

Wanderings in the Wilderness

by

John Louis & Tan Siew Hee

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Acknowledgement

This series stemmed from our desire to teach and equip the church with solid food, as it says in Hebrews 5:12. Sometime in the recent past we realize that too much of the teachings at mid-weeks were repetitive and limited in scope, and as such, mature disciples who were once zealous have lost some of their eagerness and zeal for the word of God. At times, this has contributed to their lack of zeal and has eroded their faith.

By compiling materials on this subject “Wanderings in the Wilderness” we hope to get all disciples, the mature as well as the young ones, excited again about the word of God. Special focus is given to parts of the Old Testament that have been probably the least researched or taught in churches today. We did not by any means achieve any new ground-breaking research but have read and used materials from the work of others, so as to make these rather difficult parts of the Old Testament interesting and easily understood by the ordinary disciple.

Thanks to Mr. Christopher Tan, Mr. Desmond Kwan and Miss Cheng Cheng, for their work in typing the material. Our deepest appreciation to Mr. Tan Siew Hin for taking time to draw the articles of the Tabernacle. Thanks to Douglas Jacoby for his guidance in the using scriptures in its right context and other valuable suggestions. Finally, we would like to thank our wives Karen Louis and Joyce Tan who worked hard in proof reading the material.

May the following lessons truly deepen our faith, respect and love for God and his word.

John Louis
Tan Siew Hee

Readings & Memory Scriptures

Requirements

- Attend all lessons
- Read materials given
- Read assigned chapters
- Memorize assigned verses/chapters (for chapters – not word by word, just the event)

Lesson 1 – Diary of the Wanderings

Memory Scripture : 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12

Memory Chapters : 1) Numbers 20 (Moses and the rock)
2) Exodus 14 (Crossing of the Red Sea)
3) Exodus 20 (Ten Commandments)

Assigned Reading : 1) Materials from folder – Lesson 1
2) Exodus 12:31-42
3) Exodus 13:17-20
4) Exodus 14:15-31
5) Exodus 15:22-26
6) Exodus 17:1-15
7) Exodus 20:1-17
8) Numbers 11:4-9,31-35
9) Numbers 20:1-13
10) Numbers 21 :1-9
11) Numbers 25:1-18

Lesson 2 – Rumblings from the Rabble

Memory Scriptures : 1) Deuteronomy 30:19b
2) 1 Corinthians 10:10

Memory Chapters : 1) Numbers 16 (Korah's Rebellion)
2) Numbers 25 (Sexual Immorality)

- Assigned Reading :**
- 1) Numbers 11:1-6,10-35
 - 2) Numbers 14:1-4
 - 3) Numbers 16:1-3, 23-35
 - 4) Numbers 17:10
 - 5) Numbers 20:1-5
 - 6) Numbers 25:1-16
 - 7) Numbers 26:63-65
 - 8) Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Lesson 3 – Nay-Sayers or Giant-Slayers

- Memory Scripture :**
- 1) Numbers 13:30

- Memory Chapters :**
- 1) Numbers 13 (Sending of Spies)
 - 2) Psalms 90 (The Psalm of Doom)

- Assigned Reading :**
- 1) Numbers 13
 - 2) Numbers 14
 - 3) Deuteronomy 1
 - 4) Deuteronomy 2
 - 5) Joshua 15:13-17
 - 6) Psalm 90:1-17 (oldest Psalm – Reflecting on God’s dealing with the Israelites)

Lesson 4 – Jesus in the Feasts of Israel

- Memory Scriptures :**
- 1) Colossians 2:17
 - 2) Romans 12:1

- Memory Chapters :**
- 1) Numbers 28 and 29, Leviticus 23
(The Different Feasts of Israel Described)

- Assigned Reading :**
- 1) Numbers 28
 - 2) Numbers 29
 - 3) Leviticus 23

Lesson 5 – Jesus in the Tabernacle

Memory Scripture : 1) Hebrews 8:13

Memory Chapters : 1) Exodus 25, 26 and 27
(Articles in the Tabernacle)
2) Hebrews 7
(Jesus as High Priest)
3) Hebrews 8
(The High Priest of a New Covenant)
4) Hebrews 9
(Worship in the Earthly Tabernacle)

