

WEEK 27 God Protects Baby Moses-----Dennis Watson

The last half of Genesis 50 is a transition to Exodus. Joseph brought his family including his father, Israel (Jacob), to Egypt. The words given to Abraham that his descendants would be enslaved and mistreated (see Genesis 15:13) in a foreign land had become a reality. God was in the mix sovereignly accomplishing His plan. God would now raise up a deliverer for the descendants of Abraham, the Israelites. Like Moses, Jesus was born and as a baby his life was threatened by a political leader. Like Moses, Jesus would be a deliverer. God is once again seen as the one moving history toward His planned outcome. Enjoy the continuing movement of God to deliver His people.

Day 1

First Read Genesis 50:15-26

All of the sons of Israel have relocated to Egypt. Their father, Israel, is dead and Joseph's brothers are scared that he will get back at them for mistreating him and selling him to the traders that brought him to Egypt. The brothers did not know that Joseph had already forgiven them. Forgiveness is a two-way street; it must be given and it must be received. Joseph had treated his brothers kindly and had obviously forgiven them. However, they remained fearful.

When the brothers approached Joseph they told him that their father had asked that he forgive them. They did not ask for his forgiveness but told him that their father wanted him to forgive them. Joseph had already forgiven them and now he tells them that God had a bigger plan. Joseph tells them that although they intended to bring harm to him, God had plans to use what they had done for good. God was using it to save many lives and it was already happening.

There is so much for us to learn here. First of all, we must trust that God will use even the difficult things in our lives, those times when people intentionally seek to hurt us, for His purpose. Be confident that God is still in control. Do what He wants and leave the rest to Him. Second, we learn that we should forgive before being asked to forgive and to forgive even if forgiveness is never requested. We have been forgiven and therefore our

way should be to forgive others. Joseph had already closed this chapter in his life and was now moving on to do what he needed to do. Not forgiving others can lock you up and prevent you from being able to fully carry on.

Have you forgiven those who have wronged you? Have you received forgiveness that has been given? Thank God for His forgiveness and His ability to use all things to accomplish His purposes.

Day 2

First Read Exodus 1

We now move into the book of Exodus. The title of the book in the Greek translation is Exodus and means “A going out.” In Hebrew the title is “These are the names” which is the first phrase in the book. Clearly Exodus picks up where Genesis leaves off. It continues the narrative that had begun. It continues to trace the history of man but more specifically, the history of Israel and God’s dealing with them.

The new nation of Israel has been in Egypt now for more than 300 years. A new king in Egypt called Pharaoh comes to rule. He does not know anything about Joseph, his family or his history. Pharaoh saw the Israelites, also called Hebrews, as a growing threat. The Israelites were multiplying at an alarming rate and Pharaoh did not like it. He decided to put an end to the rapid growth so he began to treat the people of Israel “ruthlessly.” He put great burdens on them hoping to slow their growth. Instead, the Hebrew people grew all the more. He had another plan—to kill all of the baby boys as soon as they were born. However, the Hebrew midwives would not kill the babies. They told Pharaoh that the women were strong and would deliver the babies before they got there. The midwives chose to obey God and ignore the demand of Pharaoh to kill the babies. God honored their obedience.

No matter what Pharaoh did, the people thrived because God had promised that anyone who cursed His people would be cursed and anyone who blessed them would be blessed (See Genesis 12:3). Pharaoh then decided to have all of the baby boys thrown into the Nile River.

In biblical history, God always raised up one that would come along to rescue His people. God is faithful! He made a promise to always be with His people. Now God is about to truly show Himself great!

Thank God for His presence and His faithfulness!

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Exodus 2:1-10

Moses is writing this account of his parents and of his own birth and it is a modest record. This is why we must turn to other portions of the Bible to give us more information about the events in Exodus. If given the opportunity, most of us would want to tell about our parents in detail, but Moses didn't even mention his parents by name. They were ordinary people. They were in slavery. They were members of the tribe of Levi. This is all Moses tells us about them at this point. Later on we are given their names as Amram and Jochebed.¹

Pharaoh was fearful of the Israelites. He plotted to bring them under control by limiting their population growth. He had the baby boys thrown into the Nile River. What a joke! God had promised to make Abraham's descendants a huge and mighty nation. Pharaoh made a feeble attempt to thwart God's plan.

It is a foolish thing to attempt to prevent the plan of God. Millions have tried with no success. After hiding the baby for three months, his mother made a water proof container (basket), placed the three month old Moses in the basket, and put it in the Nile River. She had his sister, Miriam, keep watch over the floating basket. The daughter of Pharaoh saw the basket floating with the baby Moses in it and felt compassion for him. She soon discovered it was a Hebrew baby. Moses' sister, Miriam, who had been watching, went to Pharaoh's daughter and offered to find a Hebrew woman to nurse and care for the baby. Guess who she found, his own mother! What an amazing plan! His mother nursed and cared for him and Pharaoh's daughter paid her to do it! Pharaoh's daughter gave him the name Moses which means "to draw out."

¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

God saved the baby Moses to rescue Egypt from bondage. God would use another special baby to deliver people from sin. Many years later, the Roman King, Herod was also killing the baby boys and an angel told Mary and Joseph to take their child, Jesus, to Egypt.

God's plans will not be thwarted. He will finish all that He starts. He uses people who will lock in with Him, even when the situation appears to be an impossible or hopeless one. Like Moses' mother we need to be creative and do what we can in trust and obedience to Him and leave the outcome to Him. He is faithful!

Day 4

First Read Acts 7:2-22

Stephen, a deacon in the first century church, had an opportunity to give an explanation to some Jewish religious leaders about who Jesus was. The Jewish leaders were critical of Christians. They believed that Jesus was destroying their Jewish faith system.

Stephen, in his speech, tells the religious leaders about where their faith came from and that Jesus was not only part of it but the focus. He begins all the way back with Abraham and traces the biblical history up to Moses. He was showing that Moses was part of a bigger plan that pointed to Jesus. Stephen says that the table was set, so to speak, for Moses to come and deliver the people from bondage in Egypt. Stephen says, "At that time Moses was born" (Acts 7:20). The timing was perfect. It was right at the time that God had determined. His people, Israel, were in slavery in Egypt and had been for more than 300 years. He was now ready for them to be delivered or, at least, to begin the process.

Stephen was taking advantage of an opportunity of attacks made on him, not to defend himself or lash out, but to tell the truth about Jesus! He took full advantage of that opportunity to help the Jewish leaders to see Jesus in the context of their own history. Stephen was helping the religious leaders connect the dots.

Be prepared to share with people, within their context of life, who Jesus is.

The goal is to help them know Him. Remember, Jesus is not an afterthought! He is a person in history and at the same time beyond history. He is the One who wrote history before history began and then fulfilled it!

Give thanks to God for His plan of history and that He made it known to us. Be prepared to share it!

Day 5

First Read Isaiah 7:10-14

On Friday we usually look at a prophecy or a Psalm about Jesus. Many times prophecy had both an immediate fulfillment and a further out fulfillment. Such was the case here. There would be a woman, a virgin, who would marry and have a child and before He was old enough to know good and evil the alliance between Israel and Aram would be broken. There was also a far out fulfillment which was understood by Matthew (see Matthew 1:23) to be fulfilled in Jesus. So there was a close-in fulfillment and a far-away fulfillment. God sent Isaiah the prophet to encourage King Ahaz that the alliance of two enemies would not succeed against him. Isaiah tells Ahaz to ask for a sign. However, revealing false piety, Ahaz says that he will not ask for a sign. This answer sounded pious but something in the way he said it showed he did not believe Isaiah. Perhaps he did not want to believe Isaiah, who had been prophesying about the eventual destruction of Judah if her people did not return to the Lord.²

There were two things in this prophecy about Jesus. First, it says that He would be born of a virgin. Mary was unmarried and had not yet "*known a man*." That means she had never been sexually intimate. Second, it tells us that Jesus would be called Immanuel. Immanuel is a name that means "God with us." Matthew quotes this passage in Matthew 1:23, applying it to Jesus. Jesus is the one born of a virgin and who is "God with us." He was not an ordinary man. He was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit and He was the physical presence of God in the world.

God gave King Ahaz a prophecy to strengthen his faith. It may not have done anything for his faith but it sure does for mine!

²The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty

WEEK 28 God Calls Moses ----- Chris Watson

God's calling is for all believers! If you are following Jesus you have heard God's call and have responded to His drawing. We are all called to follow God and seek Him with all we have. This week we will see the calling of Moses, another person that God uses in His plan. May we be like Moses and seek to be used by God as a part of His plan.

Day 1

First Read Exodus 2:11-25 and Acts 7:23-29

This is not the first time we see a murder in the Bible; we saw Cain murder Abel back in the beginning of Genesis. In today's reading Moses sought to take things into his own hands and sought to save his people from the harsh and bad conditions they suffered under the Egyptians. While what Moses wanted and sought to do was right, I am not so sure the way he dealt with it was right. We don't know when, but obviously Moses somehow realizes that he is not an Egyptian and that he belongs to the Hebrew people. We would have to admit he had it pretty nice; he was living in the Pharaoh's palace and, most likely, had all he wanted, but he couldn't stand that his people were being mistreated.

While Moses' choice to kill the Egyptian may not have been the best choice, his intention to free and help his people was. After all, they (Israelites) were slaves and Moses was seeking to help them. But instead of them looking to him for help they shared the news of the killing and it made it all the way to Pharaoh. When Pharaoh got word of the killing, he wanted to kill Moses, so Moses fled.

We will read later this week that God had a plan to free the people and Moses is heavily involved in that plan, but now it would be God's way. Like Moses, we often take things into our own hands. Even though our intent and meaning might be right, the way we go about it may not be the best. Today, as you see things that are against God's heart and desire, ask the Lord to help you respond how He would, not necessarily the way you might respond "in the flesh." Ask God to give you His heart and mind and

to see things the way He sees them. John McArthur says, “True faith accepts the Lord’s plan.” Today might we accept the plan of God, whatever that might be.

Day 2

First Read Exodus 3

From Acts 7, verses 23 and 30, we know that there were 40 years between the time Moses killed the Egyptian and the time he met God in the burning bush. As we saw in our study yesterday, Moses had the desire and wanted to help free his people but probably didn’t go about it the right way.

We see from today’s scripture that God visits Moses and tells him that he will be used to deliver his people. Although 40 years ago Moses was all about helping his people and though he wants to help them now, he begins to make excuses. Maybe excuses like “how can I do it” and “what if the Israelites say this or say that?” The difference between now and 40 years ago is that Moses is instructed by God and given the words of God that He will deliver His people under Moses’ direction (vs.16 and 17). While Moses’ desire was to help his people 40 years prior, this was now God’s plan and was being played out God’s way.

God had appointed Moses for this time. It was what God had him to do. God often has ways in which He wants to carry out His plans and purposes through us; we just need to be willing to hear, listen, and follow Him. One of the best ways to do that is exactly what you are doing right now, reading and studying God’s Word. God often reveals Himself through His Word and through prayer. What might God be leading you to do at this time and in this place? How does God want you to lead your family, co-workers, church, and your friends? May we be willing and ready; however God may want to use us. He just might be raising you up for this time and this place and for His purpose. May we say, “God here I am how do You want to use me?”

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

Read Hebrews 11:23-26

These four verses say so much, along with helping us understand a little more about Moses. In this passage there are two “by faith” statements. The first is that “by faith” his parents hid him for three months. The second is “by faith” Moses refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. We also learn that Moses chose to be mistreated with his people, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He knew that seeking God, regardless of his circumstances, was the right thing to do and that he would receive his reward.

Those two small words, “by faith,” mean so much. Hebrews 11 is full of these words. Verse 1 tells us that faith is “*being certain of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*” Faith is trusting and taking God at His Word. Moses had the option to continue living lavishly, getting the best food, clothes, and everything that money could buy while living in an ungodly atmosphere or choosing to obey God. He had the choice to follow the gods of Egypt or follow the one true God. We know that Moses chose to follow God and we will see as we continue reading Exodus that even the choice to follow God wasn’t all glitz and glamour. However, he knew that God would take care of him and that God would be His reward.

