

CONCERNING THE WAY

July 15, 2008



LESSON 24: EXODUS: JOURNEY TO SINAI

Introduction

This lesson will cover Exodus chapter 13 through 19, which covers the crossing of the Red Sea and the journey of the Israelites to Mount Sinai, where they will receive the Law.

- Dusty Rhodes

Exodus 13:17-18 *Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, "The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt.*

Through the land of the Philistines would be the short route. However, there were Egyptian outposts all along that way, and God knew they were not ready to fight battles yet. They were moving in a martial fashion, like an army would, in order, and may have been prepared to fight, but they weren't ready yet.

God didn't let them take that route, so I know they didn't cross the Red Sea at the shallow point. But they come out of Goshen and go down the shore of the Red Sea, and somewhere along the deeper part of it they are going to be locked in with mountains on one side of them, populated areas on another side, and coming in from the rear will be Pharaoh's army - so picture that in your mind.

Exodus 13:19 *Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the Israelites solemnly swear, "God will surely attend to you, and you will carry my bones up from this place with you."*

Joseph knew that the time was coming, when God would take them back to Palestine. We know that Moses' parents had faith, when they saw he was a special child and that God was still in their midst. Even now, as Moses and Aaron are preparing to move the children of Israel out of Egypt, they know they are going to Palestine. So they take Joseph's bones with them.

Exodus 13:20,21 *They journeyed from Sukkoth and camped in Etham, on the edge of the desert. (21) Now the LORD was going before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel day or night.*

This was a supernatural cloud, which was a visible representation of the very presence of Jehovah. In Hebrew the term for God's presence is *Sh'cheenah* or as we call it, the Shekinah glory. When God reveals His presence in this way, it's either by light, fire, cloud, or a combination of these. The Shekinah glory fulfills different functions in the Old Testament. The first function was to call Moses to be the redeemer of Israel at the burning bush. This second function is to lead Israel through the wilderness. It was a cloud by day that gave them shade from that Middle East sun. And then it became a pillar of fire by night by which it gave them light to carry on their activities.

Later on when the Tabernacle is completed, the cloud sets right over the Holy of Holies. And it becomes the guiding light of Israel. When it becomes time for them to move and camp some place else, the cloud lifts up and moves. When it stopped, they were to set up the Tabernacle, so that the Holy of Holies was under the cloud. It was the absolute presence of God. This is what amazes me. How could those Jews, seeing that cloud every day and that fire each night, still be that disobedient and prone to sin?

Let's bring it up to our present time. Are we any different? We are no different, we've got just as much evidence of the power of God and His holiness. But does it scare us? Not really. So we have become just about as blase about a lot of these things as the Israelites were in spite of everything that God was doing in their very midst.

Exodus 14:1-13 *The LORD spoke to Moses: (2) "Tell the Israelites that they must turn and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you are to camp by the sea before Baal Zephon opposite it. (3) Pharaoh will think regarding the Israelites, 'They are wandering around confused in the land — the desert has closed in on them.' (4) I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them. I will gain honor because of Pharaoh and because of all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." So this is what they did. (5) When it was reported to the king of Egypt that the people had fled, the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people, and the king and his servants said, "What in the world have we done? For we have released the people of Israel from serving us!" (6) Then he prepared his chariots and took his army with him. (7) He took six hundred select chariots, and all the rest of the chariots of Egypt, and officers on all of them. (8) But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he chased after the Israelites. Now the Israelites were going out defiantly. (9) The Egyptians chased after them, and all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-Zephon. (10) When Pharaoh got closer, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians marching after them, and they were terrified. The Israelites cried out to the LORD, (11) and they said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the desert? What in the world have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? (12) Isn't this what we told you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone so that we can serve the Egyptians, because it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!' "*

God has the Israelites basically running around in circles, so that the spies of Egypt will tell Pharaoh that they look confused, and convince him to go out and bring them back. Pharaoh and his servants change their minds, when they realize that they've lost all their free labor, and their economy would be drastically affected.

Can you imagine what those people must have thought under those circumstances, and to have their leader to tell them to stand still? Have you heard the story about the little boy who came home from Sunday School, and his biblically ignorant dad said, "Well, son what did you learn today?" The boy replied, "Well, we learned about Moses crossing the Red Sea, and how they came upon the sea and the Egyptian army was right behind them. They engineered some pontoon bridges, and they all went across and just when the Egyptians came up after them, they pushed the plunger and blew up all the bridges with the Egyptians on them." The dad said, "Wait a minute. Is that what they taught you in Sunday School?" The boy said "no, but if I told you what they told me you wouldn't believe it anyway."

Well, that is exactly the way the world takes these things. They want to somehow rationalize it, explain how it could have happened naturally by ordinary events. But these things are not ordinary

events. This is the miracle, working power of God.

So here again we remember the theme of the Exodus - a redemption, whereby God is going to do the redeeming. Israel is in a position where she can do nothing. They have no armed forces, economic, or political clout. They are helpless. Now, throughout the Book of Exodus we find that redemption is going to require a purchase, in the person of Moses, of course. Now, Moses had to be proven, as the legitimate leader and deliverer by virtue of the Signs. The rod became a serpent, his hand became leprous. All those signs were to prove to the Jew that Moses was indeed God's man for the job.

The person as far as we are concerned in our redemption process is the Lord Jesus, who in His earthly ministry also performed signs and miracles to prove who He really was. So He validated His claim, to prove that He was actually the Redeemer of Israel. Secondly, we've seen that God required blood of the lamb. It had to be placed on the door post or they would have never survived. Bring it into the New Testament and our Lamb is Who? - Christ, and the New Testament substantiates that. Let's go to I Corinthians Chapter 5. Paul writes:

I Corinthians 5:7 *Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch of dough — you are, in fact, without yeast. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

He was our Passover lamb. Now, if you will return to Exodus again, we will come to the third step in these next few verses. God is going to bring about their redemption, by exercising His power. Israel is not going to be able to build a pontoon bridge, they are going to have to wait on the power of God. For us the power of our salvation is epitomized at the resurrection. It's the power of the resurrection of Christ that makes our salvation possible. Otherwise the Scripture says we are yet dead in our sins.

Now, let's look at verse 13, it almost seems like a ridiculous answer to their dilemma. And again I want to emphasize there is no hope, and the enemy is closing in on them. Now Moses tells them to stand still, because there is nothing they can do. And only God can provide the answer.

Exodus 14:13 *Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand firm and see the salvation of the LORD that he will provide for you today; for the Egyptians that you see today you will never, ever see again.*

In other words God is not only going to let Israel escape, but He is going to destroy their enemies. Now how does that apply to us? Let's go back to the New Testament starting with I Corinthians:

I Corinthians 1:18 *For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

Do you know that Paul never mentions Bethlehem? He never mentions the birth of Christ, or his earthly ministry, or miracles. Why? Because Paul only has one message, and that is the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ. That's the Gospel; and the very core of his whole message throughout all of his Epistles. And here he is referring to it again. For the preaching of the Cross... Do you see that? Not the preaching of Christ and His miracles.

