

CONCERNING THE WAY

August 5, 2008

LESSON 26: ISRAEL: WANDERING IN THE DESERT



Introduction

This lesson will finish our study of the Pentateuch, and cover the wandering of the Israelites right up to the death of Moses and entering the Promised Land. We'll discuss a little more about the Law, and then talk about unbelief, why Israel had to wait 40 years to enter the Promised Land. So the title is appropriate, as we'll be wandering around the Bible in this lesson.

- Dusty Rhodes

If you read the Law of Moses in its entirety, you'll see that the ordinances were given for the good of the people. They were to keep them safe and give them good healthy lives, and to keep order in the community. Some of the ordinances were actually far ahead of their time. Here's some examples:

Leviticus chapter 13 gives detailed instructions on how to deal with infections and diseases of the skin. As you go through the chapter you see it is said that the priest must examine all infections. It says that if the infection turns out to be leprosy, then:

Leviticus 13:46 *The whole time he has the infection he will be continually unclean. He must live in isolation, and his place of residence must be outside the camp.*

This clearly states the modern concept of quarantine. This concept wasn't even considered as a way to prevent a spread of disease for another 3500 years! It wasn't until 1873 that scientists were able to discover that leprosy was passed from person to person, and separating lepers from the rest of the population would prevent the spread of this disease.

Numbers 19:11 *"Whoever touches the corpse of any person will be ceremonially unclean seven days.*

Isolating dead bodies from healthy people wasn't considered to be important until the 1800's. God knew that already, of course, and proscribed a process of cleansing for anyone who had touched a dead body. You would have to leave your home and your job, and spend an entire week alone in the desert (Numbers 5:2-3). And you would have to take a shower of cleansing before you could go back home.

Leviticus 12:2-5 *"Tell the Israelites, 'When a woman produces offspring and bears a male child, she will be unclean seven days, as she is unclean during the days of her menstruation. (3) On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin must be circumcised. (4) Then she will remain thirty-three days in blood purity. She must not touch anything holy and she must not enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled. (5) If she bears a female child, she will be impure fourteen days as during her menstrual flow, and she will remain sixty-six days in blood purity.*

Centuries before they figured this out in the 1800's, God declared any new mother to be off-limits for at least a week. No one was allowed to touch her. Anyone who did was to bathe, wash his clothes, and stay separate from the camp until sundown. This isolation protected new mothers

from catching labor fever. Even though this is no longer necessary health-wise today because of better standards of cleanliness, many doctors today still recommend a similar rest period for a new mother to bond with her baby, and I believe this was also God's intention here in Leviticus.

Numbers 19:17-19 *"For a ceremonially unclean person you must take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin and pour fresh running water over them in a vessel. (18) Then a ceremonially clean person must take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent, on all its furnishings, and on the people who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, or one killed, or one who died, or a grave. (19) And the clean person must sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he must purify him, and then he must wash his clothes, and bathe in water, and he will be clean in the evening.*

Gentiles would not figure out how important washing was for health, and especially hand washing, for 3,500 years. But God prescribed detailed instructions here in the Law of Moses for the Jews.

Water was showered from a Hyssop branch. The washings were repeated over seven days. Between washings germs were killed by the sun and by drying. Hyssop contains the antiseptic thymol, the active ingredient in Listerine. The soap the Jews used contained cedar oil, a skin irritant to encourage scrubbing. The soap also contained wool fibers, making it the ancient equivalent of Lava soap. Once the soap was on you, you had to scrub to get it off.

Deuteronomy 23:12-13 *You are to have a place outside the camp to serve as a latrine. (13) You must have a spade among your other equipment and when you relieve yourself outside you must dig a hole with the spade and then turn and cover your excrement.*

It wasn't until the 1800's, during the Cholera epidemic of the 1840's, that people finally realized that it was important to drain sewage out of cities and keep it out of the drinking water. If they had just followed God's instructions here, Europe could have prevented millions of deaths. Duh, separating human waste from human beings being an important health issue? Yes, it took us brilliant Gentiles 3500 years to figure that out.

Deuteronomy 21:23 *his body must not remain all night on the tree; instead you must make certain you bury him that same day, for the one who is left exposed on a tree is cursed by God. You must not defile your land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.*

People were still defying this command right up into the 1800's, leaving corpses laying in their homes for days, leaving executed criminals hanging for long periods of time, etc. The Jews knew it was important to bury the body as soon as possible.

We studied circumcision back in Genesis, it is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant. But did you know that studies have shown that circumcision helps prevent infections? A study of 200,000 baby boys in the early 1980s showed that uncircumcised boys were ten times more likely to develop urinary tract infections. The AIDS virus swept through Africa beginning in the 1980s and still continues to devastate it's people today. In 1988 scientists learned that uncircumcised men were up to 8 times more likely to become infected with AIDS. In Africa AIDS spreads mostly among tribes that do not practice circumcision. Where circumcision is common, AIDS is rare. So, again, here we have a command given by God to help keep us healthy.

I might also mention the commands about sexuality in the Mosaic Law. These Laws, along with the Bible's frank sexual language and positive messages about sex (example: Song of Solomon), have

been proven to prevent sexual confusion. Studies have consistently shown that the best protection against homosexuality is a family functioning according to Biblical principles.

So you can see that God's Law is good, meant for our protection and for our emotional and physical health.

Now I would like spend the rest of this lesson pulling out important and interesting events about Israel's journey from Mt. Sinai to the Promised Land. We've gleaned a lot from Exodus, but there are some more goodies to be found in Numbers and Deuteronomy.

First let's talk a little more about the Ark and, specifically, the Mercy Seat. Thanks to Hollywood, everyone's heard of the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was, again, wood covered with pure gold. It was just a little box (in Hebrew means coffin). Inside the box they placed the stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments. Then above that little hollow box was the Mercy Seat.

The Mercy Seat was pure beaten gold, because this is strictly the area of the Holy God Himself - not Christ in His humanity, but God in His Holiness. And it was shaped in the form of cherubim. Two angelic like beings, and their wings literally met over the middle of that little box. And those cherubim indicated a covering of God's mercy. And God's mercy is the only thing that could answer to that which was in the box, the Law. The Law is so demanding, and there is only one way that we can even come close to satisfying the demands of the law and that is in God's mercy. That is why we have the mercy seat. Now in order to wrap all of this up, let's go back to the Book of Romans Chapter 3.

Romans 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Every human being, going all the way back to Adam. We have all sinned - Jew and Gentile.

Romans 3:24-25 *But they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (25) God publicly displayed him at his death as the mercy seat accessible through faith. This was to demonstrate his righteousness, because God in his forbearance had passed over the sins previously committed.*

Some of your translations say "to be a propitiation" (propitiation is a great big word that people just stumble over and hope they don't have to deal with it again. It means the place where God's wrath is satisfied, and this is the mercy seat. Christ is our propitiation. And how does he become your propitiation? By Faith! He becomes our propitiation through faith in his blood, not His life. Not His three years of miracle working and sinless living. He can only become the propitiation through faith in His blood, whereby he can, "demonstrate his righteousness" (not yours or mine).

Romans 3:26 *This was also to demonstrate his righteousness in the present time, so that he would be just and the justifier of the one who lives because of Jesus' faithfulness.*

Let's put all of this in perspective. I have read all kinds of commentary on this, and most of it doesn't make sense to me. But I want to make it real simple.

1 John 2:1 *(My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.) But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One,*

Naturally God doesn't want us to sin, but He knows we are going to. "Jesus Christ the righteous One" Here it is again. Christ is the righteous.

1 John 2:2 *and he himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for our sins but also for the whole world.*

This is why I'm not a full Calvinist. I stand with Calvinists on every point but one, and it's a big one. Calvin maintained that Christ's redemption was only for those who would believe. They called it limited atonement. I can't buy that because the Scripture is so plain, that His death was enough for every human being who ever lived.