May we be like Moses and seek to be in God’s plan! Whether it makes complete sense or not, whether we know the next step or not, may we say “by faith I will follow and trust God, the one true God, no matter what!” In years to come may others say of us, “by faith” we sought and followed God, “by faith” we trusted God when others didn’t. May all who come behind us find us faithful.

Day 4

First Read Exodus 4:1-17

At forty years old Moses was ready to help and free his people from bondage and slavery. Now, at eighty, he is not so sure, he is not so confident. In today’s verses we see Moses as a big “excuse maker.” Every

time God tells Moses that he is the person to help free his people, he has an excuse or reason why it won't work. In fact, Moses argues and makes one last excuse. In verse 14, the Bible tells us that the Lord's anger burned against Moses; in essence, the Lord was fed up with his excuses.

Unfortunately, we all make excuses. God speaks to us and instructs us to do something, go somewhere, reach out to someone, give something away, or maybe befriend someone. Sometimes, we immediately obey, at other times, we might make excuses and either do it later or not do it at all. You may have heard the statement that delayed obedience is disobedience. Moses was in disobedience to the Lord because, instead of going as soon as the Lord told him to go, he just made excuses. As we will see later, he did finally obey the Lord but it would have been best to simply take the Lord at His word and head to Egypt as soon as the Lord told Him to go.

Moses was a great man of faith, as we learned from yesterday's devotion, but he often struggled with sin and not listening to God, just like we do. Today might we be sensitive to God's voice. May we hear what He has to say, and when He speaks to our heart, may our answer be, "Yes, Lord." Might we not make excuses, argue with the Lord, or tell Him why we can't, but might we say, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." When He speaks, let us be ready and willing to obey!

Day 5

First Read Isaiah 8:11-15

The religious leaders of Israel that were supposedly God-fearing people didn't recognize God in human form. The King was among them in the man of Jesus and yet they didn't acknowledge Him; in fact they put Him to death. When Jesus came to earth, He spoke truth and told the leaders to follow God's laws instead of the man-made laws. Of course, they didn't like this. Isn't it interesting that the ones who were supposed to be seeking and following God didn't see Him when He was right in front of them?

Verse 14 tells us that God can be a sanctuary, but in verse 15 we see that He can be a stumbling block. How can this be? It all has to do with how we see God and Jesus. "If the things of God be an offence to us, they will

undo us. The apostle quotes this to all who persisted in unbelief of the gospel of Christ, **1 Peter 2:8**. *The preaching of the cross is foolishness in their esteem; his doctrines and precepts offend them.*³

However, if we view and know Him as our Father, our comforter, and our redeemer, then He is our sanctuary, a place of rest. Is Jesus a stumbling block to you or is He your resting place? To those who seek to be good on their own and not trust in Jesus, He can be a stumbling block. But to those who know that goodness and hope can only be found in the person of Jesus, He is their sanctuary. Today, I hope you rest in Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith!

³Matthew Henry Concise Bible Commentary

WEEK 29 Moses Confronts Pharaoh-----Dennis Watson

God had prepared and called Moses for a certain task—to deliver and lead the Israelites out of bondage and slavery in Egypt. Do you remember how they got there? It was by no fault of their own. Joseph had been sold by his brothers to traders who took him to Egypt and sold him to a man named Potiphar. God gave Joseph the ability to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh and, as a result, he was elevated to a high position in Egypt. Joseph administered a savings plan during a time of great harvests and then a distribution plan during the times of famine. His father and brothers came to Egypt for food and, finally, moved to Egypt. Now, after more than 300 years, there are many people that make up the people of Israel. This week we will learn about the hardened heart of Pharaoh and his refusal to obey the command of God from Moses.

Day 1

First Read Exodus 4:18-23, 27-30 and Chapter 5

Moses' brother Aaron linked up with him on the project to go to Egypt to lead the people out of slavery. He became the spokesman for Moses. Aaron announced to the people that Moses had been sent by God to deliver them from their captors. He showed them the miraculous signs that God had provided for them. At first the people believed, were thankful, and worshipped.

Moses and Aaron then went to Pharaoh requesting that they be allowed to take the people into the wilderness to have a feast and to worship. The initial request was for a feast celebration, rather than a total departure. Pharaoh immediately refused and accused Moses and Aaron of keeping the people from their work. I guess Moses was expecting Pharaoh to just say, "Go." However, instead he said, "No," and made the people's work even harder. Not only did they have to continue making bricks but now they had to go and find their own straw to be used in the brick making. The people who were overseeing the work became even harsher.

The Israelites complained to Pharaoh about the increased workload and Pharaoh told them it was because of Moses and Aaron. The people then

complained to Moses. Their belief and celebration had turned to complaining. The enslaved Israelites were at first thankful that Moses was there to deliver them but then wavered in their faith and grumbled and complained as things got harder.

This was a pattern for the Israelites in the Old Testament. They would trust and follow God and then get discouraged, complain, and become disobedient.

What do you do when you face unexpected roadblocks in your life? Do you get discouraged and complain? We have the long record of this pattern in the Old Testament. We can learn a very valuable lesson, if we only will. When things get harder than expected, trust God anyway! Difficulty does not necessarily mean you are going the wrong way. Trust God to finish what He started.

Ask God to provide the grace for you to stay the course even when the course becomes difficult.

Day 2

First Read Exodus 5:22-6:1

I have been right where Moses was! I have often done what I thought God wanted but it didn't work out the way I wanted or expected. And, like Moses, I whined to God, "Why did you do this?" Moses was disappointed because he was following God's instructions. He went to Pharaoh, asked him to let the people go into the wilderness and worship and make sacrifices. I guess Moses was again expecting Pharaoh to say, "Go." However, instead his answer was again, "No!" Pharaoh then made the people's work even harder.

We have to remember a few things. First of all, with God time is not a big deal. He is not on a time schedule. We have a tendency to think that if things do not happen at a certain time then it may not be God's will. Second, we think that we know what God wants to accomplish and how He wants to accomplish it. His thoughts and ours are certainly not the same! God has plans we could never understand. He has ways of accomplishing His plans that include much more than we could ever understand.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,”
says the LORD. **Isaiah 55:8 (NKJV)**

God encouraged Moses in response to his prayer. God told him that He would lead the people out of bondage and that He would do certain things to Pharaoh. God was going to show Himself great so that the people would know that God was great and powerful!

Our part is to trust God even in the most difficult of situations! How many times do people give up because things get difficult? Ask God to enable you to trust Him when things do not appear to be working out. God is faithful and He will finish what He starts.

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Exodus 6:2-9

Moses, along with the Israelites, struggled because God’s deliverance was not immediate. God answered Moses’ complaint telling him that he would get the people out of the bondage in Egypt. However, as God’s answer continues in today’s passage, God tells him more than just His promise to get them out of Egyptian slavery. He tells them that He would also redeem them. This is forward looking. It looks to Jesus as the ultimate redeemer. God goes way beyond just getting them out. He says that He will lead them to the land of promise. This is the promise He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He also tells Moses that He will be their God and they will be His people.

It is important to remember that God is holy and sinless and all people are sinful. How was it that Holy God would have a relationship described here as *“I will be their God and they will be My people?”* God was welcoming them into a special relationship. In order for this to happen, the sin problem would have to be dealt with. God knew that one day He would send Jesus, the ultimate redeemer. He would make the relationship possible. Jesus would not just lead us out but He would lead us into a relationship with Holy God. All the way back in Genesis 3:15 we see that God had a plan to redeem people from sin and bring the conflict to an end. He repeats His plan in various ways throughout the Old Testament. God is

in the redeeming business.

The people were so discouraged by their circumstances that they did not receive the words with enthusiasm. Often we are discouraged by our circumstances to the point that the salvation God has provided for us is not enough to bring the encouragement we need.

Ask God for the grace to enjoy and find full contentment in what He has done for you in Jesus.

Day 4

First Read Exodus 7:8-13

Moses spent the first forty years of his life in Egypt being raised as Pharaoh's daughter's son. After fleeing to Midian he spent another forty years there. He then encountered God in the burning bush and returned to Egypt to be the deliverer of God's people from bondage at the age of eighty.

When he had his second encounter with Pharaoh he discovered that God had hardened the heart of Pharaoh. In reality, God predicted that Pharaoh, in his resistance to God, would harden his own heart. Several times in Exodus we read that Pharaoh hardened his heart (Exodus 8:15, 19, 32). God knew of his resistance and used it to accomplish His purposes. As a result of Pharaoh's resistance, God said that "*The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord*" (**Exodus 7:5**).

In today's passage we see that when Aaron throws down his rod to show God's power. The Egyptian magicians do the same. Aaron's rod became a serpent and the magicians' rods also turned into serpents. However, Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods. What Aaron did with his rod was from the power of God. What the Egyptian magicians did was trickery. God showed His superiority by causing Aaron's rod to swallow the Egyptians' rods. God's power overcame!

Even after the display of God's power over the Egyptian magicians, Pharaoh's heart continued to harden. Ask God to soften your heart so that you will be submissive to His plan and will.

Day 5

First Read Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The prophet Isaiah said that there would be one who would come and bring light to people walking in darkness. In Matthew 4:15-16 this prophecy is applied to Jesus. In John 8:12 Jesus says that He is the light of the world. Jesus is the light that Isaiah was talking about. Also in Isaiah 9 there is one described who would be man and God at the same time. It says that He would be "Mighty God." Only Jesus fits this description. He was born of a woman, not just any woman, but one who was a virgin. Jesus was born as a baby just like everyone else yet He was not conceived by a man, but by the Holy Spirit. He was fully God and fully man. As man He died in our place to take our punishment. Since He was fully God, He lived a sinless life and therefore defeated death and the grave when He was raised from the dead.

There are several other names for Jesus in Isaiah 9. One of those describes the result of His activity as Light and Mighty God. As a result of what He accomplished as the God-Man He would also be the "Prince of Peace." Since He provides light for living and walking safely through life and since He died for us, taking away sin's penalty, He brings peace. As Prince of Peace, He rules in our hearts and will ultimately rule with peace. He will take away all competing forces. The opposite of peace is conflict. When Jesus rules, He settles for us the issue of competing forces. You can have only one boss or master. All others hold a distant second place. Think of it this way, when Jesus is Lord of your life many of the decisions we struggle with are already made. I often encounter people who are in a struggle and they say, "I just don't know what to do." That is not really the struggle. As followers of Jesus they know what to do. The real problem is are they going to follow Him or their own fleshly desires? Jesus brings peace, but to experience it fully you need to follow Him.

Seek FIRST His kingdom!

Week 30 God Sends Plagues Against Egypt-----

Chris Watson

It must have been a crazy time to have lived during the plagues that take place in this week's reading! God could have simply made Pharaoh let the people go from the beginning, but in His plan this isn't what happened. Rather, He used plagues and difficult times to teach and draw the people to Himself. Pharaoh was evil and did not fear God, God even used this for His glory. God's plan, even when hard to see, is always best.

Day 1

First Read Exodus 7:14-24

Can you imagine standing there and seeing the whole Nile River turned into blood? The Nile is approximately 4,200 miles long and 2 miles wide. This whole body of water was turned to blood and the people had to look elsewhere for drinking water. Incredible!

But I wonder what must have been going through Moses' and Aaron's minds. Exodus 7:3 and 7:22 says that they already knew that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened again and that Pharaoh would not listen to them, but they obeyed the Lord and followed His commands anyway. That must have been disheartening! To follow the Lord, doing what He says in hopes of freeing your people, and yet knowing all the while that Pharaoh's heart would still be hard and he wouldn't let the people go! However, Moses and Aaron followed the Lord. While I am sure it didn't totally make sense to them, they trusted His plan.

