

The Bible From 20,000 Feet
Part 16: Numbers ch. 1 – 15, Deuteronomy ch. 1

Tuesday Night Bible Study, November 11, 2008

--OUTLINE:

- REVIEW OF EVENTS OVER 500 YEARS THAT LED TO ISRAEL REACHING THE PROMISE LAND
- ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF IN CHRIST FORESHADOWED BY THEIR UNBELIEF IN THE PROMISE LAND
- ISRAEL PREPARES TO LEAVE MT SINAI AFTER BEING THERE FOR 25 MONTHS
- CLOSER LOOK AT ISRAEL SEEING THE PROMISE LAND THROUGH EYES OF UNBELIEF

--REVIEW OF EVENTS OVER 500 YEARS THAT LED TO ISRAEL REACHING THE PROMISE LAND

--in some ways the journey to the Promise Land began the moment Adam and Eve fell and God intervened and provided a way for their sin to be covered.

--the moment Adam and Eve fell they were separated from God by their sin and the history of the world that follows is in one sense a history of God's master plan of salvation to bridge that separation.

--the Promise Land is a milestone in the development of the nation of Israel who God would use to...

--provide the means by which Christ would be born and enter the world.

--pave the way for Christ to die on the cross in order to pay for our sins.

--the journey to the Promise Land began to take definite shape 500 years before Israel first reached the Promise Land when God spoke to Abraham...

--Genesis 12:1-3: "The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

--Abraham lived in a land that was saturated with pagan worship... people worshipped many false gods, and the idea of there being just one God was revolutionary.

--God called Abraham to leave the ways of the world and follow Him to a land where He would build a nation that would worship the one true God and reflect His holy character.

--and through that nation that descended from Abraham "all peoples on earth will be blessed..." that is, all people on earth will be blessed with the opportunity for salvation through Christ.

--ISRAEL'S UNBELIEF IN CHRIST FORESHADOWED BY THEIR UNBELIEF IN THE PROMISE LAND

	PEACE IN THE PROMISE LAND	SPIRITUAL PEACE THROUGH CHRIST
FIRST ENCOUNTER	<i>UNBELIEF</i>	<i>UNBELIEF</i>
SECOND ENCOUNTER	<i>FAITH</i>	<i>FAITH</i>

--Hebrews speaks of this parallel... Hebrews 3:1-4:2: "Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus... 7 So, as the Holy Spirit says [*quoting from Psalm 95:7-11*]: "Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, 9 where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. 10 That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' 11 So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" 12 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today [*"Today" - the age of the gospel...the world stands at the feet of the cross, at the feet of the promise land of peace through Christ*] ... 16 Who were they who heard and

rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? 17 And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? 18 And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. 4:1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. 2 For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith."

--Zechariah ch. 12:9 - 14:21 describes Israel turning to Christ in faith when the entire world is gathered against her in war right before He returns.

--ISRAEL PREPARES TO LEAVE MT SINAI AFTER BEING THERE FOR 25 MONTHS

--Numbers ch. 1:

--On the first day of the second month of the second year after Israel came out of Egypt, God commands Moses to number all the males of the people from twenty years and upward, who were able to fight in war.

--603,550 men of war are numbered which, according to scholars, probably equated to about 2 million people in Israel's camp.

--the Levites aren't numbered with the other tribes because they were dedicated to the serving in the Tabernacle

--Numbers ch. 2:

--God then commands 3 specific tribes to camp on each side of the Tabernacle

--the numeric proportions of each group of people on each side roughly forms the shape of a cross!

--Numbers ch. 3:

--God commands Moses and Aaron to camp directly in front of the entrance to the Tabernacle with other specific families of Levites directly in front of the other three sides of the Tabernacle.

--Numbers ch. 4:

--specific families of the Levites assigned various duties in taking care of the Tabernacle

--Numbers ch. 5:

--further details in the ceremonial law about offerings, being ceremonially clean/unclean, and dealing with sin in Israel's camp.

--Numbers ch. 6:

--details about the law of the Nazarite Vow are given covers law of Nazarite

--Numbers ch. 7:

--instructions given for transporting the tabernacle (6 covered wagons each drawn by 2 oxen, with each tribe providing one oxen)

--overview of 12 day dedication ceremony of tabernacle after it set up for the first time

--Numbers ch. 8:

--further instructions given for the Levite's administration of the Tabernacle

--Numbers ch. 9:

--further instructions for the Passover Feast given

--God explains how a cloud would cover the tabernacle during the day and a pillar of fire by night... when the cloud or fire began to move Israel would break camp and follow cloud or fire.

--9:22: "Whether it was two days, a month, or a year that the cloud remained above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would remain encamped and not journey; but when it was taken up, they would journey."

