

**Adult
Bible Study
in
Simplified
English**



**Study
Guide**



Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy

PREPARING FOR A NEW LIFE

INCLUDES BONUS EASTER LESSON

Don Raney

BAPTISTWAY PRESS
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ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

Study Guide

Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy: Preparing for a New Life

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Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy: Preparing for a New Life

The first five books of the Bible are usually called the Torah. The word *Torah* is most often translated “law.” These five books contain most of ancient Israel’s laws. They also contain the stories of ancient Israel’s ancestors. These books begin with the stories of creation and end with the Israelites waiting to cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land. This mixing of laws and stories made Israel different from the other ancient nations. In other ancient nations, the laws were given as cold and impersonal sets of rules to be obeyed. For Israel, their laws were closely connected to their relationship with God, Who had freed them from slavery. In Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, we see some of the laws. We also see stories about how God punishes disobedience and rewards obedience. These laws and stories helped Israel prepare for the new life in the Promised Land. They can also help us as we prepare to live our new life in close relationship to God.

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Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy: Preparing for a New Life

Word List

Lesson 1

pagan: the worship of false gods or idols

covenant: refers to the special agreement between God and the Israelites

relationship: a special connection between members of a family or between friends

Lesson 2

representative: someone who stands in the place of another

unconfessed: something that has not been admitted as being wrong

wilderness: desert area where no people live

temptation: something that makes someone want to do something sinful

Lesson 3

community: group of people who live together and share similar beliefs and values

idolatry: worship of anything other than God

favoritism: treating some people better than others

Lesson 4

festival: a feast or a special time of celebration

Lesson 5

possessions: all the things a person owns

classes: groups which are similar within a society because they have the same level of income or the same background; examples: wealthy, middle-class, and poor

Lesson 6

legend: a story from the past which may or may not be true

perception: what we believe is true based on our senses

Lesson 7

opposition: people or situations that are against us

pressure: a feeling of physical or mental stress or worry

Lesson 8

curse: to call on God to inflict injury on a person or group

Lesson 9

nomads: people who move regularly from place to place, usually by the seasons; people who have no fixed place to live

covenant: agreement that binds two people or groups together

Word List

Lesson 10

community: a group of people who share common beliefs and practices

diminish: to cause something to lose value or worth

generation: a group of people of about the same age

Lesson 11

significance: important or having a great deal of meaning

unique: one of a kind, different than anything else

Lesson 12

Aramean: someone from the area that is now known as Syria

gratitude: being thankful

somber: serious; sometimes meaning dark or gloomy

Lesson 13

clarity: clear and understandable

coerced: to force someone to act a certain way

Easter Lesson

authority: the right to carry out one's plans

divinity: having qualities like God

resurrection: being raised from the dead without help

◊ Leviticus ◊



*Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English*

**Leviticus:
Becoming God's
Holy People**

**Lesson 1
Making Offerings
to God**

Leviticus 1:1-3, 2:1-3,
3:1, 4:1-3, 13, 22-23,
27-28, 5:1-6

**Lesson 2
Receiving God's
Forgiveness**

Leviticus 16:11-22, 29-34

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Be Holy in All
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Leviticus 19:1-4,
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**Lesson 4
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Leviticus 23:1-38

**Lesson 5
This Land—
Not Your Land**

Leviticus 25:8-17,
23-24, 35-43

**LEVITICUS:
BECOMING GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE**

Many people who read through the Bible come to Leviticus with a sense of dread. The descriptions of sacrifices and rules for cleaning seem strange to today's readers. Most wonder how this book could have any meaning for their lives. Some Christians say the Gospel makes Leviticus unimportant for the Christian church. Yet this book has a lot to say to us today. It tells us how God expects His people to live. It helps us understand the rest of the Old Testament. It helps us to better understand what Jesus said and did.

In Leviticus, the Israelites are still camped at Mount Sinai. They have just received the covenant from God. They are preparing to go to the Promised Land. The first five books of the Old Testament are called the Torah. Leviticus is the middle book in the Torah. It is at the heart of God's message as His people prepare to begin their new life.

The main theme of this book is holiness. God says several times, "Be holy for I am holy." To be holy means to be set apart for a special purpose. God's people were to be different from other nations. They were to live holy lives. They were to show the world what pleased God. As Christians we are to live holy lives. Leviticus shows us how to do that.

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Lesson
1
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Bible Text

Leviticus 1:1-3, 2:1-3,
3:1, 4:1-3, 13, 22-23,
27-28, 5:1-6

Background Text

Leviticus 1-7

Memory Verse

“When a person is guilty in any of these, he should tell of the sin he has done.”
(Leviticus 5:5)

Word List

pagan: the worship of false gods or idols

covenant: refers to the special agreement between God and the Israelites

relationship: a special connection between members of a family or between friends

Making Offerings to God

What thoughts come to your mind when you hear the word *sacrifice*? Most of us today do not think about the killing of an animal as a part of our worship of God. But that is exactly what the word *sacrifice* meant to the ancient Israelites. The writer of Leviticus lived in a very religious world. People worshiped many different gods in many different ways. Most of the ancient **pagan** people believed their sacrifices provided food for their gods. Many thought they had to offer sacrifices to make their gods happy. If the gods were happy, they would be nice to the people.

The ancient Israelites understood sacrifice to mean something very different. They knew the one and only God did not need food. They knew they could not force God to do anything. Their sacrifices were part of their **covenant relationship** with God. They offered sacrifices to keep their relationships healthy with God and with each other.

The book of Leviticus begins with God talking to Moses in the tabernacle. The tabernacle was a large tent which served as ancient Israel's temple while they were wandering in the wilderness. It represented God's house in the middle of the people. It reminded the people that God lived among them. It also reminded them that God wanted them to come close and worship Him. It was where sacrifices were offered to God.

The first seven chapters of Leviticus provide directions in how to offer the different kinds of sacrifices. Each sacrifice was offered for a different reason. But all of the sacrifices required the person to offer something valuable to God.

**Things To
Think About**

1. What is your attitude when making your offering to the church?
2. How does your relationship with other people affect your worship?
3. How can you best fulfill the act of making sacrifices today?

Offering of Dedication to God (Leviticus 1:1-17)

The first sacrifice described in Leviticus is the Burnt Offering. For this sacrifice, the worshiper was to offer a calf, sheep, or dove. Which animal was sacrificed depended on the person's wealth. The animal had to be one without any blemishes (spots or injuries). This meant the person was giving the best they had. The person making the offering would place his hands on the head of the animal. This showed the person identified with the animal. It also showed that all the person's sins were transferred to the animal. This sacrifice showed the person was fully dedicated to God. The animal was then burned on the altar to show total commitment to God.

Offering of Thanks to God (2:1-16)

Leviticus 2 describes the Grain Offering. The worshiper would bring a loaf of bread made from the finest flour. Oil and fragrance were poured over the loaf, and part of it was burned on the altar. The rest of the offering was eaten by the priests. This was one of the ways God provided for the priests' needs. The offering reminded people how God provided everything, including their grain. It thanked to God for His provisions.

Offering to Celebrate Relationships (3:1-17)

The third offering was the Peace Offering. This was also called the Fellowship Offering. The worshiper would bring a young calf, sheep, or goat. The animal was sacrificed, and the fat portions were burned on the altar. The rest of the animal was cooked and eaten by the priest and worshiper as part of a fellowship meal. The purpose of this offering was to be a sign

of peace and fellowship within the community. It was also an expression of thanks and fellowship between the worshiper and God.

Offerings to Address Sin (4:1 to 5:13)

Each of the first three sacrifices were voluntary offerings. The next two sacrifices were required for every Israelite home. They had to be done before any of the other three could be offered.

Both of these sacrifices dealt with seeking forgiveness of sins. Sin was seen as a very serious problem. A person had to seek God's forgiveness before they participated in any other form of worship.

The Sin Offering was made to seek forgiveness of unintentional sins. These are sins that are committed accidentally or due to a lack of understanding. This did not cover sins committed on purpose.

The Guilt Offering also dealt with the forgiveness of sins. This sacrifice covered the sins which caused someone else to lose something. Along with making the sacrifice, the worshiper had to pay for whatever the sin had cost the other person. For example, if the sin had caused another person to lose money, the worshiper had to

pay that person the amount of money they lost. The worshiper brought these two offerings to the priest as a sign of repentance and to seek God's forgiveness.

All of these sacrifices were a way to keep good relationships between the people and God. The people started making many sacrifices to try and control God. They made the sacrifices without any real change in their hearts. They wanted to use the offerings to make God happy so He would bless them.

Later, Jeremiah and Amos saw the misuse of these sacrifices (Jeremiah 7:21-23; Amos 5:22, 25). They told the people that God did not like the way they were acting. They said the people should stop bringing the sacrifices since they did not have a change in their attitudes.

Jesus came to our world and became the final sacrifice. Christians no longer have to offer animals for forgiveness.

Reading about the sacrifices reminds us our relationships with each other and with God are important to Him. We need to make sure those relationships are good so we can worship God with clean hearts.

**Leviticus 1:1-3, 2:1-3, 3:1,
4:1-3, 13, 22-23, 27-28, 5:1-6**

Lev. 1:1 The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the meeting tent, saying,

2 “Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, ‘When any of you bring a gift in worship to the Lord, bring your gift of animals from the herd or the flock.

3 If his gift is a burnt gift from the cattle, he should bring a male that is perfect. He should give it at the door of the meeting tent, so he will be pleasing to the Lord.’”

Lev. 2:1 “When anyone gives a grain gift to the Lord, it should be of fine flour. He should pour oil on it and put special perfume on it.

2 Then he will take it to Aaron’s sons, the religious leaders. The religious leader will fill his hand with the fine flour, oil and special perfume and will burn it on the altar as a part to be remembered. It will be a gift by fire, a pleasing smell to the Lord.

3 The rest of the grain gift will belong to Aaron and his sons. It is a most holy part of the gifts by fire to the Lord.”

Lev. 3:1 If this gift given on the altar is a peace gift taken from the herd, male or female, he should give one to the Lord that is perfect.

Lev. 4:1 The Lord said to Moses,

2 “Say to the people of Israel, ‘If a person sins without meaning to, by not obeying what the Lord has told us to do, these are the rules he must follow.

3 If the chosen religious leader sins and so brings guilt on the people, let him give to the Lord a bull that is perfect. It is a sin gift for the sin he has done.’”

13 “If all the people of Israel sin and do not

obey what the Lord has told them, without meaning to and without knowing about it, they are guilty.’”

22 “‘When a leader sins without meaning to, by doing any of all the things the Lord God has told us not to do, he becomes guilty.

23 If his sin is made known to him, he will bring for his gift a male goat that is perfect.’”

27 “‘If anyone among the people of the land sins without meaning to, by doing any of the things the Lord said not to do, he becomes guilty.

28 If his sin is made known to him, he will bring for his gift a female goat that is perfect, for the sin he has done.’”

Lev. 5:1 “‘If a person sins by saying nothing when he is told in court to tell what he knows or what he has seen, he will become guilty.

2 If a person touches anything that is unclean, the dead body of a wild animal, or of cattle, or of anything that moves on the earth that is unclean, even without knowing it, then he will be unclean and will be guilty.