I want to be like that! I want to follow the Lord when it makes sense and when it doesn't, when things are going great and when things are falling apart. I want to trust in the Lord even when I don't feel like it. Trusting God is not an emotion or something that just happens by chance; it is an intentional choice to trust and follow God. Even when it seems like there is no hope or even when it's difficult, we know that we can trust Him. Isaiah 40 tells us to trust and hope in the Lord, not people, things, or even friends or family, but to choose to trust Jesus. What do you choose? Today, let us CHOOSE to trust God and to put our hope in Him and Him alone!

Day 2

First Read Exodus 9

God takes care of His people; He always has and He always will. As we have learned in previous devotions, this doesn't mean that His people won't face hard times or that life will go as planned. Rather, it means we can trust God to take care of us no matter what we go through.

The Israelites found themselves in the middle of some pretty crazy plagues. From gnats and flies to boils and hail, it must have been quite a sight to see. However, notice in Exodus 9:4 and 9:26 that God made a distinction between the Egyptians and God's chosen people, the Israelites. In verse 4 it says that no animals of the Israelites would die and in verse 7 that fact is confirmed. Again in verse 26 we read that Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was the only place in Egypt that it did not hail. In both of these instances God was caring for His people. At the same time I believe it was a reminder for them that in all of the plagues He was still in control. He was still calling the shots, even when Pharaoh's heart was hardened.

We may look at what's going on in our lives, the lives of our family and friends, or even the life of our country and world, and things seem to be falling apart. However, there are ways in which we see God working and God doing what only He can do. These times often remind us that, no matter what is going on in our lives or around us, God is still ultimately in control. As the song says, "He's got the whole world in His hands." May we trust His plan and His heart, knowing He cares for us! Today, place at the Lord's feet whatever may be going on with you and trust that He has that very thing in His hands.

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Exodus 10:1-2

You may have asked this question several times when reading this week's scripture, "Why is God continuing to harden Pharaoh's heart?" In these two verses we get the answer. The answer was not so much for the Israelites or the Egyptians right then, but it was for their children,

grandchildren, and their great, great, great grandchildren! It's so they would know that God is the Lord (v. 2).

We often see, in the here and now, only what is right in front of us. But God sees it all, the before, the present, and the future! His plan is being crafted, His heart is being conveyed. Just think about what happened thousands of years ago and we can still read about today. We see that the works that God has performed are just some of the many reasons we can know that the Lord is God!

God had the future moms and dads, sons and daughters, and aunts and uncles all in mind during this. He wanted the truth to be passed on! Do we? Do we want to pass the truth of God on to our families? 100 years from now, no one will really know who you and I were, apart from a picture on a shelf or maybe a few stories. But they can know our God, they can know the truth. What we pass on to our kids right now is huge. We can pass on the truth and fear of God or we can pass on nothing, the things of this world that will fade away!

I recently read an article by John Piper saying one of the best things a parent can pass on to their family is a marked up Bible, the knowledge that dad or mom loved God. How are you passing God and Jesus on to your family?

Check out the great read at <http://www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/dads-write-in-your-bible>

Day 4

First Read Exodus 10:3-20

We have begun to see a pattern here with Pharaoh! Once a plague is impacting him and his people, he tells Moses that he has sinned against the Lord. In verse 17 he speaks to Moses and says, "Now forgive my sin once more and pray to the Lord your God to take this deadly plague away from me." Had Pharaoh really recognized his sin and turned from it? No. Basically all he wanted was the plague to be taken away. This was true with this plague and others.

We have all been like Pharaoh, including me! We might get into a bad situation, be experiencing tough times or heartache, brought on by our own poor choice(s). We acknowledge it before God and ask for forgiveness, but our real desire is for whatever we are experiencing to stop. Sometimes, we are not really concerned with seeking God and repenting, but we want to get out of the mess we are in. Often, once we get out of the mess, we go right back to our selfish ways of not acknowledging God anymore. At least not until the next tough time begins.

God wants all of us all of the time. He is not satisfied with some of us all of the time or with all of us some of the time; He wants us to be all in. He wants us to realize that our goal and hearts desire in life should be to live in a love relationship with Him. To do that, we can't continue in sin any longer. Paul made that clear in Romans, chapters 7 and 8. God wants all of us, all of our hearts, our minds, our souls, and our strengths. And when we fall short of that He wants us to acknowledge it and come back to seek Him. Might our prayer today be, "Lord I want to follow You all the days of my life, the good days and the bad days, the happy and the sad days. I want to follow You when in turmoil and when I am flourishing!"

Day 5

First Read Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and Acts 3:18-23

We have already seen that Jesus is all over the Old Testament! Today we see another glimpse of that. God used Moses to lead the people out of Egypt as a part of His plan. As we see in Deuteronomy today, Moses understood that God's plan also included Jesus. It is mentioned in Acts that the prophet Moses was talking about is Jesus. Of course we know that Jesus wasn't just a prophet as some would have us believe; He was the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

Jesus was also a prophet in that He spoke the words of God. He prophesied His own death and resurrection. Jesus was here on earth to tell us the very words of God. He was here to live, to die, and to be raised again. He was here to save us from our sins and to show us how to live and take the Gospel to the world. We are to follow Him, we are to seek Him. One of the greatest ways we do this is through reading His Word, just as you have done today. Just think! We have the "rest of the story," as Paul

Harvey would say, and it's all true. Moses, Peter, Paul, and Abraham didn't have the Bible as we have it today. Sure, they had the words of God but they didn't have the 66 books wrapped into one book that connects the dots from the beginning of time until the new earth. We do. We have it right in God's Word, the Bible. Is that incredible or what? May we treasure the Word of God. May it be one of the greatest treasures in the world.

Perhaps you have seen a video of brothers and sisters in other countries receiving their very own Bibles for the first time. They cherish it and are so thankful for God's Word. They treat it like it's the best gift they have ever received and they are often crying tears of joy. I want to treat God's Word like that! Thank God for His Word!

WEEK 31 The Last Plague And The First Passover

Dennis Watson

God had brought nine plagues upon Pharaoh and all of Egypt. The goal was two-fold; first, to convince Pharaoh to let the people leave from Egypt and second, to show God's greatness. There was one remaining plague, and the Jews still celebrate it today. Christians also celebrate it today, but in a very different way. The tenth plague was the plague of the death of the firstborn. By way of reminder, here is a list of the first nine plagues:

1. Water Turned to Blood
2. The Plague of Frogs
3. The Plague of Lice
4. The Plague of Flies
5. The Plague of the Livestock
6. The Plague of Boils
7. The Plague of Hail
8. The Plague of Locusts
9. The Plague of Darkness

Day 1

First Read Exodus 11

God told Moses there would be one last plague and then Pharaoh would send the people away. How far would you have to go before reaching the end of yourself so that you would seek God and His mercy? The land of Egypt had been ruined by the previous nine plagues. There was little left as far as food sources. The people were crying out for relief. But when Moses announced the coming of the tenth and last plague, Pharaoh's heart was once again hardened. He refused to let the people go. God told Moses that Pharaoh would finally let the people go. The grip of sin can be stubborn and relentless. We see that Pharaoh was unmoved, even by the devastation that had come to the people and the land of Egypt. With the last plague he would be touched; his own firstborn son would die.

We hear God, either through His Word or through His Spirit. By ignoring His voice and continuing in our own way of disobedience we allow our hearts to become hardened. A hardened heart is like a callous that forms on

your hand. It continues to get harder and harder and it becomes less and less sensitive to touch. Eventually, hands like these are hard and insensitive. For some workers, calloused hands are protective and enable them to do their work. But for others, like surgeons, calloused hands would be a negative thing for their work. When it comes to relating to God, a hardened heart keeps us from walking with Him and experiencing His blessings and benefits. In this last plague there would again be a distinction between God's people Israel, and the Egyptians. God was going to provide a way for the Israelites to be protected; this points to Jesus. Only Jesus can break sin's hold. The only hope of breaking the stronghold of sin is found in Jesus.

Ask God to enable you to keep your heart soft and sensitive to His Word.

Day 2

First Read Exodus 12:1-30

The first eleven chapters of Exodus are about Moses the deliverer. Chapters 12-14 are about the deliverance of Israel. Chapter 12 is a high point in Exodus. The events in chapter 12 mark the beginning of the Jewish religious calendar.

Here we see the establishment of the Feast of Passover. The Feast of the Passover was instituted as a memorial to Israel's deliverance from Egypt and their adoption as Jehovah's nation. The Passover is a festival that laid the foundation of the nation Israel's birth into a new relationship with God.⁴

Death was going to be the rule for all in Egypt. The tenth plague was the plague of death for the firstborn of animals and people—Egyptians and Israelites. There would be death in every home. However, God provided a way to make a distinction. For the Israelites who trusted God and were obedient there would be a substitute death. God instructed the Israelites to take a lamb that was perfect—without blemish—that was less than a year old. They were to kill it in the evening on the designated day and put the blood of the lamb on the outside doorposts as a sign that the death of the

⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee

lamb was their substitute. At midnight the angel of death would come to put to death the firstborn in the household. If the angel saw the blood of the lamb on the doorpost it would pass over that house and no further death would come to the household. The name Passover was given to this special observance and was to be a reminder of God's provision through the blood of the Passover lamb.

All over Egypt in the home of the Egyptians there was loud crying because death had come to their home. Among the Israelites all was quiet. We will see in tomorrow's passage that the Passover Lamb here in Exodus points forward to the true Passover Lamb, Jesus.

Give thanks to God for the wonderful blood of Jesus, our Passover Lamb.

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read I Corinthians 5:7-8

The events of the Passover Feast in the setting of the Exodus really do point to Jesus. Paul's writing in today's passage shows Jesus as our Passover Lamb. He also links it with the subject of leaven. As the people were preparing to leave Egypt they were to prepare bread without leaven. There would be no time for the dough to rise. They were preparing to leave Egypt in haste. In the future the Feast of Unleavened Bread would remind them of the haste with which they left Egypt. Leaven was also a symbol of evil, although leaven itself, is not evil. However, leaven was essential to cause the dough to rise when left for a time in a warm place. The dough was then placed in an oven for baking. If it was left too long it would continue to rise and ultimately spoil all of the dough. The same is true in a believer's life and in the church. If sin is left unchecked it will spread and have a devastating effect on many people.

Jesus is our Passover Lamb. He is our substitute. In the same way, on the evening of the plague of the death of the firstborn, the angel of death saw the blood of the lamb and then passed over that house. The lamb's death was the substitute death. For us, Jesus is our substitute, He is our sacrifice. Jesus' death was substituted for ours. He became sin for us and died in our place. When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, it is similar to the Israelites

celebrating Passover. The Israelites remembered the substitute lamb and God's deliverance. We remember that Jesus died for us as God's provision for our forgiveness.

As the people prepared to leave Egypt they did some things that made all the difference in their lives. First, they sacrificed the lamb and put the blood on the outside doorpost. Second, they prepared the bread without leaven. They trusted God's provision. Have you trusted His provision? Have you placed your faith in Jesus as God's Passover Lamb who died for you?

Thank God for His provision! If you have not received Him, please do so now!

Day 4

First Read Exodus 12:30-42

It's hard to imagine being in slavery. The Israelites had spent around 400 years in this situation, apparently with each year becoming more oppressive. That's more than 15 generations. The people had lived for all of those generations with a culture of slavery. Now, through God's provision they were about to be set free! The words of Martin Luther King Jr. ring true for the people, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty we are free at last."

At this time there were 600,000 men. Counting women and children there could have been as many as 2 million people departing Egypt. What an incredible number of people. After Jacob's arrival in Egypt along with his family there were seventy. Now there were around 2 million. God blessed the people and they multiplied as God had promised Abraham and now they were a great nation!

Everything happened just as God had said. The people gave them resources—gold, silver, and clothing. Pharaoh sent them out.