Sometimes I hear people say you have to go by what Jesus said. Be careful how you say that. You've got to realize that what Jesus said in His earthly ministry, He said to the Jew under the Law. **Don't**

get caught up in tradition or emotions, but think about it. When you go to the Epistles of Paul, he is revealing to us the very words of the same Jesus, but now from His glorified, ascended position as the resurrected Lord and Savior. **Now that makes a big difference.**

This is why Paul never refers back to Christ's earthly ministry, but only to the resurrected Christ. So he says the preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, in other words, to those that just simply reject it and ridicule it. Many people try to say, "What has something that took place 2,000 years ago got to do with me today? Well, it's got everything to do with us today because it's the eternal God who was on that Cross.

And to us who are being saved it is the power of God. Just as sure as God opened the Red Sea by His power, God also exercises His power, not only in resurrecting Christ from the dead, but bringing us out of our deadness in sin and slavery to it. Then come on down to verse 24:

1 Corinthians 1:24 *But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

So we have to rely upon that power. Let's go to Ephesians. We're going to see almost all three aspects of these three steps in the redemption of Israel, right here in Ephesians Chapter 1. Paul is writing to the Gentile believers in the area in which he had ministered throughout the book of Acts there in the western end of Asia Minor, what we know today as Turkey.

Ephesians 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace*

Him is Christ. And that redemption spoken of here says that we have been bought back through His blood. I know a lot of people are repelled by that, but you have to understand that God in His Sovereign way of doing things, decided that it would be through the shed blood that He would be able to forgive sin and NO OTHER WAY. We just have to take that by faith. I have a personal idea why He chose the blood. Life is in the blood.

So God has mandated that there can be no salvation, no forgiveness, without the shedding of blood. So here it is. We have redemption through His blood and not only are we redeemed, but we are also forgiven of our sins according to what we deserve? No, that's not what it says. It's according to His grace. His unmerited favor. None of us deserve it, but it's by His grace that He has seen fit to do it.

Ephesians 1:12 *so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, would be to the praise of his glory.*

How many people just get saved as a fire escape? I'm afraid too many times this is especially true when we have children saved. They just don't want to go to hell. They want to go to Heaven. Well, there's nothing wrong with that, of course. But we're not just saved to escape hell. We're not saved just to go to Heaven. We're saved for what? To be to the praise of His glory in this life. Right now! This is why God has paid the price of our redemption, so that we can be to the praise of His glory, those of us who first trusted in Christ. We believed. It doesn't say, "To you who are baptized and join a church." It doesn't say, "To you who have done good works." It says, "To those who have praised Him and have brought Him glory." Now let's go on:

Ephesians 1:13-14 *And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation) — when*

you believed in Christ — you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, (14) who is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory.

Watch the sequence here. He said, "...when you heard the word of truth..." How many times have I heard someone say, "Well, I have always been a Christian." Does that fit this? Were you a Christian before you heard the Word of Truth? Impossible! I've heard people use that expression. Was Israel always free? No! **Israel had to come to the place where she recognized there is nothing she can do.** She's doomed. Until what? The power of God enters in, and that's her escape. Now, it's the same way with our salvation. Every last one of us were separated from God. We were in the bondage of sin and we had to come to that place where the power of God enters in.

There is no way I could have been saved by something some other person did for me. I had to hear the Word of Truth. So remember neither could Israel move out of that slave experience except for the power of God. Now they are going to, by faith, walk through. But yet, God exerts his power while they could do nothing. And that is where you and I are. But we have to come to the place where we recognize our hopelessness. There is nothing you and I can do to get us out of that hopeless state of being lost in sin.

And then what did God do? He sealed us, with the promised Holy Spirit. **Paul says throughout all of his Epistles, that the moment we believe the Gospel we were saved, born again, and the Holy Spirit then indwells us, He empowers us, and He keeps us.** Let's look at just a few more verses. Again I want to take you back to the hopelessness of Israel, and the hopelessness of a lost person, figuratively speaking, as we are encamped on the shores of the Red Sea.

Ephesians 2:1-3 *And although you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you formerly lived according to this world's present path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience, (3) among whom all of us also formerly lived out our lives in the cravings of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest...*

That's a picture of where Israel was on the banks of the Red Sea, and where we were.

Ephesians 2:4-5 *But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, (5) even though we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you are saved!*

Look at those first two words. "But God..." Oh, don't lose that. Paul doesn't say, "But you," or "But I," But What? "But God." Come right back to the Red Sea again. Here was Israel. "Stand still," Moses says, "and see the salvation of God." It looks hopeless, there is nothing we can do. But God. And what's God going to do? Open the Red Sea. And that's exactly what He has done for us, and we walk through on dry ground. Not by anything we have done, or deserve, but all because of what Christ has done for us, and through us. Now we'll end this sidebar with two verses some of you know well, and doesn't get any plainer than this:

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; (9) it is not from works, so that no one can boast.*

Now, let's pick up again in the Book of Exodus Chapter 14.

Exodus 14:19-28 *The angel of God, who was going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. (20) It came between the Egyptian camp and the Israelite camp; it was a dark cloud and it lit up the night so that one camp did not come near the other the whole night. (21) Moses stretched out his hand toward the sea, and the LORD drove the sea apart by a strong east wind all that night, and he made the sea into dry land, and the water was divided. (22) So the Israelites went through the middle of the sea on dry ground, the water forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. (23) The Egyptians chased them and followed them into the middle of the sea — all the horses of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. (24) In the morning watch the LORD looked down on the Egyptian army through the pillar of fire and cloud, and he threw the Egyptian army into a panic. (25) He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving, and the Egyptians said, "Let's flee from Israel, for the LORD fights for them against Egypt!" (26) The LORD said to Moses, "Extend your hand toward the sea, so that the waters may flow back on the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen!" (27) So Moses extended his hand toward the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state when the sun began to rise. Now the Egyptians were fleeing before it, but the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the middle of the sea. (28) The water returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the army of Pharaoh that was coming after the Israelites into the sea — not so much as one of them survived!*

Notice it says the angel of God, which means the 2nd person of the Trinity. It seems that on the side of the Egyptian camp it was pitch black, being enveloped in a black cloud, and that's why the Egyptians don't attack all night. So here the Shekinah glory protects Israel.

What an awesome sight it must have been to walk through those walls of water on dry ground! I imagine no one just moseyed along, for fear the water would come crashing down on them. Then the Egyptian army figures if the Israelites can do it, so can they, and they chase them. Then the Shekinah glory destroys the army - throwing them into a panic, jamming their wheels, and then letting the water go back on top of them. It's possible that God let the water come seeping back in the channel at first, instead of crashing in, thereby causing a panic among the army and making the way muddy, which jammed and broke the chariot wheels.

Now, the Scripture does not indicate whether Pharaoh himself led his armies, I doubt if he did. We don't know whether Pharaoh himself was drowned, but God completely destroyed the whole army. See Psalm 106:7-11 for a confirmation of this. And in verse 29, it makes it clear once again:

Exodus 14:29-31 *But the Israelites walked on dry ground in the middle of the sea, the water forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. (30) So the LORD saved Israel on that day from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of the sea. (31) When Israel saw the great power that the LORD had exercised over the Egyptians, they feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.*

I have to discredit the movie, The Ten Commandments, because you could never run three to seven million people, with all their livestock, through that narrow channel as they showed it in the movie. And I know they did quite well, with the technology they had, but I'm convinced, that not only did God move this whole multitude miraculously faster than the three-mile-an-hour walk, but He also must have opened the Red Sea, an amazing amount of distance wide also. He would have had to. But regardless of how He did it, we know He did it. The Scripture says so and we believe it.