3 Or if he touches a human who is unclean for whatever reason, without knowing it, when he learns about it, he will be guilty.

4 If a person without thinking swears he will do something, whether bad or good, any foolish promise a person may swear, when he learns about it, he will be guilty.

5 When a person is guilty in any of these, he should tell of the sin he has done.

6 He should bring his guilt gift to the Lord for the sin he has done, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin gift. And the religious leader will pay the price for him for his sin.’”



Adult Bible Study in
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Bible Text

Leviticus 16:11-22,
29-34

Background Text

Leviticus 16:1-34,
23:26-32

Memory Verse

“For on this day your sin will be taken away and you will be clean. You will be made free from all your sins before the Lord.”
(Leviticus 16:30)

Word List

representative:

someone who stands in the place of another

unconfessed:

something that has not been admitted as being wrong

wilderness:

desert area where no people live

temptation:

something that makes someone want to do something sinful

Receiving God's Forgiveness

Sin is a serious problem in the life of every person. It damages the relationship between that person and God. It is also a serious problem for the community within which people live. The Old Testament clearly shows that ancient Israel understood how serious this problem could be. Ancient Israel was very concerned with seeking God's forgiveness for their sins. In Lesson 1, we saw they had two different sacrifices which dealt with the forgiveness of sins.

Leviticus 16 describes a very special day of the year in ancient Israel. This day was called Yom Kippur which is usually translated Day of Atonement. *Atonement* means the restoring of the relationship between God and His people. On this day, Israel gave special attention to seeking God's forgiveness for their sins. God gave instructions on what to do on this day to repair the damage that sin had caused.

This day was unique within ancient Israel because it was the only day of the year when the priest could enter into the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle. A special curtain separated this room from the rest of the tabernacle. The Most Holy Place is where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. The Israelites looked at the Ark as the throne of God. Only the priest could enter this room and only on the Day of Atonement. When the priest entered, he was coming directly into the presence of God.

Sin is also a problem today. For Christians, the blood of Jesus provides the opportunity for forgiveness.

Things To
Think About

1. How often do you confess your sins and ask for forgiveness?
2. How do you show respect for God and His house?
3. Do you ever find it difficult to accept God's forgiveness? If so, why?

Cleansing of the Priest (Leviticus 16:11-14)

The first thing that happened on the Day of Atonement was that the priest offered a sacrifice for his own sins. Before the priest could act on behalf of the people, his relationship with God had to be made right.

Many people think God's ministers do not struggle with sin. Yet the Bible says all have sinned and need God's forgiveness. God has given ministers a special calling to lead God's people. This carries a responsibility for each minister to be sure his or her life is free of **unconfessed** sin. Christians should always remember to pray that their ministers would be strong in resisting **temptation**.

Cleansing of the People (Leviticus 16:15-22)

Next, the priest would prepare to make the sacrifice for the forgiveness of the sins of the people. The priest began by taking two goats. After a special prayer, the priest sacrificed one goat on the altar. He collected the blood of the sacrificed goat in a special bowl. The priest then went behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place. The blood of the goat was sprinkled on top of the Ark of the Covenant. By doing this, the priest acted most directly as the **representative** of the people in seeking God's forgiveness. Next, the priest offered a special prayer over the second goat. This prayer placed all the sins of the people on this goat. The goat was then forced to go out into the **wilderness**. This represented the sins of the people being removed from the community.

As Christians, Jesus is our sacrifice which provides

atonement for us. His blood is the blood offered to God for our sins. It is very important for God's people to confess their sins. When we confess our sins, God removes them far away from us. Psalm 103:12 says, "He has taken our sins from us as far as the east is from the west."

Cleansing of the Tabernacle (16:29-34)

Another part of the Day of Atonement was the cleansing of the place of worship. This included the cleaning of the physical tabernacle. It also included saying special prayers to remove the sin from the worship place.

Today, not many people think about sin causing God's house to be unclean. The ancient Israelites believed sin could pollute everything it touched. Christians would do well to remember we should not come into God's house with unconfessed sin. It prevents us from being able to truly worship. It can pollute God's holy house.

Very often, people come to worship God without first confessing their sins and asking God for forgiveness. They usually find it is very difficult to worship. God always requires that the first step to

approach Him is to confess our sins and ask for forgiveness. This repairs the damage that sin has caused and allows us to have meaningful worship.

When Jesus died, God tore the curtain that separated the people from His Most Holy Place. "Then Jesus gave another loud cry and gave up His spirit and died. At once the curtain in the house of God was torn in two from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:50-51a).

This means Christians do not need a priest to approach God for them. Each believer has direct access to God. Yet Christians need to remember that confession and repentance are needed before we approach God. The description of the Day of Atonement reminds us of this truth.

Leviticus 16:11-22, 29-34

11 “Then Aaron will give the bull as the sin gift for himself, to pay for the sins of himself and those in his house. He will kill the bull as the sin gift for himself.

12 He will take a fire pan full of fire from the altar before the Lord, and enough fine, ground, sweet perfume to fill two hands. And he will bring it inside the curtain.

13 He will put the special perfume on the fire before the Lord so that the cloud of the special perfume covers the mercy-seat on the special box of the agreement or he will die.

14 He will take some of the bull's blood and put it with his finger on the east side of the mercy-seat. And with his finger he will put some of the blood seven times in front of the mercy-seat.

15 “Then he will kill the goat as the sin gift for the people. He will bring its blood inside the curtain, and do the same with its blood as he did with the bull's blood. He will put it on the seat and in front of the mercy-seat.

16 He will make the holy place, and also the meeting tent which is in the center of the camp, clean and pure because all the sins of the people make them unclean.

17 When he goes in to pay for sins in the holy place, no one will be in the meeting tent until he comes out. He will pay for the sins of himself, of those in his house, and of all the people of Israel.

18 Then he will go out to the altar before the Lord and make it clean and pure. He will take some of the bull's blood and goat's blood and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides.

19 With his finger he will put some of the blood on the altar seven times so it will be clean. He will set it apart from what is unclean

among the people of Israel.

20 “When he finishes making the holy place, the meeting tent and the altar free from sin, he will give the live goat.

21 Aaron will lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and tell of all the sins and wrongdoings of the people of Israel. He will lay them upon the head of the goat and send it away into the place where no people live by the hand of a man ready to help.

22 The goat will carry upon itself all their sins to a land where no one lives. Then the man will let the goat go free there.

29 “This will be a Law forever for you. On the tenth day of the seventh month, you must get rid of your pride and not do any work, both those who live in the land and those who visit from another land.

30 For on this day your sin will be taken away and you will be clean. You will be made free from all your sins before the Lord.

31 It is to be a special Day of Rest for you, that you may be free from pride. It is a Law forever.

32 The chosen religious leader who is set apart to work as religious leader in his father's place will pay for the sin. He will put on the holy linen clothing

33 and make the holy place, the meeting tent and the altar free from sin. He will make the religious leaders and all the people free from sin also.

34 This will be a Law forever for you. The people of Israel must be made free from all their sins once a year.” And Moses did what the Lord told him to do.



*Adult Bible Study in
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Bible Text

Leviticus 19:1-4,
9-18, 32-37

Background Text

Leviticus 19

Memory Verse

“Do not hurt someone who has hurt you. Do not keep on hating the sons of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”
(Leviticus 19:18)

Word List

community: a group of people who live together and share similar beliefs and values

idolatry: worship of anything other than God

favoritism: treating some people better than others

Be Holy in All Relationships

According to Exodus 19:6, God called Israel to be a holy nation. To be holy means to be set apart for a special purpose by God. Israel was to be different than the other nations. They were to show the other nations how to please God. This meant each person was to live a holy life.

Leviticus 17-26 is often called the Holiness Code. These chapters contain many guidelines showing the people how to live a holy life. Leviticus 19:2 states God’s people are to “be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.”

God still requires His people be holy in their living. The writer of Hebrews wrote, “Be at peace with all men. Live a holy life. No one will see the Lord without having that kind of life” (Hebrews 12:14). Christians are to show others what God is like by being holy in their words and deeds. Leviticus 17-26 helps us to understand how to be holy.

Leviticus 19 contains many restatements of some of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20. Here those commandments are placed within the Holiness Code. This chapter shows that obedience to God’s commandments was not simply obeying a set of laws. Obedience to God’s commands was a sign of a person’s holiness. The reason we should obey God’s commandments is not just “to obey the rules.” We obey God’s commandments because we are God’s people.

At the center of this chapter is the command to “love your neighbor as yourself.” God gave us His commandments as a way to protect the **community** of His people. God’s commandments

**Things To
Think About**

1. What does living a holy life mean to you?
2. Which commandment in Leviticus 19 do you find most difficult to keep? Why?
3. How have you shown God's love to someone that is different than you?

help us to keep good relationships with all people. Most verses in Leviticus 19 deal with our relationships. God knows it is important for people to take care of each other. This idea is so important, Jesus said that “love your neighbor as yourself” was the second most important commandment (Mark 12:28-31).

Obeying God's Commandments (Leviticus 19:1-4)

The first commandment mentioned in Leviticus 19 is to honor or respect your mother and father. A person's relationship with his or her parents is the first experience with relating to other people. It is also one of the most important. Parents pass on values to their children. The relationships between parents and children are what create families. Strong families are vital to a strong society. Honoring one's parents helps keep the community strong. In Exodus 20, this is the only commandment that has a promise for those who obey. Exodus 20:12 states that obedience to this commandment will lead to a long life in the land for the community.

This chapter also restates several commandments which guide our relationship to God. Verse 3 reminds us to keep the Sabbath. The word *Sabbath* comes from a Hebrew word meaning “to cease.” We are called to cease from our work for one day each week. Taking one day each week to rest gives us renewed energy and shows our dependence on God.

Verse 4 calls on God's people to avoid **idolatry**. In the ancient world, most people made idols out of wood or stone to represent their gods. Most people in America do not have stone or wooden idols. Yet an idol is anything which takes our

devotion away from God. We can even make idols out of things that are good. For many people today, their job or place in the community is an idol. For others, it is their possessions or their service to the church. This verse reminds us that nothing is to be our main focus except for our relationship to God.

Loving Your Neighbor (19:9-18, 32-37)

Most of Leviticus 19 deals with our relationships with each other. These guidelines are designed to protect individuals and the community. God's people are to have a healthy respect and love for each other. These commandments are not simply cold laws. They give us a picture of how our love for each other should be shown.

There are many things that we would not do if we loved one another. God's people are to refrain from stealing and lying. They are not to spread stories about others or show **favoritism** toward anyone. They should not hate or bear a grudge against their neighbor. They should not cheat anyone or refuse to pay what someone has earned. They should not take

advantage of those who cannot defend themselves.

This chapter also shows positive examples of what God's people should do. They should leave a part of their harvest in the field for the poor to gather. They should show respect and care for the elderly. They should treat everyone, including strangers, with respect. All of these things are to be the result of living a life that pleases God. All of these commandments point to the fact that God's people are to love their neighbors as themselves.

God wants everyone to have good, healthy relationships with those around them. It is so important to God that He tells us we cannot live holy lives if we are in conflict with our neighbors. If we want to be holy, our relationships need to be holy. Perhaps the hardest relationships are those with people who are different from us. God says we are to treat even those people with respect and love.