Assigned Reading : 1) Exodus 25, 26 and 27
2) Hebrews 7, 8 and 9

Lesson 6 – The Incense of Prayer and Anointing Oil

Memory Scripture : 1) Ephesians 6:18
2) James 5:16
3) John 7:39
4) Acts 2:38

Memory Chapters : 1) Luke 1
(Zechariah's Vision When He Offered Incense)
2) Exodus 30 (Incense and Anointing Oil)
3) Revelations 8
(Prayer of Saints – Symbolizes Incense)
4) 1 Peter 2
(Disciples are Priests of the New Testament)
5) Leviticus 8
(Anointing of Aaron as High Priest)

Assigned Reading : 1) Exodus 30:34-38
2) Luke 1:8-25
3) Revelations 8:1-5
4) Leviticus 8
5) Exodus 30:22-23

Lesson 7 – Jesus in the OT Sacrifices

Memory Scriptures : 1) Hebrews 13:12
2) Hebrews 13:15-16

Memory Chapters : 1) Numbers 19 (The Water of Cleansing)
2) Leviticus 16 (The Day of Atonement)
3) Leviticus 13 (Regulations About Infectious Skin Diseases)
4) Leviticus 14 (Cleansing From Infectious Diseases)
5) Hebrews 10 (Christ's Sacrifice Once for All)

Assigned Reading : 1) Numbers 19
2) Leviticus 16
3) Leviticus 13
4) Leviticus 14
5) Hebrews 10
6) Hebrews 13:9-16

Lesson 8 – The Wanderings of the Ark

Memory Scripture : 1) Deuteronomy 32:46-47

Memory Chapters : 1) Joshua 3 (Crossing of Jordan)
2) Joshua 6 (Fall of Jericho)

Assigned Reading : 1) Numbers 11:11-35
2) Joshua 3
3) Joshua 6
4) Joshua 8:30-35
5) 2 Samuel 6:1-11

Wanderings in the Wilderness

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- ⁶ Swindoll, Charles. **Moses : A Man of Selfless Dedication.** 1999
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ENDNOTES

- ^a “The Desert of the Exodus”, E.H. Palmer, M.A. 1871 pg 116-117
- ^b “The Temple: Its Ministry and Services”, Alfred Edersheim, pg 32
- ^c Dr. Shirlena Huang, National University of Singapore, Department of Geography
- ^d “Moses : A Man of Selfless Dedication”, Charles Swindoll, pg 229
- ^e “The Temple: Its Ministry and Services”, Alfred Edersheim, pg 158
- ^f “The Temple: Its Ministry and Services”, Alfred Edersheim, pg 113-115
- ^g “The Red Heifer and the Crucifixion”, Douglas Jacoby, pg 3 paper on Red Heifer sacrifice. Also the Jewish Mishnah (Shekalim 4:2, Middoth 1:3, 2:4 Yoma 7:2)
- ^h “The Temple: Its Ministry and Services”, Alfred Edersheim, pg 226 para 1 line 5
- ⁱ “The Temple: Its Ministry and Services”, Edersheim pg 224 para 1 line 13
- ^j “The Temple: Its Ministry and Services”, Edersheim pg 224 para 1 line 8-10
- ^k “The Red Heifer and the Crucifixion”, Douglas Jacoby pg 7-8
- ^l Mishnah ; Parah 3:5

Notes for Pictures and Maps

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Introduction

The wilderness years – such an incredibly important time in the history of the Israelites that it took God four books in the Old Testament just to cover it! These post-Egypt, pre-Canaan years are covered extensively in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy (plus the early parts of Joshua), and also referred to often in the New Testament, especially in the book of Hebrews. The speech of Stephen before his martyrdom in Acts 7 is a reminder that good Jews knew their history, and were very familiar with the wandering in the wilderness. Several millennia later, we who are children of Abraham by faith also need to know our history. The subject matter of the next eight weeks will cover almost all of the above passages, focusing on lessons learned by the Israelites of that era. During that time, we, as a church, will immerse ourselves in the past and try to see how these same lessons make sense in our lives today.