Again, this is a picture of our own salvation. It is actually indicative of the burial of Christ. And coming out on the other side is resurrection. Let's look at a verse in Romans Chapter 6. You see here that Paul makes it so plain, that we too have to be identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Even as Israel was separated from Egypt, and went through that typical burial of the Red Sea, and though they didn't get wet, in type it was their burial. Their death to Egypt. And they came out on the other side, even as Christ came out from the grave.

Romans 6:4 *Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life.*

No water baptism can give new life. Only the power of God can do that. So I am convinced that **this is Baptism of the Holy Spirit**. Paul speaks of this in I Corinthians Chapter 12. It's a baptism that human hands cannot touch; it's a baptism that a lost person can have no part in. In water baptism, we can never be sure of a person's salvation.

I Corinthians 12:12-13 *For just as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body — though many — are one body, so too is Christ. (13) For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether Jews or Greeks or slaves or free, we were all made to drink of the one Spirit.*

And here Paul is referring to the Body of Christ. Remember Paul always writes to believers. He's not speaking to a select group of believers, but **all** believers. Focus on the underlined phrase. How many are baptized into the Holy Spirit? **All**. Not just a few, or a special elite, or who have an emotional experience, or who live a certain way, but **All**. But of course that's according to God's determination of who is a believer, whether weak or strong, spiritual or carnal.

Let me qualify the Body of Christ, which of course came on the scene in the New Testament, after Pentecost. The Body of Christ began when the apostles began to preach this message of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. And by faith and faith alone without the Law. And as men and women began to believe that, then the Holy Spirit baptized, or placed them, into the Body of Christ, the Church. I don't care what denomination you are a part of it doesn't make any difference, the question is still valid: is every member on your church roll a genuine born again Christian? No. Remember we are not to judge, but we know for a fact that they are not all true believers. What about the unbeliever? Are they members of the Body of Christ? No, they can't be. They are unsaved. Only the saved go into the Body of Christ. **So the only baptism that really counts for eternity is this one.** The one that places the true believer into the Body of Christ. Let's also look quickly at Ephesians 4. Again, Paul writing to believers says:

Ephesians 4:4,5 *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling, (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism,*

So you can have your name on as many church rolls as you wish. But unless you are in the Body of Christ you are doomed. The Scripture makes it so plain. But if you are a child of God, you are in the Body of Christ by virtue of the placing it there by the Holy Spirit, as Paul makes it so plain. And then as members of the Body of Christ, we all maintain our individuality, we all have unique place in that Body, and yet we are all what? ONE. That's also why, when you walk into a room full of fellow believers, are you a stranger very long? No. I've experienced it and I know you have. When you are with fellow believers there is that oneness that any other group can never experience. Now, let's go back to Romans Chapter 6, and we'll begin with verse 5.

Romans 6:5 *For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be united in the likeness of his resurrection.*

The KJV translates it “planted” instead of “united”. The analogy is of course, the planting of a seed. If you were to plant a kernel of wheat, the first thing that happens is the seed dies. And then new life comes from that seed. Now the whole system of nature, the whole sphere of spring time is a picture of, death, burial, and resurrection. Everything that produces a seed in the fall, and that seed falls someplace, it will die, and when everything is right, it will spring up into new life, and reproduce again. It is the same way in the spirit. We must die. Do you remember the very first command that God gave to Adam and Eve concerning the tree? "*when you eat from it you will surely die.*" There was no escaping. Then Ezekiel comes along many years later, and he puts it in a little different language, but it is still the same law. He says "*the one who sins will die.*"

So, you see the human race is faced with no alternative, but that we must die because we are born in sin. And yet there is a loophole. **We can die in the person of Christ on the Cross, by identification, by faith, and by trust.** When Christ died, I died. And this is what Paul is saying here in verse 5. That is our blessed hope. We won't live and die like a dog. And we don't have to live and die with a prospect of an eternal doom. We can live and die with the prospect that the best is yet to come. **The greatest thing that can happen to a believer is to die.** In Psalm 116: 15 He tells us "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."

We don't like to face death, for a multitude of reasons. We don't like to leave our loved ones, and there are many more reasons, but in reality, death of a saint is glorious. It's on to something far better. But for those who have not experienced this identification, death is something to be feared. Death is a horrible experience, because it's not going to something better, but something worse.

Romans 6:6 *We know that our old man was crucified with him so that the body of sin would no longer dominate us, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.*

When Paul speaks of the old man, or the old nature, he is talking about the old Adam that we are born with. We who were dead in trespasses and sins, have now been made alive. Well, how were we dead in trespasses and sins? In the old Adam that we are born with. When we are crucified with Christ, then God, in terms of our position with God, kills the old Adam. We are no longer identified with Adam, but with Christ. And notice **Paul does not say that sin is eradicated in us, but it no longer dominates us, enslaves us.**

Romans 6:7 *(For someone who has died has been freed from sin.)*

An analogy of this is what if you had someone who is about to be convicted of a hideous crime, and all the evidence was against him. And they were about ready to turn it over to a jury, and he looks guilty for sure. But just before it happens the man dies. What happens then? The case is closed, it's over. You can't try a dead man. You can't do any kind of business with a dead person. This is the analogy that Paul is driving. If our old Adam is dead, can you any longer deal with him? No. That's the whole idea. He is dead. Again, that's the power of God. You don't work for something like that. This is all part of His saving salvation.

Romans 6:8 *Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*

That is why the resurrection is fundamental to our faith. Lots of people have no problem believing Christ's earthly ministry and about his crucifixion, but they have trouble with His resurrection. What about those people? According to Scripture, if they can't believe all of it, then they are lost. We have to believe that Christ rose physically, spiritually, literally, from the dead. And He is alive evermore.

Romans 6:10-11 *For the death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. (11) So you too consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

In other words, to get rid of that old Adam; How many times? One. The Book of Hebrews tells us over and over, that this Christ died once, and that it satisfies all eternity. Now let's go back to Exodus.

Exodus 15:1 *Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD. They said, "I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously, the horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.*

This is the song of Moses. And we won't take time to read through it, but I would like for you to read it in your spare time, because I think it is rather important. When you get to the Book of Revelation, and we get into the eternal state, we will sing the song of Moses, or something very like it. The song of redemption, that the battles are over, and we have now attained that to which God has been bringing us all along.

I will mention that in verses 14-16 a prophecy is given that nations of Canaan will hear about the events at the Red Sea and be terrified. This prophecy was fulfilled, as you can read in the book of Joshua when the Israelites moved into Canaan and began conquering the land. The nations remembered what had happened at the Red Sea and were afraid of the Israelites.

Also, in verse 19 Miriam, the sister of Moses, is named a prophetess. She is the first prophetess mentioned in the Bible. Other women called prophetesses in the Bible are Deborah, in Judges 4:4, Huldah in 2 Kings 22:14, the unnamed wife of Isaiah in Isaiah 8:3, and Anna in Luke 2:36. Now verse 22:

Exodus 15:22 *Then Moses led Israel to journey away from the Red Sea. They went out to the Desert of Shur, walked for three days into the desert, and found no water.*

Don't miss how big a problem this was. That many million people, and livestock, and to have no water.

