

Welcome back! As a refresher, the first 5 books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch, Torah, or the Books of Moses. Those books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Last time we learned about Genesis and Exodus. In Genesis, we learn that God was the creator. In Exodus, we learn that God is the Redeemer. Well, we didn't use those terms exactly, but saw those concepts. In Leviticus we learn that God is Holy. In Numbers we learn that God is our Guide. And in Deuteronomy we learn that God is Faithful.

It's easy to skip over Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy because they are "just a bunch of laws." What makes them even easier to skip over is that we don't follow most of these laws anymore. But, there's more to these books than just old, outdated laws.

Leviticus is named after the priests who were Levites. The Levites were the descendants of Levi, who was one of Jacob's 12 sons. All the priests were Levites, but not all the Levites were priests. Since this book is named after the priests, it makes sense that this book is basically a how-to manual of laws and guidelines for worship. We read about different offerings and sacrifices. Different animals or grains are required in different situations.

Aaron, the older brother of Moses, is made the first high priest. The rules for the priests are then given. There are different requirements for contact and consumption of clean and unclean foods, dead people, womanly, issues, mildew, diseases, and animals. Just so we're clear the rules of consumption were only for the clean and unclean foods. The Israelites weren't eating dead people or anything like that. But they would come in contact with dead people or diseases like leprosy. Then there were certain steps that they would have to take to make themselves clean again. Leviticus 18 gives certain sexual regulations. And Leviticus 23 explains the different holidays and special feasts.

The Sabbath is explained. The Passover: Remember, we talked about that last time when we were looking at Exodus and the 10th and final plague. The Passover feast is celebrated in the remembrance of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The Feast of Weeks is also known as Pentecost. It is a time to give thanks for the harvest. The Feast of Trumpets is also known as Rosh Hashanah. It is basically their celebration of the new year with, you guessed it, trumpets! The Day of Atonement is also known as Yom Kippur and it's a day for people to be cleansed and purified. And then there's the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths. During this week, the Israelites remember the booths or tents that their ancestors lived in while they traveled to the Promised Land.

Numbers is named after the census taken of the Israelites. Glance through the first few chapters. It literally is a book of numbers. Along with the numbers of the census, Numbers keeps track of the events that happened during the 40 years as God's people wandered the desert. During that time, the people just didn't 'get it', no matter how hard God tried. You could even hand out awards to those who failed the hardest.

The Fail Awards!

5th place goes to Korah who tried to impeach Moses and instead got eaten by the ground. Yep. You heard correctly. And Korah had gained a following. Guess what. They were eaten by the ground too.

Numbers 16:32 gives the details: “And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods.”

4th place goes to Balaam. Balaam wouldn't listen to God. Balaam was trying to go in a direction that God didn't want him to go. So Balaam's donkey kept turning one way or another. Balaam would hit the donkey when it wouldn't do as Balaam wanted to do. After the 3rd time, God made Balaam's donkey talk so that Balaam would listen.

3rd place goes to Miriam and Aaron. Yes, Moses' brother and sister. Of all people, you would think that these two wouldn't make it on the list, but they do. They wanted more power. They didn't get more power. They got something else. You'll have to read Numbers chapter 12 to see what they got instead of power.

2nd place goes to 10 wimpy spies. They went to check out Canaan, which was the Promised Land. It was the land that God had promised his people, the Israelites. All they had to do was to go and conquer it. They had God on their side. 12 spies went in to Canaan. Two came out with confidence because they knew that the Lord was on their side. But these 10 spies went in to look around and came out scared. The Canaanites were too numerous, too big, like giant-big, and too mean. The Israelites listened to these 10 rather than the 2 that were confident in God.

But the winner of the Fail awards goes to, drum roll please... All of the Israelites! The entire time they were wandering around the desert, they kept doubting God, they worshipped idols, and complained the whole time, even though God was faithful. They even wished that they were still slaves in Egypt because they ate better food there.

These 5 stories are pretty interesting. Pick a couple and read them. I definitely recommend the story Balaam's donkey. The best part is, Balaam argues back with his donkey!

Deuteronomy means Second Law. This makes sense as a title because it's basically a retelling of God's laws for the New Generation. This retelling is necessary because many people had been born and many had died in the 40 years that they wandered the desert.

In Deuteronomy, the 10 Commandments or 10 Words are mentioned again. We learn about the greatest commandment. It's called the Shema. That's a weird name for a commandment. Do you know what it means? It's how you pronounce the first word. 'Hear.' Deuteronomy 6:4-9 – “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

The majority of the book of Deuteronomy is comprised of various ethical, ceremonial, social, and administrative laws. Near the end of the book Joshua takes over for Moses and then Moses dies.

The point that we can gather from these three books is that the lamb of God paid the price for you.

That's all for today. Let me know if you have any questions. See you next time!