

Understanding the Old Testament 5 Exodus to Canaan

After the Exodus from Egypt, Moses led the Children of Israel toward the Promised Land. Actually, God led them with a pillar of cloud by day to shade them from the heat, and a pillar of fire by night. On the way there, Moses received the law from God on Mount Sinai. (See the video on Jabal al Laws) When Moses came down from the mountain, the people had already broken the Law before he could deliver it. They had thought that Moses had died on the mountain, and so they formed a gold idol calf to lead them back to Egypt. Moses broke the tablets in his anger, ground the gold calf up and put it in their water. (Deuteronomy 9:21) He returned to the mountain to again receive the Law.

The multitude could have made the journey in three weeks, but they had much to learn. They continually complained about their lack of water or food. Instead of turning to God, they would demand of Moses the solution to their need. God provided water from the rock and manna from heaven. Still they murmured against Moses and their conditions again and again.

Aaron, the brother of Moses, was appointed High Priest. The Law gave them a tabernacle with furnishings for worship, worship rituals as well as laws for dietary health and community relations. In the Law and the events in the wilderness, we have numerous illustrations of Jesus that was to come. Moses even predicted that God would one day raise up a prophet like himself. (see Deuteronomy 18:15) In what ways is Jesus like Moses?

These first five books of the Bible, referred to as the Torah, are essential for understanding the New Testament. Jesus often quoted from these books. The customs and traditions that set the stage for many of the stories are found in the Torah. If you want to fully understand the New Testament, you have to know the background presented in these books.

The Law of God gave more details about the sacrificial Lamb. It had to be spotless. The priest had to examine it to see that it was. On the Day of Atonement, two goats were taken. The priest laid his hands on the head of one and declared the sins of the people. That one was taken into the wilderness and driven from the people. This pictured our sins being taken away from us by an innocent. The other was slain and the blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat (atonement cover of the ark) in the Holy of Holies. It took two animals to picture what Jesus would do for us on the cross. (See Leviticus 17)

Upon their first arriving to the Promised Land, Moses sent in 12 spies, one from every tribe. Only two brought a favorable report. The others spread a word of fear and doubt. They had seen God defeat the enemies they encountered in the

Wilderness, but they were not willing to go in. Because of their consistent complaining and doubt in the face of all God had done, God sentenced them to 40 years of wandering in the wilderness until the entire older generation had died. He sentenced them to the words of their own mouth. (Numbers 14:28,33) Only Caleb and Joshua were allowed to go in because of their positive report.

Moses, himself, was not allowed to go in because of an incident that we should discuss. When the people were thirsty, he went to the LORD and asked what he should do. The LORD told him to speak to the rock. The first time this happened he smote the rock as he was instructed to do, and water came out. Let us read the second account and discuss why this was so serious. (Numbers 20:9-11) What does the rock represent? (1 Corinthians 10:1-11) Why was he instructed to strike it the first time and speak to it the second? Who did Moses say would give them water? The more we know, the more we are accountable for.

As they approached the end of the 40 years, Moses appointed Joshua to lead the people into the Promised Land. Read Moses' prayer in Numbers 27:16-17. The immediate answer was Joshua. How do we say Joshua in Aramaic? What is the ultimate answer to that prayer?

The wilderness wanderings are full of warnings and examples to us. Many see the 40 years as the life of man and crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land as our death and entrance into heaven. They are filled with warnings about the nature of man and the need to look to God without doubt or fear. The books of Exodus and Numbers and parts of Deuteronomy are exciting reading. There is a 12 sermon series on the web- Lessons from the Exodus (bible-sermons.org).

Joshua was a soldier. It seems that he needed a lot of encouragement to believe that God would be with him just like He had been with Moses. This time only 2 spies were sent in. Had he learned a lesson from the last time? Does this say anything about large committees? (you are supposed to laugh) They were saved by Rahab from capture in Jericho. This time the people believed God. Joshua met the Commander of the Armies of heaven. (see Joshua 5:13-15) Why is He for neither? Why is the ground before Him holy? When did we see this before?

The Commander gave Joshua the strangest battle plan and Jericho was destroyed, the walls falling down to let the army in. Rahab and her family are saved. She is found in the lineage of Jesus. (Matthew 1:5)

All of the city and its contents were to be devoted to God, but one man kept some of the treasure. When they attacked the next city, they were defeated. God showed Joshua it was because of the man who had stolen from Him, and He revealed who it was. The man and his family were executed. It seems very harsh, but men had because of his rebellion against God.

Joshua led the armies to victory over most of their enemies. (1406-1375 BC) The sad thing is that they did not wipe them all out as God commanded. The ones who were entrenched and more difficult were allowed to remain. The Children of Israel divided up the lands and spoils of war and had plenty. What does this say to us about being satisfied and settling down before all our battles are won? The enemies eventually enticed them into idolatry. As long as Joshua was alive, the people were obedient to God. After his death, they all did what they individually thought was best for themselves. (Judges 17:6)

This begins the period of the Judges of Israel (1375 BC – 1050 BC).

Here is a brief summary of the Names of God presented in the period we covered:

(one we skipped from the second session)

El Elyon – the Most High God – Genesis 14:18-22

Jehovah Rophe – the Lord our Healer – Exodus 15:26

Jehovah Nissi – the Lord is my Banner – Exodus 17:12-13,15

Quanna – Jealous – Exodus 34:14

Jehovah M'Kaddesh – Lord who Sanctifies- Leviticus 20:7-8

Jehovah Eloheenu- Lord our God – Deuteronomy 1:6,19-20

What do these names tell us of the character of God?

Why do you suppose a goat is used instead of a Lamb on the Day of Atonement?

What have we learned about the Lamb?

This section of Scripture is filled with types and shadows of Christ, but no clues as to the line of the seed. We will have to wait for the period of the kings for that.