Exodus 15:23 *Then they came to Marah, but they were not able to drink the waters of Marah, because they were bitter. (That is why its name was Marah.)*

It was totally undrinkable. The first thing I like to point out to new believers, whether they be young or old, is in just a little while after they have had their salvation experience, they will run into a bitter experience. It is just the way God works. We are never saved to walk a rose petal pathway. We will have trials and difficulties just like Israel did. Israel comes now down into that forbidding desert, and God doesn't just give them a basket of roses. They are going to go through some very trying times. And here is the first one. They are thirsty, and their livestock are bellowing for water. And when they do find some, it's a bitter disappointment; it's not fit to drink. Now read

on:

Exodus 15:24-26 *So the people murmured against Moses, saying, "What can we drink?" (25) He cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When Moses threw it into the water, the water became safe to drink. There the LORD made for them a binding ordinance, and there he tested them. (26) He said, "If you will diligently obey the LORD your God, and do what is right in his sight, and pay attention to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, then all the diseases that I brought on the Egyptians I will not bring on you, for I, the LORD, am your healer."*

An article that I read on this said Moses found a branch out there in the desert, and threw it into the water, and through some chemical reaction the water became fit to drink. That loses the whole thought. The tree throughout all Scripture, points to only one tree. **The Cross.** There is a reason why the Cross is referred to as a tree. It's because back in the Book of Deuteronomy it says "cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." And so the Cross was the place of curse. It was where God literally poured out his wrath upon our Passover Lamb. When they come to the place of a bitter experience, there is only one remedy. **The Cross.** This is what God wants us to do, whether we have been a Christian for years, or new believers. When a trial or tribulation comes, where do we go? The foot of the Cross. That is where everything begins and ends for us today. If we try to bypass the Cross, we are just as hopeless as these Jews were in Egypt.

And also in our experience, if we can just learn, that when tribulations and disappointments, and sorrows come, we should just race to the foot of the Cross in prayer, because that is where everything has been satisfied. Now after that bitter experience made sweet, Moses again leads them, with the cloud, and pillar of fire, and he brings them now to an oasis. And, like so many times when we have trials, God gives us rest when the trial is over, a time of restoration and refreshing.

This is one of those places where I need to mention the distinction between Israel and the Church. Israel was given specific promises that were conditional, and here we have a promise from God that He would keep them free of diseases if they obeyed Him. This is not a promise we can appropriate today, it was only for the Israelites for that period of Law. The church has different promises. God allows sickness in the Church for the purpose of determining and building Christian character. So be very careful in applying promises of Israel in the Old Testament to the church, like so many popular authors and TV preachers like to do.

Exodus 15:27 *Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there by the water.*

And here is a question I can't answer. What is the meaning here in the twelve wells of water, and the seventy palm trees? I'm sure there is something involved, but whatever, I think it epitomized a place of rest and a satisfaction of their thirst. I suppose one well for each tribe makes sense, but they would have had to keep moving, with that many people, to get everyone rested and watered.

I think that most believers are aware of the expression, "a mountain top experience." Something that has just thrilled you. But you don't accomplish much on a mountain top do you? It's a beautiful place, you can see the view. But where does the work have to be done? Down in the valley. So in the Christian experience, you may have a mountain top experience, but don't try to stay there. You must get down to the dirt and grime in the valley, where you will have the trials, tribulations, and

disappointments.

Exodus 16:1 *When they journeyed from Elim, the entire company of Israelites came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their exodus from the land of Egypt.*

You want to remember they left Egypt in April, and so now this is May, it's been one month. Also remember that in that area of the world it is getting hot. They will again be needing water. We are talking about a few million people, and livestock, so it takes lots of water.

Exodus 16:3 *The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this desert to kill this whole assembly with hunger!"*

Isn't it amazing how short memory can be? They didn't have it that good in Egypt. They were slaves, and under bondage. It almost sounds like they ate at the steak house every night, but that wasn't the case. And, they're complaining about not having food, when they clearly had huge herds of cattle and sheep. God will meet that need anyway, giving them both bread and meat from heaven.

Exodus 16:4-5 *Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people will go out and gather the amount for each day, so that I may test them. Will they walk in my law or not? (5) On the sixth day they will prepare what they bring in, and it will be twice as much as they gather every other day."*

God will use this situation as a test to see if the people will obey Him or not. Notice in verse 5 they are to gather twice as much on the 6th day, so it will last them through the 7th day. This is the beginning of what will become the 4th commandment, to honor the Sabbath, to do no work on the 7th day of the week.

Back in Chapter one of Genesis, God created everything in six days and on the seventh day he rested. That wasn't because God was all tired out at the end of that six days, but he was setting something up that would be for man's own good. I think it still carries on even unto our own day, that God still knows what is best for us, and that is, that we need one day out of seven for rest. We'll talk more about the Sabbath later.

Exodus 16:9-12 *Then Moses said to Aaron, "Tell the whole community of the Israelites, 'Come before the LORD, because he has heard your murmurings.' " (10) As Aaron spoke to the whole community of the Israelites and they looked toward the desert, there the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud, (11) and the LORD spoke to Moses: (12) "I have heard the murmurings of the Israelites. Tell them, 'During the evening you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread, so that you may know that I am the LORD your God.' "*

Here we see the Shekinah Glory, which is the visible manifestation of Jehovah, will provide sustenance to Israel. S. R. Driver says, "A brilliant glow of fire...symbolizing Jehovah's presence, gleamed through the cloud. The cloud shrouds the full brilliancy of the glory, which human eye could not behold"

Exodus 16:13-15 *In the evening the quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning a*

layer of dew was all around the camp. (14) When the layer of dew had evaporated, there on the surface of the desert was a thin flaky substance, thin like frost on the earth. (15) When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" because they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you for food.

Israel was to live on manna for 40 years. They learned to cook it several different ways in order just to stomach that same food day in and day out. The whole idea with manna, is that this is the very bread of God. Remember in John's Gospel, Jesus spoke of himself as the Bread of Life. Back here in Exodus, manna is going to sustain the House of Israel as they have come out of Egypt, and all through their 40 years of wilderness journey.

Manna, in Hebrew, is two words, and literally means "What is it?" In Psalms 78:25 it is called angel's food.

Exodus 16:16-21 *"This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Each person is to gather from it what he can eat, an omer per person according to the number of your people; each one will pick it up for whoever lives in his tent.' " (17) The Israelites did so, and they gathered — some more, some less. (18) When they measured with an omer, the one who gathered much had nothing left over, and the one who gathered little lacked nothing; each one had gathered what he could eat. (19) Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it until morning." (20) But they did not listen to Moses; some kept part of it until morning, and it was full of worms and began to stink, and Moses was angry with them. (21) So they gathered it each morning, each person according to what he could eat, and when the sun got hot, it would melt.*

An omer is about 2 quarts in our way of measuring. So, if anyone tried to keep any manna overnight, it became spoiled and wormy. Notice that some people, not trusting that God would send it again the next day, tried to take more, and save it until the next day.