Let's go a little further. Christ became our sacrifice at the Cross. He fulfilled everything that the brazen altar could ever speak of. He became our laver of cleansing. It's His Word that shows us our needs as well as cleanses us. You move in further and He is the table of showbread, He is the Bread of Life. He is the Light of the world. He is the very sweet smelling incense. He is the Mercy Seat. He is the God of the Shekinah glory. But not only that, He is also the High Priest to present the blood upon the mercy seat in the very presence of God. Let's go now to John's gospel, and see how He completely fulfilled all of this.

Most of you know the account, how Mary Magdalene had gone early to the tomb to anoint the body, as was the custom. When she got there, the tomb was empty and the stone was rolled away. And she ran and told Peter and John and they come running, and they suddenly realized that Mary was right, He must have actually risen from the dead. Then I want to point out verse 9, which shows that Jesus and the twelve never preached our Gospel as we know it. They didn't preach death, burial and resurrection. They didn't even believe any of it themselves. How could they preach it? They suddenly realized that something had taken place and they knew that He must have been raised from the dead.

John 20:9 *(For they did not yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead.)*

Had they known that he was going to rise from the dead, where would they have camped out that night? At the tomb, and so would have all of His followers. But they didn't, they all went home and thought it was all over. Now come down to Verse 15, where Mary sees this man standing there. She didn't know it was Jesus and assumed it was the gardener.

John 20:14-16 *When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. (15) Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Because she thought he was the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him." (16) Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni" (which means Teacher).*

Here Jesus is appearing to her and she thinks He's the gardener. Now when you read something like that, ask yourself some questions. Does a gardener look like a ghost? Does a gardener look like some fog you see when they "beam" people up on Star Trek? No, a gardener looks very human, very ordinary. Don't miss that. Jesus is standing there; now I know it's probably in the pre-dawn and semi-dark. The last view Mary had of Jesus was on the Cross, remember? And that was an awful sight. The Book of Isaiah says no man has ever been so disfigured as Jesus was.

In that pre-dawn darkness she sees a very normal human being, thinking it's the gardener. I want you to get that straight because I want you to understand that Jesus, in His resurrected body, from all outward appearances, didn't look any different than anyone else. Remember also the people on the road to Emmaus. He walked with them. In spite of all their tears and gloom and doom, did He look so much different to them that they caught on that some kind of a ghost was walking with them? No. And He said, "Well, what's troubling you?" And they began to rehearse everything that had happened. They didn't catch on. He walked in the house and He sat down at the table with them. He must have eaten with them. They still didn't know Who it was. And then all of a sudden, He was gone. So now all of these things are what you have to gather here from just a few little words, "Mary supposed him to be the gardener."

How many times have you heard the voice of some famous character from radio or television or movie, out of sight in the next room and immediately you know who it is, without seeing them, only by their voice. It's the same thing here. Remember that Mary was so close to the Lord Jesus during His earthly ministry. She had probably heard Him call her "Mary" many, many times. And as soon as He speaks the word, "Mary", she knows Who it is. Even though she can't recognize Him, yet she knows Who it is. What do you suppose she was ready to do? She probably was ready to give Him a big bear hug. But look what He says in verse 17:

John 20:17 *Jesus replied, "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"*

Now that's unusual, because you get down to verse 27, which is probably a little later in the day:

John 20:27 *Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and examine my hands. Extend your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue in your unbelief, but believe."*

What's that? It's touching. He was for real. And yet to Mary He says "don't touch me." Now look at the reason. Look at the rest of verse 17.

You could call this the first ascension. The second ascension is, of course, in Acts Chapter 1, when He rose from the Mount of Olives as the disciples watched Him go. Now let's go to the Book of Hebrews. I think this will complete the explanation of what took place early that Sunday morning in time, yet also in eternity, as Jesus left the confines of this earth. Now those of you who have been with me ever since Genesis 1, you will remember when we got to about Genesis 17, that Abraham had a confrontation after defeating the kings that had overrun Sodom. He had this confrontation with a man who came from the then little known village of Salem, the city of peace, which is today Jerusalem. This man was Melchizedek the High Priest. Remember that Melchizedek was a High Priest forever. And Christ was a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and not after Aaron.

I showed you back in Genesis that Melchizedek was not a priest under the Law, or the tribe of Levi. He was a priest of all. He covered the whole spectrum of the human race. That means that Christ is not just the High Priest of the Jews but the High Priest of whomever we might be. So I think early that Sunday morning when Jesus would not let Mary touch him, He still had to immediately go into the very presence of the Father. Jesus told Mary that He would ascend to the Father. Now verse 11:

Hebrews 9:11 *But now Christ has come as the high priest of the good things to come. He passed through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation,*

Remember when Moses was instructed by Jehovah at Mount Sinai to build this Tabernacle? What did He give him? A pattern of the Tabernacle in heaven. Here it is again, and the secret of this whole context is that the Tabernacle was not made with hands. So this is not on the earth, or this creation, but in heaven.

Hebrews 9:12 *and he entered once for all into the most holy place not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, and so he himself secured eternal redemption.*

He entered ONCE (not each year like the Hebrew high priest) FOR ALL (not just some) into the MOST HOLY PLACE (the presence of God at the mercy seat) by HIS OWN BLOOD (and there He sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat), and so he himself secured eternal redemption.

I think He presented His own blood there in the very throne room of heaven. It's going to be there for all eternity. And every time one of us is asked, "Why do you think you're going to heaven?" our answer should be "Because of the blood." It will be an eternal testimony of why we are going to be in Glory.

A lot of people may go to a funeral of a believer, and come away disgusted because the preacher preached that this man will be in heaven. How in the world do they know that, because nobody knows. But that's not what The Book says. The Book says that "You are to know" and **the reason we can know is not based on what you and I do in good works, or anything else. It is based all upon that finished work of Christ.** The fact that He is your propitiation. He is the one who was the sacrifice. He was your brazen altar, He is your laver of cleansing, He is your candlestick, He is not only the mercy seat, but He is the blood of the mercy seat. He's not only the God of mercy, but the sacrifice.

So that's what I like to put on that word propitiation. Everything that was in the Tabernacle was fulfilled by Christ. And remember when we looked at I John where it says "...And if any man does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" So the moment we sin, God expects us to just simply confess it, you don't have to beg for forgiveness. You don't need to put that cliché at the end of your prayer, asking God to forgive us for our sins. That is from habit. Our sins are forgiven. But what does He want us to do? **Confess them. Call it what God calls it.** And the moment we confess it, the Lord Jesus the advocate, points to that blood, and says "Father, he or she is under the blood".

Let's go back and pick up Leviticus Chapter 16. The only reason I want to touch on this Day of Atonement is that it so beautifully pictured, just as we saw from John's gospel and Hebrews, how that Christ fulfilled in every detail this Day of Atonement. I think it is unfortunate that our translators called it the Day of Atonement. Because it was not a Day of Atonement for the Nation of Israel. There was no Day of Atonement for Israel until Christ died. This should have been called the day of covering. And the word in the Hebrew is kaphar, which meant to cover. But we will have to stick with it, because it's the term we have all become acquainted with. And even the theologians who know better, they keep on using it. But it is really a misnomer. In Leviticus 16 we will start with verse one:

Leviticus 16:1,2 *The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons when they approached the presence of the LORD and died, (2) and the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother that he must not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil-canopy in front of the*

atonement plate that is on the ark so that he may not die, for I will appear in the cloud over the atonement plate.

What is under the mercy seat? The demanding Law, and there is no mercy in the Law. Always remember that. The Law can do nothing but condemn you. The Law can't save anybody:

Leviticus 16:3,4 *"In this way Aaron is to enter into the sanctuary — with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. (4) He must put on a holy linen tunic, linen leggings are to cover his body, and he is to wrap himself with a linen sash and wrap his head with a linen turban. They are holy garments, so he must bathe his body in water and put them on.*

We skipped over these garments because of time, not that they were not important. And before he could begin that Day of Atonement, here it comes again. How did he have to start? He had to wash, and wash, and wash. In fact when we get a little further, they had to wash in running water, much the same as surgeons do when they prepare for surgery. But it had to depict a complete physical cleansing. And then he could put on those linen undergarments, and then he put on the holy garments.