It was a period that was troubled yet became the foundation of the Jewish and Christian faiths. God had these written down to teach us important lessons, lessons that will benefit us and help us grow in our appreciation of the Old Testament and his awesome plan.

Diary of the Wanderings

Introduction

With the victorious Hebrew strain from “*When You Believe*” playing in our minds (for those of us who saw “*The Prince of Egypt*”), we can absolutely visualize the joy and triumph felt by God’s people as they escaped their oppressors forever! What a miraculous beginning for a new nation! God couldn’t wait for the sequel – bringing Abraham’s descendants into the land he had promised centuries before. Unfortunately, the glory days were short-lived, as the Israelites fell into sin upon sin- they eventually made God so angry with their rebellious ways that he delayed their entrance into Canaan by forty years!

The Diary

Lesson One will trace the entire journey from Egypt to Canaan. The Hebrews set out from Rameses, Egypt. They made their way into the Sinai Peninsula which was shaped like a triangle. The sides of this triangle measured about 190 and 130 miles respectively while the base was nearly 150 miles across. Any traveler would soon find that a nomadic life in this peninsula was not the most pleasant. Even today, the weather conditions are extreme. The mean temperature ranges from 50 degrees Celsius in January to 82 degrees in June. (Some years have been worse than others. In February 1937, three feet of snow was recorded in Southern Sinai!)

Rameses (Ex 12:31,35-42)

The Great Exodus occurred on the fifteenth day of the first month of the Israelite calendar. Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to leave after the 10 plagues had decimated Egypt. All the Israelites left their homes in Rameses, with one day’s notice, for the city of Succoth. As they left, the Egyptians gave them clothing, gold and silver (**Ex 12:35-36**). God blessed them when they trusted him, giving them freedom and a wealth of possessions. They later used the very same gold and silver to build the Tabernacle.

Succoth (Ex 12:37, 13:17-20)

They headed south to Succoth, avoiding the road to Philistine country, toward the Dead Sea.

Etham (Ex 13:20)

They camped here and the Lord went ahead in the pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The cloud covered them, protecting them from the intense desert heat and the pillar of fire provided light for night travelling (Ps 105:39, Isa 4:5).

Pi Hahiroth (Ex 14:2)

The Israelites turned back to Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea directly opposite Baal Zephon. God made them detour before reaching the Dead Sea.

Crossing the Red Sea (Ex 14:15-31, 15:1-21)

All the Israelites crossed the Red Sea on dry ground as Moses parted the Red Sea. The Egyptians all drowned. Miriam then sang a song to the Lord.

Marah - “Bitter” (Ex 15:22-26)

They had been travelling in the desert for three days without water. The water there was bitter, so they complained to Moses. He then made the water sweet by throwing in a piece of wood.

Elim (Ex 15:27)

There were 12 springs and seventy palm trees and they camped near the water. They left Elim on the 15th day of the second month.

Desert of Sin (Ex 16:1-36)

God sent them manna and quail after they complained that they had no food to eat.

Rephidim - “Testing and Quarreling” & “The Lord is My Banner” (Ex 17:1-15)

The Israelites grumbled again for lack of water. Moses was commanded to strike the rock then water came out for the people to drink. He renamed the place Massah and Meribah. The Amalekites attacked the Israelites here and Joshua defeated them by the sword, while Moses held up his hands with Aaron and Hur helping him. Moses then built an altar, naming it, “*The Lord is my Banner*”.

Mt Sinai (Ex 19-40)

In the third month, they arrived in the Desert of Sinai. Many important events occurred here:

God called Moses up the mountain

God made a covenant with the people

God gave them the Ten Commandments and other laws

God gave them instructions on the ark and tabernacle

God gave them instructions about the sacrifices and the priesthood

While waiting for Moses, the people sinned by worshipping a golden calf.