God is the God of all, including all of history. He accomplishes His purposes and even tells ahead of time what He is going to do and how He is

going to do it. We are blessed to see God's incredible track record of prophecy, promise, and fulfillment. We live in a wonderful time when we still have prophecy and promises of God waiting to be fulfilled.

Thank God for His faithfulness and for delivering the Israelites from slavery.

Day 5

First Read Psalm 45:1-6

Today we look at a Psalm which points to Jesus as the Messiah. In Hebrews 1:8-9 this Psalm is quoted and helps to label Psalm 45 as a Messianic Psalm. This Psalm is a word of encouragement as it speaks of a coming King, Jesus, who would ride as a victorious King and warrior. This is what is pictured in **Revelation 19:11-13**:

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

The things we see in this Psalm ring true of Jesus. His reign will be with truth and righteousness. He will rule over His enemies and all people will bow before Him. He accomplished this victory at the cross where He defeated the enemy of God and man, Satan. His throne will last forever. His reign will be without end. There is only one King whose reign will never end and that is Jesus.

The Israelites, throughout their history, have been plagued by their enemies. It all started with the Egyptians and has continued through history. This Psalm would bring a fresh word of hope to a suffering people. It also reminds us that God has a plan to defeat the enemy of God and man and then have that King rule forever with truth and righteousness.

Give thanks for the eternal rule and reign of King Jesus!

WEEK 32 God Parts The Red Sea-----Chris Watson

The Israelites had already seen the one true God do some pretty amazing things as He was preparing them to be freed from slavery, the last being the Passover. However, this week we will continue to see what only God can do. With their backs against the army and the Red Sea in front of them, God did some great things!

Day 1

First Read Exodus 13:1-16

It's important to see what the Lord is doing now and what He will do in the future, but it's also important to see what He has already done. Today's passage makes sure that those that come after the Exodus will know how and why the Lord delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians and Pharaoh's rule, because their God is great.

The Lord wanted the generations that would follow to remember what He had done and to worship Him. Thousands of years later we read about it and it is still celebrated. Leaven in scripture represents sin (Luke 12:1 and 1 Corinthians 5:8). Of course, we cannot be without sin; the only way that can happen is through Jesus.

Scripture tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Of course, this Passover is connected to Christ as we see the last supper with the disciples! We also celebrate communion in what God has done for us as we eat the bread and drink the cup. Jesus was and is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Today death is not passed over us by putting blood above our doorposts. Rather, we have eternal life and escape spiritual death by trusting in the blood and death of Jesus, which was foreshadowed in this passage. Notice the last supper (Passover) in Matthew 26 was celebrated on the First day of Unleavened Bread. Unleavened bread (Matzah) means "without sin."

Matthew 26 says, "*Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.'*" And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "*Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant,*

which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Jesus is our Passover, we will be passed over (be given life with Jesus) during the time of God's judgment, if we have received God's free gift of salvation.

Take some time today to thank God for His elaborate plan. If you have accepted His blood, His gift of salvation, thank Him. If you haven't, receive it today, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Day 2

First Read Exodus 14:1-7

I wonder what Moses must have thought when he heard the Lord tell him that Pharaoh and his army were going to come after them again. I can imagine his emotions were quite crazy. However, we know he obeyed and turned back, as the end of verse 4 said, "*the Israelites did this.*"

God was setting up the opportunity to show off. Verse 4 tells us that He will get the glory and the Egyptians will know that He is the Lord. Now we might think, "Isn't enough, enough?" Haven't the Israelites been through enough already? However, the Lord had a plan to show them He was the Lord and to continue showing that He deserved the glory.

Have you ever had enough? Have you ever said I just can't do it anymore? We will see tomorrow how the Israelites responded, but what is your response when you are pushed to the brink? Sometimes we might feel like it is being piled on but we know that God is right by our side. As one song says, "never once did we ever walk alone." Sometimes when we face difficulty or what seems like a never-ending heap of trouble and distress, God is taking time to fashion us into His image. At the same time, He is waiting to show off and show us that He is the Lord. We see this happen in the book of Job. In fact as I have shared before, I struggled for a time with anxiety and it was not fun. Looking back I wouldn't have asked to go through it. However, standing on the other side, I learned so much and can say now that I am thankful for what God did in my life during that time.

While it's often difficult turning those tough times around, when we have come through them God has shaped, molded, and taught us things we would have never learned otherwise.

Take whatever you may be going through today and give it to the Lord. Lay it before Him. While you might feel that you can't take anymore and you just want to turn back and go to Egypt, wait, trust, and know that God is in control.

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Exodus 14:8-9 and Romans 9:17

God has everything in His hands! The kings, leaders, and even the authorities that seem to be so wicked and anti-God are in His hands! While they have the free will to choose evil and go against God, God can still use and direct this. We see this in today's passage, especially Romans 9:17. God raised and used a wicked Pharaoh for His glory and His purposes. Sometimes people say they are not "playing" or "doing things God's way," and while it may be true that they are not actively seeking God, He can still use their decisions for His glory. Even as God hardened Pharaoh's heart, He was using Pharaoh for His glory. We will see tomorrow how God comes through.

God saving Israel is incredible but as Marty Machowski says, "The greatest celebration comes when we remember that Jesus was born to the sons of Israel in the Promised Land, in a town called Bethlehem. So when we celebrate Israel's salvation from slavery in Egypt, we can also celebrate our salvation from slavery to sin."⁵

Are you amazed yet? Are you amazed at the details and intricate plans of God's way of salvation? It is not just by what we read in the New Testament, but also by what we see in the Old Testament and its direct connection to the New Testament and Jesus. The Bible, written by God through some 40 different authors, is God's plan of salvation for His glory. This salvation includes what we have been saved from, such as sin, hell, the

⁵ Marty Machowski, *Long Story Short*, pg. 164

enemy, and also what we have been saved to. Most importantly, we have been saved to a relationship with God, heaven, and an eternity with Him. Thank Him today for your salvation, for His plan and then choose to trust His plan!

Day 4

First Read Exodus 14:10-31

These verses contain so much! Remember how God had walked with the Israelites and saved them through all the plagues? It was obvious that God was on their side and fighting for them. Yet when the Egyptians came back after them, they got angry and sarcastic as they asked Moses “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die?” How quickly they had forgotten and now turned their back on God and Moses saying they would have been better staying in Egypt, stuck in slavery.

Isn't it good to know that God often does things in spite of our lack of faith? God knew that the Israelites were now questioning Moses, which was in essence questioning God. Unfortunately, this is a theme we will see continue. They had forgotten what God had done. But soon they would remember. As the chapter ends, we see that they put their trust in the Lord.

We can often be like the Israelites. We see God work, we see Him move, we see what only He can do, and then with our back against the wall and a sea in front of us, we begin to question, mock, or get angry with God. I wonder if the Israelites had forgotten what God had done. Have we? Take some time to jot down how you have seen God work in the past, doing what only He can do, and thank Him for it, then rest in Him. Don't try to fix things, but rest in Him.

A key verse in all of scripture is **Exodus 14:14**, “*the Lord will fight for you; you only need to be still.*” Literally it means to put all of who you are into trusting and following God and He will fight for you! That's what the Israelites needed to do, trust God, and He would fight for them, which He did.

Day 5

First Read Psalm 45:6-9

This passage is talking about none other than Jesus. We also find these verses in Hebrews 1:8-9 which, in fact, confirms this is speaking of Jesus. Verse 6 says, “*your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever.*” Isn’t it incredible to know that if we have called on the name of Jesus we too, will be with him? 2 Timothy 2 says that we will reign with Him. What a promise! We can look forward to spending eternity with God forever and ever. If you want to get a little better picture of what this might be like, read *Heaven*, by Randy Alcorn.

These verses also tell us He will reign with righteousness and that He loves righteousness and hates wickedness. The Son of God is perfectly righteous and hates everything that is not. As Christians we are followers of Christ. In fact, the word disciple means to be a follower or learner, so as Disciples of Christ we are following Jesus. Are you? Do you seek righteousness and hate evil? Is your heart that of Jesus? 1 John 1 tells us that if we claim to have fellowship or be a follower of Jesus, then we are to follow the light (Jesus), we are to follow righteousness. While we might stumble and fall we are to acknowledge our sin, repent, and follow God. We recall that we were told, in Genesis 6, that the people’s minds were on evil all the time, meaning they were totally opposite of what God’s heart was and is. May it be said of us that our hearts and minds are always on Jesus, always on righteousness, and when we veer to the left or right, may we jump back on the path, the path of Jesus.

Today, ask God to direct your thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions so they are always on Him.

WEEK 33 God Provides Food And Water For Israel-----

Dennis Watson

Can you squeeze water out of a rock? What do you think? If you are wondering, just go find a rock and give it a try. You can't do it no matter how long and hard you try. This week we will see God's miraculous provision for His people as they journey.

Day 1

First Read Exodus 16:1-8

Uh-oh, the complaining begins. Just one month, a mere thirty days after an incredible and miraculous delivery out of slavery, the people begin to whine about being hungry. I've been hungry before, like "I missed-a-meal hungry." I'm not sure how hungry they were, but it was enough for them to complain to Moses and Aaron. They were longing to be back in Egypt in slavery, as long as they had food to eat. This was not the first case of complaining. At Marah they also complained because they didn't have water to drink and what they did have was bitter. God provided fresh water when He instructed Moses to throw a tree into the water. God told them that He had been their healer. When they came to Elim He provided for them twelve wells and seventy palm trees.

Their complaining could have been dealt with in a different way. Paul says to *do everything without complaining and arguing (Philippians 2:14.)* He also tells us to *not be anxious but to pray and make our request known to God (Philippians 4:6.)* Why complain? Why whine? The people of God—the Israelites had seen God's miracles. They had experienced His care and seen Him work miracles. They had seen the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea. He told them at Marah when He gave them water that He was the God who healed them (Exodus 15:27). Here we find one of the Hebrew names of God "Jehovah Ropha." God says, "I am Jehovah Ropha." This means "God is healing."

What about you? How do you do in light of the blessings of God? Do you complain? Instead of complaining, tell Him what you need. The people complained to Moses. Instead of asking Moses to pray and ask God to provide, they complained. Why don't we complain less and pray more?

Day 2

First Read Exodus 16:9-35

The Israelites had forgotten about God's provision and complained against Moses. In today's passage God miraculously provides once again for their needs. First of all, He sends quail for meat. At evening the quail would fly into their camp. Second, in the morning they went out to find that after the dew had dried there was something left on the ground. They were curious and asked, "What is it?" And that became its name—"what is it" or manna. Moses told them that God had sent it along with the quail to provide for their needs. God had told them to gather just enough for each person each day and no more. They had just what they needed. Some people tried to gather extra and store it up. The extra spoiled and caused worms and smelled bad.

God also provided a time of rest for the people. He granted them instructions to gather twice as much food on the day before the Sabbath, Friday, so that on the Sabbath they could rest. He wanted them to know that He intended for His people to have a day of rest. He built it in from day 1 (and days 1-6). God created all things in six days and then rested on the seventh so that the people would know they needed a day of rest and He later strictly instructed them to observe the Sabbath Day.

God provided what they needed, even though they complained. God is gracious and kind beyond our ability to understand. He gave them what they asked for and needed. What do you need from God? Have you asked? Ask for what you need and thank Him for His provisions.

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read John 6:31-40

Once again, we must really celebrate that we have this perspective. We can read the New Testament and look back and see with clear eyes what was really going on. Thousands of years ago God provided manna for the people of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Jesus tells the Jewish religious leaders of His day that His Father provided the

bread and then tells them that now He is the bread from God. The bread, manna that God provided, literally saved the people from starving to death all those years.

They had no idea that what God provided, and they ate, was pointing to something far greater. Jesus tells His listeners that He is the bread of life. Jesus tells them that, like the manna of old, He has come down to be the One who saves. He would not just save them for another day, but He would bring to them everlasting life. He was the bread of life that God provided so that they could eat and live forever. Like the manna-bread, all of the people had to go out and gather it each morning, Jesus says that all who come to Him and believe in Him will never hunger or thirst. He is the One who brings the real lasting and eternal food. He is talking about true salvation and is forever.