Leviticus 16:5,6 *He must also take two male goats from the congregation of the Israelites for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. (6) Then Aaron is to present the sin offering bull which is for himself and is to make atonement on behalf of himself and his household.*

In other words, even though he was a High Priest of Israel, he was a sinner. He sinned just as well as anybody else. In order to begin this role of the High Priest (and here again is where Christ of course went in sinless, even though He took our sins upon Himself), Aaron had to kill this first sacrifice for himself and his family. He would take the blood and start in, and stop at the laver of cleansing; he would then come on through, take the coals from off the brazen altar, and put them on the altar of incense, and the smoke would be more or less his protection or covering. And as he would take the blood of that offering, and would come through the sanctuary, and once a year he would come behind the veil. And he would sprinkle the blood of his sacrifice (the bull) upon the mercy seat for himself and his family.

Leviticus 16:7,8 *He must then take the two goats and stand them before the LORD at the entrance of the Meeting Tent, (8) and Aaron is to cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and one lot for Azazel.*

Now he comes to the two goats and he casts lots. In other words I guess we would say that he drew straws to see which goat would be killed and which would be left alive. You know, we still use the word today, a scapegoat is somebody who takes the blame for somebody else.

Leviticus 16:9,10 *Aaron must then present the goat which has been designated by lot for the LORD, and he is to make it a sin offering, (10) but the goat which has been designated by lot for Azazel is to be stood alive before the LORD to make atonement on it by sending it away to Azazel into the wilderness.*

Now he takes the blood of the goat that is designated by lot to be put to death and he again comes behind the veil and sprinkles it upon that beautiful, golden, mercy seat of the cherub. I know a lot of people think, "That must have been just filthy with dried blood." But now listen, they didn't just sprinkle gobs of blood around. You know how they did it? They took their finger and dipped it in the

basin and just touched on it. So there wasn't gobs of blood upon that gold. But he would just simply take his finger and thereby present the blood. Then after he had presented the blood of the goat on behalf of the children of Israel, he would make his way back out.

I bet some of you have heard that the High Priest went in with a rope tied to one of his feet, and that in case he died, they could drag him out. That may be according to legend, but it's not in The Book. Now he did have bells around the bottom of his garment. And if the bells stopped tinkling, then Israel would have known that he was in trouble. But there's nothing in the record that a High Priest ever lost his life behind the veil. But it was serious business. Had they done anything one bit wrong, God would have stricken them dead. Had anyone other than the High Priest tried to go behind that veil, he wouldn't have come out alive. And so the High Priest actually did have bells around the hem of their garment. And as long as those bells were tinkling, those outside knew he was still getting along okay. But, let's get back to this goat that has been left alive. Down to Verse 20. When he has finished his work in the Holy of Holies:

Leviticus 16:20,21 *"When he has finished purifying the holy place, the Meeting Tent, and the altar, he is to present the live goat. (21) Aaron is to lay his two hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities of the Israelites and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins, and thus he is to put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man standing ready."*

Don't lose sight of Who is pictured even in this scapegoat. Christ has become not only our sacrificial goat, the One Who's blood was sprinkled, but now He becomes the scapegoat. Now there's a tremendous lesson here. There's a hymn that says Buried, he carried our sin, where? Far away. Well, the hymn writer picks it up here from the scapegoat. Into the wilderness where there was no way anyone could go bring it back. I think that's a picture of exactly what Christ did. Jesus, on the cross, perhaps somehow in the eternal dimension, carried our sins away as far as the east is from the west, where they can't be brought back. And, in a way we can't really understand, **literally suffered all the hell, all the judgment that every human being deserved. And after stepping out of eternity back into time, now on the Cross, He says it's finished.**

Some may say, "It wasn't really finished until he was resurrected." That's true. But, what Jesus was really referring to was the business of obliterating our sin, of suffering the sin penalty. Naturally, our salvation could never be complete until he rose from the dead. That's why I'm always emphasizing Paul and his writings. Because Paul says, "We know only Christ, crucified and risen from the dead." And remember, that's our Gospel. That was revealed to Paul from our crucified and risen Savior in heaven.

So many people concentrate primarily on Jesus' earthly ministry. A book came out awhile back by a famous author, "The Gospel According to Jesus," and the minute I heard the title I knew the guy was out in left field. You cannot be saved by the Gospel according to Jesus, because that is speaking of His earthly ministry. We have salvation only by virtue of His death, burial and resurrection. That's our gospel. There are a lot of people out there that don't know that. They just can't comprehend that there is a difference.

Anyway, the high priest then fulfilled, or he pre-typed that which Christ fulfilled as our high priest. And as I've pointed out now in all the aspects of the Tabernacle program, those priests were human. They died. There had to be others come in and take their place. It was exercised year after year after year. But the finished work of Christ, the word in Hebrews is ONCE! For this He did ONCE! And

He obtained eternal redemption for us. Never lose sight of it and help your friends and neighbors who may know nothing of this, to understand.

UNBELIEF

Let's go to the Book of Numbers. We mentioned before that seven weeks after the Tabernacle was raised up the first time, the cloud lifted, and it directed the children of Israel all the way up to the border of the Promise Land, the land of milk and honey. Now here we are in Numbers 13, and a lot has taken place in the mean time. We have had the episode of leprosy with Miriam because of her complaints. God dealt with it, but fortunately He also healed her. We also had the episode of the quails. Israel was complaining because they wished they were back in Egypt, so they could eat different kinds of food. Now let's read go to Numbers 13.

Numbers 13:1-3 *The LORD spoke to Moses: (2) "Send out men to investigate the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. You are to send one man from each ancestral tribe, each one a leader among them." (3) So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran at the command of the LORD. All of them were leaders of the Israelites.*

There were twelve spies, and Joshua and Caleb were among them.

Numbers 13:17-20 *When Moses sent them to investigate the land of Canaan, he told them, "Go up through the Negev, and then go up into the hill country (18) and see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, few or many, (19) and whether the land they live in is good or bad, and whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or fortified cities, (20) and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether or not there are forests in it. And be brave, and bring back some of the fruit of the land." Now it was the time of year for the first ripe grapes.*

Numbers 13:25-33 *They returned from investigating the land after forty days. (26) They came back to Moses and Aaron and to the whole community of the Israelites in the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. They reported to the whole community and showed the fruit of the land. (27) They told Moses, "We went to the land where you sent us. It is indeed flowing with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. (28) But the inhabitants are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. Moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. (29) The Amalekites live in the land of the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan." (30) Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses, saying, "Let us go up and occupy it, for we are well able to conquer it." (31) But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against these people, because they are stronger than we are!" (32) Then they presented the Israelites with a discouraging report of the land they had investigated, saying, "The land that we passed through to investigate is a land that devours its inhabitants. All the people we saw there are of great stature. (33) We even saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak came from the Nephilim), and we seemed like grasshoppers both to ourselves and to them."*

So all the spies come back with a fearful report except for Caleb (and Joshua, we find out later)

Numbers 14:1,2 *Then all the community raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. (2) And all the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had perished in this wilderness!"*