Moses then destroyed the two stone tablets and received new ones. They set up the Tabernacle in the first day of the first month of the second year (Ex 40:17). Altogether, Moses went up and down the mountain at least seven times.

On the first day of the second month, they took a census of the whole of Israel. On the 20th day of the second month of the second year they left Mt Sinai, almost a year after arriving here. With the construction of the Ark and Tabernacle, Sinai marked a new beginning in their relationship with God.

Taberah - “Burning” (Num 11:1-3)

The Israelites complained about their hardships, so fire from the Lord burned some of them.

Kibroth Hattaavah - “Graves of Craving” (Num 11:4-35)

The Israelites craved after other food and complained again. The 70 elders prophesied. God sent quail again, but as the people ate, God sent a plague (see Ps 78:23-32)

Hazeroth (Num 12:1-16)

At Hazeroth, Miriam and Aaron spoke out against Moses. Miriam became leprous then God healed her. They stayed there seven days waiting for her to be “clean.”

Kadesh Barnea in the Desert of Paran (Num 13-14)

The Israelites camped here. It took 11 days to walk here from Mt Sinai (Deut 1:2). They sent out spies to Canaan. The 12 spies returned and 10 of them gave a bad report, so the people refused to go into Canaan. After God pronounced the punishment for their disobedience, the people rebelled again, entered Canaan against God’s will and were defeated by

the Amalekites and Canaanites. They then officially began their Wandering in the Wilderness.

38 year Wandering (Num 15-19, 33:18-36)

During these years, no one really knows where they went or stayed. We guess it was in the hill country of Seir (**Deut 2:1**). Along the way, a Sabbath-breaker was stoned (**Num 15:32-36**), Korah and several Reubenites rebelled against Moses (**Num 16**) and the rebels were killed. The people then rebelled against Moses when Korah was killed (**Num 16:42**) and God sent a plague, killing 14,700 more.

No other events are recorded. Obviously nothing exciting happened! No wars, no victories – just monotonous living. The enemies left them alone until it was time to decided to stop wandering and enter the promised land (**Num 20:14,20**).

Kadesh Barnea - “Quarreling” (Num 20:1-22)

The Israelites returned to Kadesh and Miriam died and was buried here. The people complained about food and water again at Kadesh Meribah. Moses struck the rock twice (although God told him only to speak to the rock) and they got water. God became angry with Moses for disobedience and denied him entry into the Promised Land.

Note : This was the second Meribah.

Mount Hor (Num 20:22:29)

Aaron died and was buried here in the fifth month of the 40th year since the Exodus.

Hormah - “Destruction” (Num 21:1-9)

They were attacked by the king of Arad but defeated him instead. Later, the people became impatient while trying to go around Edom, and God sent venomous snakes. Moses made a bronze snake on a pole, which enabled the people to be saved.

Note: In **Num 14:44-45** they had been defeated by the Canaanites and Amalekites when they had tried to enter the Promised Land after God pronounced the 40 years of wandering. It was the only time they moved without the ark going with of them.

Zered Valley (Num 21:12)

They traveled 38 years since their first departure from Kadesh Barnea to the Zered Valley(**Deut 2:14**).

Arnon Gorge and Bashan (Num 21:21-35)

They defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites and Og, king of Bashan. They conquered cities stretching from the Arnon to Mt Hermon.

They were refused passage by the Edomites, attacked by Arad and resisted by the Amorites and Gileadites.

Plains of Moab (Num 22-26)

They camped across from Jericho. Balaam was sent to curse them but ended up blessing them. They got involved in immorality with the Moabites and joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor. Phinehas killed Zimri, a Simoenite leader who was openly immoral with a Midianite woman in the camp. This stopped the plague which had already killed 24,000. A second census was also taken which included none of those from the first census except Joshua and Caleb.