God's plan to provide for His people has never been an afterthought. It was the plan from before the world began. We get to see the plan unfold and then we get to see it fulfilled in Jesus.

Have you come to Him? Have you believed in Him? Have you turned to Him to have your hunger for true life filled? If you have, give thanks to God for His amazing provision. If not, why not come to Jesus in faith right now? Confess and believe that Jesus is God's Son, whom He sent to die for your sin. Believe that He was miraculously raised from the dead to give you eternal life and victory. Ask Him to save you and invite Him to live in you.

Day 4

First Read Exodus 17:1-7

How much of our complaining and anxious nature could be eliminated if we would simply trust God? Once again, the people gripe and complain against Moses because they are thirsty. They even wanted to stone Moses. Once again, they failed to remember that God was daily providing manna out of nothing and, once again, we see the enduring love of God. Instead of punishing the people, He told Moses to strike the rock and He provided water for them.

Have you ever thought that our struggles, needs, and appetites are good things? We will not always have everything we want and need right when we need it. In fact, God uses and even causes us to hunger and thirst so that we will ask Him to provide. Notice I said ask Him, not complain and whine. Look at **Deuteronomy 8:3**:

So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

Food and water are not all we need. God shows us that we need Him. Now look at **I Corinthians 10:4**:

They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

There it is again. We see Jesus in the Old Testament. Paul says that the rock the water came from was Jesus. Moses struck the rock. God had Jesus, our Rock also struck for us. He alone provides everything we need, even when we do not immediately know our own needs.

Give thanks to God for providing all we need!

Day 5

First Read Psalm 72:1-2 and 2 Timothy 4:8

As we have already seen, the entire Bible is ultimately about Jesus. The more you read and study the Bible, the more you will see Him. The passage in Psalm 72 was written by Solomon, who was a king and very wise. He amazed the world in which he lived with his wealth and his wisdom. He asked God for wisdom to rule as a wise king and God answered his prayer.

However, Jesus would be the King and Judge of righteousness. He was righteous because He never sinned and He was both completely God and man. He was also righteous, because He came from God and was returning to God. When He comes and establishes His eternal Kingdom on the new Heaven and new earth, He will rule and judge with righteousness. All who

have surrendered to Jesus as Savior and Lord and recognized His Kingship will receive from Him the crown of righteousness. Here is what one of my favorite commentaries says about the crown of righteousness: “A crown of righteousness” is, I believe, the reward for a righteous life, and Paul will receive that. “Unto all them also that love his appearing” does not refer to doctrine you hold regarding His appearing. You may be a premillennialist, a postmillennialist, or an amillennialist. I have news for you: there’s no reward for holding any one of those views. The question is: Do you love His appearing? To love His appearing means that you will have to love Him. Oh, my friend, do you have a close relationship with Him? Have you ever told Him that you love Him? (I have a notion that Paul told the Lord every day that he loved Him, because he had hated and persecuted Him before.) There is a crown for those who love His appearing. I would like to have that crown. I believe it will shine brighter than all the others.”⁶

I Like Paul, anticipate that crown. I look forward to His appearing because I am His and He is mine. How about you?

⁶Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee

WEEK 34 God Gives Moses the Ten Commandments---

Chris Watson

Boundaries for children are good, but boundaries can also be good for adults. Boundaries often keep us safe, keep us out of trouble, and can also save us from a ton of heartache. God's boundaries, or commandments, provide protection for us. They also help us to keep our eyes on God, while showing us what sin is.

Day 1

First Read Exodus 19

God is holy and we are not. He is righteous and we are wicked. He is perfect and we are imperfect. It is important that we understand this. It's not just that some people are bad and others are good. Isaiah 64 tells us that our righteousness is like filthy rags. Want a good picture of filthy rags? Go back to your school days, it's lunch time and you are walking into the lunchroom. You look over and see that the custodian is wiping off the table where you are about to sit and eat. What she doesn't tell you is that the towel she is using to wipe off your table was dipped into the mop water and that mop water hasn't been changed for a whole month. Not only was it dipped in the mop water, it's the same water that has been used to clean the hallways, bathrooms, and classrooms. Now remember, she just used that same towel to wipe off your table. I know. That's nasty, right? That kind of towel is what our good works are like, filthy, nasty, and gross. Think about that for a minute. We, on our own, have nothing to offer God. Until we realize this we will never see our need for Jesus. Since God is holy and we are not, God cannot and will not be associated with us. There is no sin in heaven. Therefore, as sinners we are doomed unless we know Jesus. Jesus is our only hope. Since God can't be associated with sin, we can't be in His presence without the blood of Jesus.

Moses took this seriously and so did God. He warned the people not to come up the mountain. In fact, verse 23 says the Lord was putting limits around the mountain and setting it apart as holy. God wanted to ensure that the people knew what the limits were!

Aren't you thankful for Jesus? Scripture tells us we can now boldly approach the throne of God through Jesus Christ. Without the shedding of Jesus' blood, there is no forgiveness of sins meaning we can't know God and we won't spend eternity with Him in heaven. Thank God for Jesus. Thank Him for being righteous and holy while at the same time being a just God.

Day 2

First Read Exodus 20:1-21

In today's passage God speaks to Moses and gives him the Ten Commandments. Much has been said about the Ten Commandments over the years, but the truth is they are from God and was given to the Israelites. Scripture tells us that the commandments, or the law, were given so that we might know what sin is and point us to Jesus.

Can you imagine being one of the Israelites and experiencing what they experienced? Our response might have been the same. The reality is the people were given commandments and many of them had probably already broken them! For those commandments that hadn't been broken, they knew were too much to bear, meaning they knew they couldn't keep all of them. This is why we need Jesus.

Look at verse 20. After hearing the commandments the people probably sought to follow them and did what they could not to break them. Often, as believers, we might keep or follow God's commands; because we know the consequences of breaking even one might be great. The law was made to draw us to God, for us to seek Him to help us. As we grow in our walk our focus should shift to pleasing and honoring God and not so much just keeping commandments. As we come to know God more and seek Him, His law is placed in our heart, and our focus will be on Him. By seeking to honor and please Him we are following, or obeying, His commands with the focus being on Him not so much the commandments. The more we know Him the more we follow and the more we do what His heart desires. May we have the heart of Jesus and may His words be written on our hearts!

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Galatians 3:23-24

At a quick glance it may seem that Galatians is totally contradicting what we read yesterday. Yesterday we saw the law, the Ten Commandments, that were given to Moses and the people. They were to follow them. Yet today we read that the law could be like a prison. Which one is right? In fact, both are right and they don't contradict each other. In the time of Moses, the people were to follow God's commandments and seek to honor and love Him. Jesus had not yet come so God was setting up standards in how they were to live their lives according to God's commands. The commandments came straight from God and the people were to follow them. When Jesus came He would shed His blood for you and me so that we would know Him and go to heaven. We are not made right by following the Law, but by trusting in Jesus. This doesn't mean that we simply trust in Him and live our lives like we want to. In fact, the scriptures say we died to sin, so how can we live in it any longer? Martin Luther says "there are three ways in which the Law may be abused. First, by the self-righteous hypocrites who fancy that they can be justified by the Law. Secondly, by those who claim that Christian liberty exempts a Christian from the observance of the Law. These,' says Peter, 'use their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness,' and bring the name and the Gospel of Christ into ill repute. Thirdly, the Law is abused by those who do not understand that the Law is meant to drive us to Christ. When the Law is properly used its value cannot be too highly appraised. It will take me to Christ every time."⁷

The Law is meant to show us our need for Christ. Go back and read over the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. How many have you broken? The truth is most of us have broken most, if not all of them, which means we are guilty before God. We have no hope except for Jesus. The bad news is that we have all broken God's laws but the good news is that Christ died for our sins and when we trust in Jesus we can know God and have the promise of heaven.

⁷A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

Take some time to thank God for His son Jesus. Acknowledge the shortcomings in your life and seek to follow God but know that, as **Romans 8:1** says, “*therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*”

Day 4

First Read Exodus 20:22-23

We are all tempted in different ways! Some folks are tempted or enticed in ways others are not and vice versa. The enemy wants to do everything he can to keep us from following God. God knew how the Israelites would be tempted, so much so that He gave them the first two commandments again in today’s passage. Look at Exodus 20:2-3. It is very similar to today’s passage, just more concise.

Robert Robinson wrote these words in 1758: “O to grace how great a debtor daily I’m constrained to be! Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to Thee. Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love; here’s my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for Thy courts above.”

The words to this song express our desire to sin. We know that we are often prone to wander and walk away from God. Yet we know it’s wrong and in the end it will not benefit us at all. It will only hurt our relationship with God. The truth is that when we worship anything other than God, be it real idols (as in Moses’ time) or fame, money, relationships, our job, etc., then, in fact, we are walking away from God. Selfishness and pride are at the bottom of every sin, trying to satisfy ourselves and get what we want, when truly the only thing that can satisfy is God Himself.

What areas of sin and weaknesses seek to pull you away from the Lord? Lay those before the Lord today and seek Him. We don’t overcome our sin by seeking not to do it but rather by keeping our eyes on God and seeking Him. Seek Him today!

Day 5

First Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Luke 22:19-20

We read about covenants all throughout the Old Testament. The first time we see a covenant is in Genesis 9 when God makes the promise never to flood the earth again. Later, we see the covenant God made to Abram in Genesis 15:18-21. We also see in Genesis that God make a covenant with Abram that He would give his descendants the land of Canaan and that they would be great and Abram would be the father of many nations.

Today, we read about the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. It's important that we know and understand the Old Covenant, which we read about a few weeks back, so that we can grasp the New Covenant. The New Covenant is speaking of Jesus! In fact, Jesus is telling His disciples that His blood will be poured out for them.

By the grace of God we can all be part of the New Covenant by placing our faith in Jesus. Placing our faith in Jesus is the only way for our sins to be taken away and it offers us the hope of heaven, which is great! But that also means that we have the hope of an eternal relationship with God, Himself. It means we get to live with God forever and we will get to see those that went before us and those that will go after us. Oftentimes, we think of salvation in regards to what we are saved from. We are saved from hell, the enemy, death, and destruction, but salvation is also what we have been saved to! We have been saved to a relationship with the creator of the universe. This life is here today and gone tomorrow but God has given us this life to "practice" worshiping Him as we will be doing in Heaven. We will know Him and it will be very much like it was before Adam and Eve sinned. We will walk with God and there will be no pain, sin, death, or destruction. For God will have won, once and for all, and if we are on God's team, we will also win. Do you know God through His Son Jesus? If not, ask Him today to take your sins away and seek to follow Him. If you do, thank Him for Jesus and continue practicing His presence.

WEEK 35 The Tabernacle----- Dennis Watson

The Israelites were instructed to build a tabernacle. The tabernacle was a tent that represented the dwelling of God among the Israelites. It is a “connecting the dots” thing when you think about the words of John. In **John 1:14** he says “*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*” The word here for dwelt is the word for tabernacle. However, as much as the tabernacle reminded the people of His presence, there was a veil that separated the special room in the tabernacle, called the Holy of Holies. It was where the Ark of God was kept. It was where the High Priest, once a year, would enter with a blood sacrifice for the sins of the people. God wanted all of the people to know, not just Israel but all of the surrounding nations, that Israel’s God was not a false god and that He lived among His people.

Day 1

First Read Exodus 25:1-9

God gave Moses a rather lengthy list of materials to be used for building the tabernacle. Remember, God wanted the Israelites to know that He was with them. He often made His presence known to them through a cloud, fire, and smoke. There were no other gods. People in the places around them had false gods, represented by the idols that were made by men. God told the people that there was not to be any representative image of Him that they would worship.