Jesus spent a lot of time ministering out of love to those from different races and nations. We are called to follow His example.

Leviticus 19:1-4, 9-18, 32-37

1 The Lord said to Moses,

2 “Say to all the people of Israel, ‘Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

3 Every one of you must have respect for his mother and his father. And keep My Days of Rest. I am the Lord your God.

4 Do not turn to false gods or make gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God.

9 ‘When you pick the food of your land at gathering time, do not pick all the way to the corners of your field. And do not gather the food left on the ground there after you have picked.

10 Do not gather what is left among your vines, or gather the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for those in need and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God.

11 ‘Do not steal. Be honest in what you do. Do not lie to one another.

12 Do not lie when you make a promise in My name, and so put the name of your God to shame. I am the Lord.

13 ‘Do not make it hard for your neighbor or rob him. You should not keep the pay of a man who works for you until the next morning.

14 Do not say bad things against a man who cannot hear. Do not put something in the way of a man who cannot see. But fear your God. I am the Lord.

15 ‘Be fair in how you judge. Do not show favor to the poor or to the great. Be fair in how you judge your neighbor.

16 Do not go around saying things that hurt your people. Do not do things against the life of your neighbor. I am the Lord.

17 ‘In your heart do not hate someone from

your own country. You may speak sharp words to your neighbor, but do not sin because of him.

18 Do not hurt someone who has hurt you. Do not keep on hating the sons of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

32 ‘Show respect to the person with white hair. Honor an older person and you will honor your God. I am the Lord.

33 ‘If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not do wrong to him.

34 You should act toward the stranger who lives among you as you would toward one born among you. Love him as you love yourself. For you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

35 ‘Do not lie about the weight or price of anything.

36 Always tell the truth about it. I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 Keep all My Laws and do all that I tell you. I am the Lord.’”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Leviticus 23:1-38

Background Text

Leviticus 23

Memory Verse

“Say to the people of Israel, ‘These are the special suppers of the Lord, which you will keep for holy meetings. These are My special suppers.’”
(Leviticus 23:2)

Word List

festival: a feast or a special time of celebration

Living on Sacred Time

This lesson continues our study of the Holiness Code in Leviticus. This code provides guidance in living a holy life that pleases God. Leviticus 23 contains a description of the special **festivals**. These festivals were times to celebrate all that God had done for the people. Festivals marked special times during the year. They gave order to life in ancient Israel. Most people in ancient Israel were farmers. These festivals were connected to significant events in the farming cycle.

Remembering God Each Week (Leviticus 23:1-3)

Before describing the yearly feasts, the writer of Leviticus reminds the people to remember the Sabbath. The word *Sabbath* comes from a Hebrew word that means “to cease or to stop.” For six days each week, the people were to do their work. On the last day of the week, the Sabbath, they were to stop working. They were to rest and think about what God had done for them. They had to depend on God to meet their needs for that day.

Christians need to remember the original purpose of the Sabbath. Many Christians are very busy on the Sabbath doing a lot of different things at church. Many teach Sunday School, serve on committees, and sing in the choir. We all need to learn to stop our activities and rest. We need to slow down serving God long enough to focus on renewing our relationship to God.

Remembering God through the Year (23:4-38)

The ancient Israelites had three major festivals during the

Things To
Think About

1. How do you observe the Sabbath?
2. How might you focus on God more during different holidays?
3. Which is most significant to you, worshipping God as Redeemer, Provider, or Protector? Why?

year. Each lasted for a week. A representative from each family would go to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts. Each festival had a lot of eating, drinking, and celebrating. They also included many sacrifices and focused on worshipping God.

The first was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It took place each spring right after Passover. This feast celebrated the barley harvest. The people celebrated God as Redeemer. They remembered how God rescued them from slavery in Egypt. Each family brought the first part of their harvest and a lamb to sacrifice. The priest offered these on the altar.

Fifty days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the people celebrated Pentecost. This was also called the Feast of Weeks. This festival was held in the summer to celebrate the wheat harvest. Once again, the people would bring a portion of the harvest and an animal sacrifice. During this feast, the people worshiped God as Provider. They thanked God for the many ways He provided for their needs. They thanked God for providing them with the Promised Land. Verse 22 instructs the people to leave some of the wheat in the fields for the poor to gather. In this way, the people could provide for the needs of others. In later years, this feast was connected to God's gift of the covenant at Mount Sinai. In the book of Acts, it is during the celebration of Pentecost that God sends the Holy Spirit.

After the harvest of the fruit crops each fall, the people celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles. This is also called the Feast of Booths. During this festival, entire families would come to Jerusalem. They would build tents out of palm branches and would live in them during the feast. The people worshiped God

as Protector. They thanked God for His constant protection of them and their land. By living in tents, the people were reminded of how God protected them during 40 years of wandering in the desert.

God wants His people to gather together to worship Him. God has set up special days and seasons for His people to do this. Most Christians do not celebrate the festivals of ancient Israel. We have Christmas and Easter when we gather to focus on all that God has done for us. We also have a weekly time of rest and worship. During these times, we gather together and celebrate how Jesus unites us in God's family. These special times allow us to take a break from our work and remember our dependence on God. Like the Israelites, we can thank God that He is our Redeemer, Provider, and Protector.

Leviticus 23:1-38

1 The Lord said to Moses,
2 "Say to the people of Israel, 'These are the special suppers of the Lord, which you will keep for holy meetings. These are My special suppers.

3 Work may be done for six days. But the seventh day is the Day of Rest, a holy meeting when you do no work at all. It is the Day of Rest to the Lord in all your homes.

4 'These are the special suppers of the Lord, the holy meetings you will keep at the right times.

5 On the fourteenth day of the first month in the evening begins the Lord's religious gathering to remember how His people left Egypt.

6 On the fifteenth day of the same month is the Lord's special supper of bread without yeast. For seven days you will eat bread made without yeast.

7 On the first day you will have a holy meeting. You will not do any hard work.

8 But you will give a gift by fire to the Lord for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy meeting. You will not do any hard work.'"

9 Then the Lord said to Moses,

10 "Say to the people of Israel, 'When you come into the land I am going to give you and gather its grain, bring some of the first fruits of your grain to the religious leader.

11 He will wave the grain before the Lord for you to be received. The religious leader will wave it on the day after the Day of Rest.

12 On the day when you wave the grain, you will give a perfect, one year old male lamb as a burnt gift to the Lord.

13 The grain gift with it will be one-fifth part of a basket of fine flour mixed with oil. It is a gift by fire to the Lord for a pleasing smell. And the drink gift with it will be a jar of wine.

14 Do not eat bread or dry grain or new grain until this same day, when you have brought

the gift to your God. It is to be a Law forever for all your people in all your homes.

15 'Number seven full weeks from the day after the Day of Rest, from the day when you give the grain for the wave gift. There will be seven whole Days of Rest.

16 Number fifty days to the day after the seventh Day of Rest. Then give a new grain gift to the Lord.

17 Bring from your homes two loaves of bread for a wave gift, made of one-fifth part of a basket of fine flour. They will be made with yeast, as first-fruits to the Lord.

18 With the bread give seven one year old male lambs that are perfect, and one young bull, and two rams. They will be a burnt gift to the Lord, with their grain gift and their drink gift. It is a gift by fire with a pleasing smell to the Lord.

19 Then give one male goat for a sin gift and two male lambs one year old for a peace gift.

20 The religious leader will wave them with the bread of the first-fruits as a wave gift before the Lord, with the two lambs. They will be holy to the Lord for the religious leader.

21 On this same day call together a holy meeting. Do no hard work. It is a Law forever in all your homes for all your people.

22 'When you gather the food of your land, do not pick all the way to the corners of your field. And do not gather the food that falls. Leave it for those in need and the stranger. I am the Lord your God.' "

23 The Lord said to Moses,

24 "Say to the people of Israel, 'On the first day of the seventh month, you will have a Day of Rest. It will be a day of remembering, made known by the blowing of horns, a holy meeting.

25 Do not do any hard work. But give a gift by fire to the Lord.'"

26 Then the Lord said to Moses,

27 "The tenth day of this seventh month is the day to be made free from sin. It will be a holy meeting for you. You will be without pride and give a gift by fire to the Lord.

28 "Do no work on this day. For it is a day to be made free from sin, to be made free from your sin before the Lord your God.

29 If there is any person who will not be free from his pride on this day, he will be kept away from his people.

30 Whoever does any work on this day, I will destroy from among his people.

31 Do no work at all. It is a Law forever for all your people in all your homes.

32 It will be a Day of Rest for you. And you must be without pride. You will keep your Day of Rest from evening until evening on the ninth day of the month."

33 The Lord said to Moses,

34 "Say to the people of Israel, 'On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the special supper of tents to the Lord. It will last seven days.

35 A holy meeting will be on the first day. Do no hard work of any kind.

36 Give a gift by fire to the Lord for seven days. On the eighth day have a holy meeting and give a gift by fire to the Lord. It is a special gathering. Do no hard work.

37 'These are the special suppers, the holy meetings you will keep at the right times. They will be for giving to the Lord gifts by fire, burnt gifts and grain gifts, gifts of animals and drink gifts, each on its own day.

38 These are to be added to the Days of Rest of the Lord, and your gifts, both those that are promised and your free-will gifts that you give to the Lord.'"



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Leviticus 25:8-17,
23-24, 35-43

Background Text

Leviticus 25

Memory Verse

“Do not do wrong to one another, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God.”
(Leviticus 25:17)

Word List

possessions: all the things a person owns
classes: groups which are similar within a society because they have the same level of income or the same background;
examples: wealthy, middle-class, and poor

This Land—Not Your Land

The goal of many people today seems to be to make a lot of money. Many people try to add to their bank accounts while they do not care if others are mistreated in the process. People work many hours to make more money for what they think they need. Society encourages this attitude. Television commercials and programs seem to teach that the people with the most money are the most important and the happiest.

God looks at money and possessions differently. God is concerned with a person's heart rather than his or her possessions. God wants all people to treat each other with love. God wants people to live holy lives no matter how much money they have.

Jesus showed us this clearly. Jesus spent most of His time with the poor people or people who were unimportant to society. Jesus wanted to show us that possessions are not important to God. We are to learn from His example.

Leviticus 25 helps us to understand what is important to God. This chapter contains a description of God's plan for the Year of Jubilee. This was a special year to be celebrated once every 50 years. This year reminded people that all possessions came from God. It reminded them that they were dependent on God for everything. It helped them remember God cares for all people the same, no matter how much someone owns.

Like chapters 19 and 23, this chapter is part of the Holiness Code. It shows us that part of being holy is having a proper view of possessions.

Things To
Think About

1. How does personal debt affect your daily decisions?
2. In what ways do you help take care of the earth?
3. How have you helped the poor in a way that treated them as an equal?

Remember God's Provisions (Leviticus 25:8-17, 23-24)

Several important things were to happen during the Year of Jubilee to show the people how they should look at possessions. First, during this year all debts were to be canceled. This means if anyone owed money to someone else, they no longer had to repay it. Second, if anybody had sold any land, it was to be returned to the first owners. Third, anyone who was a servant to someone else was allowed to go free.