In other words, the second census included only those born in the desert as well as those under the age of 20 during the Exodus. The vast majority must have been under 40, young and with an eager heart, ready to claim God's Promised Land.

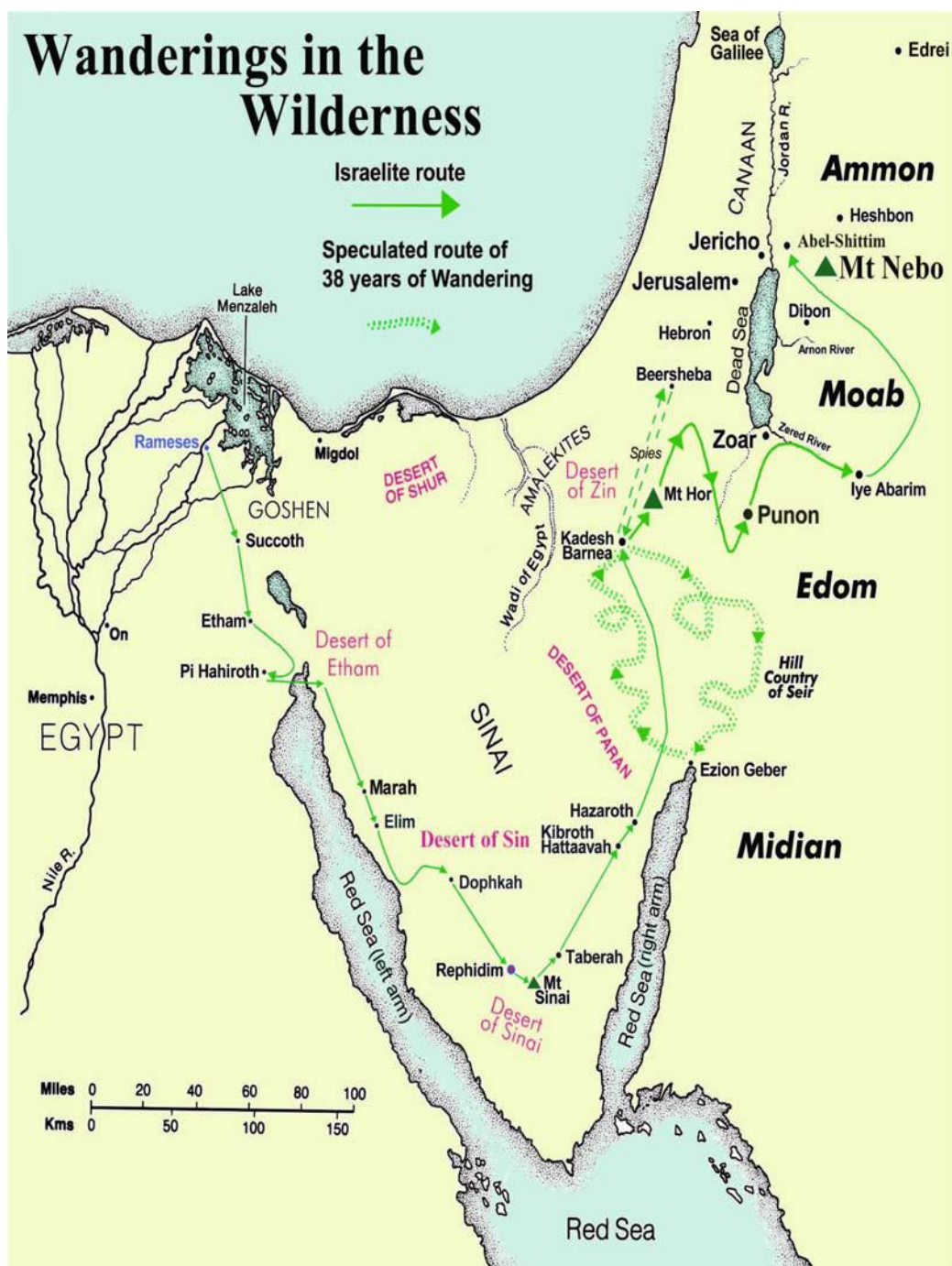
Mt Nebo (Deut 1-34)

On the first day of the 11th month of the 40th year, Moses gave a farewell address to the Israelites and climbed Mt Nebo. He was buried nearby - 120 years old. Joshua now led the Israelites.

