



FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM | *The Story of Israel*
the books of EXODUS & LEVITICUS & NUMBERS

CLASS INSTRUCTIONS

Every Class will have Biblical reading for preparation. However, *we will not read the whole text in classes.* Please **pre-read** before the class. *Take Home Review Sheets* for notes will be provided on a weekly basis.

Regarding Health and Safety, we will sit in comfortable distanced seating during class – and it is recommended that masks be worn to your seat and as you leave.

#FALL 2020

L E S S O N S C H E D U L E

1.	9/8	Introduction to the Class and the Exodus of Israel
2.	9/15	Bondage and the Rise of the Deliverer Exodus 1-2
3.	9/22	The Call of the Deliverer Exodus 3:1-4:23
4.	9/29	Liberation Begins Exodus 5:1-6:30
5.	10/6	The Prophet and The Power of God Exodus 7:1-10:29
6.	10/13	The Prophet and The Power of God (2) Exodus 11:1-12:51
7.	10/20	The March to Freedom Exodus 14-15
8.	10/27	The Journey of Complaint and the Testing of the People Exodus 16-17
9.	11/3	Jethro and Moses, the Law Giver Exodus 18-19
10.	11/10	Covenant Is Made with Ten Commandments: The Moral Code Exodus 20
11.	11/17	Covenant Ordinances (Ex. 21:1): Obedience and Disobedience (Lev. 26:14-46 with Deuteronomy 28-30) and Capital Crimes (Exodus 21).
12.	12/1	Covenant Ordinances: Holiness (Ex. 22:31; Lev. 19:1-3; 20:7, 26): <i>"You must be holy" involves many things, including respect, Sabbath and the Tithe</i> (Ex. 22:29-30; 23:19; Lev. 27:30-34).
13.	12/8	The Covenant Calendar Special days of the Tabernacle (Ex. 23:14-17; 31:12-17; 34:18, 21-26; 35:1-3; Lev. 16:1-34; 19:30; 23:1-44; 25:1-24; 26:2): The Sabbath Day (Ex. 31:12-17; 34:21; 35:1-3; Lev. 19:30; 23:1-3; 26:2); The Sabbath Year (Lev. 25:1-7). The Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8-24); *The Passover (Lev. 23:4-5); The Festival of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 34:18; Lev. 23:6-8); The Festival of Firstfruits (Lev. 23:9-14); The Festival of Harvest (Lev. 23:15-22); The Festival of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25); The Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:1-34; 23:26-32); The Festival of Tabernacles (Shelters) (Lev. 23:33-44).
14.	12/15	Continued The Covenant Calendar

Lesson 8**The Journey of Complaint and the Testing of the People** | Exodus 16-17

God Provides. The nation of Israel have now just witnessed a remarkable rescue from Egypt at the Red Sea that was preceded by ten indisputable miracles in the plagues that God brought upon the Egyptians from which the Hebrews were spared. In a once in a lifetime moment, they had crossed the waters of the Red Sea on dry land. In a once in a lifetime moment, they saw God destroy the Egyptian army, along with 600 chariots in that same Red Sea as the Egyptians pursued them. In that moment, where do you think your faith would be?

God Leads them through the Wilderness. They came out from Elim, an oasis of rest and comfort (Exodus 15:27) and head towards Sinai, a place to meet with God and receive His law. In between Elim and Sinai was the wilderness of Sin. In the original text the name “Wilderness of Sin” has nothing to do with sin and could just as easily be translated Wilderness of Zin. Yet as the story unfolds, we see that this wilderness had a lot to do with sin.

The Nation Questions God’s Provision. Still, after being a part of what God demonstrated in His ability to provide for their rescue, the nation questioned God’s ability to provide food. YES! “How is possible?” we always ask. It has hardly been a month (12:18) since they left Egypt and 16:2 says, “And the whole congregation of the children of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.”



The Nation grumbles for food. Although they accused Moses with you would “kill us with hunger” (16:3) and yet, it would seem that starvation was more anticipated than experienced. They had not lived through weeks of famine nor had they witnessed family and friends die of malnutrition, or even have to kill all their livestock for food; instead they *started to feel hungry*, anticipated starvation, and cried out. They went from singing to complaining very quickly. But here, the nation grumbles because they are hungry and pine for their previous condition – where they believed they would be better provided for – as slaves. They were selective in their memories and remembered only what they needed to remember to authentic their feelings.

Even today, people may reflect back to the “good ole days” but there, just like here, what they really see is from a distorted reality of their past – as if as slaves they had their every nourishment with no threat of punishment. Grumbling comes from the distortions we create in our own minds:

1. I deserve better than this.
2. They should have thought of me first.
3. Can you think of one? (It’s frighteningly easy).