During this special year, everyone was given the chance to start over. Everything was made equal. This prevented the people from being separated into classes. It also reminded the people that everything they had came from God.

God is much more concerned with people than with possessions. God loves everyone equally and expects His people to do the same. The Year of Jubilee reminded those who did own a lot that God was the true owner. God wanted them to trust Him rather than depend too much on their wealth. This year also gave hope to those who were not rich. It reminded them that God loves them and would always take care of them.

During this year, the people were not to plant or harvest crops. This gave the earth a chance to rest. The people had to depend on God to supply their need for food during this year.

We are on the earth for just a short time. It is our responsibility to take care of it. Sometimes we need to allow the earth to rest. God knows what we need. He is able to give us all we need. It is up to us to trust and depend on God to take care of us.

Take Care of the Poor (25:35-43)

The second half of Leviticus 25 gives guidance about how we are to treat the poor among us. Whenever an Israelite loaned money to another Israelite, they were not to charge interest. Both were members of God's chosen nation, His chosen people. They should treat each other like family. Sometimes the situation became so bad that an Israelite would choose to become a servant of the one to whom he owed money. Whenever this happened, the person was not to be treated as a slave. He or she was still an equal member of God's people. They were to be released when the debt was paid. God delivered the people from slavery in Egypt. No Israelite was to ever be treated as a slave again.

Christians today live in a world where greed causes people to mistreat others. Many people take advantage of others in order to make more money. These people place a higher value on possessions than on people. God's people are to be different than these people. We are to treat each other as family. We are to remember all we have comes from God. We are to remember all God has done for us in saving

us from our sins.

We are to take care of each other, the earth, and everything God gives us. All of this is an important part of living lives which are holy and pleasing to God.

Leviticus 25:8-17, 23-24, 35-43

8 'You are to number seven Years of Rest for yourself, seven times seven years. The time of the seven Years of Rest will be forty-nine years.

9 Then let the horn be heard on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the day to be made free from sin you will let a horn be heard all through your land.

10 You will honor the fiftieth year as holy. And let it be known in all the land that all who are living there are free. It will be a happy time for you. Each of you will return to what is his. Each will return to his family.

11 That fiftieth year will be a happy time for you. You will not plant seeds in the field, or gather the food that grows of itself, or gather fruit from the vines that are not cared for.

12 This is a happy time. It will be holy to you. You will eat from what the field gives.

13 'In this Year of Jubilee each one will have what was his.

14 If you sell anything to your neighbor, or buy from your neighbor, do not do wrong to one another.

15 You will pay your neighbor by the number of years since the Year of Jubilee. And he will sell to you by the number of years the food may be gathered.

16 You will make the price more if there are many years, and make the price less if there are few years. For he is selling you the food that is gathered each year.

17 Do not do wrong to one another, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God.

23 'The land will not be sold to be kept forever. For the land is Mine. You are only strangers staying with Me.

24 For all the land you have, you must be willing to let it go.

35 'If your brother becomes poor and is not able to pay you what he owes, then you should help him as you would help a stranger or visitor. So he may live with you.

36 Do not make him pay for the use of the money he owes you. But fear your God, so your brother may live with you.

37 Do not make him pay for the use of your money or your food.

38 I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

39 'If your brother becomes so poor that he sells himself to you, do not make him work as a servant.

40 He will be as a man who is paid to work for you, as one who is traveling from place to place, until the Year of Jubilee.

41 Then he will leave you, he and his children, that he may return to the land of his fathers.

42 For I brought them out of the land of Egypt as My servants. They are not to be sold as a servant.

43 Do not make it hard for him, but fear your God.

Numbers



*Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English*

**Numbers:
Journeying through
the Wilderness**

**Lesson 6
Courageous Faith
in Action**

Numbers 13:1-3,
17-20, 25-33,
14:1-10, 30-31

**Lesson 7
When the Pressure
Builds**

Numbers 20:1-13

**Lesson 8
Don't Get in God's Way**

Numbers 22:1-6, 22-35,
24:10-17

**NUMBERS:
JOURNEYING THROUGH
THE WILDERNESS**

The fourth book in the Bible is Numbers. It describes two censuses (a counting of the people). One is in chapter 1, and the other is in chapter 26.

The name of this book in Hebrew is “In the Wilderness.”

This title comes from the first few words of the book. This book contains stories about the Israelites wandering through the wilderness outside the Promised Land. In the first 10 chapters, Israel is still camped at Mount Sinai. The people camped there for about 11 months. The rest of the book describes the 40-year journey from Mount Sinai to the Promised Land. Sadly, the generation which left Egypt and met God at Mount Sinai failed to trust God when it counted. Because of their disobedience, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years until that generation died. God then gave their children the chance to occupy the Promised Land.

Today it can seem like we are wandering through a wilderness. Life can be hard and full of challenges even for Christians. We may feel we have no direction or purpose. We question God about why we are having hard times. We can learn a lot from the ancient Israelites. Numbers shows us how we should and should not handle life's difficulties.



Lesson
6
*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Numbers 13:1-3,
17-20, 25-33,
14:1-10, 30-31

Background Text

Numbers 13-14

Memory Verse

“The Lord is slow to anger and filled with loving-kindness, forgiving sin and wrong-doing. But He will not let the guilty go without being punished. He brings the sin of fathers down upon the children, even the great-grandchildren.”
(Numbers 14:18)

Word List

legend: a story from the past which may or may not be true
perception: what we believe is true based on our senses

Courageous Faith in Action

The Israelites miraculously escaped from slavery in Egypt. They spent 11 months camped at Mount Sinai as God gave them the covenant. Now they camped just outside the Promised Land. They prepared to move into their new home.

The Spies Are Sent (Numbers 13:1-3, 17-20)

In Numbers 13, God told Moses to send 12 spies to explore the land before the people entered it. They were to gather information about the strength of the people who lived there. They were to confirm that the land was good and fertile for growing crops. Before the spies left, God told the people He was giving this land to them. It was the land God promised to Abraham. The people only had to accept God’s gift. This would require them to have faith and trust God.

How often do we miss God’s blessings because we do not have the faith to simply accept it?

The spies spent 40 days searching the land. They searched the land from the plain in the south to the hills in the north. They studied the number and strength of the people living there. They gathered fruits and vegetables to show the fertility of the land. They prepared to report their **perceptions** to the Israelites.

Even today, perception can be very strong. The problem is that perception usually does not match what is really there. Our perception of our situation often causes us to forget what God has told us is true. This is what happened to the 12 spies.

Things To
Think About

1. What has God called you to do that you are afraid to do?
2. How have you exercised faith in the face of fear in the past?
3. What do you need that would allow you to exercise faith over fear?

The Spies Give Their Report (13:25-33)

The spies gave their report when they returned to the camp. They all agreed the land was good and fertile. They showed the fruit and vegetables. The land did flow with milk and honey. All 12 agreed the land was very good.

Then they started to report about the people who lived in the land. They all agreed that the people who lived there were very powerful. Their cities were large and strong. In the perception of the spies, the people who lived there were giants. They reminded the spies of the old **legends** about giants. The spies felt like grasshoppers compared to them. Ten of the spies said the Israelites could not take the land from these people. The Israelites would surely be defeated.

But two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, said the Israelites should go in and take the land. They could easily defeat these people since God was with the Israelites. The other 10 spies began spreading fear among the people because of their poor perception.

Many times when we face problems, fear takes over in our minds. Whenever we feel afraid, we cannot act in faith. Fear causes people to forget what they believe in. Fear makes us focus on the problem instead of relying on God.

Fear caused the Israelites to begin to complain against Moses and God. They wanted to go back to Egypt. They forgot all God had done for them. They even began to doubt God and His plans for them. Joshua and Caleb remembered. They tried to remind the people how God had blessed them. They reminded the people that God had promised to give them this

land. The people only had to believe God instead of fearing the people who lived in the land. The land was good and God was with them.

But the people refused to listen. They even talked about killing Joshua and Caleb. Moses prayed for an answer. God told Moses all the people who refused to go and take the land would never be allowed to enter it. Because they rejected God's gift of a homeland, they would have to wander in the wilderness without a home for 40 years. During that time, the generation which refused to enter the land would die in the desert. A new generation of their children would receive the gift from God.

Joshua and Caleb had tried to strengthen the people's faith. They never lost their faith in God. Because of this, Joshua and Caleb would lead the next generation into the Promised Land after the 40 years were finished.

Sometimes we feel we are wandering in a wilderness. We know what God has done for us and what He has promised us. But fear causes us to miss God's blessings. We must seek to exercise our faith and not live in fear. When God says, "Go, receive

the gift," we need to be ready to go, knowing God goes with us.

**Numbers 13:1-3, 17-20, 25-33,
14:1-10, 30-31**

1 The Lord said to Moses,

2 "Send men to spy out the land of Canaan which I am going to give to the people of Israel. Send a man from each of their fathers' families, every one a leader among them."

3 So Moses sent them from the desert of Paran, as the Lord had told him. All of the men were heads of the people of Israel.

17 Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan. He said to them, "Go up there into the Negev. Then go up into the hill country.

18 See what the land is like. See if the people who live in it are strong or weak, and if they are few or many.

19 Find out if the land they live in is good or bad. See if the cities they live in are open or if they have walls.

20 Find out if the land is rich or poor, and if there are trees in it or not. Then try to get some of the fruit of the land." Now this was the gathering time of the first grown grapes.

25 They returned from looking over the land after forty days.

26 And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the people of Israel in the desert of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought news to them and to all the people, and showed them the fruit of the land.

27 They told Moses, “We went to the land where you sent us. It does flow with milk and honey. This is its fruit.

28 But the people who live in the land are strong. The cities have walls and are very large. And we saw the children of Anak there.

29 Amalek is living in the land of the Negev. The Hittites and Jebusites and Amorites are living in the hill country. And the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.”

30 Then Caleb told the people in front of Moses to be quiet. And he said, “Let us go up at once and take the land. For we are well able to take it in battle.”

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go against the people. They are too strong for us.”

32 So they brought the people of Israel bad news about the land they had spied out, saying, “The land we have gone to spy out is a land that destroys those who go there to live. All the people we saw in it are very large.

33 We saw the Nephilim there. (The sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim.) We looked like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”

Numbers 14:1 Then all the people cried out with a loud voice, and they cried that night.

2 All the people of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this desert!

3 Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to be killed by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be taken away. Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”

4 So they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and return to Egypt.”

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in front of all the gathering of the people of Israel.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh tore their clothes. They were among those who had spied out the land.

7 They said to all the people of Israel, “The land we passed through to spy out is a very good land.

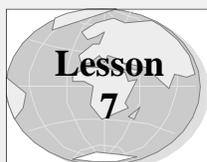
8 If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us. It is a land which flows with milk and honey.

9 Only do not go against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land. For they will be our food. They have no way to keep safe, and the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

10 But all the people said to throw stones at Joshua and Caleb. Then the shining-greatness of the Lord was seen in the meeting tent by all the people of Israel.

