

The Bible From 20,000 Feet Part 10: Exodus 13:11- 19:25

Tuesday Night Bible Study, September 2, 2008

--OUTLINE

THE LAW OF THE FIRSTBORN
JOURNEY FROM EGYPT TO MT. SINAI
ISRAEL MEETS GOD AT MT. SINAI

--THE LAW OF THE FIRSTBORN

--Exodus 13:11-16: "And remember, when the Lord brings you into the land he promised to your ancestors long ago, where the Canaanites are now living, 12 all firstborn sons and firstborn male animals belong to the Lord, and you shall give them to him. 13 A firstborn donkey may be purchased back from the Lord in exchange for a lamb or baby goat; but if you decide not to trade, the donkey shall be killed. However, you must buy back your firstborn sons. 14 "And in the future, when your children ask you, 'What is this all about?' you shall tell them, 'With mighty miracles Jehovah brought us out of Egypt from our slavery. 15 Pharaoh wouldn't let us go, so Jehovah killed all the firstborn males throughout the land of Egypt, both of men and animals; that is why we now give all the firstborn males to the Lord-except that all the eldest sons are always bought back.' 16 Again I say, this celebration shall identify you as God's people, just as much as if his brand of ownership were placed upon your foreheads. It is a reminder that the Lord brought us out of Egypt with great power." (TLB)

--the Law of the Firstborn memorialized the fact that Israel belonged to the Lord...

--God didn't deliver Israel out of Egypt for them to go their own way and do whatever they want... He saved them by His grace for His special purpose of reflecting His holy character to the world and the special purpose of bringing salvation through the Messiah to the whole world.

--Exodus 4:22-23: God instructed Moses to tell Pharaoh, "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. 23 So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"

--because the death of all the firstborn in Egypt resulted in Israel being set free, the firstborn (of both animals and humans) symbolically belonged to the Lord and had to be symbolically "purchased" from the Lord. This served as a constant reminder that Israel as a nation belonged to the Lord for His special purpose.

--king Solomon prayed, "For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD." (1 Kings 8:53)

--Isaiah 43:1: "But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob [*Jacob is another name for Israel, as Jacob's name was changed to Israel – Genesis 32:28*], And He who formed you, O Israel: '*Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.*'"

--in a similar way all Christians belong to the Lord, as He has delivered us from being prisoners to sin...

--Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."

--1 Cor. 6:19-20: "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

--we are not our own... we should live for His will and not our own... and when we do we discover that His will fulfills the deepest desires of our heart.

--practical reality of the Law of the Firstborn...

--the symbolic purchase of the firstborn (through money paid to the Levites or animal sacrifice given to the Levites) was one of the means through which God provided for the tribe of Levites who officiated the ceremonial law.

--THE JOURNEY FROM EGYPT TO MT. SINAI

--through the Red Sea...

--Exodus 13:17-14:4: "So at last Pharaoh let the people go. God did not lead them through the land of the Philistines, although that was the most direct route from Egypt to the Promised Land. The reason was that God felt the people might become discouraged by having to fight their way through, even though they had left Egypt armed; he thought they might return to Egypt. Instead, God led them along a route through the Red Sea wilderness. 19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with them, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel vow before God that they would take his bones with them when God led them out of Egypt-as he was sure God would. 20 Leaving Succoth, they camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. 21 The Lord guided them by a pillar of cloud during the daytime and by a pillar of fire at night. So they could travel either by day or night. 22 The cloud and fire were never out of sight. 14:1 Jehovah now instructed Moses, 2 "Tell the people to turn toward Piha-hiroth between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal-zephon, and to camp there along the shore. 3 For Pharaoh will think, 'Those Israelites are trapped now, between the desert and the sea!' 4 And once again I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will chase after you. I have planned this to gain great honor and glory over Pharaoh and all his armies, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." (TLB)

--when Israel saw Pharaoh's army approaching they cried out in fear... Exodus 14:11-14: "Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." 13 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14 The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

--Israel will eventually learn that their victory against all enemies depends not on their own strength but on God fighting for them...