God provides again. He provides a miracle of impossibilities and He provides a miracle from possibilities when He sends manna in the mornings and quail at evening.

The first time the nation sees this manna (16:150, they say literally, “What is it?” (something they have never seen before come from the sky) is the Hebrew word, “mawn.” Then, God sends quail or “feathered fowl” (Psalm 78:27) for supper. Lots and lots of quail - God sent them. Now the people who come up with a natural solution for every miracle say that the quail landed on the first available spot after their long flight across the Red Sea. Of course how can that be explained for the next 40 years? Whatever...they just happen to land right there where the Hebrews just gather them up and cook them for supper. Incidentally, there is another quail episode later in Number 11:16-35 (see notes).

Yet, the manna will be the test for the nation (16:4,5,16,26-28). The thing that I want you to see in this passage is that the Lord takes a situation of difficulty and an attitude of complaint and He uses it as an opportunity for discipleship. While the situation without water at Marah (15:23) was a real problem, perhaps even a seriously grave situation for millions of people without water, Still, the people Grumbled against Moses then and here – against the Lord. God hears this situation of difficulty and their attitude of complaint and here is where they go wrong. It may have been verbally expressed against Moses and Aaron, but over and over God and Moses interpret this complaint to be their problem with God Himself – even though Moses feels the burden of it. They were questioning God's ability to provide. So, God takes this situation of real difficulty and this sinful attitude for complaint and He turns it into an opportunity for discipleship.

What God is doing is promising two things, food and rest. Notice, He establishes a plan to address the heart attitude of Israel and their situation and test them as He provides their material needs. In doing so, He is meeting their spiritual need. So, for six days a week, He's going to give them bread. He is going to supply their material need, and one day a week, fifty-two or so days a year, He is going to supply the need of rest, which would become spiritual with Him. He provides food and rest and in this He begins a plan of discipleship. He provides what they need materially and spiritually.

Moses himself, in Deuteronomy 8, makes it clear that Exodus 16 is about God providing needs. In John 6, when Jesus reaches back to this event for application in His own ministry, He speaks about the event just as Moses himself had; And then He goes on to say, "For the bread of God is that which comes down from Heaven and which gives life to the world." So in verse 34, they said, "Lord, give us that bread." Jesus sends the shocking truth: "I am the bread of life." Yet, He is saying that He is something greater than the manna in the wilderness. "I am the bread of God, and he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood, in other words, he who trusts in Me, he who places his faith in My broken body and My shed blood, he shall have life for evermore."

It's interesting to note that they did not eat meat from their own livestock when they were hungry because they were not permitted to do so except under special circumstances. Those circumstances are explained in Leviticus 17.

It's also interesting to note that the keeping of the Sabbath day comes even before the giving of the law in Exodus 20. God is training them to observe the Sabbath before the Law is given – and training them in His (clearly) and (providential) supply of their daily needs. Although Moses recorded that the Sabbath was marked sacred at Creation (Genesis 2:2-3) when he said, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Exodus 16:23 regards the significance of the Sabbath without any explanation, even though this is the first time in the Bible that *the word "Sabbath"* occurs.

It's also interesting to note how God prevents Israel from relying on themselves in their storing methods. They could not gather an extra day's worth of manna on any day *except Friday*; it would become infested with worms if they tried to save it. But Fridays were different; it would keep through Saturday. We see in Exodus 16:30, "So the people rested on the seventh day." And when some initially went out Saturday morning to gather their daily allotment of manna, there was none. On later occasions, violators of the Sabbath keeping will be punished later. And just to further show its miraculous nature, this same manna is put into a jar for a memorial. From verse 35, manna remained part of the Hebrew diet for 40 years until they reached Canaan in Joshua 5:10-12.

God provides Water – again. According to the LORD's instruction (17:1), they stayed in the wilderness and followed the pillar of cloud and fire which led them to where there was no water for the people to drink. They were in the will of God but in a difficult time. It is possible to be completely in the will of God yet also in a season of great problems. But this remains part of their testing to trust God as He shapes in them the nation He has planned for them to become.

“In Numbers 33:12-14 it is said, that when the Israelites came from Sin they encamped in Dophkah, and next in Alush, after which they came to Rephidim. Here, therefore, two stations are omitted, probably because nothing of moment took place at either.” (Adam Clarke)

Moses said they they not only quarreled with the Lord – but they tested Him (17:2). So Moses cried out again to the LORD. Moses knew the people were unfair to him (What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!). But he still had to lead while under the pressure of unfair attack, and he did the right thing in turning to God in prayer. One of Moses’ most praiseworthy characteristics was to take his difficulties to the Lord – for in his earlier life he learned that God would always be there. If God would not open the rock, Moses’ striking of the rod would be vain. In the same way today, God uses “means” to accomplish His purposes – and miracles.