30 For sure, not one will go into the land where I promised to have you live, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

31 You said that your children would be taken and killed. But I will bring them in, and they will know the land you have turned away from.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Numbers 20:1-13

Background Text

Numbers 20

Memory Verse

“But we cried out to the Lord. He heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out from Egypt.”
(Numbers 20:16a)

Word List

opposition: people or situations that are against us

pressure: a feeling of physical or mental stress or worry

When the Pressure Builds

Because they failed to trust God, the Israelites had to wander around the wilderness for 40 years. Life in the wilderness was hard. God supplied manna for the people to eat, but water was often hard to find. The people became angry about the way Moses was leading them. They complained about their difficulties. Many wanted to go back to Egypt.

The people complained to God again and again. God grew angry with the people. Moses prayed God would show mercy to the people. God continued to be patient and take care of them.

Numbers 20 describes one of these times when the people complained against Moses and God. This time, Moses failed to act as God had instructed him. God punished Moses for failing to obey Him when the **pressure** was against him.

Facing Opposition (Numbers 20:1-5)

Numbers 20:2 states the people came to a place with no water. The people became thirsty and complained to Moses. They accused God and Moses of bringing them into the desert to die. They forgot why they were in the desert. God offered them the Promised Land where all of their needs would have been met. But the people allowed fear to control them. They refused to take God’s gift. Now they gathered together to oppose Moses. Once again, they were focused on the problem rather than on God.

Just like fear, difficult times may make us take our eyes

Things To Think About

1. How do you deal with people around you who always seem to complain?
2. How do you normally respond when faced with opposition or pressure?
3. When was the last time God gave you the specific direction you asked for?

off of God. We focus on our problems and forget God is with us and wants to take care of us.

Responding Rather than Reacting (20:6-8)

Moses refused to react to the complaints of the people. He had heard their complaints many times before. He knew he first needed to ask God what to do.

Many times when we are faced with **opposition** of any kind, we simply react in the moment. This usually results in hurt feelings or a damaged relationship. It also can damage our witness as Christians. Many times the best thing to do when we feel opposition is to be silent until we have prayed. We should ask God what is the best thing to do.

In this case, God answered Moses. God told him to gather the people near a certain rock. Moses was then to speak to the rock. Water would come from the rock.

God is always faithful. If we ask for help, He will give it, even if He has to make water come from a rock in the desert.

But this time, Moses failed to follow God's directions. Instead of speaking to the rock, Moses struck it with Aaron's staff. Why did Moses fail to follow such simple instructions?

In a similar event right after the people crossed the Red Sea, God had told Moses to strike the rock (Exodus 17:1-7). Did Moses think God had to solve the same problem in the same way as He did before? Did Moses allow his anger and impatience with the people to take over his actions? The Bible does not tell us why Moses disobeyed God. We should notice

God provided water from the rock in spite of Moses' disobedience. It was important to God to meet the people's need, and then to punish Moses separately.

Because of his disobedience, God told Moses that he would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. This punishment may seem too severe for this one sin. But Moses was God's chosen leader. God has very high expectations of His leaders. When leaders fail to obey, the followers begin to question why they need to obey. Leaders are not perfect, but God expects them to set a good example of obedience whenever they are leading.

This is why it is very important to pray for those who lead us, especially in our churches. This also shows that God is very serious about disobedience.

We all face times when the pressure seems to be high against us. In these times, we have the power to choose how we will respond. Will we allow the pressure to keep us from acting right? Will we assume we know what God will do, so we act without asking Him? Will we ask Him, but then not obey? Or will we ask for God's direction and do as He instructs? If we want to deal

with the pressure in a way that pleases God, we will always follow God's leading.

Numbers 20:1-13

1 Then all the people of Israel came to the Desert of Zin in the first month. And the people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried.

2 Now there was no water for the people, and they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.

3 The people complained to Moses, saying, “If only we had died when our brothers died before the Lord!

4 Why have you brought the Lord’s people into this desert, for us and our animals to die here?

5 Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us into this bad place? It is not a place of grain, or figs, or vines, or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink.”

6 Then Moses and Aaron went from the people to the door of the meeting tent, and bowed to the ground. They saw the shining-greatness of the Lord.

7 The Lord said to Moses,

8 “Take the special stick. You and your brother Aaron gather the people together. Speak to the rock in front of them and it will give its water. So you will bring water out of the rock for them. Let the people and their animals drink.”

9 So Moses took the special stick from before the Lord, just as He had told him.

10 Moses and Aaron gathered the people in front of the rock. And he said to them, “Listen now, you people who go against the Lord. Should we bring water for you out of this rock?”

11 Then Moses lifted up his hand and hit the rock twice with his stick, and more than enough water came out. The people and their animals drank.

12 But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you have not believed Me and honored Me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, you will not bring these people into the land I have given them.”

13 These were the waters of Meribah because the people of Israel complained against the Lord, and He proved Himself holy among them.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Numbers 22:1-6,
22-35, 24:10-17

Background Text

Numbers 22-24

Memory Verse

“God is not a man,
that He should lie. He
is not a son of man,
that He should be
sorry for what He has
said. Has He said, and
will He not do it? Has
He spoken, and will
He not keep His
Word?”
(Numbers 23:19)

Word List

curse: to call on God
to inflict injury on a
person or group

Don't Get in God's Way

For 40 years, the people of Israel had wandered in the wilderness. A generation of children had watched their parents die in the desert. Those parents had told their children the stories of all that God had done for them. They also told them about their failure to trust God and take the Promised Land. They wanted their children to learn from their mistakes. This younger generation was now grown and would soon be faced with the same choice their parents had faced. Would they act in faith and take the land God promised to them? As these Israelites approached the Promised Land, one man tried to stop them. That man was Balak, the king of Moab. The story of Balak in Numbers 22-24 can teach us a lot about what happens when we try to get in God's way.

A Plan to Defeat the People of God (Numbers 22)

The story begins with the Israelites camped on the east side of the Jordan River. They were ready to cross the river and settle in their new homeland. The different nations of the area had heard how God blessed the Israelites and defeated the Egyptians 40 years before.

Balak, the king of Moab, heard these stories and was afraid God would help the Israelites defeat his country. King Balak tried to hire a prophet named Balaam to **curse** the Israelites so Balak could defeat them. People at that time thought words had special powers to either bless or curse. The king sent

Things To Think About

1. How does knowing that God is always protecting you help you face challenges?
2. Has there ever been a time when you realized God had protested you after He did? How did you feel when you realized it?
3. Has God ever used an unusual or unexpected means to speak to you? What was it and what did God tell you?

special messengers to get Balaam. Even though Balaam was not Israelite, he still recognized God's power. God told Balaam not to curse Israel because God had blessed them. When God chooses to bless a person or group, no one can curse them. Balaam would not go with the messengers. He could not curse Israel. Balak sent a second group of messengers to bring Balaam to him. This time God told Balaam to go to the king and to say only what God told him to say.

On the road to see Balak, Balaam's donkey suddenly stopped and would not go forward. God had sent an angel to block the path and only the donkey could see it. Balaam became angry and began beating the donkey to make it go. After the third beating, the donkey spoke to Balaam. The donkey accused Balaam of mistreating it when it was only obeying God. Balaam then looked and was able to see the angel blocking the path. Balaam bowed before the angel. The angel reminded Balaam to only say what God told him to say. The angel said Balaam's choice was a bad choice. The Bible does not explain why this happened. Maybe Balaam had secretly decided to take Balak's money and curse Israel after all. The angel was sent to remind Balaam to obey God.

Many times God will speak to us in ways we do not expect. We should be sure we are always listening for God to speak to us. God will probably not use a talking donkey, but we should be ready to hear Him whenever He speaks. We should also be ready to change what we are doing in order to obey what God says.

**Whatever God Blesses,
Man Cannot Curse (23:1-24:25)**

Numbers 23-24 tells us that Balak tried to get Balaam to curse Israel three times. Each time Balaam announced a blessing on Israel rather than a curse. After the third time, King Balak became very angry. He refused to pay Balaam and sent him home. Before he left, Balaam reminded the king that he had told him that he could only say what God told him to say. Balaam then told Balak that one day a king of Israel would defeat Moab. Many years later, David became king of Israel and defeated Moab (2 Samuel 8:2). Balaam's words were more than a blessing on Israel. They announced a day when Israel would be stronger than the opposing nations.

The Israelites never knew about Balak's plan to harm them. All these stories happened outside the Israelite camp. God protected the people even when they were not aware of the threat.

God is still faithful to protect His people. How many things does God protect us from each day that we never know about? The stories of Balak show us that God protects us at all times. These stories

also remind us to always obey God and to make sure we never try to interfere with God's plans.

Numbers 22:1-6, 22-35; 24:10-17

1 Then the people of Israel traveled on and set up their tents in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan beside Jericho.

2 Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

3 So Moab was filled with much fear because of the people, for they were many. Moab was very afraid of the people of Israel.

4 And Moab said to the leaders of Midian, "Now these people will take away everything around us like the bull eats up the grass of the field." Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time.

5 So he sent men to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the children of his people. They said to him, "See, a people came out of Egypt. See, they cover the land, and they are living beside me.

6 Now come, I beg you. Curse this people for me, because they are too strong for me. Then I may be able to win the battle against them and send them out of the land. For I know that good will come to the one you pray for, and trouble will come to the one you curse."

22 But God was angry because he was going. The angel of the Lord stood in the way against him. Balaam was sitting on his donkey, and his two servants were with him.

23 When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his sword in his hand, the donkey turned off the road and went

into the field. But Balaam hit the donkey to turn her on the road again.

24 Then the angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path in the grape-field, with a wall on each side.

25 The donkey saw the angel of the Lord. So she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against it, so he hit her again.

26 Then the angel of the Lord went farther. He stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right or the left.

27 When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam. So Balaam was angry and hit the donkey with his stick.

28 And the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you? Why have you hit me these three times?"

29 Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a fool of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now!"

30 The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have traveled all your life to this day? Have I ever done this to you before?" And Balaam said, "No."

31 Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his sword in his hand. And he bowed to the ground.

32 The angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have you hit your donkey these three times? See, I have come out against you, because your way was against me.

33 But the donkey saw me and turned from me these three times. If she had not turned from me, for sure I would have killed you, and let her live."

34 Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, "I have sinned. For I did not know that you were

standing in the way against me. But now, if it does not please you, I will turn back."

35 The angel of the Lord said to Balaam, "Go with the men. But speak only what I tell you." So Balaam went with the leaders of Balak.

Numbers 24:10-17

10 Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he hit his hands together. Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse those who hate me. But see, you have done nothing but pray that good would come to them these three times!

11 So now run away to your place. I said I would give you much honor, but the Lord has kept you from honor."

12 Then Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not tell the men you had sent to me,

13 'Even if Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot do anything against the Word of the Lord'? I said, 'I cannot do good or bad because I want to. What the Lord says, I will say.'

14 Now see, I am going to my people. Come, I will tell you what this people will do to your people in the days to come."

15 Then he began speaking and said, "Balaam the son of Beor is the man whose eye is opened.

16 He hears the words of God. He knows what the Most High wants him to know. He sees what the All-powerful wants him to see. He falls down, but has his eyes open.

17 I see him, but not now. I see him, but he is not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A special stick of power will rise from Israel. It will crush the forehead of Moab, and break down all the sons of Sheth."