The instruction to Moses was to speak to the Israelites and tell them to bring these items as offerings for building the tabernacle. Where would they get things like gold, silver, and bronze? After all, they had been slaves in Egypt. Remember when they were getting ready to leave Egypt? God told them to ask for gold, silver and other valuable items from the Egyptians? God made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the Israelites and the Egyptians gave them what they asked for. God prepares us in advance for what we will need and even what He will ask of us!

Not only did God give a list of the materials for the people to bring to build the Tabernacle, He also showed Moses the pattern for the building of the

tabernacle. So, was there a literal tabernacle in heaven? Apparently there was. You see the same wording in Hebrews 8:5 and in Hebrews 9:23-24. The people were obviously excited about the Tabernacle, because in Exodus 36:6-7 Moses had to tell the people to stop bringing offerings because they had more than enough— *”too much!”*

Thank God for the blessings of His presence among us!

Day 2

First Read Exodus 26

The tabernacle was a very large tent-like structure which could easily be taken down and moved. It would be the place where Moses would meet with God to receive instructions for the people. It was the place of sacrifice and prayer. It was also central to the national life of the Israelites. The tabernacle reminded the people of God’s presence with them.

The tabernacle was 45 feet long and 15 feet wide and high. It had four coverings. The first covering that could be seen from the inside was linen with cherubim embroidered in gold, blue, and purple thread. Next was a layer of material made of black goat’s hair, then a layer of rams’ hide dyed red and, on top, badger skin. Inside there were two rooms, the Holy Place and then a 10 by 10 room called the Holy of Holies. Inside the Holy of Holies was a chest called the Ark of the Covenant. The chest was 27 inches by 45 inches and was 27 inches high. The stone tablets containing the Commandments, a jar of manna and Aaron’s rod that had budded were placed inside the Ark. The top of the Ark was something called the Mercy Seat. It was here that the High Priest would sprinkle blood from a sacrifice each year to atone or cover the sins of the people. This was the place from which God would speak with Moses to give instructions to the people.

When Jesus was crucified, the veil in the temple, separating the Holy of Holies, was torn apart from top to bottom. The death of Jesus on the cross bought for all people access into the presence of God. His blood became the covering for our sin. No longer was it necessary for a man, the High Priest, to go into the Holy of Holies to speak to God and make atonement for sin. Jesus’ crucifixion bought our access. We can now freely enter in

because He is our sacrifice, our High Priest, and God's continuing presence!

Connect the dots! It all points to Jesus!

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Exodus 27:1-8 and Hebrews 10:4-10

Yesterday, we looked at the only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies—the Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat. Just outside the Holy of Holies, beside the veil, was the altar of incense. Incense in the Bible usually symbolizes prayer. There was also in the Holy Place a table called the table of showbread. Each week twelve loaves of bread were placed on the table. For us the bread reminds us that Jesus is the bread of life. He provides what we need. The last piece of furniture was the golden lampstand. This was a lampstand with seven lamps. There was no natural light that could enter the tabernacle so the lampstand provided light and reminds us that Jesus is the light and He has sent us to carry the light to the world.

In the courtyard surrounding the tabernacle was the altar of burnt offerings. On this altar thousands of lambs were sacrificed year after year to provide forgiveness for sin. It was an altar that no one could touch. No matter how many animals were sacrificed here they were not sufficient to remove sin. They were a constant reminder of sin.

However, as we connect the dots, we read in the New Testament that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for sin. It was not the blood of lambs, bulls, or goats that would accomplish forgiveness. In Hebrews 10 we read that the blood of Jesus did what the blood of animals could never do. Jesus died “once for all” that our sins may be “once for all” completely dealt with. When we come into the presence of God we do not have to bring an animal to sacrifice. No, Jesus became our sacrificial lamb. We freely approach God totally forgiven, with our sins covered by His death and we have victory over sin, death, and the grave by His resurrection.

Thank God for Jesus being our sacrifice for sin!

Day 4

First Read Exodus 28:1-30

All of the furnishings in and around the tabernacle had significant meaning but the clothing and items the priests wore also had significance. In connecting the dots we need to be reminded that we are priests. That is right! As believers, we are a kingdom of priests. There is a New Testament doctrine called the priesthood of every believer. This means that as believers, we are all full-time servants of God. We do not need anyone other than Jesus to stand before God on our behalf. However, it goes further. The priests had special clothing and items to wear when they served. On each shoulder of the ephod, a vest like garment, was attached an onyx stone. On each onyx stone was engraved six names of the tribes of Israel for a total of twelve. There was also a breastplate to be worn which had twelve jewels, each having the name of one of the twelve tribes engraved on it. The names of the twelve tribes would remind the priest that the tribes were important to God and should be important to him also.

I believe the location of the names worn, was also important. The names on the shoulder would remind the priest that he carried the needs and concerns of the people on his shoulders and was to bring those people and their needs to God in prayer. The names on the breastplate worn over the heart would be a reminder to keep the people in his heart.

Now there are some applications for priests today—all believers. First we are to be interceding for others. One part of a priest's responsibility was to stand before God on behalf of others. We should bear people on our shoulders before God. As Jesus our Great High Priest is ever interceding (Hebrews 7:25), we too should be interceding, praying for others. The breastplate with the names over his heart reminded him that he also stood before people on behalf of God. The hope was to point people to God and His Word. As priests we have both of these opportunities, we stand before God on behalf of others and we stand before others on behalf of God as His representatives.

Ask God for the grace to be an effective priest.

Day 5

Read First Psalm 72:4-8

We have already looked at a portion of this Psalm. It is a Psalm that speaks of Jesus way in advance. The first part talks about Jesus being King of righteousness. The scripture for today speaks of Jesus being King of peace. A king rules and reigns which results in certain experiences. In the future eternal earthly reign of Jesus as King, there will be peace—total, complete, eternal peace. It will be a peace that will last forever (“*Until the moon is no more*”) and will be everywhere (“*from sea to sea*”). I am looking forward to that!

In the meantime, and often it really is mean-time, Jesus rules and reigns in the hearts and minds of His people. Of course, we must wait for the complete peace which will come when His eternal Kingdom is established, but for now we have the peace which He brings.

Look at the words of Jesus:

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27 (NKJV)

Just a few days ago I was really having a tough time dealing with some things and finding myself desperate for peace. I searched the Bible for some help and I wrote many passages down in my journal. Here is one of those passages:

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. **Colossians 3:15 (NKJV)**

Make it a regular experience to be reminded that Jesus is even now our King of peace. Wait, abide and continue in His presence and His peace will guard you.

WEEK 36 The Golden Calf----- Chris Watson

Just nine chapters ago we saw the Lord give Moses and the Israelites the Ten Commandments and then we saw the first two reiterated. This week we will see that “knowing” and “doing” are two separate things. The Israelites clearly understood the Lord’s commands, but they chose to follow what they wanted to do.

Day 1

First Read Exodus 29:1-21, 35-37

We have already seen that God is a God of details and we see this again in these verses. He gave specific instructions for Aaron and his sons and they followed them carefully.

Notice that there was a sin offering and in verse 36 we see, “*sacrifice a bull each day as a sin offering to make atonement.*” This was a constant reminder of their sin and God’s desire for holiness, but they were not holy. The blood of the animals was meant to cover their sins so that they could serve in God’s presence.⁸ The only person, though, that can take our sins away is Jesus. When Jesus died, was buried, and rose again as payment for our sins, He covered all of our sins, every one of them. That’s why we no longer make sacrifices as followers of Christ. Jesus’ blood was more than enough. We need no sacrifice other than Jesus himself. No matter what we have done, Jesus’ blood can cover it. When we trust Jesus and what He has done for us, we are saved and forgiven. If God has forgiven us, we need to forgive ourselves. C.S. Lewis says, “[If God forgives us we must forgive ourselves otherwise its like setting up ourselves as a higher tribunal than Him](#)”.

Remember the thief on the cross dying next to Jesus? Apparently he had done something really bad since he was being crucified (Luke 23:41). He realized that Jesus was the Son of God and that his only hope was Jesus. He asked Jesus to remember him when He came into the Kingdom. Jesus told him, “*you will be with me in paradise.*”

⁸ Long Story Short, Marty Machowski, pg. 183

No matter what we have done, Jesus' blood is enough and it will always be enough. Rest today in His mercy and grace and thank Him that He is the ultimate sacrifice.

Day 2

First Read Exodus 32:1-8

How long was Moses up there? Maybe Moses was dead. Maybe he forgot. Maybe Moses was just taking his time. Whatever the reason, the people saw that Moses was taking too long to come down after the commandments had been passed to him. They even said they were not sure what had happened to him, so what did they do? They made idols (gods).

They didn't just make gods and worship them, they even said in verse 4 that these gods brought them up out of Egypt! What? The God who had allowed them to escape Egypt, parted the Red Sea, given them manna, and provided for them in every way, is now being substituted with manmade gods. They had totally forgotten the one true God; they had forgotten, or really ignored, His commandments and now they were doing their own thing! This is so hard to believe. How dare they!

How could they do something like this? How do WE do something like this? Yes, us! It's so easy to read this account and question the Israelites, when, unfortunately, we have so many similarities. Do we know God's commands? Do we know God? Do we know what God asks of us? Do we always follow? Unfortunately we don't. We like the Israelites, often go our own way. When God is too "slow", when we want our way, or when we just don't want to listen, we go our own way and make other things or people our god(s).

Today, might we realize that we can be very fickle as believers, but, thankfully, God isn't. He is faithful; we can trust Him and follow Him. Today, might we see that the One who has brought us to where we are, has brought us out of sin and into the light. Let us acknowledge that He is the only God and He is all that we need. We need no other.

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Exodus 32:9-14

God loved the people of Israel and so did Moses. However, once God saw them worshiping other gods and thanking those other gods for bringing them out of Egypt, that was enough. Moses was the mediator between God and the Israelites. Moses sought God and asked Him why He brought them out of Egypt just to destroy them? Verse 14 tells us that God relented, meaning He decided not to destroy them.

Moses was the mediator, the go-between if you will, between God and the Israelites. We need a mediator as well! Why? God is holy and righteous without sin, and we are sinful and unholy. Scripture tells us that because of this we will die, both physically and spiritually. Every man will die physically but not all have to die spiritually. God sent His Son Jesus to become our mediator, living the righteous life that we could not, so that when we trust in Him we have His righteousness. This is called imputation. Scripture also tells us in **2 Corinthians 5:21** that *He became sin who knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God*. Jesus is the only mediator between us and God. We can't fix our sin problem; neither can our spouses, parents, best friends, or anyone.

God would have been perfectly just not to send Jesus as our mediator. However, because of His great love and His desire to be in a right relationship with us, He did. Scripture tells us that it is God's desire for none to perish but for all to come to repentance and faith in Jesus! Have you come to repentance? Do you know Him? Is Jesus your Savior? I pray that He is. Spend some time thanking Him for dying for your sins and for placing His righteous on you.

Day 4

First Read Exodus 32:15-35

Waiting on God can sometimes be difficult. We know the best thing to do is to wait and let the Lord reveal Himself to us. Sometimes, though, we get impatient and take things into our own hands. The Israelites were in

essence waiting for Moses' direction but when he took too long and they were not sure what happened to him, they took things into their own hands.

Did you catch verse 20 of this passage? Go back and read it! Wow, can you imagine that? I believe while Moses was angry, he was seeking to get the people to understand that if this is what you really want you can have it, drink it. Most likely the people knew, by then, that their disobedience was not worth it. This case is true with all of God's people. When we go our own way and seek to do our own things, no matter what we may gain, good or bad, it is not God's plan and it always leads in the way of destruction. It doesn't always seem this way, though. In fact, if we are disobeying God, we don't gain anything but disobedience, and following the way of the enemy is not good.

Can you imagine what Moses must have thought and felt when coming off the mountain? He had just had an encounter with God and was given the Ten Commandments and now he had to deal with this! Not only was it the people but his right hand man, Aaron, his brother, the one contributing to following the ways of the enemy. And to make matters worse, Aaron says in verse 24 that he just threw a bunch of gold in the fire and out popped a calf. Really?

