1-29). Why do you suppose they were so thorough?

After the first defeat at Ai, the Israelites learned that even the disobedience of one man could cause a serious setback. No doubt, they wanted to vigilantly carry out God's command to totally destroy the people and city of Ai.

8. After the fall of Ai, Joshua offered sacrifices to God and read the Law of Moses to all the people (Joshua 8:30-35) even though there were many battles yet to be fought in the land of Canaan. What acts of obedience and worship should we as Christians be careful to perform even as we face the battles of life?

Students may mention that Christians should read God's Word, pray, gather together to worship, and partake of the ordinances.

CONCLUSION

With God's help, Joshua faithfully carried out the great task to which he had been appointed. As we read about Joshua's victories, we also should be encouraged to faithfully follow the Lord: the same God who led Joshua and the Children of Israel into Canaan is leading us today!

DISCOVERY

Claiming God's Promises



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Joshua 13:1 through 21:45

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." (Joshua 21:45)

BACKGROUND

Joshua, who was about one hundred years old, now had the task of distributing the land to each of the tribes of Israel. The allotments were given both as border descriptions and a listing of cities. His completion of this job left a lasting legacy to Israel: a place for each tribe and family to settle and call home. They were then able to enjoy what God had given them.

The Israelites inherited their land. They did not win it as spoils of battle nor did they purchase it. "Inheritance," the theme of the Book of Joshua, is a very important word. In these nine chapters, the word *inheritance* is found more than fifty times. Other important words are *possession* and *promised*.

Before Joshua proceeded with dividing the land on the west side of Jordan, the land on the east side was divided amongst the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. This was completed per the instruction given by Moses. Focus was then placed on the land of Canaan.

Caleb made his request, "give me this mountain" (Joshua 14:12). This must have signaled to the tribes God's ability to fulfill His promises. Not only was Caleb alive to receive his promised inheritance, but he was willing and able to do a younger man's work to get it. Caleb also provided for his descendants. He engaged his nephew Othniel, who later became his son-in-law, to take the city of Debir. Caleb's daring faith influenced Othniel, who went on to become the first judge of Israel.

The territory of Judah was divided by border descriptions and a detailed list of cities. The tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph, inherited the central hill country of Canaan.

Though slow to respond to the challenge, the remaining seven tribes also had their inheritance marked out for them. Unlike Caleb and the daughters of Zelophehad, these tribes did not demonstrate faith and spiritual zeal. A settlement process was put in place for them. The land remaining to be apportioned was divided into seven equal parts. Joshua then cast lots to determine the specific inheritance of each tribe.

OPENER

The final two land designations were made. First, Joshua established six cities of refuge. They were needed because society in that day had no police force to investigate crimes. Joshua set apart three cities of refuge on each side of the Jordan River. Finally, fortyeight cities were designated for the Levites to live in—as the tribe of Levi had been set aside by God to be priests for Israel, they did not receive their own territory like the other tribes.

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. Four times in this text block it is mentioned that the Levites were given no inheritance (Joshua 13:14,33; 14:3-4; 18:7). In your own words, explain why they were not given a portion of land like the other tribes.

The Levites were chosen to serve the Lord and He was their inheritance (Deuteronomy 10:8-9; 18:1-8; Numbers 18). Lead the class to recognize that God wanted the priests to be fully devoted to His service. We, too, are admonished by the Lord to have our "inheritance" set on heavenly things rather than earthly possessions. Through class discussion, list some possible indicators of whether our chief treasures are heavenly or earthly. Your students' ideas might include how we spend our time, what we think about, what we look at, what we do with our money.

2. Joshua and Caleb had finally reached the Promised Land. Clearly they were still in good health and able to enjoy Canaan. Why was this so?

They had come into Canaan because they believed God and obeyed Him. No doubt many times they were glad they wholly followed the Lord, rather than being swayed by the reports given by the other spies. Even though they spent forty years in the wilderness, God rewarded their faith, and they lived to see His promise fulfilled. Discuss with your class the benefits in fully trusting God.

3. Define *inheritance* and describe how it applied to the Children of Israel.

One definition is, "action of inheriting (receiving as an heir)." God had given them this land by promise, but it was up to them to take possession. The Christian is an heir to the Kingdom of God. Discuss what actions we must take in order to receive our inheritance.

4. Who was the first to claim his inheritance? (See Joshua 14:6-15.) What zeal did he demonstrate?

Caleb was first. He reminded Joshua of the promise Moses had made to him. Not only was he eager to receive it, but he was willing to do whatever was necessary to take possession. His age, the enemy, and fenced cities were not deterrents, because the Lord was with him. Discuss obstacles that we may face as we endeavor to serve God. What can we learn from Caleb in these situations?