- The plains of Er-Rahah

“At the foot of Mt Sinai there was a plain commanding a view of the mountain from every part and sufficiently large to admit all the people maneuvering upon it so that at one time all could come near and stand under the mountain. They did not have to actually encamp on the plain as ‘Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God and they stood at the foot of the mountain’ (Ex 19:17). All that is required is a plain capable of allowing standing room for the Israelites as spectators. Captain Palmer made actual measurements of the spot and proves that the space extending from the base of the mountain to the watershed or crest of the plain is large enough to accommodate all the Israelites, two million souls with about a square yard for each individual.”^a

According to the above report made by Captain Palmer, the plain in front of Mt Sinai was perfectly made for the Israelites.



Diary of the Wanderings

Gen 12: 2-3

“I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”

God had been longing to fulfill his promise to Abraham for almost 600 years. His plan, as far as we can see from the Old Testament record, was to bring Abraham’s descendants out of Egypt, into the desert, spend three months getting organized and then a year preparing them at Sinai. Another two or three months and it would have been “Goodbye sandflies, hello milk and honey!” Unfortunately, because of their disastrous doubt (remember the “spying out the land” fiasco from **Num 13**), God’s plan had to change! Instead of the Israelites having a nice desert holiday for 1 ½ years, they were stuck there for forty! Don’t you just look at the Israelites and think, “Wow, you guys blew it big time!” Sometimes, however that kind of self-righteous attitude comes back in our faces!

Here’s two tips to remember to make sure that YOU don’t miss out on the blessing that God has already promised you:

1. Faithful Fighting Is More Fun Than Faithless Floundering

Refer to the table on the next page. Compare the outcome of the two different scenarios – the one that God had originally planned, and the chain of events that actually took place. (refer to table on page 7)

So, which was the better path? More importantly, on which path are YOU? When “Go” leads us to the desert, let’s have the faith of Joshua and Caleb, who were faithful, and then we will be able to see great victories! Notice that, the route God had planned was a lot more enjoyable than the one eventually taken. When you obey God, and fight His battles, you will have some tough times, but you will be joyful even during(well, most of) the battles and the victories afterwards will be so sweet. In the NT, our time on earth is parallel to the wanderings of the Israelites. Look in **Heb 3:16-4:1** “...therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it”. Just as the faithful ones crossed the Zered Valley (**Deut 2:13**) after 38 years of wandering, we, too, if we are faithful, will cross to heaven and enter rest, Amen!

WANDERINGS IN THE WILDERNESS
LESSON 1 – DIARY OF THE WANDERINGS

The Route Planned by God	The Route Taken by the Israelites
First 1 ½ years the same.	First 1 ½ years the same. Nothing in their route suggests that it was a result of God's punishment for their disobedience. God's plan was for them to enter into a covenant relationship with him at Mount Sinai and then proceed to Kadesh where they would be ready to conquer the promise land.
B. Needs met in a glorious way with all that Canaan had to offer.	B. Needs met in a less glorious way – manna, quail, water.
C. Lifelong battle to do great things Deut 7:22 – “little by little, not all at once” - hence a lifelong battle. If they had entered here and taken possession of Canaan, it would NOT have been a one-time battle with the Canaanites and thereafter they would settle there in peace. This is evident by the fact that when Joshua finally entered Canaan, God allowed them to conquer “little by little”, not all at once. Joshua's eventual conquest took at least 30 years. This was better than wandering for the next 38 years.	C. Lifelong battle to even have a relationship with God (Deut 1:27) Constantly grumbling and insecure about their relationship with God.
D. Claimed the promised land in roughly 30 years.	D. Never able to enter the promised land.
E. Saw INCREDIBLE victories (though difficult battles had to be fought) Jordan River split. Walls of Jericho fell. Sun stood still. 31 kings defeated. Promise land claimed – families saved.	E. Died after wandering aimlessly in the desert for 40 years. No recorded victories – only records 2 acts of rebellion in the 38 year period. No wars, battles, victories – just “WANDERING”.