When we seek to take matters into our own hands, instead of placing it in God's hands, it's never good. It may seem good from what we see, or others may see it as good, but God sees and calls it disobedience. May we always seek God, wait on Him, and not become impatient. Today, might you seek, pray, and ask the Lord to help you trust and wait on Him, rather than taking matters into your own hands!

Day 5

First Read Isaiah 53:12

Isaiah is a book rich in prophecy and this verse, in particular, is very clear about the prophecy of Jesus. This verse says so much:

1) *He poured His life unto death*- meaning He died for the sins of the world and it's His desire that every person come to repentance. The word in the NIV is "poured" which implies He willingly gave it and He gave it all. He didn't have to. After all, He is God. He died for us, so we wouldn't have to die and so we could know Him, not just know about Him.

2) *He was numbered with the transgressors*- Jesus was literally considered by many to be a sinner. Because He gave much prophecy and spoke of whom He was, God's Son, many didn't believe Him and said He was a liar and a blasphemer. As we find in scripture, He took great ridicule but remained silent for you and for me.

3) *He bore the sin of many*- When Jesus died He literally died for the sins of all. Can you imagine the weight of the sins of the world? He died for murder, lies, hate, lust, bitterness, jealousy, etc. This might help us get a better picture of why Jesus' death was so grueling. It wasn't just physical, it was so much more.

4) *He made intercession for the transgressors* (and still does) - When Jesus died for our sins He was interceding between God and sinners. Scripture tells us that even now He is at the right hand of God interceding for you and me. We have an advocate, Jesus Christ! He is standing in our place; much like Moses was seeking to stand in the place of the people. Jesus stood in our place!

Thank the Lord for Jesus. Take some time today to thank Jesus for who He is and what He has done!

WEEK 37 God Has Mercy On Israel-----Dennis Watson

Since the people left Egypt, God had been traveling with them. They knew He was there because He gave them a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. With the tabernacle they had another reminder of His presence. On several occasions God called the people “stiff-necked.” This meant that they were stubborn and would not be obedient to God. Last week we looked at the biblical historical account of the golden calf. Idolatry is a very ugly and devastating sin because it is the sin of trying to make a substitute for God. That is where we pick up this week. Moses interceded as a mediator of the people before God and God gave them a fresh new beginning. So they continued their journey, God traveling with them.

Day 1

First Read Exodus 33:1-11

There are many sad words in the Bible and this passage is really sad. God told Moses that the people were to continue on their journey to the Promised Land but that He would not go with them. He would send His angel ahead of them. He would not go with them because He may rise up because of their stubbornness and destroy them. He would, instead send His angel ahead to drive out the people from the land. When the people heard this they were upset. This time they took off their jewelry, not to build an idol but, as a sign of sorrow and repentance.

Moses moved the special tent he used to meet with God away from the people so that he could cry out to God on their behalf. When Moses would meet with the Lord, the people would stand far off and watch. They knew God was meeting with him because the cloud that traveled with them would hover at the tent door. The people were obviously anticipating hearing from God and hoping that He would turn from removing His presence from them.

The scripture says God met with Moses “face to face.” However, based on the context that follows, this would probably mean the Angel of the Lord or a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus met with Moses. Jesus said, “*Anyone*

who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). We do not have to worry about those sad words. Jesus promised that He would be with us until the end of the age (Matthew 28:19). He gave us His Holy Spirit as a deposit (Ephesians 1:14). We are blessed to have the security that nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37-39).

Thank God for His continuous presence. He is always with you.

Acknowledge and enjoy His presence!

Day 2

First Read Exodus 33:12-23

Moses stood in the gap for the people. He was their mediator. He met with God on their behalf and he stood before the people and spoke for God on His behalf. Moses interceded for the people after the golden calf debacle. God told the people that they could continue on their journey but that He was withdrawing His presence from them. Moses said that God’s presence with them showed that God was the real and true God and that He was their God. Moses cried out to God saying that they would not go without Him. He pleaded for God’s grace reminding Him that the people were His. As a result of Moses’ intercession, God told Moses that He would go with them on the journey.

Many of us, including myself, have longed to see God. That is what Moses asked of God. He asked to see God’s face. God told Moses that he could not see the face of God and live. God told Moses that He would show him His glory. So God put Moses in a safe place in a rock and hid him there with His hand. As God passed by before Moses, God covered Moses with His hand and allowed Moses to “see My back.” This is a very gracious and tender picture where God is dealing with Moses as a loving father deals with his child.

Neither Moses, nor any other person, for that matter, can see the face of God and live. However, we can see the glory of God. Remember Jesus said that to see Him is to see the Father! God reveals Himself so that we can see His glory. The glory of God is His shining. To see God’s shining is

to see His impact. Moses was allowed to see God's back. I believe that Moses was able to see where God had been! To know that God creates, saves, and transforms is to know and then see, or recognize, His handiwork. To see my children and grandchildren when they were first born was to see the glory of God. Seeing God work in a person's life through salvation, the new birth, is to see God's glory.

There is coming a day when will see the fullness of God revealed in the resurrected and glorified Jesus. Open your eyes and look and see where God has been. His glory is all around.

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Hebrews 12:18-24

Hebrews tells us that the New Covenant is superior in every way to the Old. It is not that the first failed but the first was the prelude or the preface to the New. The preface of a book introduces and gives a hint of what is to come in the pages that follow. The Old Testament and the Old Covenant were a preface for what was coming in the New. Mount Sinai represents the Old Covenant and Mount Zion represents the New Covenant. Moses was the mediator between Israel and God. His mediation was temporary and brought temporary pardon for guilt. However, in today's passage, there is a greater, in fact the greatest mediator, Jesus.

But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

Hebrews 8:6 (NIV)

Through Jesus we can draw near with confidence. When Moses went up on Mt. Sinai to receive the law the people were prohibited from even coming near the mountain. The picture of Mt. Zion is a picture of the New Jerusalem and the New Heaven and Earth. We do not fear but anticipate God's blessings and salvation because of Jesus. Verse 24 says that Jesus is the Mediator of the New Covenant. Moses was the mediator who stood for the people and sought God's forgiveness for their stubbornness. Jesus is the Mediator between us and God to save, or deliver us, and reunite us to God.

Abel and Jesus were both wrongfully killed. Abel's blood cried out for justice. Jesus' blood cries out for mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

Give thanks that through Jesus, our Mediator and our Savior, we can confidently live and abide always in God's presence without fear.

Day 4

First Read Exodus 34

God is the God of second chances (and third, fourth, fifth and so on). Moses went back up on Mt. Sinai to meet with God again, and once again, God gave him the law and two new stone tablets. God told Moses that He is the Lord God and that He is all about goodness, forgiveness, and mercy, but at the same time the God of justice. Moses once again asked God to pardon the people for their stubbornness.

I am thankful that God is a God of mercy and grace and He seeks to forgive and give new beginnings. While up on the mountain, in addition to giving the law again, God reminded them not to have false gods or idols and to keep the Sabbath. God also reminded Moses that the firstborn belonged to Him but could be redeemed with a lamb. The lamb was sacrificed for the firstborn as a substitute. This was looking ahead to Jesus, God's firstborn and only begotten Son, who was sacrificed for us. Moses came down off the mountain with two new stone tablets with the Ten Commandments engraved on them. This was for the people, God's forgiveness and His offer of a new beginning.

God was, is, and always will be the God of new beginnings. He is the God of justice but also forgiveness. He offers to all who will repent and come to Him on His terms, through His Mediator, Jesus, a new beginning. We are graciously reminded that all who are in Christ are new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

Revelation 21:5 (NKJV)

Thank God for new beginnings and that His mercies are new every morning.

Day 5

First Read Psalm 16:8-10 and Acts 2:25-31

Can you imagine reading this Psalm without the benefit of the New Testament? Who would live and die but not stay dead? I have said it several times already; we have a wonderful perspective from which to read and study the Bible. The Psalmist speaks of one who would live a glorious life and die, but not stay dead. In Acts 2, Peter is preaching and says that this Psalm was speaking about Jesus. In these verses we see the life of Christ (Psalm 16:8). We also see the death of Christ (Psalm 16:9). In verse 10 we have the resurrection and in verse 11 the ascension to the right hand of God. Perhaps without the preaching of Peter and the words of Paul in Acts 13:34-39, we might not have known who this Psalm was speaking of. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself!

It is an incredible thing to read the Old Testament and the New and connect the dots. The Old Testament predicts and anticipates Jesus. The New Testament reveals what the Old had concealed.

As I continue to travel this journey through the Old Testament my faith is being bolstered. What is happening with you? Be reminded that Romans 10:17 says that faith comes from hearing the Word of God. Tell someone today what has been happening to your faith. I have been in church all my life (61 years), but since we have been on this journey my faith has grown incredibly!

Join me in thanking God for growing our faith!

WEEK 38 The People Of Israel Complain-----

Chris Watson

It's been said that the folks who often complain the most are Christians! It seems to be similar in the Old Testament. Those that were following the Lord often had things to complain to the Lord about, from not wanting the food they had to wishing they could be back in Egypt. Even thinking Moses had brought them out of Egypt to die, they were always complaining! We will see this week that the Lord is not in favor of complaining.

Day 1

First Read Numbers 10:11-13 and 10:33-11:3

We pick up the account of the Israelites today in Numbers. When the cloud lifted in Numbers 10:11-12, it meant that the Israelites had to take down their tents and pack up everything as they traveled with everything they had. When the cloud lifted they would travel and when it came to rest they would stop as they were headed towards Canaan, the land that the Lord had promised them. (You can read more about this in Exodus 9:15-23.) God had brought the Israelites through many difficulties, including deliverance from bondage and the parting of the Red Sea, to name a few. Now, God was leading them in their next step and it says in verse 33 that the ark of the Lord went before them, meaning the Lord was preparing the way. He was going before them.

However, in the next verses, we find the Israelites complaining about their hardships. We are not sure what the hardships were, but we can assume they were just upset from having to move, although they were moving under the Lord's leadership and He was with them. Maybe they were tired of traveling for three days and were worn out. Whatever the reason, they were complaining. God had brought them this far and yet all they knew to do was complain.

This hits a little too close to home for probably all of us! Unfortunately, followers of Christ are often the ones who complain the most. Why is that?

We have been given a relationship with God through Jesus Christ; we have hope in this life and hope in our next life with Jesus. We have been promised that there will be difficult times, so it shouldn't be a surprise to us. Yet we have also been promised that God will be right with us like He was with the Israelites, and yet, we complain. As David Ring used to say, we "bellyache."

What did God do when they started to complain? He sent them a warning sign; He sent fire that burned some of the outskirts of the camp. It was as if God was saying, "I hear you but you have Me, you have all you need, you have nothing to complain about." Today, might we realize that while we can share with God our difficult times and how we need Him, we have so much to be grateful for. Most importantly, we can know Him. While everything else may fall apart, He never will. May we learn to say, "It is well with my soul," because we know God. He is the maker of the heavens and the earth, the stars and the moon, water and dry land, the God who is all powerful! Seek Him today.

Day 2

First Read Numbers 11:4-17

Verse 4 speaks of the "rabble"! Just what is "rabble?" Most likely it was Egyptians who had left Egypt and possibly even intermarried with some of the Israelites. So they were not true, authentic Israelites. These people began wanting food other than what they had, and as they complained, other Israelites joined in with them. They were lusting for food. John Butler says, "Lust was the cause of this particular complaining by the Israelites. Lusting does not bring contentment; it only fosters discontent. We will never be content when we allow our lives to be governed by our fleshly lusts."⁹ What the Lord had given them was more than sufficient for what they needed. It was enough! However, when we seek to go after things on our own, rather than receiving what God has provided, then we are seeking to gain contentment where it can't be found. We will only find satisfaction in a relationship with God!