◊ Deuteronomy ◊



*Adult Bible Study
in Simplified English*

Deuteronomy: God's Message for a New Day

Lesson 9

Making Sense of Life

Deuteronomy 4:9-14,
32-40

Lesson 10

Ten Word to Live By

Deuteronomy 5:1-21

Lesson 11

Show and Tell the Children

Deuteronomy 6:1-9,
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Lesson 12

How to Worship God

Deuteronomy 26:1-15

Lesson 13

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Deuteronomy 30:11-20

DEUTERONOMY: GOD'S MESSAGE FOR A NEW DAY

The book of Deuteronomy contains three collections of Moses' sermons to the people. The Israelites who heard these words were the children of those Moses had led out of Egypt. Most were not born when God spoke to the people at Mount Sinai. They heard the stories from their parents. They lived their whole lives wandering in the wilderness. They buried their parents in the desert. They were now camped within sight of the Promised Land.

Their leader for the past 40 years was not going to lead the final steps into the land. This new generation needed a new leader for their new life. Moses wanted to prepare the people to enter and settle the land. Moses retells the stories of what God had done on behalf of His people. They are to learn from them and to pass them on to their children. God still expected them to keep the covenant and obey Him.

Deuteronomy might be thought of as the most influential book in the Old Testament. It was the guide for the writers of Israel's history in Samuel and Kings. It is foundational to the preaching of the prophets. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He quoted from this book (Matt. 4:1-11). The simple message of the book may be summarized as, "Obey God and He will bless you, disobey God and He will punish you." The book's title means "second law." It does not add anything to the law in Exodus. It is simply a restatement of the law for a new generation. It reminded them of their past. It challenged them to move ahead with God.

Deuteronomy reminds us God's word is for every generation. His expectations of His people do not change. The stories are our stories also. Each generation must live in obedience and pass God's message to the next generation.



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Deuteronomy 4:9-14,
32-40

Background Text

Deuteronomy 1-4

Memory Verse

“So know this day,
take it to your heart,
that the Lord is God in
the heavens above and
on the earth below.
There is no other.”
(Deuteronomy 4:39)

Word List

nomads: people who
move regularly from
place to place, usually
by the seasons; people
who have no fixed
place to live

covenant: agreement
that binds two people
or groups together

Making Sense of Life

In the first three chapters of Deuteronomy, Moses tells the story of Israel from the time God rescued them from slavery in Egypt. The focus is on the many times the Israelite people sinned against God. Moses tried to make sure the people understood why they had been **nomads** in the desert for so long. It was because their parents failed to trust God to fulfill His promise to give them the land. They allowed fear of the people living in the land to blind them to God's ability to protect them.

Although Moses talked about events during the years of their parents, he used the word “you” in these chapters. Moses wanted the people to understand their connection to the past. He wanted them to know these stories were their stories, not just stories from the past. By including them in their parents' sins, Moses wanted them to know they must be careful not to repeat the mistakes of the past. They must guard against failing to fully trust God.

In chapter 4, Moses urges the people to remember the past and remain faithful to God by learning from their past.

Remembering Who You Are (Deuteronomy 4:9-14)

They had lived in tents in the desert all their lives. Now they were about to settle into houses in a land of their own. In the desert, they had to depend on God for their daily survival. In the desert, God gave them manna to eat and water from rocks to drink. When they settled, they would begin raising their own

Things To Think About

1. How does knowing that God is always protecting you help you face challenges?
2. Has there ever been a time when you realized God had protected you after He did? How did you feel when you realized it?
3. Has God ever used an unusual or unexpected means to speak to you? What was it and what did God tell you?

food. There would be a danger that the people would forget their dependence on God.

Moses knew this was a danger. It could lead the people into sin. Moses also knew the best way to avoid this was to remember the stories of the past.

Moses especially wanted the people to remember the **covenant** between them and God. Here again, Moses included them in the story. Moses said, “*You* stood at Mount Sinai. *You* heard God’s voice. God spoke to *you*.” The people listening to Moses had not been born when God gave the covenant at Mount Sinai. Moses did this so the people would understand that the covenant God made with their parents was also between God and them. It was a covenant between God and every generation of God’s people. The people were to understand they were God’s people. They should live in ways that pleased God.

We as Christians have our stories, too. The stories of faith in the Bible are our stories. Many believers have stories of faith from their parents or grandparents. We all have the stories of great men and women of faith through the years. Their stories are our stories because we all serve the same God. We are part of the same family of God. We need to know our stories so we can share them with the next generation.

Remembering Whose You Are (4:32-40)

All of the stories which the people were to remember told them how God acted on behalf of the people. The God Whom Israel served was not like the gods of any other people. No other god chose a specific people to be his people. No other god

rescued people from slavery. No other god entered into a covenant with people. No other god took care of its people like the God of Israel. This true and living God did all of this so the people would know He was completely unlike the idols, the false gods, of the other nations.

When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they met people who worshiped many different gods. The Bible tells us the Israelites were tempted to worship these gods. Moses warned the people to stay away from these other gods.

We as Christians worship the same God as the Israelites. Our God has indeed done things that no other god has done. No other god has ever become human in order to show us how we should live. No other god has ever died on a cross as the final sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. No other god has ever risen from the dead as a sign of His defeat of death.

For the ancient Israelites and for Christians today, having a clear memory of who we are and Whose we are gives us purpose and helps us make sense out of life.

Deuteronomy 4:9-14, 32-40

9 “Only be careful. Keep watch over your life. Or you might forget the things you have seen. Do not let them leave your heart for the rest of your life. But teach them to your children and to your grandchildren.

10 Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Mount Sinai. The Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people together before Me, so I may let them hear My words. Then they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and they may teach their children.’

11 You came near and stood at the bottom of the mountain. And the mountain burned with fire into the heavens, which were covered with darkness and black clouds.

12 Then the Lord spoke to you from the center of the fire. You heard the sound of words, but saw no body. There was only a voice.

13 He told you His agreement which He told you to keep, the Ten Laws. And He wrote them on two pieces of stone.

14 The Lord told me at that time to teach you Laws. So you might obey them in the land that you are going to have for your own.”

32 “Ask about the past days, the days before your time, since the day that God made man on the earth. Ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing? Has anything been heard like it?

33 Have any people ever heard the voice of God speaking from the center of the fire, as you have heard it, and still live?

34 Or has a god tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation, by trials, special things to see, great works, war, a powerful hand, a long arm, and spreading much fear? The Lord your God did this for you in Egypt in front of your eyes.

35 It was shown to you so you might know that the Lord is God. There is no other except Him.

36 He let you hear His voice from the heavens to teach you. On earth He let you see His great fire. And you heard His words from the center of the fire.

37 He loved your fathers, so He chose their children after them. He Himself brought you from Egypt by His great power.

38 He drove out from in front of you nations greater and more powerful than you. And He brought you in and gave you their land for your own, as it is today.

39 So know this day, take it to your heart, that the Lord is God in the heavens above and on the earth below. There is no other.

40 Keep His Laws which I am giving you today. Then it may go well with you and your children after you. And you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you for all time.”



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Deuteronomy 5:1-21

Background Text

Deuteronomy 5

Memory Verse

“Do not use the name of the Lord your God in a bad way. For the Lord will punish the one who uses His name in a bad way.”
(Deuteronomy 5:11)

Word List

community: a group of people who share common beliefs and practices

diminish: to cause something to lose value or worth

generation: a group of people of about the same age

Ten Words to Live By

The Ten Commandments have been in the news a lot over the past several years. Some people feel the Ten Commandments should be posted in public buildings in the United States. Other people believe this goes against the United States Constitution.

No matter which side of this debate a person is on, everyone must agree that these ten statements have been the foundation of Jewish and Christian beliefs for thousands of years. These rules give us guidelines for how we should act toward God and toward other people.

In these commandments, God gives us a sense of the moral structure which He built into creation. These are not like the laws we are used to. These statements show what is important to God. They are guides to help us live lives that are pleasing to God.

Moses began his second collection of sermons in Deuteronomy by reminding the people of the Ten Commandments. He wanted them to remember to build their lives around these guidelines.

The Call to Listen (Deuteronomy 5:1-5)

In chapters 1-3, Moses retold the story of Israel's years in the wilderness. In chapter 4, he encouraged the people to live right before God in the light of that history. He now begins his second collection of sermons by telling them how to do that.

In 5:1, he first calls the people to listen. This simple step is

Things To Think About

1. What are some things you might make a idol of?
2. What are some ways that we abuse God's name?
3. If you could write an eleventh commandment that reflects God's heart, what would it be?

often the one people overlook. We often fail to stop and listen to God in our efforts to serve.

As Moses did in the previous chapters, he includes the people to whom he spoke in the past. In verse 3, he says, "The Lord did not make this agreement with our fathers, but with us, all those of us alive here today." God had made the covenant with their parents. Moses wanted them to know that no one **generation** was to think of the covenant as something from the past. God's promises to His people were for all generations. Each generation was also expected to obey the commandments of the covenant.

Our Relationship to God (5:6-15)

If you compare the Ten Commandments here with Exodus 20, you will find several differences. The first three commandments of these lists are almost identical. Each of these deals with our relationship to God.

First, we are not to have any gods before God. Most people today are not tempted to worship pagan idols or gods. But there are other things to which we often give too much of our devotion. These might include our possessions or our jobs. They might also include good things such as our service to God or our families. God has given us these things to enjoy and take care of. But they can also become idols and take our attention away from pleasing God.

Second, God is concerned about protecting His name. Knowing someone's name is an important part of any relationship. It brings a duty not to misuse that name. We are

not to use God's name in any way that **diminishes** its holiness. We should never use it to swear or to make empty promises. We cause damage to God's name when we are known to be a Christian but act like an unbeliever. God gave us a great gift when He gave us His name. We should never abuse that gift.

Third, we are to protect our relationship to God by remembering to keep the Sabbath. This is to be a day of rest to think on all God is and all He has done for us. Unfortunately, many people are too busy serving God on the Sabbath. They fail to keep the Sabbath as God wanted.

Our Relationships with Each Other (5:16-21)

A person's relationship to his or her parents is the most basic of all relationships. It can show a lot about our attitude toward life and other people. The fifth commandment is the only commandment that comes with a promise for those who obey it. God promises that obedience to this commandment will lead to a long life in the land God gives us. Our relationship to our parents will change as

we grow older, but we are always to keep a sense of honor toward them.

The other commandments are about things we are to avoid that would injure or diminish the life of another person. Each person is created in the image of God. He is concerned about each individual life. As a member of God's family, we are to seek to protect the life and possessions of our neighbors. By doing this, we help to make the **community** stronger. We also reflect the heart of God to the world around us.

All of the commandments are to be thought of as instructions to each person. But the larger purpose of the Ten Commandments was to protect the community of God's people. As each person lives in a right relationship to God and others, the community will be strong and blessed by God. When any of those relationships begins to be overlooked, the community will suffer.

As a new generation of Israelites prepared to begin their new life in the new land, they needed to be reminded that God had given them these important moral words to live by.

Deuteronomy 5:1-21

1 Then Moses called all Israel, and said to them, "Listen, O Israel, to the Laws which I speak in your hearing today. Learn them and be careful to live by them.