NOTES

5. In what way was Joseph remembered, even though he had died in Egypt? (Numbers 16:1-5)

He was remembered through the fact that two of his sons—Manasseh and Ephraim—inherited the central hill of Canaan. Also the bones of Joseph were buried in the Promised Land at this time. Discussion should center on the far-reaching implications of whether or not we will serve God.

6. The majority of the tribes were slow to take possession of their land. What plan was devised to help them? (Joshua 18:2-6)

Three men were selected from each tribe to go through the land and describe it and divide it into even parts. Then Joshua cast lots to determine who received which section. After discussing the plan, you may bring out how many Christians today are slow to take what God has promised to them. We have a description of what is available, so we should claim and possess the promises of God at the first opportunity. Delaying does not make it easier. It gives the enemy more time to cause doubt and undermine our faith.

7. Caleb's daughter asked for more than her father promised (Joshua 15:19). What was her request and the subsequent result? What spiritual lesson can we learn from her action?

She asked for springs of water in addition to the portion of land given to her, and she received the upper and lower springs. Possibly, she received more than she expected. Talk about how we can ask of the Lord and He can grant beyond our expectations. You may ask for a student to share a personal testimony to illustrate this point.

8. Read Joshua 21:43-45. What three "good things" promised to the Children of Israel did God fulfill? What assurance does this provide us today concerning God's promises to us?

- 1. They possessed the land the Lord had promised.
- 2. He gave them rest all around them.
- 3. He delivered all their enemies into their hand.

Have the class correlate the Israelites' "good things" to the blessings we enjoy as Christians today. We, too, can possess His promise, have rest from our burdens, and receive victory over our enemy, Satan.

CONCLUSION

The Lord fulfilled His promise. Israel's ownership of the land was purely the gracious act of God. Their possession and enjoyment of the land depended on their submission and obedience to Him. Not one word of God will ever fail those who wholly follow Him.

DISCOVERY

Committing to Faithful Service



SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Joshua 23:1 through 24:33

KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

"Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left." (Joshua 23:6)

BACKGROUND

Joshua made two speeches at the end of this book emphasizing how good the Lord had been to the Children of Israel. His advanced age was the reason for his gathering "all Israel" unto himself, and this text block has been noted as his farewell address to them. Joshua took this opportunity to remind them that they were eyewitnesses of God's mighty deeds, and he admonished them to be faithful to the Lord and obey His Law.

Joshua went on to remind them that God brought their patriarch, Abraham, from "the other side of the flood," (Joshua 24:3) referring here to the great river Euphrates, not to the great Flood of Noah's day. He pointed out the great lengths that God undertook to establish this people as His people.

Although Terah (Abraham's father) and Nachor (Abraham's brother), had knowledge of the one true God, they compromised their faith by mixing with the idolatrous culture in Haran. God chose Abraham and established His covenant with him because he obediently followed the voice of God.

Sometimes God used ordinary elements to accomplish His purpose. Joshua reminded the elders of the time that God sent a swarm of hornets to drive out the inhabitants of the land allowing the Children of Israel to possess houses already built as well as crops already cultivated.

As Joshua ended his discourse to them, the Children of Israel said, "The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey" (Joshua 24:24). True to their word, for a time, they kept the covenant they made with God by the hands of Joshua long after he, and the elders who outlived him, died.

SUGGESTEDRESPONSETOQUESTIONS

1. When God commissioned Joshua to be Moses' successor, He provided Joshua with divine encouragement, exhorting him to be courageous and obedient to God's will (see Joshua 1:5-9). What similarities

OPENER

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do you see between this instruction and the opening words of Joshua's farewell address to the nation in Joshua 23:6-11? What conclusion can we draw from these two Scriptures regarding how Joshua responded?

In His commission of Joshua, God commanded him to "be strong and of a good courage" and to observe all that was in the Law, not turning to the right hand or the left. In Joshua's farewell address to the nation, he repeated the same two points: that the people were to be courageous, and to keep the Law of Moses, not turning to the right hand or left. As your group discusses the conclusion that can be drawn from these Scriptures, they should see that Joshua had realized the vital importance of God's instruction, and knew it must be emphasized to God's people in his final communication to them.

2. Joshua 23:3 describes the Lord as "he that hath fought for you." What had God done for the Israelites up to this point? Use Joshua 24:2-13 as a guide.