Always remember the setting. Here in the last thirteen months of time, they have experienced the

miraculous exodus out of Egypt. They've walked through the Red Sea on dry ground. They've seen the appearance of the Cloud by day and the Pillar of Fire by night. They saw all of the thunder and lightening and the fire on Mount Sinai. They saw how God could send a plague and kill 20,000 people and He could also come back, in mercy, and stop it. They have just seen miracle after miracle, and yet, here they come upon the very borders of the Promise Land; the land of milk and honey; the land that God said He would use hornets, as well as other means, to drive out the Canaanites, and He says, "All you have to do is occupy it." Now He says, "I won't drive them all out at once where you can't keep up, because then the wild animals might take over before you got there." But He said, "I'll drive them out just fast enough so that you can occupy the homes that they've built, use the wells that they've dug, tend the vineyards that they've planted. It's all yours. All you have to do is take it." But let's go ahead to Deuteronomy because you have to see this from Scripture or you might not take my word for it. Moses is speaking here of everything that has gone on before. And so after the fact, he is now writing a synopsis of it you might say:

Deuteronomy 1:19-22 *Then we left Horeb and passed through all that immense, forbidding wilderness that you saw on the way to the Amorite hill country as the LORD our God had commanded us to do, finally arriving at Kadesh Barnea. (20) Then I said to you, "You have come to the Amorite hill country which the LORD our God is about to give us. (21) Look, he has placed the land in front of you! Go up, take possession of it, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, said to do. Do not be afraid or discouraged!" (22) So all of you approached me and said, "Let's send some men ahead of us to scout out the land and bring us back word as to how we should attack it and what the cities are like there."*

So, as we discussed before, did God intend those twelve spies to go into Israel? No. God intended for the nation of Israel to go right on in by faith. Knowing that He would take care of the inhabitants, because He said He would. He said that He would drive them out. Now, how did they cross the Red Sea? By faith. Here they come to the same kind of a situation. Granted, they don't know what to expect. But God has told them that He would have everything ready for them. He would drive out their enemies and all they would have to do is occupy. Now this is what I want you to understand, that the sending in of the twelve spies was not God's idea. And Israel said, "Oh, we don't know. Can't we send in spies?" And God, in His goodness and graciousness, said, "Alright, I'll let you send in spies." But that was not His intention.

So, in verse 22, what are they really doing? They are saying, "Now listen Moses, we don't really believe that God is going to do what He says He's going to do. But let us send in men that can confirm, and they can tell us what to do." You see, they were taking things out of God's hands and putting it into the hands of mere mortals. Had those twelve spies come back and said, "We can take it." Then what would they have done? They would have said, "Okay, we'll go." But it was a sad, sad thing. Here the land of milk and honey was sitting there in front of them. Everything was ready, and they could have had it all, without one ounce of work. Of course, the picture here is that Israel could have entered into what the Bible calls His rest. See, they wouldn't have had to labor, they wouldn't have had to dig the wells and so forth. They could have just walked in and it was ready for them. That's why He called it "The land of milk and honey, the place of God's rest." But here they are. They're crying and murmuring:

Numbers 14:3 *Why has the LORD brought us into this land only to be killed by the sword, that our wives and our children should become plunder? Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?"*

What a hypocrisy. Is that who they were really worried about? No, these guys were scared to death of the giants that might be up there in the Promised Land. You know, it's almost amusing and yet it isn't because it was such serious business. Go to verse 28:

Numbers 14:28,29 *Say to them, 'As I live, says the LORD, I will surely do to you just what you have spoken in my hearing. (29) Your dead bodies will fall in this wilderness — all those of you who were numbered, according to your full number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me.*

We skipped the section on the census. They were all counted and from those numbers is where I get the number that there were anywhere from 3 to 7 million of them. All you've got to do is a little computing, because all together there were over 600,000 men of war. That's young men, unmarried, and then you compute all their relatives and families, and you can easily get 5 million people. That's why I make it a round figure of 3 to 7 million. The whole megaplex of Dallas and Ft. Worth, together. Can you imagine Dallas and Fort Worth, out there in the wilderness of Sinai? There's millions of them and that in itself is miraculous.

Numbers 14:30-31 *You will by no means enter into the land where I swore to settle you. The only exceptions are Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. (31) But I will bring in your little ones, whom you said would become victims of war, and they will enjoy the land that you have despised.*

Isn't that something? I always have to tie this in to today. Isn't that exactly where the human race is today? Everything that God has put out there for the human race, what do they say? For one reason or another, they've got a million excuses, "I don't want any part of it. I don't want it." And yet look what they're missing. That which God has promised and has made available, they have despised it. We're no different. We can't look down our nose at the Jew and say, "Well, you know we would have done things different." No we wouldn't. The human race is the same from start to finish. Come back to Numbers 14, verse 4:

Numbers 14:4 *So they said to one another, "Let's appoint a leader and return to Egypt."*

Now, that's a short memory, isn't it? You remember what the conditions were in Egypt? What were they belly aching about? They would say, "Oh our task masters, they're cruel." And they were. They worked from sun-up to dark and they got just enough compensation to keep them alive to work the next day from sun-up to dark. And yet, when they are on the very threshold of the land of milk and honey, they look back and think Egypt was heaven on earth. And again, aren't people the same way today? Sure they are. It's unbelief. That's all their problem was. Go to Hebrews Chapter 3. This is so appropriate for you and I right now, today, at this present time. Remember, the book of Hebrews is written primarily to Jewish believers. So the writer uses an awful lot of Old Testament experiences in order to make his point. Here he's quoting from the book of Psalms:

Hebrews 3:7-9 *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Oh, that today you would listen as he speaks! (8) "Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of testing in the wilderness. (9) "There your fathers tested me and tried me, and they saw my works for forty years.*

Do you see the setting? The writer is making reference to that forty years wilderness experience

that followed their rejection of going in at Kadesh-barnea.

Hebrews 3:10-12 *"Therefore, I became provoked at that generation and said, 'Their hearts are always wandering and they have not known my ways.' (11) 'As I swore in my anger, 'They will never enter my rest!' " (12) See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has an evil, unbelieving heart that forsakes the living God.*

A heart of what? Unbelief. Turn with me a couple of pages to Hebrews Chapter 11; to what I call one of the two absolutes that we have to confront. You cannot detour around them and you cannot compromise them. They are absolute. Now there are a lot of things in Scripture that I will tell people I don't get all shook up if you don't agree with me because there is room for disagreement. But there are some areas that there is no room for disagreement. And here's one of them:

Hebrews 11:6 *Now without faith it is impossible to please him, for the one who approaches God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*

I said that there were two, so I might as well hit the other one while we are here in Hebrews. And that would have to be back in Chapter 9, verse 22. Now you know, there are liberal circles that don't have very kind words about the blood bought way of salvation. They comment about it. And a lot of denominations over the past 10 years have taken every song out of their song book that has any reference to the blood, whether you know it or not. Some of our major denominations have removed all of the hymns with any reference to the blood. Well, the reason is that they don't like it. But look what The Book says. Here again is an absolute that you cannot compromise:

Hebrews 9:22 *Indeed according to the law almost everything was purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

There is no forgiveness. Again go back to the Tabernacle, what did the High Priest have to do every year? He had to present the blood. It was the only way for man to approach God. There is no other way. There is no approach to God other than the blood-sprinkled way. **So without faith we can't please Him. Without the shedding of blood we can't please Him.** Back to Hebrews Chapter 3 then, it all rests on their lack of faith. They could have had the very rest of God. They could have had the land of promise. But they turned because of their unbelief. Now down to verse 13:

Hebrews 3:13 *But exhort one another each day, as long as it is called "Today," that none of you may become hardened by sin's deception.*

Always stop and think. How do we recognize sin, and how do we deal with sin? One word. Faith. Because, unless we can believe what God says about certain activities or certain acts, we don't know that it's sin. But when God says it and we believe it, then we know what it is. Our whole daily walk is prompted by faith in God's Word. Think about it. When Romans 3:23 says that "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," that's the first step to salvation, to believe that I am what The Book says that I am. And that is, short of the glory of God. It's taking God at His Word concerning myself, concerning you. So faith is that which guides us not only into salvation, but all through our Christian experience. It's all based on what The Book says. Not what someone else says. I don't have to tell people, "Stop doing this and stop doing that" because as soon as they get into The Book and see what The Book says, by faith, then they'll see what God wants for them. I know that if you get people into The Book, you get them to believe in what God says, and many

problems will take care of themselves. But people refuse to study it.