Exodus 16:22-26 *And on the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, two omers per person; and all the leaders of the community came and told Moses. (23) He said to them, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow is a time of cessation from work, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Whatever you want to bake, bake today; whatever you want to boil, boil today; whatever is left put aside for yourselves to be kept until morning.' " (24) So they put it aside until the morning, just as Moses had commanded, and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it. (25) Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the area. (26) Six days you will gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will not be any."*

This is set up before the Ten Commandments are given. Now, there is a lot of confusion today about the Sabbath, and I will make a clear statement here. **Don't ever call Sunday the Sabbath.** Sunday is not the seventh day, it is the first day of the week. We know beginning back here, God is dealing with Israel, and He does set up the seventh day as the day of rest and worship. It will be incorporated into the Ten Commandments, but we always have to remember that we are on resurrection ground, and not on the legal ground of the Mosaic system.

Let's turn to Acts 20. Now, the Sabbath is a controversy with so many people and groups. There is one group that shouts from the house tops that the reason America is having problems is, we have forgotten about the Sabbath. We have lot's of problems, and a lot of it is spiritual, but not because we don't keep the Sabbath. Remember, Paul never instructs us to keep the Sabbath. We worship on Sundays because it was on the first day of the week that Christ rose from the dead. So, here in

Chapter 20, Paul is out ministering to the Gentiles. Let's go to verse 6:

Acts 20:6,7 *We sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and within five days we came to the others in Troas, where we stayed for seven days. (7) On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul began to speak to the people, and because he intended to leave the next day, he extended his message until midnight.*

It is interesting that we also have the same connotation in I Corinthians Chapter 16. I'm touching on this because so many people are confused about this. The Sabbath decree was under the Law, and it's also interesting that out of all the Ten Commandments that Paul refers to throughout his letters, the only one he makes no mention of is the Sabbath. In other words Paul will say, since the Law is fulfilled with love, therefore we don't steal, therefore we don't commit adultery, therefore we don't bear false witness, and he goes on down the Law through his Epistles, like in Ephesians, where he talks about honoring your father and mother. So Paul makes a reference to nine of the Ten Commandments, but the one that is glaringly absent is the one concerning the Sabbath day. That separates us from the legal system, and remember he's writing to Gentile believers.

There is another Scripture reference with this day of the week. Turn with me to Romans Chapter 14. And here again, I'm not taking anything away from our Sunday services, but on the other hand, the old evangelist John R. Rice use to almost deplore the Sunday morning worship hour. And what he was deploring was the fact that it had just become a ritual. It was that one hour a week, when people thought that they were fulfilling their obligation to God. I like what Paul says here:

Romans 14:5 *One person regards one day holier than other days, and another regards them all alike. Each must be fully convinced in his own mind.*

Do you know what that means? Do you just become a Sunday Christian? Do you just become aware of worship and praise once a week? When should we? All seven of them. Every day of the week, you and I in this Age of Grace who realize what God has done on our behalf, and we are unworthy of any of it, then is it too much to expect that every day becomes a day of praise and worship? That doesn't mean we have to go to a formal service, or have your church doors open seven days a week, but it does mean that your Christian walk should just not depend on that one day a week service for worship. But when it comes to the formal assembling of God's people, on what day does Paul refer to? The first day. I hope that may have helped a little bit.

Exodus 16:27-31 *On the seventh day some of the people went out to gather it, but they found nothing. (28) So the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to obey my commandments and my instructions? (29) See, because the LORD has given you the Sabbath, that is why he is giving you food for two days on the sixth day. Each of you stay where you are; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day." (30) So the people rested on the seventh day. (31) The house of Israel called its name "manna." It was like coriander seed and was white, and it tasted like wafers with honey.*

And then we have people who tried to go out and gather it on the 7th day, even though God said not to, that there wouldn't be any. From the time I was young and first started reading the story of the Exodus, I would see how over and over again the Israelites wouldn't listen to God, wouldn't trust Him, they would just do their own thing, and I would get so frustrated with them! God would call them a stiff-necked people and they certainly were! But I suppose we're not much different, are we?

Exodus 17:1-3 *The whole community of the Israelites traveled on their journey from the Desert of Sin according to the LORD's instruction, and they pitched camp in Rephidim. Now there was no water for the people to drink. (2) So the people contended with Moses, and they said, "Give us water to drink!" Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you test the LORD?" (3) But the people were very thirsty there for water, and they murmured against Moses and said, "Why in the world did you bring us up out of Egypt — to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?"*

Here they go again. That must have been quite a group of people for Moses to put up with. In fact, at one point he said "God these are not my people, they are yours." But you see Moses was only human, and I can see why he got exasperated.

You wonder if the people thought that Moses and Aaron had water and were withholding it from the people, or whether Moses was able to get it on demand. The people should have come to Moses to ask him to pray to God for water, but their action led Moses to say that they had challenged God.

Exodus 17:4-6 *Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What will I do with this people? — a little more and they will stone me!" (5) The LORD said to Moses, "Go over before the people; take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile and go. (6) I will be standing before you there on the rock in Horeb, and you will strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink." And Moses did so in plain view of the elders of Israel.*

Of course, God was also aware of the fact that not only were the people thirsty, but also their livestock. So He supplied all of this water, and I believe it was like a river that flowed down that desert floor, and they all had plenty to drink. Psalms 78:15,16, 20 also speak of this event.

Verse 6 is one of the most glorious verses in the Bible. Why? First we have to identify the term rock. So come back to the New Testament to I Corinthians Chapter 10. Remember that all through Scripture, when the word rock is used in any symbolic setting, it will only refer to One Person and that person is Jesus the Christ. He is always the Rock. In another place He is called a stone of stumbling. We need to start in verse 1 to pick up the flow. Paul is writing to the believers at Corinth.

I Corinthians 10:1-4 *For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea, (2) and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, (3) and all ate the same spiritual food, (4) and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they were all drinking from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.*

Paul so often related things in the Old Testament to Christ. Now, there is another one in Matthew. It is a verse that, I think, is twisted all out of context, in order to make it say something that it doesn't say, simply because people do not maintain a Biblical rule of order. And that is when a word is used a particular way it is not used out of that context.

Matthew 16:16-18 *Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (17) And Jesus answered him, "You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven! (18) And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.*

And again, we cannot comprehend spiritual truths unless God opens our understanding. That is just part of it. And that doesn't take away our free will, or make us bound to a decision by God, that we will go to hell or Heaven. Nevertheless, before we can comprehend spiritual truths, God must open our understanding, even as Jesus said that God did here with Peter.

There is a perfect example of using the term symbolically, Who is this Rock? Peter or Christ? Well Christ is, all the way through Scripture. How could the Scriptures suddenly make Peter the Rock? Well it doesn't. The Rock referred to here upon which He will (future tense) build His Church is the only Rock in Scripture and that is Christ Himself. Now, let's go back to Exodus 17, where this rock has been smitten.

There is also a great lesson in that as well, for you and I on this side of the work of the Cross. Remember, I'm talking about His death, burial, and resurrection. Why, or how, do you and I appropriate that finished work? Only by faith. But in order for us to appropriate these things by faith, what had to happen to Christ first? He had to suffer, and die. And according to the Old Testament, He was smitten. He was struck, like the rock at Horeb, for our offenses. Keep that in your mind when we get into the Book of Numbers, where the children of Israel are complaining again because of no water, and Moses is at the end of his patience. He takes his rod and contrary to God's instruction, instead of speaking to the rock, he strikes it. This is saying to us that you don't strike Christ twice, He has already been struck. The word in the Book of Hebrews over and over is "once." He went to the Cross once, and He does not go again, and again, and again.