God took them from idolatry, led them into the Promised Land, multiplied them, sent Moses and Aaron, plagued Egypt, brought them out of bondage, gave their enemies into their hand, delivered them out of the hand of their enemies, and gave them a land for which they did not work.

3. In Old Testament times, God fought physical battles for His people. What type of "battles" do we face today?

Although we may face physical persecution at times, most of our battles today as Christians are fought in the spiritual realm. The enemy's favorite battleground is the mind. How has God prepared us to resist the onslaughts of Satan? Lead the class in sharing specific ways they have used that have helped them overcome difficulties.

4. What was Joshua's first command to Israel in this exhortation? What was his second? (Joshua 23:6-7)

Joshua's first command was to "be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left." Discuss the dangers in swerving too far "to the right" or "to the left" of God's law. Discussion should bring out: loss of direction, poor decision-making, failure to pass the law on to succeeding generations, and ultimately eternal separation from God. Class input could also focus on some of the stabilizing forces in a Christian's life: salvation, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the sound interpretation of Scripture, and the counsel of pastors, elders, and leaders in the Gospel.

Joshua's second command was for the people to be separate from the ungodly nations around them, and to cleave unto the Lord. The Hebrew word dabaq, translated as cleave in English, means "to follow closely, to be joined together (as in marriage); to stick or adhere to." It is the same word used to describe God's design for marriage in Genesis 2:24. God's promise to expel the inhabitants of Canaan and give Israel the Promised Land was conditional upon their continued obedience to God's Law, their faithfulness to Him, and keeping their distance from the wicked and idolatrous Canaanites.

5. What were the conditions of God's promise to fight for the Israelites? (Joshua 23:7) How can we be assured that God is fighting for us?

The conditions of the promise included that they should not live among the heathen nations and that they should not mention the names of the heathen gods, swear by them, serve them, or bow down to them. We can be assured that God is fighting for us when we wholly follow Him, forsaking all other gods (that is, anything that competes with Almighty God), and serve the Lord in sincerity and truth. Ask the class for examples from their lives or from the testimony of someone they know, of instances where the Lord intervened and fought for them. Use the testimony of Walter Janeway (tract #51, Prayed Out, Stayed Out), for whom the Lord fought many physical and spiritual battles.

6. Joshua 23:11 states the third command: to love the Lord. How did the Children of Israel demonstrate their adherence or lack of adherence to this command? How can we show the world through our actions that we, too, love the Lord?

If they had truly loved the Lord, they would have followed all His commandments, and this obedience would have been reflected in their daily actions. One who truly loves God is consecrated to His service in heart, soul, mind, and strength. Bring out that obedience alone does not always communicate love. Joyful obedience and an attitude that exudes total love and commitment will demonstrate our devotion. Use a chart listing several Christian duties such as: caring for the poor, witnessing, charity, etc. Ask your students to provide some positive and negative attitudes/ behaviors for each item listed.

7. What did Joshua do to commemorate the people's covenant renewal with God? (Joshua 24:25-27) What are some examples of "monuments" in a Christian's life?

Joshua recorded their decision on a scroll and erected a stone pillar as a monument of their covenant. It is possible that the stone was inscribed, since Joshua mentions that "it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us." The permanency of the stone pillar was to be a continual reminder to the people. Symbolically, the greatest monument in our lives is the experience of being born into the Kingdom of God. Your class may offer testimonials of a time when the Lord answered prayer, or when they received deeper experiences from God. There may even be those who have literal monuments, which constantly remind them of God's goodness, such as prayer journals and traditions.

8. If you knew you had only one month to live, would your attitude and behavior change? If so, in what way? What would you say to your friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers in your "final address"?

If we were told we had only one month to live, possibly we would all be more diligent in our service to God. As we look at our lives, are we evangelizing as we should? Do we have strained or broken relationships that need to be mended? Are there earthly debts that we need to settle? Your students may benefit from considering what they would like written in their own eulogies.

CONCLUSION

Faithful service to God is built upon the foundation of a born-again experience. As we purpose to "cleave unto the LORD" and "love him with all our heart," we will consecrate ourselves to the service of the Lord.

The Seven Feasts in Leviticus

Spring Feasts | The first three springtime feasts celebrate different aspects of one major event in Jewish history: deliverance from bondage in Egypt. They occur together in an eight-day period, beginning with Passover. Technically, Passover is only the first night of the celebration, but together the three feasts are commonly referred to as "Passover week." The fourth springtime holiday, the Feast of Weeks, occurs seven weeks later.