Hebrews 3:14 *For we have become partners with Christ, if in fact we hold our initial confidence firm until the end.*

I know that a lot of people jump on that and say, "See, it says `if, and that's conditional." Well, this verse cannot be speaking of salvation, as there are too many other verses that speak of our security in Christ. This has to be speaking of our fellowship with Christ, our daily walk with Him.

Hebrews 3:15-16 *As it says, "Oh, that today you would listen as he speaks! Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." (16) For which ones heard and rebelled? Was it not all who came out of Egypt under Moses' leadership?*

How many escaped? Joshua, Caleb, Moses and Aaron. And only Joshua and Caleb entered the Land. But for the most part, that nation that was old enough to respond was totally in unbelief. This is hard to comprehend. Only a few survived that judgment in their unbelief.

Hebrews 3:17 *And against whom was God provoked for forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose dead bodies fell in the wilderness?*

It was only a few months previous to this that they had that horrible incident with that pagan, golden calf. But is that what God is concerned about? No. Because why did they worship and why did they dance at the golden calf? Unbelief! Had they believed in the God that Moses was dealing with up there in the mountains, would they have asked for an idol? No. See what I'm saying? Okay, but what was their problem?

Hebrews 3:18-19 *And to whom did he swear they would never enter into his rest, except those who were disobedient? (19) So we see that they could not enter because of unbelief.*

And you know that's the problem today, just as much as it was then. People will not, and for some reason, cannot believe the Word of God. Oh the intellectual community will try to argue it away from their highly educated position. But they just can't bring themselves to say, "But this is what God says." It wasn't their disobedience, but their unbelief.

Well, now Israel has really done it. Because of their unbelief, God is not going to allow them to go into the Promised Land, but He's going to have them wander around outside for 40 years until all of them die off and their children will then go into the land, led by Joshua.

The little land of Israel is between the coast and the Sea of Galilee, and the Dead Sea. Take a look at the maps in the back of your Bible, if you have them. Just off the corner of the Dead Sea is the city of Jericho, and Jerusalem is just a few miles inland. So this is all real close together. It's only about 40 miles from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan Valley. Israel is a tiny little strip of land. Down at the southern part of Israel is Kadesh, where they sent in the 12 spies. And as a result of their unbelief God sends them back into the Sinai for 40 years of wandering.

If you want to get an idea of how many times they took down that Tabernacle, packed it up and

moved out, read Numbers Chapter 33. That Chapter gives the whole list of their stops. But remember that was 39 years plus. As you will see, they will come out of the Sinai, and go in a circuitous route, through Moab, and they will end up coming into the Promised Land, not from the closest route, but clear around the Dead Sea just opposite Jericho. There they crossed the Jordan River, and just five miles from that river is the city of Jericho, which was their first conquest. Most people don't realize Israel did not come in from the south.

But for now, they are in this area of Moab, and they have just come out of their 40 years of wandering. And when the King of Moab saw that multitude of Israelites, he knew there was nothing he could do militarily, so he said there is only one way that I can defeat these people. He had heard of what their God had done for them, so he knew it would have to be in the area of a spiritual curse. He knows he can't do it; his armies can't do it. But he must somehow put a curse on these people. He knows that there is an enchanter, a man of divination, out there in Mesopotamia, to the east. And he is known for his enchantments. So he called for him to put a curse on the children of Israel.

Now the main reason I want to stop and take some time to teach Balaam, is to point out two basic facts. Number one, I wasn't kidding when I said there was from 3-7 million children of Israel. We will see that in the text. Secondly, to see how Balaam is the perfect example of false teachers. And if ever there has been a day that we need to be aware of false teachers, it is today. We are just being overwhelmed by it from every direction. People who spout off at what they think The Word says. And too many people are just simply being brainwashed without realizing that a lot of this stuff does not come from The Book.

Numbers 22:1,2 *The Israelites traveled on and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan River across from Jericho. (2) Balak son of Zippor saw all that the Israelites had done to the Amorites.*

They have already fought battles down in the Sinai, one of which was with the Amorite tribe which they utterly destroyed. They didn't have radio, television or telephones back then; just word of mouth. As the camel caravans went from Egypt to Mesopotamia, don't think they were any different from people today. They gossiped, and told everything they knew and had seen. So, by the time the Israelites get to Moab, the Moabites had heard all the things that had happened to these children of Israel.

Numbers 22:3-5 *And the Moabites were greatly afraid of the people, because they were so numerous. The Moabites were sick with fear because of the Israelites. (4) So the Moabites said to the elders of Midian, "Now this mass of people will lick up everything around us, as the bull devours the grass of the field. Now Balak son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at this time. (5) And he sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the Euphrates River in the land of Amaw, to summon him, saying, "Look, a nation has come out of Egypt. They cover the face of the earth, and they are settling next to me.*

When he said "they cover the face of the earth," he meant as far as the eye could see, there was nothing but Israelites. Now what is the most distance you could see to the horizon? 10-12 miles? But as far as old King Balak could see, he saw nothing but the children of Israel. Let me show you another verse. Drop down to verse 11:

Numbers 22:11 *"Look, a nation has come out of Egypt, and it covers the face of the earth. Come now and put a curse on them for me; perhaps I will be able to defeat them and drive them out."*

So, Balak makes this offer to Balaam of tremendous wealth. He will give him almost anything if he will only curse these Israelites; and by virtue of the curse, God will turn His back on them. Balak just wants to somehow bring the Israelites to a place where God would destroy them. We are going to find when we go to the New Testament there were some things Balaam just didn't understand. In spite of her wickedness and sins, Balaam didn't understand that the Grace of God would always overcome Israel's shortcomings. He thought God should curse them. We will look at it in a bit.

Let's go to Chapter 23. King Balak is still working on Balaam to bring about the curse, and Balaam is having some difficulty. I like to point out as you read these verses that just because the LORD Jehovah is dealing with Balaam and speaking with him on a face to face basis, that does not mean Balaam is a valid prophet. He is a false prophet. He used enchantments, and divination, and depended on the power of Satan to do what he did. He was not an Israelite, and not a valid prophet. So Balak takes Balaam up to a high place:

Numbers 23:13,14 *Balak said to him, "Please come with me to another place from which you can observe them. You will see only a part of them, but you will not see all of them. Curse them for me from there." (14) So Balak brought Balaam to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, where he built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.*

Pisgah was a very high mountain, and even then he could not see the end of the children of Israel. I want you to see that we are not dealing with just a few thousand people, but rather a multitude of Israelites. So God is bringing them around opposite the Jordan River and no wonder old King Balak thought he needed help. But instead of Balaam staying home, when he received the message, he goes to King Balak, because he can see all the wealth of Moab that is being offered to him just for putting a curse on these Israelites.

Let's go back to the New Testament for a little bit. We haven't taken time to read all that went on between Balaam and Balak. But Remember the King had offered old Balaam just about anything he wanted. But God immediately told Balaam, "Don't do it!" And Balaam speaks with Jehovah. Finally Balaam tells Balak, that he can't curse them because Jehovah is blessing them, and Balak gets all upset. But Balaam has another plan. Now the New Testament gives us a perfect description of the man in three separate categories. The first one is here in II Peter Chapter 2, and the whole Chapter, as does the little Book of Jude which deals with false teachers. We are being warned that they will come on the scene in the last days, and believe me, we are seeing them. They are coming from every direction and every hue and color. The average believer and church member today is totally confused, they don't know what is right or wrong. How can they sift out the truth from the garbage? I think that is one of the problems with our nation, is that the people of our nation have just lost all concept of the truth of God's Word. Now let's look at how Balaam is described back here in II Peter Chapter 2:

2 Peter 2:1-2 *But false prophets arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. These false teachers will infiltrate your midst with destructive heresies, even to the point of denying the Master who bought them. As a result, they will bring swift destruction on themselves. (2) And many will follow their debauched lifestyles. Because of these false teachers, the way of truth will be slandered.*

II Peter 2:12,13 *But these men, like irrational animals — creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed — do not understand whom they are insulting, and consequently in their destruction they will be destroyed, (13) suffering harm as the wages for their harmful ways. By considering it a pleasure to carouse in broad daylight, they are stains and blemishes, indulging in their deceitful pleasures when they feast together with you.*

See what they are doing? They are fellowshiping with church people, but they are filled with false teaching.