2. God Gets Angry When We Don't "Get It"

In **Hebrews 3:19**, God tells us that the Hebrews were not able to enter the land of rest because of their unbelief. Unbelief was their root sin. All other sins were a manifestation of their unbelief. This unbelief caused the ten spies to give a negative report 3500 years ago -- it (stubborn refusal to trust God) is also the root of most of our failures as disciples today!

- i. Some don't make it into the Promised Land because of not being able to find a life-partner. The "there are no good brothers/sisters in the church" syndrome. Isn't the root sin UNBELIEF that God will help them find someone in the kingdom?
- ii. Some people leave God because of sin, perhaps immorality or materialism. They DOUBT that they can enjoy life without these sins or that they can repent in relation to these sins. Isn't the root sin UNBELIEF that God will meet their needs?
- iii. Some Christians feel tired of trying to be close to God or other disciples. They LACK FAITH that God can ever help them to change in relationships. Again the root sin is UNBELIEF!
- iv. Some people are lukewarm because of the commitment; UNABLE TO TRUST that giving their all to God is more worthwhile than taking an extra course, working a lot of overtime or spending too much time on sports/leisure/recreation. This is also UNBELIEF.
- v. Why do disciples struggle with giving financially? Isn't the root sin usually UNBELIEF that God will bless them?
- vi. For disciples who could be in a leadership position but don't want to, isn't the root sin often UNBELIEF that their time is better spent doing other things than serving the kingdom?
- vii. Some brothers and sisters struggle to share their faith. Isn't the root sin usually UNBELIEF that they can be fruitful?

All through the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, we see God's anger in the face of unbelief!

3. Milestone Markers Are a Must

During the Israelites' trek through the desert, many places were named for events. These became milestones, markers of their journey. Unfortunately, most of their memories were negative (see below).

Name	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Reminder</i>
1) Marah	Bitter	Bad
2) Rephidim	Testing and Quarreling The Lord is my banner	Bad and Good
3) Taberah	Burning	Bad
4) Kibroth Hattaavah	Graves of Craving	Bad
5) Kadesh Barnea	Quarreling	Bad
6) Hormah	Destruction	Good

- i. What kind of markers are you setting up? How would someone "name" your last year or last 10 years as a Christian? Look back to the time when you were baptized and think of how God might describe your Christian life during significant events or at the end of each year. Hopefully you'll have more good reminders than bad. Be determined to end the year 2000 with a great milestone marker!

Hormah was an interesting milestone. The older generation was beaten here by the Canaanites (Num 14:44-45). However, 40 years later, the younger generation went back to the same spot and defeated the Canaanites (Num 21:3). Likewise, we can always go, by faith, to the spot where we failed before and be victorious! Now THAT'S encouraging! Do memories of old failures plague you? Believe now that God can and will give you great victories even in areas where you've never seen them. Get a journal and keep a record!

Conclusion

In summary, everyone on earth has struggles. The question is, will you fight great battles and live an exciting, fulfilling life (that you will actually enjoy) or will you wander aimlessly with no real “home”, half of you wanting to believe and half of you stranded in the nevernever land of doubt? (Doesn’t sound like much of a choice.) All it takes is faith, and the courage to act on it!

