

Lesson Six — Chosen for a Purpose

Day One — The Four Hundred Years

Day Two — Bondage and Redemption

Day Three — Dealing with Leaven

Day Four — At Mt. Sinai

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Last week we learned that God very specifically called Abraham out of Mesopotamia for the express purpose that Abraham and his seed (descendants through Isaac and Jacob) would realize an inheritance in another land. We learned that God progressively revealed Himself and His plan to Abraham, as Abraham was faithful. This week we will see the fulfillment of a portion of what God told Abraham, specifically about his descendants being in bondage in a land not their own, and God taking them out of that *land in order to bring them into the land promised* to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 15:13, 14).

This week we will be studying the successes and failures of Abraham's descendants. We will see their redemption, and will strive to grasp *the purpose* of that redemption.

It is important to understand the details of this story, for this picture is given to the Church as *a type* so that we might learn from their example (I Cor. 10:6, 11). Therefore, study this lesson well! Again, it is part of the foundation, which is laid out in Scripture in order to teach us details concerning *our salvation*. It is an important concept to grasp!

Day One — The Four Hundred Years

Begin your week of study in prayer. Pray for eyes to see and ears to hear!

Today we will review what we have learned thus far. We will glimpse the portions of the puzzle, which we have turned up and have begun to fit together. (Remember that God reveals understanding and knowledge bit by bit, here a little, there a little [Isa. 28:9-13a]; and repetition is one of the best ways to learn.)

As we have seen, Satan was created as the anointed cherub over the earth (Eze. 28:14). But because of his desire to: 1) raise his own throne above all the other stars of God (i.e., other morning stars), and 2) sit upon God's Own Throne on the Mount of Assembly (Is. 14:12-14), God cast him down (or is in the *process* of casting him down as it is written in the imperfect tense) and caused Satan's sanctuaries to become desecrated.

This ruin of Satan's domain is the reason why God restored the earth in Genesis 1:2b-19. The earth had become formless and void (Gen. 1:2a; *cf.* Isa. 45:18) as a result of judgment against Satan and his rebellious angels (Eze. 28:18). God restored the earth to a habitable place and created the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and the animals, which roamed the earth. God's final creation was forming man from the dust of the earth and breathing into man's nostrils the breath of life — God's own breath. Man became not only a physical being, taken from the dust of the earth, but also a spiritual being, receiving from God His very Own breath — His very own Spirit. Man was made in the image and likeness of God and was told to 1) be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and 2) to rule over the earth and subdue it. Then God placed the man in the garden and told him to work and protect the garden.

God created man in His own image and likeness in order for them to have dominion over this newly formed earth and newly created beings, in Satan's stead. Having created the man, God caused the man to fall asleep, took a rib (a part of Adam's body) from the man's side and fashioned a woman. The woman was created to be the man's helper, for God saw that *it was not good* for man to be alone. This, in no way, implies that the woman was inferior to the man. But rather, the woman was created to help the man fulfill his created goal. Neither could do it alone, for both were incapable of doing it alone. Together, and only together, the man and woman were to accomplish God's purpose. (This has been designed altogether with the view toward Christ and His bride [*cf.* Eph. 5:32].)

But before man could take his position as ruler over the earth, God tested man in order to prove his worthiness — "Don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (The privilege to rule always requires obedience, and a test is the checking point.) Man must prove his willingness to submit to His Creator in obedience. Therefore, God gave Adam a test by putting the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden, and God commanded him not to eat from that tree. (The tree of life was also there, which would have given the man wisdom to fulfill his created purpose. But the choice between the two trees was the man's to make.)

Satan was intensely interested in bringing about the fall of man, for Satan knew that if man would prove himself unworthy to rule, he would maintain his position as the ruler over the earth. Therefore, Satan set out to bring about the fall of man, through deceiving the woman, and succeeded in his goal. Man failed the test by eating from the wrong tree.

Very much was lost in this failure. Instead of maintaining the garden and protecting it, the man had to leave the garden. Instead of the garden producing fruit from the ground and from the trees, the man had to work the ground outside of the garden where food would only be obtained by the sweat of his brow, while working among thorns and thistles.