II Peter 2:14 *Their eyes, full of adultery, never stop sinning; they entice unstable people. They have trained their hearts for greed, these cursed children!*

When the Scripture uses the word adultery, it does not always mean physical, sexual adultery. Many times it is mixing paganism with true Biblical truth. That is adulterating the Word of God. And these people are masters of that. Do you see why people have to be taught? Otherwise they're going to be blown away like Paul says, "With every wind of doctrine."

II Peter 2:15 *By forsaking the right path they have gone astray, because they followed the way of Balaam son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness,*

Why couldn't he refrain from going back to Moab and cursing those people? He saw the wealth he could gain by confusing the issue. And aren't we seeing the same thing today. How many people are using the Word of God to line their own pockets? I think it is just as much an abomination in God's sight as anything else you can think of. They are using God's Word for profit. I know pastors and preachers are due their salaries, and I'm not taking that away from them. I'm talking about people who use the Word of God for no other reason but to enhance their own financial state. Balaam was in it for one reason and that was to make money. That is the way of Balaam. He wanted to cash in on his particular gift, which happened to be divination and enchantments.

Paul had to confront more than once the workers of Satan, who were constantly confronting the apostle as he was going into those pagan areas with the Gospel. Now let's also turn on over to the little Book of Jude. And here we have a second description of Balaam. The Book of Jude is almost a carbon copy of 2nd Peter, and he too warned about false teachers:

Jude 1:3 *Dear friends, although I have been eager to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel compelled instead to write to encourage you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.*

In other words Jude had intended to write just a little letter concerning the plan of salvation. But the Holy Spirit forbade him to do that. We are to earnestly contend. We are not to be obnoxious, but we are to take a stand on what we believe, and help people to see that this is the Truth, the Word of God. I never try to shove it down people's throats. We can't do that. But on the other hand we must stand for what we know The Word is telling us.

Jude 1:4 *For certain men have secretly slipped in among you — men who long ago were marked out for the condemnation I am about to describe — ungodly men who have turned the grace of our God into a license for evil and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Nobody knows what these men are up to. They can come into a denomination, or local church, and they are so deceptive that the average church member doesn't know what they are doing. He is going to explain how these false teachers are going to operate. Skip down to verse 10:

Jude 1:10,11 *But these men do not understand the things they slander, and they are being destroyed by the very things that, like irrational animals, they instinctively comprehend. (11) Woe to them! For they have traveled down Cain's path, and because of greed have abandoned themselves to Balaam's error;*

What was this error of Balaam? He thought that if he could get Israel to lose her separated position with Jehovah, and get them to sin openly, what would God have to do? Curse them. We are going to see that he succeeded. That was the error. Let's turn to Revelation Chapter 2. Here we are in the seven letters to the seven churches, and here in that letter to the church at Pergamos Jesus is speaking and he says in verse 14:

Revelation 2:14 *But I have a few things against you: You have some people there who follow the teaching of Balaam, who instructed Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel so they would eat food sacrificed to idols and commit sexual immorality.*

Peter called it the way of Balaam, Jude called it the error of Balaam, and here Jesus calls it the teaching of Balaam. And what does Balaam teach? That they could commit adultery, or idolatry, and lose their separated state, and it wouldn't hurt them. Now let's go quickly to the Book of Numbers again, Chapter 25. Now some time has gone by and God hasn't permitted Balaam to get away with it. But on the other hand he did get away with it.

Numbers 25:1 *When Israel lived in Shittim, the people began to commit sexual immorality with the daughters of Moab.*

Do you see what they were doing? They were breaking down the separated state. And now to Chapter 31. Why did the Israelites begin to commit immorality with the Moabites? Moses tells us here in verse 16:

Numbers 31:16 *Look, these people through the counsel of Balaam caused the Israelites to act treacherously against the LORD in the matter of Peor — which resulted in the plague among the community of the LORD!*

Now let's turn to Deuteronomy Chapter 7. The Nation of Israel is sitting out here in Moab, on the east side of the Jordan River, and east of the city of Jericho.

The King of Moab has tried to hire a false prophet to curse the children of Israel. He didn't totally succeed but he did to a certain extent, because he had advised the Moabites to put their prettiest young ladies and best looking young men right out there next to the Israelites and seduced them. And they did! At least several thousand of them. And then God had to do some cleansing, so quite a few thousand lost their lives as a result of their losing their separated position. But nevertheless, the Nation of Israel remained intact, so the Moabites will just have to put up with them until they cross the Jordan River.

So now very soon they will go in and occupy the Promised Land. They won't have the easy time they could have had at Kadesh. At Kadesh they could have gone right in, and could have had the whole land without losing a single soldier. But because of their unbelief they just didn't believe that God meant what He said. So God, in His wrath, turned them back into the wilderness for 40 years of wandering. When they cross the Jordan River and get on the other side, they will stop for Passover. And do you know, that Passover they will celebrate will be exactly 40 years from the Passover in Egypt. That is how meticulous God is with His timing.

Now the Book of Deuteronomy is written in that final two months, while they are sitting here opposite the Jordan River. But as Moses writes from that time frame, he's going to reflect back, and review everything that has taken place from the coming out of Egypt. So remember Deuteronomy is a lot of recap. In Chapter 7, Moses is dealing with the here and now. They are about ready to go into the land of Canaan. However Moses is going to give some strict commands from God:

Deuteronomy 7:1 *When the LORD your God brings you to the land that you are going to occupy and forces out many nations before you — Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and powerful than you — (2) and he delivers them over to you and you attack them, you must utterly annihilate them. Make no treaty with them and show them no mercy! (3) You must not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, (4) for they will turn your sons away from me to worship other gods. Then the anger of the LORD will erupt against you and he will quickly destroy you.*

Stop and think for a moment. Who was the classic example in Israel's history that did this to the extreme. On the one hand he was a righteous Godly man to the extreme. But on the other hand he followed other women and their gods to the extreme. Who was he? King Solomon. When I read the account of Solomon, as he dedicated that new temple that he had built (or least had been the architect and master builder of), and God so honored that man, that as he stood there to dedicate the temple, the Shekinah glory again came into the picture. That is how God felt about Solomon. And yet by the end of his life where is he? Do you know that he was guilty of offering little Jewish babies to the fires of the god of Molock? Don't think for a moment the average Jew wasn't faced with that kind of a temptation. And it is no different for us today. But we will discuss that a little later.

When we talk about serving other gods, and idols, the first thing we think of is the cultures, probably in the orient, who actually worship the idols of Buddha, and so forth. But listen, there is another idol that is sneaking in on the American scene faster than we can shake our finger at. The idol of materialism. Things can become an idol just as fast, and just as much as wood or stone. Some people like to say that traditional Christianity is outmoded, because we are living in different times than Bible times, and we're not under that kind of a culture. Yes, people change, economies change, societies change, but there is one who never changes. God does not change! God hates the same thing today that He hated back here in Israel's history. I think the American people have to be made aware once again that the God that made our nation what she is, is the same God that laid down these requirements.

