

3. The Wilderness Wanderings Pt. I

Camped at Mt. Sinai

Introduction

Review of Patriarchs & the Exodus

- Abraham/Isaac/Jacob/Joseph
- Jacob and his family in Egypt under Divine Protection (Land of Goshen)
- Remember the Prophecy:
Gen. 15: 13 And God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 “But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 “And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 “Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”
- Major Theme of the Exodus:
The Exodus marks the end of a period of persecution and the beginning of the fulfilling of God’s Covenant with Abraham to dwell in the Promised Land (Gen. 12) and to multiply his descendants
- The Significance of the Exodus:
Note the reference to the Exodus by other Biblical Authors
 - Ps. 105:25-45
 - Ps. 106:6-27
 - Acts 7:17-44
 - I Cor. 10:1-13
 - Heb. 9:1-6
 - Heb. 11:23-29
 - And others
- The Exodus is a giant metaphor of “salvation by grace through faith”

The Setting for the Nation at Mt. Sinai:

- Israel departs from Egypt and journeys into the Wilderness on the way to Mt. Sinai
- God commanded them to take the “long” journey to the Promised land:

Cf Ex. 13:17-22

“17 Now it came about when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war, and they return to Egypt.” 18 Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt. 19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, “God shall surely take care of you; and you shall carry my bones from here with you.” 20 Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. 21 And the LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

- In 3 months they arrive at Mt Sinai (Israel spends 11 months at Mt Sinai)
 - God enters into the Mosaic Covenant with them (Ex. 19-24)
 - He reminds them of His special care of them

Ex. 19:4 ““You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.””

- God says that if they obey Him Israel will:
 - Be a special possession of God’s
 - Be a kingdom of Priests
 - Be a Holy nation

Ex. 19:5-6 ““5 Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, 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 that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.””

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NB: Before the year at Mt Sinai (from MacArthur Study Bible):

- The presence of God’s glory had never formally resided among the Israelites
- A central place of worship, like the tabernacle, had never existed
- A structured and regulated set of sacrifices and feasts had not been given
- A High priest, a formal priesthood, and a cadre of tabernacle workers had not been appointed

As Exodus concludes:

- Features 1 and 2 had been accomplished
- This meant that features 3 and 4 had to be set up
- This is where Leviticus comes in

I. The Nation Encamped at Mt Sinai: The Book of Leviticus

NB: The Book of Leviticus represents God's revelation to Moses *during 50 days at Mt. Sinai*

- Leviticus repeatedly says the contents were revealed "at Mt Sinai"
 - Lev. 27:34
 - Lev. 7:38
 - Lev. 25:1
 - Lev. 26:46
- Leviticus 1:1 says that the Lord called to Moses "from the tabernacle of meeting" and we know that the tabernacle was finally finished in the 1st day of the 1st month of the 2nd year (Ex. 40:1, 17)
- Numbers 10:11 states that the nation departed Mt. Sinai on the 1st day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year after they left Egypt.

Conclusion: *That would mean that the whole book takes place during a 50-day period at the foot of Mt. Sinai*

- Leviticus revolves around 2 great themes:
 - The Holy character of God
 - God's desire for Israel's holiness
- The other themes in the book advance these ideas
 - reminder of man's sinfulness (125x)
 - need for sacrifices as a means for becoming holy and being pure
 - the motive for holiness is repeatedly affirmed: "for I am holy" and "I am holy" (over 50x)

Lev. 11:44-45 "For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. 45 'For I am the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; thus you shall be holy for I am holy.'"

- God's presence in the Sanctuary
- The need to be separate and "holy" is illustrated by the abundance of Laws regulating sacrifices, clothing, food, personal hygiene, etc.

II. The Sacrificial System Described

A. Laws Pertaining to the Sacrificial System (Lev. 1:1-7:38)

1. Burnt Offerings
2. Grain offerings
3. Peace Offerings
4. Sin Offerings
5. Trespass Offerings

B. The Beginnings of the Priesthood (8:1-10:20)

C. Laws Pertaining to Uncleanness (11:1-16:34)

D. Laws Pertaining to Practical Holiness (17:1-27:34)

III. Divine Principles of the Sacrificial System

A. The Principles Behind Sacrifices

1. Substitution

- a. A principle instituted in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3)
- b. Illustrated with Cain and Abel (Gen. 4)
- c. Illustrated with Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 22)
- d. Developed in the Mosaic Law (esp. Leviticus)

2. Repetition

- a. Note the requirement (“if”, “when”, “whenever”, etc.)
- b. The significance of the repetitive nature of the sacrifices is explicitly stated in Hebrews 10: 1-14

Heb. 10:1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, But a body Thou hast prepared for Me; 6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure. 7 “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.’” 8 After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Thy will.” He takes away the first in order to

establish the second. 10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

3. Obedience for Blessing

- a. Obedience to the requirements of the Mosaic Law (i.e., the sacrificial system, etc) was a requirement for the enjoyment of God's blessings under the Mosaic Law. (Lev. 26)

NB: This does not mean that mere external, perfunctory obedience to the law *guaranteed* the enjoyment of God's blessings. This is abundantly seen in the statements of later Prophets, which indicate that God was looking for an obedience, which came *from the heart*. (Isaiah 1:10-17; Amos 5:21-24; Romans 2:25-29; Romans 6:17). Any other type of obedience was at best useless and at worst offensive to God.

B. The Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) as a unique anticipation of Jesus Christ

1. Described (Lev. 16)

2. Fulfilled (The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ)

- a. John 1:35-36

“35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God!’”