--God could have given Moses a map for extended periods of their journey, but this method of visible guidance helped keep their focus on the Tabernacle (dwelling place of God's Spirit among them) and required them to wait on the Lord every day

--in a like manner we need to keep our focus on the Lord every day and depend on His guidance day by day...and maintain our relationship with Him on a daily basis!

--Numbers 10:

--the Lord gives instruction for making 2 silver trumpets for the Levites to signal various assemblies and the orderly breakdown of camp before moving the camp to a new location.

--and here in chapter 10 after spending 2 years and 1 month and 20 days at Mt. Sinai (20 days after God commanded Moses to number Israel in Numbers ch. 1) Israel packed up and "started out for the first time according to the command of the Lord..."

--Moses tries talking father-in-law into going with them... "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things to Israel." 30 And he said to him, "I will not go, but I will depart to my own land and to my relatives." (Num 10:29-30)

--maybe his father-in-law had an idea that it would be a long time before Israel reached the Promise Land based on their track record of going astray.

--Israel's journey begins... Numbers 10:33-36: "So they departed from the mountain of the LORD on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. 34 And the cloud of the LORD was above them by day when they went out from the camp. 35 So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: "Rise up, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered, And let those who hate You flee before You." 36 And when it rested, he said: "Return, O LORD, To the many thousands of Israel."

Numbers ch. 11:

--amazingly, after all that God had done, once again Israel begins to complain about eating the same Mana everyday.

--Numbers 11:4-6: "Now the mixed multitude [*non-Israelis who followed Israel out of Egypt*] who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6 but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"

--Israel's persistent complaining and unbelief is a picture of the stubbornness of our flesh... in our flesh we are just as short-sighted and foolish as the Israelites were!

--Mark 14:38: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

--Israel had been saved from Egypt and was on a journey to the Promise Land with God living in their midst through His Spirit... likewise, we have been saved from the consequence of our sin and we are on a journey to heaven with God living in our hearts through His Spirit.... yet we can become short-sighted just as quickly as the Israelites!

--another lesson in this episode is the influence of the "mixed multitude"...

--1 Cor 15:33: "Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

--bad company can stir up our flesh and bring out the worst in us

--Moses becomes overwhelmed by all the complaining and the Lord directs him to appoint 70 elders from the tribes to help him govern... the Lord said, "I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone." (Numbers 11:17)

--if Israel wasn't so rebellious Moses could have ruled alone as God intended...similar pattern of compromise when Israel wanted a King that they could see rather than only having God as their King who they couldn't see, as God originally intended.

--then the Lord sends quail in response to Israel's complaining and many died of a plague from eating them.

--Numbers ch. 12:

--Aaron and Miriam (brother and sister of Moses) rebel and question the authority God gave Moses, then Miriam is struck with leprocy and God brings about healing only through Moses' intercessory prayer.

--ISRAEL SEES THE PROMISE LAND THROUGH EYES OF UNBELIEF...

--Numbers ch. 13:

--Israel quickly reaches the Promise Land (only an 11 day journey from Sinai) and the Lord commands spies to survey the land... Numbers 13:1-2: "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 'Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you

shall send a man, every one a leader among them."

--God was "giving" the land to Israel... if only they would believe.

--apparently command to send spies was in response to earlier petition of the people to send spies to survey the land (Deuteronomy 1:22).

--spies return and only Caleb and Joshua (Deut. 1:38) see the Promise Land through eyes of faith...

--Num 13:26-14:12: "Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 Nevertheless the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan." 30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it." 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." 32 And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. 33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight." 14:1 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "**If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!** [*again, a picture of how stubborn our flesh is without overcoming our flesh through the Spirit!*] 3 Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." 5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. 6 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.'" 9 Only do not rebel against the LORD, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the LORD is with us. Do not fear them." 10 And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel. 11 Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

--Moses then intercedes for Israel once again and asks God to show mercy for the sake of His name so that He would be glorified through Israel.

--God spares the present generation and gives them further opportunity to grow in their faith but he closes the door of opportunity to enter the Promise Land for 40 years when the entire present generation passed away.

--spies spent 40 days in the Promise Land so the Lord sentenced them to 40 years in the desert, 1 year for each day (Numbers 14:34)

--all the individuals who spied out the land except Joshua and Caleb immediately died – "died by the plague before the Lord"

--then Israel defies the command of the Lord again...after He said He would not give them the Promise Land for another 40 years they try to enter the Promise Land in their own strength...

--Numbers 14:39-45: "Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly. 40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!" 41 And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed. 42 Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. 43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you." 44 But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp. 45 Then the

Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah."

--when the Lord said He would give them the land they refused to take it and when the Lord said He would not give them the land they tried to take it!

--a picture of how lost Israel would have been without the Lord and how dependent they were on His mercy... also a picture of how lost we would be in our flesh without the Lord and how dependent we are on His mercy!

--the historical prologue to the book of Deuteronomy reviews the events in Numbers 1-15 (Deuteronomy 1:6-33)