In Verse 7, Moses names the place, Massah and Meridah (17:7), as a rebuke to the children of Israel “because of the quarrelling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?” This event is also recalled often at Massah and Meribah:

1. Deuteronomy 6:16: Do not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah.
2. Deuteronomy 9:22: at... Massah... you provoked the LORD to wrath.
3. Deuteronomy 33:8: Your holy one, Whom You tested at Massah, and with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah.

This attitude among the Israelites was their great sin. In this time of difficulty, the children of Israel – directly or indirectly – doubted the loving presence and care of God among them. Later, when Israel remembered God’s provision in the wilderness at the Feast of Tabernacles, they had a specific ceremony where they recalled this miracle of water from a rock. In that exact context, Jesus said: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38).

Last, God provides victory over the Amalekites (17:8ff). Amalek was grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12), and although akin to Israel, proved their most difficult enemy, as subsequent history shows. “There is every possibility that they had known about the promise of the Land of Canaan that had been given to Esau’s twin brother, Jacob; therefore, they should not have felt any threat to their interests in the Negev had this promise been remembered and taken seriously.” (Kaiser). The method of attack used by Amalek was despicable according to Deuteronomy 25:17-18, where Moses said, “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.” God led them so they would not have war (13:17) but they are now involved in war. However, Israel prevails in battle as Moses prays (10-11): “So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.”

Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill: They did this so they could see, so they could be seen, and so that they could pray. Aaron was the brother of Moses, and some think Hur was his brother-in-law. “Josephus (Antiquities III, 54 [ii.4]) preserves a Jewish tradition that Hur was the husband of Moses’ sister, Miriam.” (Kaiser). And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: Moses supported the battle behind the scenes, busy in prayer. The fate of Israel in battle depended on Moses’ intercession because when he prayed Israel prevailed and when he stopped praying Amalek prevailed.

This amazing passage shows us that life or death for Israel depended on prayers of one man, assisted by his co-horts and provided by God Himself. In his early days Moses thought the only way to win a battle was to fight (Exodus 2:11-15). Now Moses let Joshua fight while he did the more important work: pray for the victory. So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword: Because of this work of prayer Israel was victorious over Amalek. We are left with no other option than to say if Moses, Aaron, and Hur did not do the work in prayer, Israel would have been defeated, and history would have been changed.

A never-ending battle with Amalek (17:14-16). “Write this for a memorial in the book” is found five times in the Pentateuch where Moses wrote something down at the command of God (Exodus 17:14, Exodus

24:4-7, Exodus 34:27, Numbers 33:1-2, and Deuteronomy 31:9, 24). Yet God said Amalek would receive judgment at Israel's hand because 1) Amalek had the shame of being the first nation to make war against Israel. 2) Amalek had the shame of going out of their way to attack Israel. 3) Amalek had the shame of actually fighting against God. Moses built an altar and called its name, THE-LORD-IS-MY-BANNER: Though Moses knew his prayer was important, he wasn't foolish enough to think that he won the battle. As an act of worship he built an altar and praised the name of Yahweh-Nissi (THE-LORD-IS-MY-BANNER).

In Exodus 17 we see examples of God's power and man's effort working together. Moses struck the rock; but only God could bring the water. Joshua fought, Moses prayed, but only God gave the victory over Amalek. In it all, God received the glory. It wasn't Israel is my banner or Moses is my banner or Joshua is my banner; rather it was Yahweh-Nissi: THE-LORD-IS-MY-BANNER.

And the war would continue: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation that gave them much time to repent of this great sin of attacking their cousin, Israel. 1) Balaam prophesied of their ruin (Numbers 24:20). 2) Hundreds of years later, Saul fought against them (1 Samuel 14:48). 3) God then commanded Saul to continue the fight against Amalek, to bring complete judgment upon them for their ancient sin against Israel (1 Samuel 15:1-7). The failure to obey God in regard to Amalek was the primary act of disobedience that cost Saul the throne (1 Samuel 15:2-9 and 1 Samuel 28:18). 4) They continued to bother Israel (1 Samuel 27:8, 30:17; 2 Samuel 8:12). 5) However, there are some indications that this work was completed in the late days of the divide monarchy under Hezekiah (1 Chronicles 4:41-43), but it is possible that some descendants of the Amalekites remained (such as Haman in Esther 3:1).

NEXT WEEK | 11/3 | Jethro and Moses, the Law Giver | Exodus 18-19