And for the woman, child bearing (multiplying and filling the earth) would be painful for her. Instead of the man and woman together ruling over the earth, the man would rule over the woman and she would always have a desire for him. This is her consequence for taking things into her own hands, seeking to control things and even seeking to bring her husband into the sin (I Tim. 2:14).

Satan had gained a major victory and has been unrelenting in his pursuit to maintain his dominion ever since. He has also been successful. He is ready to do battle with anyone who hears God's call to the pursuit of righteousness. As we study, watch how carefully he fights this battle. But also know that in the midst of the battle, even while the battle is still raging on, Satan is the defeated foe. We will see this as we continue to study.

God remains steadfast in steps to fulfill His plans and purposes for man. His purposes will not be thwarted. We have seen the revelation of His plan of redemption unfolding through the first four chapters in Genesis. We have also seen how God called Abraham out of Ur in order to take him into another

country and to raise up a people of His own. God progressively revealed Himself to Abraham, and as Abraham responded positively and obediently toward God, He continued the revelation.

We see in Genesis chapter fifteen, that “*Abraham believed God and God counted it unto him as righteousness* (v. 6).” But that is not the end of Abraham’s story. Subsequent to this statement in Genesis chapter fifteen, we see God calling Abraham *to act upon* his belief in God’s promises — “Offer up your son.”

Only through this means — actions done through faithfulness to his calling, and righteousness being accounted to him — could Abraham be in a position to be used of God in the way God had purposed. It was after Abraham believed God (Gen. 15) that God tested Abraham (Gen. 22) for his worthiness. The *belief* was counted to him as righteousness, but this accounting of righteousness came to fulfillment in his *subsequent action*. Then look to see how God looks upon *acting in faithfulness* in James chapter two.

James 2

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,” and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.

(We’ll look at this idea more closely in a later lesson.)

In last week’s lesson, we witnessed Abraham’s faithful growth toward maturity. He, in fact, became the father of a great nation, a people called the people of God — God’s very own nation. With this review, here are some questions for you to ponder:

- What would be the purpose for God to have His Own people in the world?
- Why was there a need for so many people, as the sand on the seashore and stars in the heavens?
- Why have *a land* set before them?

We will learn more about all of this as we get further into the survey, but for now, we need to study the story of the descendants of Abraham. As we have seen, one portion of the promises God gave to Abraham is found in Genesis chapter fifteen. We saw it last week, and we need to begin here this week.

Genesis 15

13 And God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions.

This week we will look at the fulfillment of this prophecy. But first, write in your own words what, according to this passage, will happen to Abraham’s descendants.

How many years will make up the time period of Abraham’s descendants being strangers in a land not theirs (eventually becoming enslaved) at the end of which time, God will bring them out of bondage?

the course of time, Isaac had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Though Esau was the first-born, he forfeited his rights as first-born son to Jacob. (The rights of the first-born were that of 1) acting as priest for the family, 2) being the ruler over the father's estate, and 3) receiving a double-portion of the inheritance.) God changed Jacob's name, which means *supplanter* or *beguiler*, to *Israel*, which means *he will rule with God*.

(This is no small matter as one thinks of the ramifications of the meaning of this name change. The nation brought forth from Egypt is called *the nation of Israel*, or pointing to the meaning of the name, *the nation who will rule with God*. In fact, some believe the etymology of the name *Israel* is the same as the etymology of the name *Sarah*. It is interesting to note that Sarah was the wife of Abraham, and Israel is referred to in Scripture as the wife of God [Isa. 54:5a; Jer. 31:32; Hosea 2:19, 20].)

Jacob had twelve sons whose descendants made up the twelve tribes of *Israel*, or the twelve tribes "*who will rule with God*." It was the descendants of Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob, whom God made into a new creation (*cf.* Isa. 43:1, 7). Again, through a series of events, God brought Jacob's family to Egypt, wherein they enjoyed the blessings of the land for some years. God used this time in Egypt to set apart this people for Himself, allowing time for the nation to grow in numbers. (They went into Egypt numbering seventy [Gen. 46:27], and came out some 210 years later numbering probably more than 2,000,000.) But after Joseph's death and prior to Moses' birth, a new Pharaoh (an Assyrian) had come into power in Egypt. The Assyrians had, at some point after Joseph's death, conquered Egypt. This Assyrian Pharaoh (probably along with a relatively small group of Assyrians living within Egypt's borders) feared that Israel might rise up and usurp his power and authority. Therefore, he sought to enslave Israel. Their slavery lasted for some 100 years or so. Then God reckoned the time for their redemption and acted on their behalf. Nothing thwarted His plan for their redemption. He brought forth His "first-born son" out of bondage with His mighty outstretched arm, and set them in the direction of the promised land (Ex. 4:22; 15:13).