To follow up this concept in Deuteronomy Chapter 7, come all the way over to Chapter 20. I hope you take the time to read the chapters in between on your own. Beginning in verse 1, Moses is

explaining to the Jews how they are to operate in warfare. However I want you to come down to verse 17. This is beyond ordinary warfare of occupation. Now he is talking about how they are to deal with the people who occupy the Promised Land at that time. Remember this is a Holy, Righteous, Just and Fair God that is speaking.

Deuteronomy 20:17 *Instead you must utterly annihilate them — the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites — just as the LORD your God has commanded you, (18) so that they cannot teach you all the abhorrent ways they worship their gods, causing you to sin against the LORD your God.*

Isn't that exactly what King Solomon did? It says it so plainly that after Solomon had married those 900 wives out of all the various pagan cultures, in order to satisfy the demands of those pagan wives, he built shrines, and places of worship to those pagan gods. And then he actually condones the sacrifices of little Jewish children in the fire. To me that is just incredible.

Let's recall something we've studied earlier, in Genesis 15. This is another reason to follow me all the way from Genesis 1. I have said so often, unless you have a good understanding of The Book of Beginnings (Genesis), a lot of these things are hard to comprehend. But back here in Genesis 15, God has just called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees in Chapter 12. And He has given him the Abrahamic Covenant. In that Covenant He has promised the man Abram, that out of him would come a nation, a race of people totally different than anything that has been on the scene. And that race of people, when they would become a nation, He would put them in a geographical area of land. He pointed it out here in Chapter 15. And then in some point in the future, He Himself would come in the flesh and be their Messiah and their King. That is the whole concept of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 15:16 *In the fourth generation your descendants will return here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its limit."*

Remember this? Why does God wait almost 490 years from the time of Abram's call till Joshua leads them in? Because the sin of the Amorites (that is indicative of all the Canaanites tribes) hasn't reached it's limit.

God has now given these Canaanites 490 years in all to turn from their evil ways, but they don't turn from it. Rather, they go deeper and deeper into their wickedness, immorality, and abominations until they finally get to the place where God can now tell Joshua to instruct the children of Israel that they are not to spare a one of them. They are so rotten, that unless you totally cleanse the land of them, it won't be long until your sons and daughters will be just like them. You have to remove the rot. Because unless you do, it's going to infect you and destroy you and then He'll have to deal with you. And that's exactly what happened.

Now let's look at Deuteronomy 28. And again don't forget the setting. Israel is ready to go in and occupy the land of Canaan under Joshua. And we are going to see that God is going to tell Moses to write his own obituary while he is still alive. But that is what Moses does. He writes the whole thing as if it was in the past, and yet this is the beauty of Scripture. God is leading every word, and this is what we call the inspiration, so that Moses can literally write the account of his own death.

Deuteronomy 28:1 *If you indeed obey the LORD your God and are careful to observe all his*

commandments I am giving you today, the LORD your God will elevate you above all the nations of the earth.

God is going to leave it up to them, to use their will. He won't make robots out of them. That is quite a promise isn't it? Here they will be the greatest nation on the face of the earth, if they are just obedient. I know that under law it was far more demanding than what you and I have to be responsible for. But it wasn't impossible. He wasn't asking them to live a life of misery to keep His commandments. They would have been blessed to the hilt. They could have been the happiest and most contented nation of all. Then He lists all the blessings that would come their way. Now I always qualify this by saying that we want to remember that in the Old Testament economy, God rewarded obedience with material blessings. This is all through the Old Testament. That is why so many of these great patriarchs were wealthy. God rewarded them.

Now we are being deluged today with prosperity salvation. And that is if you just get saved, then God will pour out all kinds of wealth on you. Some tell you to just send them \$50 or \$100 and tomorrow your debt will be gone, and within a short time you will be a millionaire. They can preach it they can scream it, they can do what they want with it, but that is not according to The Book. All God has promised the believer in the Age of Grace is a roof over our head, clothes on our back, and food to eat. Beyond that it's just his Grace and blessing. There is nothing wrong with material blessings, and accumulating wealth. But if it becomes a priority, then God will frown upon it. But, here in the Old Testament, God is promising that if they are obedient He will bless them in every way. But go to verse 15. Look at that very first word. Here comes the flip side, one of the most crucial words in Scripture:

Deuteronomy 28:15 *"But if you ignore the LORD your God and are not careful to keep all his commandments and statutes I am giving you today, then all these curses will come upon you in full force:*

Now verse 16 and following, instead of the word blessed, what word is used? Cursed. And He spells out how Israel is going to receive the wrath of God because of their disobedience. And, believe it or not, all of these things in the remaining verses have happened to the Jew. Most Jews today would violently disagree if you told them that the reason the Jews had been under such attack throughout their history, including the holocaust, was because of their sin. But it's true. I know that Satan is doing everything he can to thwart the work of God and, consequently, he does attack God's chosen people. But, on the other hand, they are responsible for their actions. And so he lists them all here. Be sure to read them in your own time. Let's go to verse 37, which is part of these curses. This is exactly what the Jew experiences in almost every nation on earth. Look what it says now in verse 37:

Deuteronomy 28:37 *You will become an occasion of horror, a proverb, and an object of ridicule to all the peoples to whom the LORD will drive you.*

Has this happened? Of course it has. And it's all because of their rejecting the love and mercy of their Jehovah God.

Deuteronomy 28:63 *This is what will happen: Just as the LORD delighted to do good for you and make you numerous, he will take delight in destroying and decimating you. You will be uprooted from the land you are about to possess. (64) The LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one*

end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, gods of wood and stone.

As you read this, keep reminding yourself, this is exactly what happened. This is written almost 1,500 B.C., and here we are almost 2,000 A.D. 3,500 years and it has come to pass to the exact word. I don't know how many of you are acquainted with the author, James Michener, but in the forward of his book, "The Source" he traced Jewish families from all the way back. Michener was always great on research, there's no doubt about it. He usually didn't even start a book until he lived in the area. But in that forward, he made the statement that, as he researched that book, he found evidence of Jews in every culture around the globe, including the Eskimos! The Book said that they would be scattered from one end of the earth to the other. Now verse 65:

Deuteronomy 28:65-67 *Among those nations you will have no rest nor will there be a place of peaceful rest for the soles of your feet, for there the LORD will give you an anxious heart, failing eyesight, and a spirit of despair. Your life will hang in doubt before you; you will be terrified by night and day and will have no certainty of surviving from one day to the next. (67) In the morning you will say, 'If only it were evening!' And in the evening you will say, 'I wish it were morning!' because of the things you will fear and the things you will see.*

In other words what were they doing? They were wishing their life away. It wasn't worth living. Now I want to show you the other side of the coin; the better part. So skip over to Chapter 30:

Deuteronomy 30:1 *"When you have experienced all these things, both the blessings and the curses I have set before you, you will reflect upon them in all the nations where the LORD your God has banished you.*

Do you see what God is telling them before it ever happens? Because of their disobedience, and unbelief, they are going to end up scattered from one end of the earth to the other. But God says.

Deuteronomy 30:2,3 *Then if you and your descendants turn to the LORD your God and obey him with your whole mind and being just as I am commanding you today, (3) the LORD your God will reverse your captivity and have pity on you. He will turn and gather you from all the peoples among whom he has scattered you.*

This is called the Palestinian Covenant by most people, but I prefer to call it the Land Covenant. It is still a part of the Abrahamic Covenant, but it says that the area of Canaan is still going to go back to the Jew. If only our politicians could understand this. That regardless of what they may try to do, regardless of how they may try to pacify the other nations of the Middle East, they might as well get it straight, that God has mandated one day the Jew is going to have her land back. Now you have to know history, and we know that after the destruction of the temple by Titus in 70 A.D., not only did God permit the Temple to be totally destroyed, but He permitted the Nation of Israel to be dispersed again. That was an act of God. A Sovereign act whereby He scattered them into every nation in the world.