⁹Bible Biography Series– Moses: The Emancipator of Israel

Not only did they want meat, but they began reminiscing about what they had in Egypt. They were, in essence, wishing they were back in Egypt with the food they had there. They had forgotten that they were in bondage at that time and were seeking to be delivered from that bondage. Their desire for “temporary” satisfaction was outweighing true satisfaction in God.

The Israelites had again forgotten what the Lord had done and how far He had brought them. As believers, we sometimes do this. Take a minute to see where the Lord has brought you. Can you see how He has worked in your life? May we never forget where the Lord has brought us. If He has saved us, this is a miracle in itself. Then, He works in our lives and grows us into what He wants us to be. May we not desire or lust for things that we know are not of God. May God be our portion, everything we need, and may we find that only He can fill us. Nothing that we can want or gain on our own will do that. Thank Jesus that He gives us what we need and that we can depend on Him.

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Exodus Numbers 11:24-29 and Acts 2:14-18

Moses had inquired of the Lord for some help in leading this group of obstinate people, and the Lord gave it to him! He provided seventy elders to help carry the load and they began to prophesy! Joshua wanted to stop them, but Moses told him that he wished all were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit on all of them.

We see this carried out in Acts 2 of our reading today. Acts, of course, is the beginning of the New Testament church and we see the Spirit of the Lord (Holy Spirit) speaking to men and women and using them as instruments to teach the truth. One of those that we see is Peter!

The Spirit of the Lord is not something that is conjured up or a formula, if you will. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ and you have put your hope in Him, you have the Spirit of the Lord in you, the Holy Spirit who guides, directs, and leads us. As believers it should be our desire that with each new day we live more and more in the Spirit. This is not to say we only have some of the Spirit; we have all, but as we seek God and know Him

through His Word and prayer we are directed more by His Spirit! Then it is our desire for others to have the Spirit of the Lord, for them to know God through Jesus Christ.

May our prayer be for the Spirit of the Lord to work in our lives and in the lives of others. Might we realize that He wants to work in the life of all and one of His tools to do so might be you or me! Today, may we live in the Spirit and seek to be used by Him.

Day 4

First Read Exodus Numbers 11:31-34

We understand from verse 34 that not all of the people died because not all of them craved other food. So while some died because of their craving meat other than what God had provided, those that didn't crave other meat lived.

Covetousness and greed, wanting what you don't have, and wanting more of what you have as we see can be deadly! Those that wanted the food they didn't have and lusted after it (verses 4-5) found that it cost them their lives. They had food that the Lord had provided but decided it wasn't enough and they wanted another kind of food. But the food isn't the focus here. They wanted more than what God had provided. There was a point in which the "rabble" and later, other Israelites began salivating for what they didn't have.

Throughout their complaining and whining God gave them what they wanted or what they thought they wanted and, in the end, it cost them their lives. There are many things we think we want but desiring anything other than God or the things that God provides is wrong. The Israelites had forgotten again what God had done for them and they were whining about how bad they had it.

I believe the Israelites that didn't "crave other food" (v. 34) realized just how serious God was. They quickly recognized that they needed to leave their needs and desires to God and trust Him, specifically not whining and complaining. When we seek to fill our lives with things other than what

God has provided in Himself we are being disobedient. Today, may we be thankful for where God has brought us and be content with what He has given us. We can depend on Him to know what is best.

Day 5

First Read Malachi 4:1-3

Here in the Old Testament, it speaks of the coming of the Lord! Even before Jesus is on earth, we see His coming in Malachi.

Notice the comparison in verses 1 and 2. For those that are arrogant, meaning they follow their own ways and they have not trusted in God, it will be an awful day. They will be punished and they will be turned to stubble. Nothing of them will be left! This lets us know that God takes very seriously those that don't follow Him and those that are evil. We all have the choice to follow Jesus, to obey and trust Him. However, for those that choose not to follow Him, this passage is very clear about the end results. The best they will ever experience will be here on earth.

However, for those that trust in Jesus, for those who find their hope in Him and are His disciples, they will be free. They will live forever; they will know Jesus and be worshiping Him always. For them the best isn't on this earth, it's what is to come. However, while on this earth, we seek to love and follow Jesus.

Matthew Henry says of this passage, "Here is a reference to the first and to the second coming of Christ: God has fixed the day of both. Those who do wickedly, who do not fear God's anger, shall feel it. It is certainly to be applied to the Day of Judgment, when Christ shall be revealed in flaming fire; to execute judgment on the proud, and all that do wickedly. In both, Christ is a rejoicing Light to those who serve him faithfully. By the Sun of Righteousness we understand Jesus Christ. Through him believers are justified and sanctified, and so are brought to see light. His influences render the sinner holy, joyful, and fruitful. It is applicable to the graces and comforts of the Holy Spirit, brought into the souls of men. Christ gave the Spirit to those who are his, to shine in their hearts, and to be a Comforter to them, a Sun and a Shield."¹⁰

¹⁰ Matthew Henry Concise Bible Commentary

Jesus is the one who has given us His righteousness! Not only has He taken our sin away but He has made us white as snow, through the blood of Christ. God, through Jesus, has freed us from the stall (verse 2) and we are no longer in bondage to sin. We are free in Christ. Alleluia! Take some time and thank God for this! If you don't know Him, He wants to be your Savior and your God!

WEEK 39 Miriam's Leprosy ----- Dennis Watson

One of the things we see time and time again in the Bible is that God seeks to display His glory through people—willing vessels that open their lives up for God to work through. In all these cases it is not about the person but about God who is working in and through the person to show His glory. Moses was a humble servant of the Lord. Other people became envious of Moses and sought to undermine his leadership and authority. However, it backfired.

Day 1

First Read Numbers 12:1-2

How often is there conflict in our churches, homes, and families? What is the source of such griping and complaining? It seems to be a bad case of pride which presents itself as jealousy and envy. Envy is wanting something someone else has. It may be a thing or a position. It says, “I deserve this more than you and I should have it.” In these verses we see this was coming from a very unlikely source—Moses’ older sister and brother, Miriam and Aaron. Can you imagine that? This is a family feud. The “reason” for the attack or so Miriam said, was because Moses’ second wife was an Ethiopian woman. But verse two really tells the story, they were saying, “Who does Moses think he is?” They were envious!

I wonder how many churches, men, and women have gotten off course because of jealousy and envy? I wonder how many churches have split and homes broken because of pride? What about you? Is there envy and jealousy in your life? As you look around the church or look at your family and neighbors, are you holding on to envy? In Philippians 4, Paul spoke about being content. If you are content with where you are and where God has you then you can say, “This is where I am and it is where God has me.” This is liberating! Thank God for your circumstances and serve Him right where you are! Ask God to enable you to be faithful in the place He has you.

Day 2

First Read Numbers 12:3-10

James 4:6 says, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Yesterday, we saw the pride of Miriam and Aaron that resulted in envy. Today, we see that Moses was the most “*humble man on the face of the earth.*” What an incredible contrast! Miriam and Aaron were proudly saying, “We deserve what Moses has.” Moses was humbly saying, “I am only doing what God has given me to do.” This task of leading the people was not Moses’ idea; it came from the Lord. Moses did not apply or lobby for the job. God, in His grace, called Moses to this task.

God met with the three siblings. God reminded the three of them that He spoke with Moses face to face. He did not deal with Moses like a prophet, through dreams and visions, but He met with and spoke to Moses. God was making it clear to Miriam and Aaron, with Moses listening, that Moses was in this role by God’s determination. In His anger, God caused Miriam to have leprosy. God punished Miriam because in her pride, she envied and undermined a humble man. Since God defended Moses, he did not have to defend himself.

I am sure thankful that I do not get sick every time I complain, am envious, or am prideful. You can always look around and find someone who has it better than you. Don’t live life too horizontally! Seek to spend more time looking up to God and living vertically. Living vertically equips you to live horizontally. Ask God to enable you to have the grace to simply do His will without pride or envy.

Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

First Read Philippians 2:1-11

Moses was an amazing leader. God says that Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth at the time the book of Numbers was written. Humility is thinking of others as more important than yourself. Moses was always thinking of the people he was called to lead. He was caring for and providing for them. Moses was a type of Christ. A type represents a

resemblance between something present and something in the future. Moses was humble but Jesus is the full expression of humility. Moses thought of others and acted on their behalf as mediator. Jesus gave up Himself, His rights and His glory as the Son of God. He became a man and died on the cross and took our punishment. That is what we see in today's passage. Jesus became our substitute and died in our place for our sins. He gave himself and gave up His privileged position to become a humble servant and die for us.

The opposite of humility is pride. Pride is seeking our way and our recognition at the expense of all others. The first four verses of this passage tell us not to seek our own way and advancement but to be united in mind with others and to have the same mind as Christ. A mind governed by humility, seeking the best of and for other people.

Think about Jesus and His self-sacrifice. Ask God for the grace to have the same mind that Jesus had. Consider others and what they need. Jesus first lived vertically and then horizontally.

Day 4

First Read Numbers 12:11-16

Aaron and leprous Miriam were on one side, God, who judged Miriam, was on the other and Moses was in the middle. Moses was the man who acted as mediator. Aaron cried out to Moses to ask God for mercy for Miriam and Moses interceded and God healed her. Miriam had to stay outside of the camp for seven days, probably because she was considered unclean from the leprosy.

A huge aspect of humility is to live and operate without being vindictive. Vindictive means to be spiteful, bitter, to act in such a way as to hurt someone because of something they have done. Remember, humility says, "I am only doing what God wants me to do." Moses served God and others entirely because of God's call on his life. When things did not go his way or the people opposed him, he refused to become vindictive. He was in tune with God's will and plan.

Moses maintained his integrity through this, but what do you suppose Miriam learned from her experience? I hope that the extreme judgment of God on Miriam woke her up. Certainly she would really give serious thought before complaining again.

If you have a tendency to complain, ask God for grace to stop complaining. If you have been mistreated by someone, practice humility and do as the English Poet Alexander Pope said—forgive. He wrote, “To err is human; to forgive, divine.”

Day 5

First Read Haggai 2:20-23

We have previously talked about how important people mentioned in the Old Testament are, too often we read over people who appear to be insignificant. Don't miss what God may be revealing in the details. Zerubbabel was the leader of the people who returned from exile. He was a leader, perhaps a King or, at least considered governor. He was a descendant of King David. In this passage in Haggai we get a hint of things to come. God told Haggai, the prophet, to give encouraging words to the people and then a word of encouragement to Zerubbabel. The people under Zerubbabel's leadership were rebuilding the temple. There were attacks from the outside and attacks from the inside. Zerubbabel was a blue collar king. He did not deal from a throne or wear a crown. He went to work. When God sent the message to King Zerubbabel, He called him “my servant.” But God calls him something else; He calls him “a signet ring.”

A signet ring was a ring worn by a king that represented his authority. The king would use the ring to mark a document with his signature. When the king sent out a message, hot wax was used to drip on the rolled up document to seal it and the king would press the image of his ring in the wax. It was his official signature. God tells Zerubbabel that he was God's authority like a signet ring. Zerubbabel was a descendant of King David and in the line of Jesus. God was encouraging him to stay on the course because the Messiah would come through his family! What a word of encouragement. You cannot give up, grow weary, or quit because you play a necessary role in God's plan.

Every detail in the Old Testament has significance. You too, though you may think you are insignificant; you have a role in God's plan. Don't quit, grow weary, or give up. Be encouraged and carry on!

The transition between week 39 and week 40 could have been huge. However, God told Moses to send in twelve men to “*spy out*” the land that He was giving them. The Israelites had been traveling only a short time and should have been ready to go into the Promised Land very soon. However, due to lack of trust in God they would spend the next 40 years wandering in the wilderness! At the end of their wandering for 40 years, and under the leadership of Joshua, the people will go into the promised land. In volume 4 of “Connecting the Dots, we will see their wandering, their moving into the land, their failure to fully defeat the enemy and we will encounter a wonderful love story.

Let’s continue our journey!

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