2 The Lord our God made an agreement with us at Mount Sinai.

3 The Lord did not make this agreement with our fathers, but with us, all those of us alive here today.

4 The Lord spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the center of the fire.

5 I was standing between the Lord and you then, to tell you the Word of the Lord. For you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain. He said:

6 'I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house where you were servants.

7 'Have no other gods except Me.

8 'Do not make a false god for yourselves, or anything that is like what is in heaven above or on the earth below or in the water under the earth.

9 Do not bow down to them or serve them. I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I punish the children, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren for the sins of their fathers who hate Me.

10 But I show loving-kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My Laws.

11 'Do not use the name of the Lord your God in a bad way. For the Lord will punish the one who uses His name in a bad way.

12 'Remember the Day of Rest, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God told you.

13 Six days you will do all your work.

14 But the seventh day is a Day of Rest to the

Lord your God. You, your son, your daughter, your man servant, your woman servant, your bull, donkey or any of your cattle, or the traveler who stays with you, must not do any work on this day. So your man servant and woman servant may rest as well as you.

15 Remember that you were servants in the land of Egypt. The Lord your God brought you out of there by a powerful hand and a long arm. So the Lord your God told you to keep the Day of Rest.

16 'Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has told you. So your life may be long and it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God gives you.

17 'Do not kill another person.

18 'Do not do sex sins.

19 'Do not steal.

20 'Do not tell a lie about your neighbor.

21 'Do not have a desire for your neighbor's wife. Do not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his man servant, his bull, his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.' "



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Deuteronomy 6:1-9,
20-25

Background Text

Deuteronomy 6

Memory Verse

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord! And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

(Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

Word List

significance:

important or having a great deal of meaning

unique: one of a kind, different than anything else

Show and Tell the Children

Where did you first learn about God and all He has done for you? You probably learned about God from someone older than you. It may have been a parent or grandparent or a pastor or teacher. They probably learned from someone older than them.

God has given each generation the task of passing on the stories to the next generation. As each generation passes it on, the story grows as God continues to act on behalf of His people. But the task of teaching the next generation about God stays the same. These stories give us each a sense of where we came from and who we are.

This process began with the ancient Israelites. Moses reminded the people that God expected them to live according to His moral laws. Then Moses told them they must be sure to pass on the stories and teach their children. They must also teach their children to teach their children.

Building Homes that Love God (Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

God had one very important commandment for Moses to teach the people. Everything else supported this one commandment in some way. If the people would remember to obey this one commandment, they would have no problems obeying the others.

What was this one commandment? It is found in verses 4-5: “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord! And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all

**Things To
Think About**

1. What stories are you passing on to the next generation?
2. In what ways do you make talking about God a part of your family?
3. How are you loving God with all your mind, soul, heart, and strength?

your soul and with all your strength.”

These verses in Deuteronomy are known as the *Shema*. This word means “hear.” It is the first word in these verses which Moses spoke to the people. It is also the first thing the people needed to do if they wanted to please God.

Even today, this is the most significant statement in Jewish belief. When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He quoted these verses: “‘Teacher, which one is the greatest of the Laws?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest of the Laws. The second is like it, ‘You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ All the Laws and the writings of the early preachers depend on these two most important Laws” (Matthew 22:36-40).

Today, we can benefit from this commandment. Much can be learned if we stop talking and be still long enough to really hear what God is saying. Hearing God is be our first commandment, too.

These verses also remind us that there is no god like our God. Unlike the gods that other nations worshipped, the God of Israel is unified in purpose and is **unique** as the only living God. Because of this, we are to love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Notice that we are not to love Him only with our hearts. We are to love God with every part of our lives. We love Him with our *minds* by studying and thinking on His Word. We love Him with our *souls* by committing our lives to Him. We love Him with our *hearts* by choosing to develop a

close personal relationship with Him. We love Him with our *strength* by using our talents and abilities to serve Him.

Moses went on to say we are not only to practice this, but we should also make it a part of our family life. We are to teach our children these life lessons. We should use every opportunity to talk about God and what He expects of us. We should talk about these things in the morning, daytime, and at night. We should talk about them at home and when we travel. In both our lives and our homes, our commitment to God should be apparent to everyone we meet.

Telling the Children about God's Story (6:20-25)

In addition to teaching the children about God's laws and expectations, parents are also to tell their children the stories of God's actions on behalf of His people. Israel's laws were closely connected to Israel's stories. The laws helped explain the stories. And the stories gave **significance** to the laws. Israel identified itself by both its laws and its stories. The Law told them what they believed. The stories explained

why they believed it.

In verse 20, Moses told the people the day would come when their children would ask about the meaning of the laws. On that day, they were to tell them how God saved His people from slavery in Egypt and how He led them to the Promised Land.

Christians also have a message and stories to tell our children. The message is the good news of Jesus. Our stories are our testimonies about our lives with God. Our stories are about the great heroes of faith from the past. We have a responsibility to tell these stories to our children so they can tell their children. We are to pass on the message, our stories, and our faith to the next generation. We can give them no greater gift or legacy.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 20-25

1 “These are the Laws which the Lord your God has told me to teach you. You are to do them in the land you are going to take for your own.

2 Then you and your son and your grandson will fear the Lord your God. You will obey all His Laws that I tell you, all the days of your life. And then you will have a longer life.

3 O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do them. Then it will go well with you. And you will become many in a land flowing with milk and honey. This is what the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you.

4 “Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord!

5 And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6 Keep these words in your heart that I am telling you today.

7 Do your best to teach them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up.

8 Tie them as something special to see on your hand and on your forehead.

9 Write them beside the door of your house and on your gates.”

20 “In time to come your son will ask you, ‘What do all the Laws mean which the Lord told you?’

21 Then say to your son, ‘We were servants of Pharaoh in Egypt. But the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand.

22 The Lord showed us great and powerful works against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all those of his house.

23 The Lord brought us out from there to bring us into the land He had promised to our fathers.’

24 So the Lord told us to do all these Laws and to fear the Lord our God for our good always, as it is today.

25 We will be right with the Lord our God if we are careful to obey all of the Law before Him, just as He told us.”



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Deuteronomy 26:1-15

Background Text

Deuteronomy 26

Memory Verse

“And the Lord today has made it known that you are His own people, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His Laws.”
(Deuteronomy 26:18)

Word List

Aramean: someone from the area that is now known as Syria

gratitude: being thankful

somber: serious; sometimes meaning dark or gloomy

How to Worship God

Many different styles of worship are found in churches today. Some people prefer singing old hymns. Some people prefer singing new, upbeat praise choruses. Some people want very formal and structured worship services. Others would rather have a more free-flowing service. Some people argue that their way of worshipping God is the most pleasing to God. Is it possible to truly worship God in a variety of ways?

However we design our worship, the focus should be on drawing closer to God rather than being concerned with the details or the schedule. We need to have a new appreciation that when we come to worship, we are coming into the presence of the Holy God Who created all that exists.

Israel had a clear understanding of this. Deuteronomy 26 gives us insight into how Israel understood worship. It provides us with guidance we can use as we seek to truly worship God.

Understanding Our Place Before God

(Deuteronomy 26:1-11)

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 describes the First Fruits Offering. This was an offering each Israelite was to make after settling in the new land. They were to bring a basket full of the first harvest which God gave them in their new land. This showed the Israelites understood it was God Who led them out of slavery to the Promised Land. The process of making the offering was an act of worship in which the worshiper was reminded of his or her

Things To Think About

1. If you were to write your own confession like the one in verses 5-9, what would it say?
2. Which of the attitudes discussed above do you have the most difficulty with? Why?
3. What do you need to do in order to be fully prepared to worship God?

place before God. It also points to the attitudes we should have whenever we worship God.

The first of these attitudes is a heart of **gratitude**. By bringing an offering of the produce of the land, the people acknowledged it was God Who had given them the land and its produce. These verses mention God's gift of the land to Israel six times (vv. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, and 11). This is clearly to remind the people of how much God had freely given to them. Though the people farmed the land, only God could provide the harvest. In response, the people were to have a heart of gratitude. This is more than simply thanking God for His gifts. We are to live in constant awareness of our dependence on God and gratefulness to God for all of His gifts.

We should not only thank God for all He has given us, but also for all He has done for us. Verses 5-10 contain a brief summary of Israel's sense of identity. In these verses, Israel confesses they are the descendents of a wandering **Aramean**—a man named Abraham. They acknowledge Abraham was not a great king or man of power. He was a simple, nomadic shepherd whom God chose to be the father of His people. This confession reminds the people of the terrible slavery their fathers endured and of God's miraculous rescue. This confession served not only as a reminder of their past but also as a motive for humility. Christians also can recite such a confession as they remember God's act of saving us from sin and bringing us into His kingdom of life.

Worshippers should approach worship in an attitude of joy. Verse 11 points out that our memory of the past should

lead us to rejoice over all that God has done. Many times we enter into worship wearing our most **somber** expressions. While we should honor and show reverence for God in worship, we should also be filled with joy that shows on our face. This is much more than happiness. Happiness is based on feelings that can change. Joy is based on an outlook on life that knows God is watching over us. God wants us to enjoy being with Him. The Almighty Creator loves us. That should be enough to make anyone smile and rejoice.

Finally, we should enter worship in a spirit of giving. These verses clearly show we are to bring our offerings to God as an expression of thanks. They also tell us that giving should extend to those in the community who are in need. Verse 12 describes giving to strangers, orphans, and widows as an act of worship to God. God cares for these people and wants to use us as His way of providing for their needs. When we do this, we worship and please God.

Offering Our Tithes to God (26:12-15)

Every third year, the people were to

set aside one-tenth of their harvest as a special tithe to God. This tithe was to be provided to those who had no way to provide for their own needs. In this way, everyone was provided for and was able to enjoy the produce of the land. This also reminded the one making the tithe that it was God Who had given the harvest. It was their responsibility to take care of all of the members of God's family. Even today as God's people do this, God continues to look down from heaven and bless His people (v. 15).

People today may worship in different ways. The music may be different. The location may be different. The order of worship may be different. But where true worship takes place, one thing will be the same. God's people will approach the opportunity to worship God in a spirit of gratitude, confession, humility, joy, and giving. When we acknowledge our place before God and offer God all of our best, we can know God will be pleased with our worship of Him.

Deuteronomy 26:1-15

1 “When you go into the land the Lord your God gives you, it will be yours and you will live in it.

2 You must take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you gather from the land the Lord your God gives you, and put it in a basket and go to the place where the Lord your God chooses to have His name.

3 Go to the religious leader who is working at that time, and say to him, ‘I make known this day to the Lord my God that I have come into the land which the Lord promised to our fathers to give us.’

4 Then the religious leader will take the basket from your hand and set it down in front of the altar of the Lord your God.

5 And you will say before the Lord your God, ‘My father was a traveling Aramean. He went to Egypt, few in number, and stayed there. But there he became a nation, great, powerful, and with many people.

6 The Egyptians made it hard for us. They brought us much trouble and made us work very hard.

7 Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers. The Lord heard our voice and saw our troubles, our work, and how hard our lives were.

8 And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and a long arm, causing much fear by doing powerful works.

9 He has brought us to this place. He has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 Now see, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground that You have given me, O Lord.’ Then you will set it down before the Lord your God, and worship Him.