Today we will look closely at how God redeemed His people out of the bondage of slavery. Moses was the man God used, having already prepared him for this job. The following is what God told Moses to say to His people:

Exodus 6

6 "Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver <05337> you from their bondage. I will also redeem <01350> you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.'"

deliver <05337>

redeem <01350>

After studying the definitions, re-phrase the passage.

Who will do the work of bringing the Children out of bondage?

What will God do and how will He do it? (Be sure to notice the word “redeem.”)

God sent Moses to Pharaoh, telling him what to say —

Exodus 4

22 “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Israel is My son, My first-born. 23 So I said to you, ‘Let My son go, that he may serve Me’; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your first-born.”

Pharaoh would not let God’s people go and continued to harden his own heart. Therefore, God sent plagues upon Egypt, each plague dealing with each one of the Egyptian gods, each plague intending to motivate Pharaoh to let God’s people go. But Pharaoh would not!

Finally, after nine plagues (nine “mighty acts of judgment”), God was ready to bring about the tenth and final plague. God told Moses that every family of Israel was to slaughter a lamb and to take some of its blood and put the blood on the door posts and lintels of their house. He gave very specific directions concerning this. This was to be the LORD’S Passover.

Exodus 12

1 Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 2 “This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. 3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, ‘On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers’ households, a lamb for each household. 4 Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. 7 Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8 And they shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails. 10 And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. 11 Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste — it is the LORD’S Passover. 12 For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments — I am the LORD. 13 And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt...

Think for a moment. Why would God need to redeem Israel? What was their condition?

Who would be killed?

Who would not be killed?

Look back at Exodus 12:13. What did God have to see in order to “pass over” any house?

Write out exactly what each household was to do.

Write out exactly what God did.

The events of the tenth and final plague caused Pharaoh to let the people go.

Day Three — Dealing with Leaven

Begin your day in prayer.

Review Exodus 12:1-13 from yesterday’s lesson. Remember that the details of what happened to the Children of Israel are given as an example (lit., *type*) for us, so that we can learn from their experiences (I Cor. 10:6, 11). Study well these days, for you are laying a foundation which will be necessary for understanding other sections of Scripture.

Today we will look at what was to happen immediately following the Passover.

Continuing in Exodus from yesterday —

Exodus 12

...14 **Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance. 15 Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. 16 And on the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you.**

17 **‘You shall also observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. 18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19 Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land. 20 You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’”**

(Note that v. 14 says that this day is to be *a memorial* to them. A memorial is something to which they were to look back upon and remember. On the other hand, a *sign* is given as something that they were to look forward to [e.g. the Sabbath Rest]. Remember this distinction, for we will need to make the distinction as we study further.)

God repeats these commands shortly thereafter:

Exodus 13

6 “For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders. 8 And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ 9 And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt. 10 Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year...

NOTES:

In Scripture, leaven is always used as a symbol of sin or corruption (I Cor. 5:8). Leaven is the picture God gave to Israel showing that, after redemption, God expected Israel to rid themselves of sin. Keep that in mind as you work through these questions.

Go back through these last two passages and count how many times God told them that they *were to rid themselves of leaven*. How many times is it?

Now count how many times God said that if any one had been found with leaven he would *be cut off from the people*. How many?

What does it mean to be *cut off from the people* or *cut off from Israel*? Does it say that they would be sent back into slavery? Then what? (For more insight into the comparison of what it means to be cut off or *not* to be cut off, read Psalm 37:9, 22, 28-29, 34.)

Briefly, what were the people to do?

Why were they to do it?

For *how long* were they to do this?

And if they did not follow these instructions, they were to be “cut off from the people,” which means they would not receive their portion of the inheritance.