But in our own time, we are seeing God fulfilling His Word. He's bringing them back. And they are going to have it. No one is going to drive them into the sea, like the Arabs promise to do. They are there for good, because The Book says they are. We will be looking more at that when we get into prophecy. Let's go to Deuteronomy Chapter 31. This is in the final 30 days of Moses' leadership.

Deuteronomy 31:14 *Then the LORD said to Moses, "The day of your death is near. Summon Joshua and present yourselves in the tent of meeting so that I can commission him." So Moses and Joshua presented themselves in the tent of meeting.*

Put myself in his shoes. How would you feel, if all of a sudden the Lord could just somehow speak to you, and say, "Get ready. You have about 3 more days and that's it. I'm going to bury you." That's what happened to Moses. He was just as human as we are. This is what God told him, and he is writing it before it happens.

Deuteronomy 31:15-17 *The LORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud that stood above the door of the tent. (16) Then the LORD said to Moses, "You are about to die, and then these people will begin to prostitute themselves with the foreign gods of the land into which they are going. They will reject me and break my covenant that I have made with them. (17) At that time my anger will erupt against them and I will abandon them and hide my face from them until they are devoured. Many disasters and distresses will overcome them so that they will say at that time, 'Have not these disasters overcome us because our God is not among us?'*

In the spiritual realm, you are bringing two religions together that have no business being together. In this case it is Judaism, or the Mosaic system, and any kind of pagan system. When they commingled, then it was a spiritual adultery, and God hated it. It's no different today. When the true Church, the Body of Christ, begins to commingle with other doctrines, and when the true church starts embracing these things, then it becomes spiritual adultery. And God is going to judge it. Never forget that.

Deuteronomy 31:21,22 *Then when many disasters and distresses overcome them this song will testify against them, for their descendants will not forget it. I know the intentions they have in mind today, even before I bring them to the land I have promised." (22) So on that day Moses wrote down this song and taught it to the Israelites,*

I'm going to give you a statistic. Feel free to check it out, I've read this, and I'm trusting the people who write these things, that they know what they are talking about. In the last 800 years, one out of every two Jews have been murdered; have faced a violent death. That is 50%. Think about that. It is hard to believe, but maybe not considering all the Jews killed in the holocaust and other tragedies in their history. But nevertheless, God had foretold before they even crossed the Jordan River, that all these things would happen to them. Come over to Chapter 32. Moses now quits his speech, and has given his song for Israel to remember.

Deuteronomy 32:48-50 *Then the LORD said to Moses that same day, (49) "Go up to this Abarim hill country, to Mount Nebo (which is in the land of Moab opposite Jericho) and look at the land of Canaan that I am giving to the Israelites as a possession. (50) You will die on the mountain that you ascend and join your deceased ancestors, just as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and joined his deceased ancestors,*

After all that Moses has gone through, why in the world can't he lead them into the Promised Land? He's not old so far as his activity is concerned. It says that his eye wasn't dimmed, and his physical strength hadn't wavered. So it wasn't because he was getting decrepit. Let's read on and see what happened. Verse 51:

Deuteronomy 32:51,52 *for both of you rebelled against me among the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the desert of Zin when you did not show me proper respect among the Israelites. (52) You will see the land before you, but you will not enter the land that I am giving to the Israelites."*

Let's go back to Exodus Chapter 17 and see what happened. This has been one of the questions that has come up over the years, "What was it that kept Moses from going into the Promised Land?" It wasn't a big thing. It certainly wasn't worshipping an idol or being part of the golden calf or having any immoral activity. But it went deeper than that. Let's look at Exodus 17. And in this Chapter, of course, they have just come out of Egypt. They are out there in the desert with all their multitude of people and flocks and no water. And they begin to murmur and complain. You remember the story. Now let's look at verse 5:

Exodus 17:5,6 *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.*

Go back to the New Testament, in the book of Corinthians. All through the Scripture, any reference to the Rock refers to Christ, unless the text definitely indicates something else.

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.*

The word baptism here indicated a placing of the nation of Israel under the leadership and authority of Moses. When Moses took that shepherd's rod and struck the Rock, who was he striking? Christ! Absolutely he was, because, you see, it's the stricken Christ. Isaiah 53 says "He was wounded because of our rebellious deeds, crushed because of our sins" That's referring to the Cross. Now then, as a result of the work of the Cross, what can God now pour out on the human race? Living water! But how many times was he crucified? Once! And the book of Hebrews says that so emphatically. "For this he did ONCE;" never more than once.

Let's go to the thing that brought Moses down and kept him from going in. Let's go to Numbers, Chapter 20. This is many years after their coming out of Egypt and they are in their 40 years wilderness journey. They are down in that area of the Sinai, which is just wilderness and a lot of desert. Sometimes in the rainy season, they may have the waddies full of water, but usually it was dry. They had to depend on wells. But at this particular time, there was no water. Again, with all that livestock, everything was crying, bellowing, and bleating for a drink of water.

Numbers 20:2-10 *And there was no water for the community, and so they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron. (3) The people contended with Moses, saying, "If only we had died when our brothers died before the LORD! (4) Why have you brought up the LORD's community into this wilderness? So that we and our cattle should die here? (5) Why have you brought us up from Egypt only to bring us to this dreadful place? It is no place for grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink!" (6) So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the entrance to the tent of meeting. They then threw themselves down with their faces*

to the ground, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. (7) Then the LORD spoke to Moses: (8) "Take the staff and assemble the community, you and Aaron your brother, and then speak to the rock before their eyes. It will pour forth its water, and you will bring water out of the rock for them, and so you will give the community and their beasts water to drink." (9) So Moses took the staff from before the LORD, just as he commanded him. (10) Then Moses and Aaron gathered the community together in front of the rock, and he said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring water out of this rock for you?"

What is Moses' attitude here? Well, he's angry. He's not saying, "now look, God has instructed me to speak to the rock and you will have all the water you need." That's what he should have done. But instead in his anger, and wrath, he says, "Alright, you want Aaron and I to bring you water? Watch this!" I think he becomes arrogant, which was unlike Moses. He was the most meek man that ever lived. But here in a moment of weakness, and we can't condemn him, because we might have done the same thing. We would have run out of patience long before this. But here Moses finally reaches that breaking point.

Numbers 20:11 *Then Moses raised his hand, and struck the rock twice with his staff. And water came out abundantly. So the community drank, and their beasts drank too.*

Now what was he destroying? The type, the picture that Christ was smitten once. And after the finished work of the Cross, how do we approach Him? Not with another striking, but by communicating. We talk to Him, ask Him. The word in Romans 10:13 is "call upon the name of the Lord and you will be saved." Do you see the picture? And Moses destroyed that.

Numbers 20:12 *Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust me enough to show me as holy before the Israelites, therefore you will not bring this community into the land I have given them."*

Because you did not what? "Trust". Isn't it amazing that it always comes down to that same one word. We don't trust God. We can be so strong and yet in a moment of weakness, what fails us? Our faith! Every time a sin besets us, what's the problem? A lack of faith. Because if we know and believe what God has said to us then we're not going to let these things happen. But it's a lack of faith. Now come back to that last Chapter of Deuteronomy, the last chapter of the Pentateuch, the 5 books of Moses.

Deuteronomy 34:1-10 *Then Moses ascended from the deserts of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the summit of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho. The LORD showed him the whole land — Gilead to Dan, (2) and all of Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the distant sea, (3) the Negev, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of the date palm trees, as far as Zoar. (4) Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it, but you will not cross over there." (5) So Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab as the LORD had said. (6) He buried him in the land of Moab near Beth Peor, but no one knows his exact burial place to this very day. (7) Moses was 120 years old when he died, but his eye was not dull nor had his vitality departed. (8) The Israelites mourned for Moses in the deserts of Moab for thirty days; then the days of mourning for Moses ended. (9) Now Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had placed his hands on him; and the Israelites listened to him and did just what the LORD had commanded Moses. (10) No prophet ever again arose in Israel like Moses, who knew the LORD face to face.*