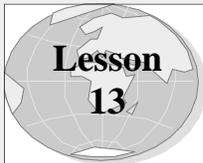
11 You and the Levite and the stranger who is among you will be full of joy because of all the good the Lord your God has given you and those of your house.

12 When you have finished paying all the tenth of the food you received in the third year, the year of giving a tenth, then give it to the Levite, the stranger, the child whose parents have died, and the woman whose husband has died. So they may eat it in your towns and be filled.

13 Then say before the Lord your God, ‘I have taken the share for holy use from my house. I have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the child whose parents have died, and the woman whose husband has died. I have done this because of all Your Laws which You have told me to do. I have not sinned or forgotten any of Your Laws.

14 I have not eaten of it while in sorrow, or taken any of it while I was unclean, or given any of it to the dead. I have listened to the voice of the Lord my God, and have done all You have told me to do.

15 Look down from Your holy place in heaven and bring good to Your people Israel. Bring good to the ground You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You promised our fathers.’ ”



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

Bible Text

Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Background Text

Deuteronomy 29-30

Memory Verse

“But the Word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may obey it.”

(Deuteronomy 30:14)

Word List

clarity: clear and understandable

coerced: to force someone to act a certain way

Choose Life

The people of Israel were again at an important decision time. Forty years ago, their parents were at the same point. The choices were clear. They could trust God and move into the Promised Land. Or they could allow fear to control them and wander in the desert for another 40 years. Whatever they decided, Moses knew he would not be going with them. This was the last chance for him to encourage the people to trust God. In his sermons recorded in Deuteronomy, Moses very clearly explained what their choices were and the consequences for each choice. He then offered an emotional appeal for them to choose wisely.

Even today, decisions can be very difficult. We can often find it difficult to trust God when none of the choices look good. When we face hard choices, we need to be reminded of God's promises so we can move ahead with God. Deuteronomy 30 is a good place to come when we need that reminder.

The Clarity of the Covenant (Deuteronomy 30:11-14)

In Deuteronomy 27-28, Moses clearly outlines the blessings for those who obey God and the curses for those who disobey Him. Obedience would result in a long life in the land God was giving them. Disobedience would result in God taking the land away and sending the people into exile. Moses carefully explained to the people what God expects and the results of both choices. Moses wanted the people to understand that these things

Things To Think About

1. Why do you think God created us with the freedom to choose to follow Him or to reject Him?
2. What was the most significant decision you have ever made? How were you able to make it?
3. What did Moses mean when he said that God's Word was "in your mouth and in your heart" (30:14)?

were not difficult to understand. God had placed His covenant within their reach. Although they might fail to obey, they could not claim they did not know what God had expected.

The pagan worshippers in the nations around Israel were never sure how their gods would act. They often had to travel to distant temples in order to worship and to learn what the gods expected. Their gods were hidden and never closely related to the people.

Israel's God was not like this. He was closely related to His people. He was always near to them and invited them to come near to Him. He could be trusted to always act out of love for them. He had clearly expressed to them what He expected. He had placed His commandments in their hearts.

This was true for ancient Israel, and it is even more true for us. The Israelites did not have the Bible or any written record of God's acts. They had to rely on priests and prophets to tell them. We have the Bible as a written guide and the Holy Spirit to help us understand what is written there. God's Word is indeed close at hand.

The Call to Choose (30:15-20)

Knowing the truth and acting on that truth are two different things. We can know all there is to know about all of our choices, but the time comes when we must decide what we will do and then do it.

In verses 15-20, Moses calls for the people to decide. He has told them all he can about their options. The choice is simple. It is life or death. They can trust God and enjoy life in

the Promised Land. Or they can fear what they see and die in the desert. The people should not make their choice out of fear, but out of love for God. Moses knew the people would have to choose to obey every day. If the people allowed their love for God to guide their choices, they would always choose correctly. But if fear determined their choices, they would always fail.

God clearly had a plan and a new life waiting for them. But they had to choose to take it. God never forces His plans on people. God does not want obedience that is **coerced**. God wants His people to obey Him out of love and a desire to please God. All of heaven and earth was waiting to see what the Israelites would do. The passage ends without an answer. The reader is left to wonder what they chose. The reader might also ask, “What would I have decided?”

Many people today find themselves in a similar place. Many non-Christians have been confronted with the Gospel and are at the crucial decision time. Will they take the step of faith and follow God? Or will they let fear of the cost of obedience

cause them to miss the new life God offers? Many Christians also face moments of decision about different events in their life. The question is the same. Do we choose to act in faith or in fear? The choice is simple. Choose life.

Deuteronomy 30:11-20

11 “For this Law I give you today is not too hard for you, or too far from you.

12 It is not in heaven. You do not need to say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us and bring it down to make us hear it, so we may obey it?’

***13** It is not farther than the sea. You do not need to say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us and bring it to us to make us hear it, so we may obey it?’

14 But the Word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may obey it.

15 “See, I have put in front of you today life and what is good, and death and what is bad.

16 I tell you today to love the Lord your God. Walk in His ways. Keep all His Laws and all that He has decided. Then you will live and become many. And the Lord your God will bring good to you in the land you are going in to take.

17 But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but leave to worship other gods and serve them,

18 I tell you today that you will die for sure. You will not live long in that land across the Jordan which you are about to take for your

own.

19 I call heaven and earth to speak against you today. I have put in front of you life and death, the good and the curse. So choose life so you and your children after you may live.

20 Love the Lord your God and obey His voice. Hold on to Him. For He is your life, and by Him your days will be long. You will be allowed to live in the land the Lord promised to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

***Editor's Note:** The verses listed here as verses 12-13 are presented in the printed copy of the New Life Version as solely the content of verse 12. However, in comparing this passage with other widely accepted translations (KJV, NIV, NAS), verse 13 is included as beginning with the image of the sea. This editorial change is made here to present the text in a way that more accurately mirrors the presentation of other established versions of the Bible.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Matthew 28:1-10,
16-20

Background Text

Matthew 28

Memory Verse

“Go and make
followers of all the
nations. Baptize them
in the name of the
Father and of the Son
and of the Holy
Spirit.”
(Matthew 28:19)

Word List

authority: the right to
carry out one's plans

divinity: having
qualities like God

resurrection: being
raised from the dead
without help

Responding to Jesus' Resurrection

What do you think about when you hear the word *Easter*? Is it brightly colored eggs, large Sunday lunches with all the family, a fancy drama, or new clothes? We know Easter is a celebration of Jesus' **resurrection**, but our first thoughts about it can shape how we respond to this holy day. Besides the special music and events with our church families, Easter should be something important in our lives each year. Our response to this holiday should go beyond celebrating a change of the seasons.

Along with the feeding of the crowd of 5,000, the resurrection is one of only two stories found in all four gospels in the New Testament. Each gospel writer focused on different aspects of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Matthew wrote his gospel for mostly Jewish readers. He wanted to show them that Jesus fulfilled all of their expectations about the Messiah. In his account, Matthew moved quickly from Jesus' death to the resurrection and the events that followed it. Matthew was interested in showing how Jesus demonstrated His **divinity** by conquering death. Matthew also showed the importance of a proper response to Jesus' resurrection.

Encountering the Risen Lord (Matthew 28:1-10)

There is something significant about the group who first discovered Jesus had arisen. They were all women. At that time in Israel, women were treated badly. They had few legal rights and had to depend on a male relative for everything. Jesus did

Things To Think About

1. How do you plan to prepare to encounter the risen Jesus this year?
2. What will you do this Easter to move beyond worshipping Jesus to serving Him?
3. What would you have to change in your life to follow the call to “make disciples”?

not agree with the way women were treated. He spent much of His time and efforts ministering to women. He wanted them to be treated like men were treated.

Now, these women were the first to learn of Jesus' resurrection. They also became the first to proclaim the good news that Jesus had risen. In Christ Jesus, there is freedom and equality for both women and men.

On the morning after the Sabbath, these women gathered what they needed. They knew someone needed to prepare Jesus' body for His final burial. As they walked, they must talked with each other about how they would open the tomb. A large rock had been put over the entrance to the tomb. As they approached the tomb, a large earthquake shook the ground. They saw the rock had been moved. One has to wonder what the women thought of this. Surely they were confused and afraid.

An angel appeared to them and told them not to fear. Jesus had already arisen from the dead. The stone had been moved so people might see that Jesus was no longer there. The angel told the women to go tell the disciples.

As the women were running to the disciples, there may have still been doubts in their minds. Maybe someone had taken the body. But then Jesus appeared to them. Jesus met them so they would have no doubts. He was alive! When they saw Him, they bowed and worshiped Him. There is no better response to encountering the risen Jesus than to bow in submission and worship.

Serving the Risen Lord (28:16-20)

Jesus told the women to tell the disciples to gather and wait for Him in Galilee. This was one of Jesus' favorite places and was very familiar to the disciples. They had gone there many times with Jesus. That is where the disciples were when Jesus appeared to them. Many of them immediately bowed and worshipped him. Others still had doubts. They had seen Jesus die and be buried. How could He be alive?

Jesus knew their doubts and gave an answer for those doubts. Jesus told them that God had given Him complete **authority** in heaven and on earth. That is how He was alive. This would not only settle their doubts, but would give them confidence to do what He was about to call them to do.

Verses 19-20 are usually called the Great Commission. In these verses, Jesus gave His disciples a task to do after He was gone. That task was to "make disciples." Jesus told them this would involve going into the world, baptizing new believers, and teaching them to obey all Jesus had taught them. Clearly, Jesus was calling them to do

more than simply preach the good news.

"Making disciples" involves teaching people to be a disciple of Jesus. Paul later described it this way: "What you have heard me say in front of many people, you must teach to faithful men. Then they will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). This is the task all Christians are called to. Our response to Jesus' resurrection does not end with worship. We must move past this to serve Him in obedience to this call.

Easter is certainly a wonderful time in the life of the church. It represents the heart of our message to the world. But we should not forget that Easter is also a time when we encounter the risen Jesus. The question is how do we respond to this encounter. The Great Commission reminds us that responding in worship is good. But Jesus calls us to move from worship of Him to service for Him.

Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20

1 The Day of Rest was over. The sun was coming up on the first day of the week.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the grave.

2 At once the earth shook and an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. He came and pushed back the stone from the door and sat on it.

3 His face was bright like lightning. His clothes were white as snow.

4 The soldiers were shaking with fear and became as dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus Who was nailed to the cross.

6 He is not here! He has risen from the dead as He said He would. Come and see the place where the Lord lay.

7 Run fast and tell His followers that He is risen from the dead. He is going before you to the country of Galilee. You will see Him there as I have told you."

8 They went away from the grave in a hurry. They were afraid and yet had much joy. They ran to tell the news to His followers.

9 As they went to tell the followers, Jesus met them and said hello to them. They came and held His feet and worshiped Him.

10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My followers to go to Galilee. They will see Me there."

16 Then the eleven followers went to Galilee. They went to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

17 When they saw Jesus, they worshiped Him. But some did not believe.

18 Jesus came and said to them, "All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go and make followers of all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

20 Teach them to do all the things I have told you. And I am with you always, even to the end of the world."