In the way of a brief review of the passages covered in yesterday's study (and please forgive the repetition here), what was God's part in the redemption of Israel?

What were the individual households to do in order to realize their redemption?

Then, *after* their redemption, they were to rid leaven from their houses and from their borders.

When the Israelites were some days out, Pharaoh changed his mind about having let the people go. Now the Lord had hardened Pharaoh's heart, in order to accomplish something. Pharaoh called for all of his soldiers with chariots to chase after this multitude to bring them back into slavery. Pharaoh joined the chase alongside his 600 chariots.

Be sure to catch the ongoing picture here. There is so much to be learned about our own relationship with the Lord.

Israel's enemy — Pharaoh's army — had finally caught up with them and it appeared that Israel had no way out. A sea lay before them, mountains on either side, and Pharaoh's army behind. Yet all God needed to do in dealing with His people's enemy was to *stretch out His mighty arm*. He told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea, and by the power of God, a strong wind cut a path through the Red Sea, and dried the path so that His people could walk to freedom on dry ground. A very vivid picture is written out for us in Exodus 14:16-31. God provided the protection of a cloud between the camp of Israel and Pharaoh's army until His people were all safely on the other side of the Red Sea. Then, once every Israelite was safely on the eastern shore, with the horses and chariots having followed them onto the sea's floor, God told Moses to lift his hands again, and the sea tumbled back over the army. And it was over. Can you imagine the sight! Israel's enemies either lay at the bottom of the sea, or lay dead on the shore. All of Israel looked and beheld the sight. By God's power, Pharaoh and his army were rendered powerless against them, before their very eyes.

Pharaoh's army died and was buried in the Sea. But Israel had died vicariously in Egypt, through the substitutionary death of the lamb, and in a picture, were buried in the Red Sea, yet rose on the other side to walk in the newness of life set before them. This is the first picture in all of Scripture of *baptism*. The Children of Israel had been set free from bondage to their enemies through death (of the lambs), as they were taken through the Red Sea (a picture of burial), in order to be taken to the promised land wherein they were to realize the purpose of their redemption and of their calling. God's redemption was complete. Not even Pharaoh's army could bring them back.

Read the passage below —

Exodus 14

30 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 And when Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.

What does this passage say Israel did when they saw their enemies dead?

Now the calmed Red Sea lay between the Children of Israel and Egypt, between themselves and the bondage that had held them for years. They had been freed and now were being taken to a new land — the land of their inheritance. Not only were they free, but also the Lord was traveling with them, leading them by a cloud during the day and a pillar of fire during the night. Awesome!

We'll pick it up again tomorrow.

Day Four — At Mt. Sinai

God told Israel that they were to celebrate the Feast of Passover annually, as *a memorial* of what He had done for them. This was to be an annual reminder of the price God had paid for their redemption. He wanted them to look back and remember that they had once been in bondage, but that His mighty arm had set them free. This was to be Israel's redemption story. In addition to celebrating the Feast of Passover, they were to immediately celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. At the beginning of the feast they were to clean out any and all leaven that was within their houses, even within their borders. They were to keep this feast for seven days. (Seven is a number of completion in Scripture.) If anyone was found with leaven within their house, they were to be *cut off from Israel*. They were not sent back to Egypt (they did not lose their redemption), but they were *cut off from the fellowship of the people of God; cut off from receiving the very things to which they had been called out to receive; cut off from receiving their inheritance as a first-born son of God* (Ex. 12:14-20; 13:6-10). This is a very important point to understand, especially in light of the fact that God gives this first generation and events to us as examples (lit., *types*) so that we might not do the same things they did, standing to lose something as they did. This will become clearer to you as you continue to study.

Three months to the day that they had come out of Egypt, they came to Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19), which is the place where they would spend up to a year. It was at Mt. Sinai where God made *a conditional covenant* with Moses and the Children of Israel, and where He taught them about Himself and what He expected of them as they entered the Promised Land. Exodus 19:4-6 is the first thing God said to His people at Mt. Sinai. This is an important passage to know and understand! We will be referring to Exodus 19:4-6 many times in the weeks to come. (It would be a good one to memorize.)

Exodus 19

3 And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself.

5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

Let's stop there for a moment and look carefully at what God said. What had they seen Him do to the Egyptians?