	1	2	3	4
English/ Hebrew Name	FEAST OF PASSOVER	FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD	FEAST OF FIRSTFRUITS	FEAST OF WEEKS OR PENTECOST
Het	PESACH	MATZOT	BIKKURIM	SHAVUOT
Jewish/Gregorian Calendar Dates	Fourteenth day of the first month March or April	Fifteenth to twenty-first day of the first month March or April	The day after the Passover Sabbath March or April	Fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits May or June
, Theme	Deliverance	Holiness	Resurrection	Revelation of God's Law
Key Texts	Leviticus 23:5 Exodus 12:1-46	Leviticus 23:6-8 Exodus 23:14-15	Leviticus 23:9-14 Exodus 23:16, 19	Leviticus 23:15-21 Exodus 34:22 Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Summary	This feast marks God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage and His preservation of their firstborn through the sacrificial blood of a lamb. That was the defining moment of Israel's birth as a nation and therefore is the first holiday on their calendar. It is to be commemorated with a meal that is comprised of the same types of foods as the first Passover. Over 1,500 years later, Jesus died on Passover as the Sacrificial Lamb for all mankind. The Jews' deliverance from Egyptian bondage foreshadowed our greater deliverance from the bondage of sin, which is accomplished through the Blood of Jesus. Thus, the birth of the nation illustrated spiritual birth of believers in Jesus Christ.	This feast commemorates the first days of the Israelites' freedom from bondage. When God brought them out of Egypt, He instructed them to eat only unleavened bread. Before this feast begins each year, the Jews are to purge all leaven from their homes and then abstain from eating it during the entire Passover week. In the New Testament, leaven is commonly symbolic of sin, so unleavened bread is symbolic of a life without sin—in both outward acts and the inner nature. Sin must be eradicated from our hearts through sanctification, which was also made possible through Christ's sacrificial death (Hebrews 13:12).	This feast commemorates the Jews' entrance into the Promised Land and the fulfillment of God's promise to give the land as an inheritance. It is also the first of three feasts that relate to the harvest season. On this day, Jews are to offer the first of the harvest to God, thanking Him in advance for what is yet to come. Jesus rose from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits and Scripture explains that as the first to be resurrected, He was the firstfruits offering (1 Corinthians 15:20). On Easter (Resurrection Day), we rejoice both in the power that raised us from spiritual death and our promised inheritance awaiting us in Heaven.	Firstfruits marks the beginning harvest of the first spring crop (barley), and this feast marks the beginning harvest of the last spring crop (wheat). This is a day of rest when offerings are to be made, including grain, wine, animal sacrifices, and some quantity of all the later spring crops. Jewish tradition also holds that the Ten Commandments were given to Moses on this day. Following Jesus' ascension, it was on this feast day that the Holy Spirit was first poured out, which resulted in 3,000 souls being reconciled to God. This fulfilled Jeremiah 31:33, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." These first converts under the new covenant dispensation marked the birth of the Church.

Fall Feasts | The fall feasts all take place in the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. Since the number seven is representative of completion, it seems fitting that these feasts would mark major events of the end times. Christ fulfilled the spring feasts during His first coming and it is anticipated that He will fulfill the fall feasts during His second coming.

5	6	7
FEAST OF TRUMPETS	DAY OF ATONEMENT	FEAST OF TABERNACLES
YOM TERUAH	YOM KIPPUR	ѕиккот
First day of the seventh month	Tenth day of the seventh month	Fifteenth to twenty-first day of the seventh month
September or October	September or October	September or October
Regathering	Repentance	Millennial Kingdom
Leviticus 23:23-25 Numbers 29:1-6	Leviticus 23:26-32 Leviticus 16:1-34	Leviticus 23:33-43 Deuteronomy 16:13
This feast does not mark an event in Jewish history and Scripture does not state its purpose. It is to be a solemn day of rest that includes sacrifices, offerings, and the blowing of trumpets. It is commonly understood to be a call to prepare for the Day of Atonement. This feast has not yet been fulfilled, but the blowing of trumpets suggests a connection to the Rapture. It is the only feast to occur on the first day of the month, which begins when the new moon first appears. The Jewish people had to wait and watch the sky to know when that would happen, just as we must wait and watch for the return of Jesus.	God gave detailed instructions to carry out this feast, with the focus being a sacrificial ceremony to atone for the sins of the nation. It is a solemn day of fasting, mourning sin, repentance, and abstaining from work and pleasure. This feast has not yet been fulfilled because no major event has taken place on this date. However, Christ's death fulfilled all the steps of atonement. At Passover He was the Sacrificial Lamb, but in the Day of Atonement He is both our High Priest and Atoning Sacrifice (Hebrews 9:11-12). Some suggest this feast will be fulfilled on the future day of mourning at the Battle of Armageddon.	This feast is a time of great jubilation when the people are commanded to rejoice. Falling at the end of harvest season, it is a time to thank God for His provision, protection, and presence over the past year, as well as remember His help during the years of wandering in the wilderness. To do that, the Jewish peope were instructed to dwell in booths (simple shelters) outside their homes for seven days. This feast has not yet been fulfilled. Zechariah prophesied that it will be celebrated during Christ's Millennial Reign, so it could mark a key date related to His kingdom.





