So we should always remember some of these basic truths of Scripture. After He has been struck and has arisen from the dead victorious over sin and death, we don't appropriate any thing more by another crucifixion, but now we appropriate it how? By fellowship, speaking, communication. That is why God has given us the power of prayer, that we can now speak with him, we can praise Him.

References to rock or stone that speak of Christ are all over the Bible. And they emphasize different aspects of Jesus:

- **His Deity** - Genesis 49:24, Deuteronomy 32:15, 2 Samuel 23:2-3, Psalm 18:31, Matthew 16:16-18
- **The Stone cut without hands** - Daniel 2:34 - also emphasizes His existence in pre-eternity
- **The Stone that was tested and proved** - Isaiah 28:16, 1 Peter 2:4,6
- **The Foundation Stone** - Matthew 16:18, Matthew 21:44
- **The Stone of Stumbling, the Rock of Offense** (especially with reference to the Jews) - Isaiah 8:14, Romans 9:32, 1 Corinthians 1:23, 1 Peter 2:8
- **The Rejected Stone** (rejected by the Jews) - The Bible predicted that Messiah would be rejected by most Jews - Psalms 118:22, Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17, Acts 4:11, Ephesians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:6

Exodus 17:8-10 *Amalek came and attacked Israel in Rephidim. (9) So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." (10) So Joshua fought against Amalek just as Moses had instructed him; and Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill*

Who were the Amalekites? Amalek was the grandson of Esau, and the Amalekites became the

continuous enemy of the Nation of Israel. Why do you suppose the Amalekites began to do battle with the Israelites at this point in time? Remember the setting: they are out there in the desert, there is very little water and it is a tremendous commodity. And the Amalekites see this abundance of water flowing out, as a result of Moses striking the rock.

Deuteronomy 25:17 indicates that Amalek attacked from the rear, striking the ones who were lagging behind, so it was a very cowardly attack. Joshua is told to select men to fight - **this is the first war experience Israel has had.**

Verse 9 is the **first mention of Joshua**. Numbers 13:6 says his original name was Hoshea, and Moses changed it. Hoshea means savior, Joshua means "Jehovah is Saviour". The name Joshua translated to Greek then into English comes out to be "Jesus". Joshua will become a personal servant of Moses and ministered to him, he will be the one that brings Israel into the promised land.

Exodus 17:11-13 *Whenever Moses would raise his hands, then Israel prevailed, but whenever he would rest his hands, then Amalek prevailed. (12) When the hands of Moses became heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side and one on the other, and so his hands were steady until the sun went down. (13) So Joshua destroyed Amalek and his army with the sword.*

Many have used this as an example of intercessory prayer – but the passage makes no such mention. So far In Exodus the staff of God is the token of the power of God; when Moses used it, God demonstrated his power. To use the staff of God was to say that God did it; to fight without the staff was to face defeat. Using the staff of God was a way of submitting to and depending on the power of God in all areas of life.

Exodus 17:14-16 *The LORD said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in Joshua's hearing; for I will surely wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. (15) Moses built an altar, and he called it "The LORD is my Banner," (16) for he said, "For a hand was lifted up to the throne of the LORD – that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."*

God curses Amalek, repeated in Numbers 24:20 and Deuteronomy 25:19, and eventually wipes them out, though it takes four centuries to do so. There is a 2nd battle with the Amalekites mentioned in Numbers 14:45. In Judges 6:33 the Amalekites and Midianites conquer Israel, but God raises up Gideon to lead Israel against them. Finally, Saul, the first king of Israel, wipes out the nation of Amalek, from then on they exist only in small scattered tribes (1 Samuel 15:1-9,32-33, 2 Samuel 14:48). The idea of removing the memory of a people is an idiom for destroying them – they will have no posterity and no lasting heritage.

Chapter 18

In Chapter 18:1-12 we see Jethro, father-in-law of Moses, visiting. Remember, Jethro was the Priest of Midian. Midian had no king, Jethro as Priest was the leader of the nation of Midian. He brings Zipporah and Moses' two sons - Gershom and Eliezer back with him to Moses. So Zipporah missed all the miracles that God had done for Israel because of her negative attitude (remember the circumcision incident?).

Jethro sees this multitude of Israelites and he see them besieging poor old Moses with one problem after another. Jethro tells Moses, "There is no way one man can do all of this alone. You must set up a system of dealing with their problems."

Exodus 18:13-21 *On the next day Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning until evening. (14) When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why are you sitting by yourself, and all the people stand around you from morning until evening?" (15) Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. (16) When they have a dispute, it comes to me and I decide between a man and his neighbor, and I make known the decrees of God and his laws." (17) Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good! (18) You will surely wear out, both you and these people who are with you, for this is too heavy a burden for you; you are not able to do it by yourself. (19) Now listen to me, I will give you advice, and may God be with you: You be a representative for the people to God, and you bring their disputes to God; (20) warn them of the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. (21) But you choose from the people capable men, God-fearing, men of truth, those who hate bribes, and put them over the people as rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.*

We would probably say today "Moses this is going to kill you." Jethro was a Midianite Priest, and the text indicates that he believed in Jehovah, but I don't think he was a true believer, he probably thought of Jehovah as one God among many, being a pagan Midianite. He gives Moses this advice, but it seems that, at this point, it's not from God. Nowhere in the chapter does it say "the LORD said." He is out of the picture completely. This is only a man speaking, although it sounds very logical. There is nothing basically wrong with what Jethro is advising. When they came out of Egypt they already had organization. They have a good system in place by tribes.

Exodus 18:24 *Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he had said. (25) Moses chose capable men from all Israel, and he made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. (26) They judged the people under normal circumstances; the difficult cases they would bring to Moses, but every small case they would judge themselves.*

This spiritual man Moses, who has such a close relationship with God, listens to this pagan man. Did God use Jethro to give him good advice, or was God not in this at all? In any case, this plan was not implemented until after the Law was given at Mt. Sinai. Let's jump to Numbers Chapter 11, and Moses is speaking to God:

Numbers 11:14,15 *I am not able to bear this entire people alone, because it is too heavy for me! (15) But if you are going to deal with me like this, then kill me immediately. If I have found favor in your sight then do not let me see my trouble." (16) The LORD said to Moses, "Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know are elders of the people and officials over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting; let them take their position there with you. (17) Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take part of the spirit that is on you, and will put it on them, and they will bear some of the burden of the people with you, so that you do not bear it all by yourself.*

By now the Priesthood has been established and the tabernacle is in the midst of the camp. Now, all of that power for leadership that Moses had, God is going to take some of it from him, and empower

these 70 men, that they will have the same quality of spiritual leadership that Moses had from the beginning. None of that was indicated back there when Jethro came on the scene. Now God is ordaining this, it's from Him. Jethro gave his advice and then left; Moses took it for what it was worth, and it's not long after that that God proposed His own solution.