Who did all of this work?

What do you think it means that He "brought them to Himself"?

Now, *who* is to do something?

What are they to do?

And for what reason are they to do this?

What is the potential for the Children?

It is important to realize that this entire adult generation of Israel was, in fact, redeemed, for if they were not redeemed, they would not be expected to obey. This following passage from Isaiah speaks of their redemption in no uncertain terms.

Isaiah 63

8 For He said, “Surely, they are My people, sons who will not deal falsely.” So He became their Savior. 9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, And the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them; And He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.

Rephrase this passage into your own words.

Continuing —

10 But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit; Therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them.

Rephrase this passage into your own words.

Why is obedience required in Exodus 19:5? According to this passage, what would be the result of obedience? (Notice the “if...then” statement.)

Think it through. Actually, the Children of Israel could only become a kingdom of priests, a holy nation *if* they had been previously redeemed. An individual (or a nation) could never become a king/priest (or a kingdom of priests), *unless* they had first been redeemed. Literally then, redemption places them into a position wherein they would be able to fulfill *all* that God had intended, including the role of king/priests (or a kingdom of priests).

And it is only in being redeemed by God, that there is a possibility that anyone could fail or succeed in fulfilling His purposes for redemption. The redemption is all of God’s to do. The fulfilling of the purposes thereof is up to the will of the individual who has been redeemed, as he chooses to obey or disobey. *Only the redeemed are in a position to obey.*

We will look at what happened with the first generation of redeemed Israelites tomorrow.

Day Five — At Kadesh Barnea

When the Children of Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai, they remained there for just over one year (Ex. 12:37 - Num. 14:45). God had much information to give to them. It was here that God made a conditional covenant with His people. They committed to obey everything He said, and conditioned upon their obedience, He promised to bless them in the promised land, setting them above all the nations of the world, with Himself dwelling in their midst. Just think of it! But, as we shall see, obedience on the part of Israel was not the case, and this first generation, though redeemed, fell short of their intended goal through disobedience and unbelief in God's willingness (or ability) to bring them into the land.

If we had time to do an in-depth study of the period of time they spent in the wilderness, we would be able to see that the Children of Israel were a rebellious people. They continued to be disobedient, and God brought judgment upon them as He disciplined them as a Father disciplines His sons. He continued however, *to focus on bringing them into the Promised Land*. All the while, the Children of Israel tested God, as He continued to forgive them (Num. 14:20).

Then came the point when God had taught them all they needed to know about His blessings and expectations, so He finally told them to move forward to Kadesh Barnea where they would come to the entrance of the Promised Land. Egypt was behind them with the Red Sea separating them from Egypt. The land which God had promised to their forefathers, the land about which God had told them, the land that was flowing with milk and honey was before them. God told them that He would go with them into the land and He would make their enemies fall before them.

The Children of Israel had progressed from a rudimentary knowledge of God in sacrificing the paschal lambs in Exodus chapter twelve, to the place where they knew exactly what God expected from them, what He had planned for them, and what He wanted to accomplish through them. He had told them *many times over* that He was their God and they were His people; that He would hand their enemies over into their hand; and that they would rule over their enemies. In other words, God would set up a *theocratic kingdom* in the promised land wherein He would rule over the world *through* them, as they would be His kingdom of priests, His holy nation, His own treasured possession of all the earth. He reiterated this to them many times during the year they spent at Mt. Sinai.

God would be their King; He would administrate the kingdom *through* His people. They had grown in numbers. The land was before them and was theirs for the taking.

But first, *the test!* They had to prove themselves worthy. They had to prove their faithfulness to Him. Here at Kadesh Barnea they stood on their proving ground.

Spend a good amount of time studying the following account. Read through it several times. Make notes in the margin as to the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, HOW. Feel free to use any cross-references in your Bible. Get a good grip on this passage and write out your thoughts in the NOTES section.

Numbers 13

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 2 “Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers’ tribes, every one a leader among them.”

17 When 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 And see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or

many. 19 And how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? 20 And how is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes. 21 So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, at Lebo-hamath.

25 When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days, 26 they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 Thus they told him, and said, “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the 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 quieted the people before Moses, and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.”