--after passing through the Red Sea... Exodus 14:26-31: "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." 27 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. 29 But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. 30 So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses."

--miraculous provision for food and water...

--Israel is quick to lose faith... Exodus 16:2-3: "Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

--God provides supernatural Mana from heaven to feed Israel.

--when there is no water Israel is quick to lose faith again... Exodus 17:3: "And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

--God then commands Moses to strike a large rock with his staff and then a fountain of water sprung forth for all Israel to drink.

--God's patience with Israel...and His patience with us...is a theme repeated all throughout the Bible!

--Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?"

--miraculous victory over the Amalekites...

--just like the Red Sea parted when Moses held up his staff so Israel prevailed in their battle against the Amalekites while Moses held up his staff on a hilltop. When Moses let down his staff Israel began to lose the battle.

--for the first time when Israel faces danger it appears that they are learning trust God... as Scripture doesn't say that they despaired in fear like they did in every previous danger.

--Moses lifting up the staff during this battle is a picture of us lifting up our voices to God in prayer during our battles...

--GOD MEETS ISRAEL AT MT. SINAI

--3 months after leaving Egypt they arrived at Mt. Sinai.

--God calls Moses to meet him on the mountain and gives him instructions for Israel.

-Ex 19:3-8 And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." 7 So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 Then all the people answered together and said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do.'"

--"...a special treasure to Me above all people ... a kingdom of priests and a holy nation..." (19:5-6)

--at this point in history every nation of the world was founded on the worship of false gods. God delivered Israel from Egypt in order to establish a special nation to worship the one true God and reflect His holiness to the world (in spite of how poorly Israel would fulfill this purpose)

--God hardened Pharaoh's heart to prove that He is the one true God and that all the false gods of Egypt are worthless (each of the plagues targeted things that the Egyptians deified)

--God's second hardening of Pharaoh's heart after Israel left Egypt served as an exclamation point about who He is and how He feels about idol worship... Exodus 13:4: "And once again I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will chase after you. I have planned this to gain great honor and glory over Pharaoh and all his armies, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord."

--as we saw last week, to herald this turning point in history God established a whole new calendar... in a sense the establishment of Israel was the beginning of a new era!

--a new calendar... Exodus 12:1-3: "The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 2 'This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. 3 Tell the whole

community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household."

--the ultimate temporal fulfillment will be during the Millennial Kingdom when Christ will reign on the earth for 1000 years and every nation will honor Him as the Lord.

--the eternal fulfillment will be the new heavens and new earth where everybody will worship the Lord without a single trace of false gods.

--Moses goes up the mountain and the Lord gives him further instructions...

-19:10-13: Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. 11 And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 12 You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13 Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain."

--up to this point Israel's communication with the Lord was distant as God spoke through Moses, but now they would hear directly from Him and see His presence descend upon the mountain...

--What do you think the people expected to see? A beautiful, dazzling, heavenly appearance?

--the Lord appears... Exodus 19:16-20: "Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. 20 Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up."

--Israel will soon learn that God is holy and we are exceedingly sinful...and without our sins being covered there is a terrifying separation between God and man!

--Moses went up the mountain where God gives Him the 10 commandments and instructions for the tabernacle and the ceremonial law by which Israel's sins could be temporarily covered until being permanently covered by the shed blood of Christ.

--it's interesting here that God appeared to Israel on the third day after Israel prepared for His appearance... approximately 1450 years later Jesus died for our sins and then reappeared on the third day alive from the dead!

--Hebrews describes the contrast between approaching God without our sins being covered and approaching Him with our sins being covered by Christ...

--Hebrews 12:18-24: "For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20(For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.") 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel."

--only through Christ can we see the presence of God in heavenly glory...