This event shows that God approves of a plurality of leadership, and this is also taught in the New Testament, for the church. The Bible never encourages a one man leadership style in a church. It also never teaches a congregational style of leadership. The Bible does teach a leadership of elders over the local body of believers who make decisions for the church. Never just one person, but a plurality of leadership. One man leadership causes many problems in a church. A pastor should never be in a position where he makes all the decisions. He also should not have to do all the work, there should be a division of labor, like we have here in Exodus and Numbers.

Chapter 19

Now, as we come into Chapter 19, it is the month of June. Israel is gathered around Mt. Sinai, and God is getting ready to give them the Law and then the Tabernacle.

Exodus 19:1-4 *In the third month after the Israelites went out from the land of Egypt, on the very day, they came to the Desert of Sinai. (2) After they journeyed from Rephidim, they came to the Desert of Sinai, and they camped in the desert; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. (3) Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, "Thus you will tell the house of Jacob, and declare to the people of Israel: (4) 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I lifted you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.*

You will see the names Sinai and Horeb used for this area. Horeb is the mountain range, Sinai is a mountain in the Horeb range. The Desert of Sinai, or Wilderness of Sinai, as it is translated in some versions, is a vast flat plain in front of Sinai, so the mountain would be visible to the whole camp of Israel.

It's going to be a while before we get to the Book of Revelation at the rate we are going. So I'm going to take the time here to jump all the way to Revelation, because you have a similar circumstance for a group of Jews, who at the last half of the tribulation period, will be fleeing away from Jerusalem, to a place God will lead them. It will probably be to the mountains of Moab southeast of Jerusalem, that He has this place for them. We pick this up in Revelation Chapter 12.

Revelation 12:6 *and she (Israel) fled into the wilderness where a place had been prepared for her by God, so she could be taken care of for 1,260 days.*

That is 3 1/2 years. Now who are these Jews that are going to be fleeing from Jerusalem? For this we need to go back to Matthew 24. We're going on a little rabbit trail, but it's interesting. Of course, the setting for Matthew 24 is Jesus alone with the twelve disciples. And they have asked Him in the earlier verses in this Chapter, "What are the signs of your coming again? What can Israel look for at the appearance of their Messiah?" Jesus is speaking here:

Matthew 24:15 *"So when you see the abomination of desolation — spoken about by Daniel the prophet — standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),*

Now, He is talking to the twelve and the Nation of Israel, whom they represent. There is no Gentile language in here whatsoever. We won't take time to go back to Daniel, but Daniel said in the middle of the week, or 7 years, the anti-christ will move down into Jerusalem. I think probably from Western Europe. He will move into the Temple in Jerusalem and defile it, probably like Antiochus the Syrian did back in 167 B.C. He will probably offer a hog on the altar at the Temple in Jerusalem, which we know will be rebuilt. And if you have been watching your news, you know that many Jews in the world are waiting for the Temple to be rebuilt. And according to Daniel, the anti-christ will then turn on the children of Israel, and bring in that terrible last 3 1/2 years of tribulation. Then Jesus says when you see the Temple defiled by the anti-christ:

Matthew 24:16-21 *then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. (17) The one on the roof must not come down to take anything out of his house, (18) and the one in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. (19) Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing their babies in those days! (20) Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. (21) For then there will be great suffering unlike anything that has happened from the beginning of the world until now, or ever will happen.*

Notice the different classes or category of people here that Jesus is referring to. In the Middle East economy, you will find that most of the better homes have their patio on the house tops. So here you have probably retired people, and they are not to come down to take anything out of their house. Then you have the working class. These are the younger people, the ones that are working outside the home. And then you have another category which involves mothers with little ones, and expecting mothers.

The winters in Israel can be adverse and miserable, and also Israel is going back under the Law during this time, so the sabbath comes into play again. It is interesting to read the accounts in the Jerusalem Post sometimes. There have been attempts in the Jerusalem Parliament, to pass laws that will actually re-establish the Sabbath in every category in Israel. And there is a lot of controversy between the secular Jews and the religious Jews, as the religious Jews have almost mandated this to be. So everything is getting set in the Nation of Israel even as we speak. I think it won't be too long before they have the Temple and will start Temple worship again, and re-establish the Sabbath day. This will shut down all of their movies and night clubs and places of entertainment and business. And even in Jesus' day they could only walk a short distance because of the Law.

This is what Jesus is making reference to. Because they will be required to go many many miles, they had better pray that it won't happen on the Sabbath. It will be just like leaving Egypt the night of the Passover. These Jews are suddenly going to realize that the one they thought they could trust, the one they had signed that treaty 3 1/2 years earlier, turns out to be their mortal enemy. So this mixed escaping remnant, a complete cross-section of the Jewish society, will gather and make their flight out of Jerusalem on foot, heading for the mountains Southeast of Jerusalem.

This last 3 1/2 years is going to be the most awful time in all of human history. We cannot even imagine what it will be like. But this escaping group of Jews are the ones referred to in Chapter 12 of Revelation. They are going to their place in the wilderness, where the Godhead is going to protect and feed them.

Revelation 12:13-14 *Now when the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. (14) But the woman was given the two*

wings of a giant eagle so that she could fly out into the wilderness, to the place God prepared for her, where she is taken care of — away from the presence of the serpent — for a time, times, and half a time.

Of course the dragon in Scripture is always in reference to Satan who has been cast out of heaven earlier in this Chapter. He just turns on the Jew, that he had earlier given permission to have the Temple worship, and had been more or less benevolent to them. Now he turns in hatred on them.

And God will take care of the remnant of Israel, even as God took care of them in the wilderness with the manna, water, etc., for that last 3 1/2 years. And the reason I like to connect Exodus and Revelation is that **just as surely as Israel was isolated in Goshen from the plagues, so will Israel be isolated from all the calamities of the tribulation.** Wherever this group of Jews is being protected they will be completely insulated from it. And God will feed them, and protect them. At the mid-point of the tribulation so many things happen.

At the mid-point of the tribulation the anti-christ comes to Jerusalem (probably from Europe) but at the same moment Satan is cast out of heaven, and he indwells the anti-christ. Now, this has happened before and a good example is Judas - when Satan entered in and literally took over the man Judas, and used him. So Satan will also indwell the anti-christ and will control him. When Satan, in the man anti-christ, sees this escaping group of Jews, probably quite a few thousand of them, what does he do? - Just like Pharaoh did when he sent an army after them from Egypt.

Revelation 12:15-16 *Then the serpent spouted water like a river out of his mouth after the woman in an attempt to sweep her away by a flood, (16) but the earth came to her rescue; the ground opened up and swallowed the river that the dragon had spewed from his mouth.*

Always remember that there is symbolic language in Revelation, and it's pretty obvious when you see it. This does not mean it is not speaking of literal events, but the apostle John is describing future events in the best way he can, probably not understanding some of the things he sees. We can assume that this flood is some kind of army that the anti-Christ sends after the escaping Jews. Just as sure as Pharaoh saw Israel escaping and sent an army after them, the anti-christ will do the same thing. But God intervenes, even as he did at the Red Sea by drowning all the Egyptians.