An Illustration of the Camp of the Tribes of Israel



*The Levite totals in Numbers 3 include males age one month and older. The Numbers 4 census totaled only those able to perform the Levitical duties, including carrying the Tabernacle, which was tremendously heavy. The Numbers 4 totals are used here as the age 30-50 parameter more closely aligns with the age 20+ criteria for the other tribes, and this essentially represents all those able to serve either in a religious or military capacity.

Key Locations in Numbers



The Promised Land – Allotments & Cities of Refuge



Why So Many Laws?

Jacob's family numbered 75 when he moved to Egypt.¹





The Israelites spent approximately 400 years living in Egypt.

At the end of that time, their population was perhaps over 3,000,000.² They were slaves, and had years of exposure to Egyptian idolatry, culture, and government.





God gave them a miraculous deliverance from Egypt.

At Mt. Sinai, God gave them a mode of worship and a system of government.





When Israel was nearly ready to enter the Promised Land, the ten spies gave a negative report. The people rebelled because they did not believe God would give them the land.

Due to their unbelief, God caused the people to wander in the wilderness for nearly thirty-nine years. All those who were twenty and older died (except Caleb and Joshua).





The new generation of adults was ready to enter the Promised Land. They had not been of age when the Law was given, so Moses rehearsed it. Thus we have Deuteronomy, meaning "second giving of the law."

Jericho Archeology

Dr. Bryant Wood is an archaeologist and director of *Associates for Biblical Research*. He has made a career of the study of Jericho and is an internationally recognized authority on the subject. In his article titled, "The Walls of Jericho," first published in *Creation Ex Nihilo* (March–May 1999), Dr. Wood relays the following intriguing discoveries regarding Jericho:

- Jericho was built on a hill and surrounded by two high walls. The outside (or lower) wall included a mudbrick wall (20 to 26 feet high and about 6 feet thick) built on top of a stone retaining wall (12 to 15 feet high) at the base of the hill. Inside the mudbrick wall was an embankment ascending to about 46 feet above the ground level of the surrounding countryside. On the top of this embankment was the inside (or upper) wall, also made of mudbrick. (In meters respectively: 6 to 8 and 2; 4 to 5; 14.)
- The upper city (inside the upper wall) included about nine acres and was home to about 1,200 people by archeological estimates. Houses were also built on the embankment between the upper and lower mudbrick walls—likely a poor district, as this area was significantly less secure in war. Residents of the surrounding countryside probably fled to Jericho in wartime as well.
- Jericho had adequate food and water to survive a lengthy siege. A spring inside the city provided an abundant water supply and excavations have uncovered large jars *full* of grain (indicating the siege had been short and the conquerors had not looted the commodity, as was normally the case).
- Various excavations (at different sides of the city) have found that the mudbrick walls collapsed and fell with gravity, forming a ramp against the (still-standing) stone retaining wall.

"So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city." (Joshua 6:20)



mudbrick walls



• A German excavation in 1907–1909 found a short section of the outside city wall and the houses built against it still intact. The section was located on the north of the city and the houses (built between the two city walls) were in the poor area.

"Then she [Rahab the harlot] let them [two spies] down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain [probably the wilderness just north of the city], lest the pursuers meet you." (Joshua 2:15-16)

• Archeologists have found a layer of ash and debris (about three feet thick) and their studies indicate the city was burned *after* the collapse of the walls.

"And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein." (Joshua 6:24)

Dr. Wood concludes that the findings of archeologists at Jericho prove the Biblical account in Joshua. It is important to realize, however, that many archeologists—even those who carried out the excavations Dr. Wood references—conclude that the Biblical account is merely a folk tale explaining the city ruins. Most of these Bible-skeptic views are based on unproven and incorrect assumptions of the archeologists—such as a world that is billions of years old—and the dating of archeological findings—methods of which are debatable in themselves. (Visit www.answersingenesis.org for more information.)