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us.” 32 So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. 33 There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

NOTES:

Now the Children of Israel faced a *major* decision concerning obedience to God’s word, which He spoke to them *subsequent* to their redemption. We will see in the passage today that God indeed had ‘passed over’ their sins previously committed and had continued to forgive their disobediences in everything thus far.

But now, they were at the place in which they had to choose whether or not they would *believe God* to fulfill the very purpose for which God had redeemed them out of bondage. It was their choice to believe and act in obedience, or to not believe God and act in disobedience. Having been redeemed, God had provided everything necessary for their success.

Look back at Numbers 13:27. The people even had the chance to see and taste of the fruits of the land. They were there, right at the door of the very place to which God had brought them out of Egypt. So what would they decide? Based upon what ten of the spies reported (13:31-33), this was their decision.

Numbers 14

1 Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. **2** And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! **3** And why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” **4** So they said to one another, “Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.”

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. **6** And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; **7** and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, “The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. **8** If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us — a land which flows with milk and honey. **9** Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.” **10** But all the congregation said to stone them with stones...

List what the ten spies said about the land and the idea of going in to take it. Then list Joshua and Caleb’s response. Then write out how the community of Israel responded.

The Ten Spies:

Joshua and Caleb:

The Israelite Community:

Are you getting the picture? From the moment they left Egypt, God was drawing them to the Promised Land. That which He had told them had to do with this land. He desired their focus to be *this* land. But instead, they longed for Egypt! Imagine! In Egypt, their knees were bent and their backs were hunched under the weight of slavery. They had a glorious land before them, yet they longed for the land wherein they had been enslaved. They wanted to go back to Egypt. These redeemed people, full of the knowledge of what God would and could do for them, decided *not to believe* Him, not to take Him at His word, and they *disobeyed* Him. It’s such a sad picture.

What would God’s response be? Notice in this next verse that God appeared to *all* the Israelites.

....Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.

11 And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? **12** I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they.” **13** But Moses said to the LORD, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Thy strength Thou didst bring up this people from their midst, **14** and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that Thou, O LORD, art in the midst of this people, for Thou, O LORD, art seen eye to eye, while Thy cloud stands over them; and Thou dost go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. **15** Now if Thou dost slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of

Thy fame will say, 16 ‘Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness.’ 17 But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as Thou hast declared, 18 ‘The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.’ 19 Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Thy lovingkindness, just as Thou also hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.”

20 So the LORD said, “I have pardoned them according to your word; 21 but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD. 22 Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, 23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. 24 But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it. 25 Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys; turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.”

Did God forgive them for their sins as Moses had requested (see v. 20)?

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27 “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. 28 Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the LORD, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; 29 your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. 30 Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey — I will bring them in, and they shall know the land which you have rejected. 32 But as for you, your corpses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they shall suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. 34 According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you shall know My opposition. 35 I, the LORD, have spoken, surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they shall die.”

Remember when I asked you why God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden? And then, why did God tell Abraham to sacrifice Isaac? I have to ask the same question of you here — why did God allow Moses to send in the twelve spies? This is important for us to understand. Write out your thoughts.

Look back at Number 14:1-4 and compare it to Numbers 14:27-35. What did Israel say? What did God say?

Israel said:

God said:

Look at your list above and circle one thing that Israel wanted to do but that God did not allow. Why is it that God would not allow them to go back to this place?

Continuing —

36 As for the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land and who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing out a bad report concerning the land, 37 even those men who brought out the very bad report of the land died by a plague before the LORD. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive out of those men who went to spy out the land. 39 And when Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people mourned greatly. 40 In the morning, however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country, saying, “Here we are; we have indeed sinned, but we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised.” 41 But Moses said, “Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the LORD, when it will not succeed? 42 Do not go up, lest you be struck down before your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. 43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned back from following the LORD. And the LORD will not be with you.”

44 But they went up heedlessly to the ridge of the hill country; neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses left the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down, and struck them and beat them down as far as Hormah.

Write a brief summary of what these verses are saying —

Would God repent (change His mind) from what He had previously declared? Why or why not?

See you in class. (Next week’s lesson has a lot of reading in it! Just wanted to tell you ahead of time.)