Just before the armed forces get to the escaping Jews, the earth opens up in a deep crevice and just literally swallows them up. You may think that is just too hard to believe. Is it? That is no harder than believing that God opened the Red Sea and drowned them. Remember the Scriptures says "with God all things are possible." So as these Jews are escaping, they will go out as if they have wings like a eagle. Remember that what God said happened in Egypt. And how did they leave Egypt? They walked. It was so miraculous the way God did it that it seemed like they took wings and flew. And so it will be that way again, by a miraculous, Sovereign God. Now, let's come back again to Exodus Chapter 19, to continue our study.

Exodus 19:5 *And now, if you will diligently listen to me and keep my covenant, then you will be my special possession out of all the nations, for all the earth is mine,*

He says Israel will be a special possession, or treasure, above all people. How can God designate one nation to be above all others? Because He is Sovereign. What does the rest of the verse say? Because "all the earth is mine." **The whole concept of the "chosen people" came from these verses.**

Some people may accuse me of making too much of the Nation of Israel. How can you? You can't make too much of them. This whole world revolves around God and His chosen people Israel. And I know they are out there today in a blindness, and dispersion, but they are still in the news, three times a day, seven days a week, Why? Because they are the very vortex of all of God's dealing with the nations. Oh, if only our politicians could recognize it. They can not stab Israel in the back and get away with it. They can't ignore them and hope they go away. Jerusalem from day one, God said would be a stone of stumbling. And isn't that exactly what it is? The world today is in constant turmoil, because they don't know what to do with Jerusalem. And **the reason they don't know what to do with Jerusalem is that they don't know the Bible.**

Exodus 19:6 *and you will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you will speak to the Israelites."*

Remember that the kingdom, is the kingdom, is the kingdom. What kingdom? That kingdom that is coming on earth, which Christ will one day rule, not just the Nation of Israel. Although they will be the apple of His eye, and will be the greatest nation on earth, when that kingdom comes in. But it's the only kingdom that the Scripture is looking forward to. Granted, you and I as Grace Age Believers, are already members of the kingdom. And it is now in heaven. But where is that kingdom coming to? Back on the earth. So always remember that the kingdom is the kingdom is the kingdom unless the text designates something else.

Now, what is a priest? A go-between. Between man and God. For Israel to become that kingdom of priests (go- between) naturally they are not going to be a go-between themselves and God, for they have God. So who are they going to have to be the go-between for? The Gentiles. A lot of people can't understand this coming out of the Old Testament, that the whole purpose of setting aside the Nation of Israel was to be the vehicle to bring these pagan Gentiles to a knowledge of Israel's Messiah. Now keep that concept in your mind as you come all the way through the Old Testament. God is preparing the Nation of Israel to funnel back into the main river of humanity, and bring the Gentiles to a knowledge of their King and God.

Turn to Acts 2, and here Peter is preaching that Pentecost sermon, but to whom is he preaching? Jews only. Remember he is still on Covenant grounds. He is still referring, in Chapter 3, to the fact that you are the children of the Covenant, which God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now, we as Gentiles are not under those Covenant promises. That was strictly Jew only. Here, Peter, preaching on Covenant grounds says:

Acts 2:22 *"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man clearly attested to you by God with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs that God performed among you through him, just as you yourselves know —*

Now, I'm not an English major, but I can read English, and I don't see any mention of Gentiles here. He only says "Men of Israel,...." and that's all. And then from verse 25-30 he goes back to the Old Testament and quotes David. David meant everything to a Jew. Did he mean anything to the Romans or Greeks? No. So you see this was all Jewish oriented. Now come down to verse 36:

Acts 2:36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know beyond a doubt that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ."*

All the house of Israel...plus all of you Gentiles? No, it doesn't say that.

Acts 2:38 *Peter said to them, "Repent, and each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

And that wasn't anything different than what John the Baptist preached way back in Matthew. Jesus and the Twelve preached it, and Peter is still preaching, "Repent and be baptized." How many? "...each one of you...."

Do you know what that means? Every person in Israel, would have to repent and be baptized, and then they would have become a nation of Priests. In Chapter 3, Peter is still preaching to the same kind of a crowd, his language is identical, and here Peter and John go up to the Temple in verse 1. And as soon as you see the word Temple that should tell you they are still under the Jewish Law, as the Temple is still operating. God hasn't told them to shut it down. Titus hasn't come and destroyed it yet. And so Peter and John go up to the Temple. In verse 26 he is speaking to men of Israel again:

Acts 3:25-26 *You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'And in your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed.' (26) God raised up his servant and sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each one of you from your iniquities."*

..turning each one of you... The nation of Israel had to come to that recognition that Jesus was their Messiah. Now had they done so, what would have God done? He would have sent back the King, and they could have had the Kingdom on earth, that they were promised, and then every Jew could become a priest. They would have gone out into all the Gentile nations. But they didn't, and as a result we don't see Jews winning Gentiles in the Book of Acts - except on one occasion (Peter and Cornelius) and that was for the purpose of the events that would take place several years later in Acts Chapter 15.

Exodus 19:7-8 *So Moses came and summoned the elders of Israel. He set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him, (8) and all the people answered together, "All that the LORD has commanded we will do!" So Moses brought the words of the people back to the LORD.*

I don't think they even realize what they are agreeing to, but they commit that they will obey God. Then God says He will let the whole nation hear His voice, in order to remove any doubt that Moses is the one God has chosen, and Moses must be believed when he speaks.

Exodus 19:10-15 *The LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and make them wash their clothes (11) and be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (12) You must set boundaries for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves not to go up on the mountain nor touch its edge. Whoever touches the mountain will surely be put to death! (13) No hand will touch him — but he will surely be stoned or shot through, whether a beast or a human being; he must not live.' When the ram's horn sounds a long blast they may go up on the mountain." (14) Then Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. (15) He said to the people, "Be ready for the third day. Do not go near your wives."*

B. Jacob (Exodus, 537) notes that as the people were to approach him they were not to lose themselves in earthly love. Such separations prepared the people for meeting God. Sinai was like a bride, forbidden to anyone else. Abstinence was the spiritual preparation for coming into the presence of the Holy One.

Israel is commanded to be purified, because Jehovah in some visible way is going to come down on Mt. Sinai in sight of the people. Because He is coming down on the mountain, He makes the mountain holy (set apart to Himself) and a boundary line is set. Mt. Sinai now becomes off-limits to man and animals.

Exodus 19:16-25 *On the third day in the morning there was thunder and lightning and a dense cloud on the mountain, and the sound of a very loud horn; all the people who were in the camp trembled. (17) Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their place at the foot of the mountain. (18) Now Mount Sinai was completely covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire, and its smoke went up like the smoke of a great furnace, and the whole mountain shook violently. (19) When the sound of the horn grew louder and louder, Moses was speaking and God was answering him with a voice. (20) The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.*

God, using the Shekinah Glory, becomes visible, in the form of smoke, fire, and earthquakes. The voice of God is like the sound of a trumpet. But, despite, the noise, God and Moses are able to carry on a conversation.

Hebrews 12:18-21 indicates that Mt. Sinai here became a place of utter terror to the people. The writer is pointing out the difference in the Mosaic Covenant, a place of terror, and the New Covenant, a place of acceptance and peace.

Then Moses climbs the mountain, the first of several climbs he makes.

We'll continue our study next time with the events surrounding the giving of the Law, and a discussion of the Mosaic Law itself, and how we relate to it today. God bless you until next time!

Dusty Rhodes