Rumblings From the Rabble

God has always had a heart for his chosen people, the Israelites. Likening his relationship to the nation of Israel as to a relationship with a man, God says in **Deut 32:9,10** , "... He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye." The Jewish Rabbis at the time of Jesus would say: "The world is like unto an eye. The ocean surrounding the world is the white of the eye; its black (the coloured part) is the world itself; the pupil is Jerusalem; but the image within the pupil is the sanctuary."^b

Introduction

God's plan never was to hurt the Israelites. On the contrary, throughout the entire time in the wilderness, he showered his care abundantly:

- a) He guided them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, (**Ex 13:21-22**). The cloud served as a covering (**Ps 105:39**). It protected them from the intense heat in the desert. "...*It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.*" **Isa 4:5-6**

A quote from a climatologist from the National University of Singapore :

"Thin clouds have albedos of between 25-50% and thick clouds 70-80%. Very simplistically put, if you consider that desert sand has an albedo ranging from 20-30%, then having a thick cloud cover (if we assume God did NOT go by the "laws of nature" – i.e. deserts should have cirrus – or thin – clouds) over the desert could mean that a substantial amount of the sun's radiation was "eliminated" because 70% of the radiation is reflected by the cloud's surface, then a further 20% of the "remaining" 30% passing through further reflected by the sand's surface. Thus, given a thick cloud cover, the Israelites would have had it pretty cool."^c

- b) He provided them with food every morning called "manna". They could bake it, boil it, broil it, make it into sandwiches, eat it raw, cut it

- up, or make dumplings out of it. “*The people...ground it...made it into cakes..*” (Num 11:8).
- c) He protected them from diseases, “*..I will not bring you any of the diseases....*” (Ex 15:26).
 - d) He took care of them physically, “Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years...” (Deut 8:4).
 - e) He protected them from their enemies, “When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them on the road through the Philistine country, though that was shorter. For God said, ‘If they face war, they might change their minds and return to Egypt.’” (Ex 13:17)

In spite of all these blessings, the first generation of Hebrews after Egypt failed to have the victories that God had intended for them. In Lesson One, we saw that the Hebrews’ root sin was unbelief. In Lesson Two we will see how their unbelief led them to fall into other sins. We can categorize into three major areas: **Ingratitude, Immorality, and Insubordination.**

1. Ingratitude

The Israelites did not start out this way. In Ex 15, after crossing the Red Sea, they were full of praise. They sang a song to God! However, as they faced hardships later, they got disappointed, especially with God. They grumbled about:

Food

In Ex 15:22-23 they started to grumble three days after they crossed the Red Sea! More grumbling is recorded in Ex 16:2, Ex 17:3, Num 11:4, Num 14:1-2, Num 16:41, Num 17:10, Num 20:3, Num 21:4-5.

The Hebrews got tired of their food, “manna”, which, incidentally, was given to them *daily* without their having to work for it. Instead of being grateful, they grumbled; because of ingratitude they did not appreciate it. You might say they were given a heavenly diet, but they had an earthly appetite.^d We could apply that to our lives by asking ourselves if we have a spiritual mindset regarding the blessings God gives us. You must go to God to get a heavenly appetite and to appreciate the things that God gives

you (**Ps 37:4** “*Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.*”)

Water

At one point, Moses lead them to a place at Rephidim, but there was no water to drink. There were only rocks. So God told him to strike the rock. They called this place “Massah and Meribah” which means, testing and quarreling. They even dared to ask, “Is the Lord among us or not?” God was providing for them in a big way and they still grumbled!

In **1 Cor 10:3-4** Paul says that Christ is our Rock. But if Christ is the Rock of your life, are you grateful? Or are you, too, complaining about what God has given you? Do you feel like the Rock isn’t meeting your needs? We live in one of the most blessed countries on earth. Amazingly, we complain more than most people on earth! Ingratitude is a cultural sin! Let’s get rid of it before it ruins us. Amen!

Characteristics of Grumblers

Num 11:1-4 says, “the rabble with them”. In the ASV and the KJV it says the “mixed multitude”. These were men who were half Egyptian and half Hebrew. They started to miss their old way of life. They were Egyptian enough to like Egypt and Hebrew enough to know that they should stay in the wilderness. These were also the ones that hung out at the outskirts of the camp. (see **Deut 25:17-18**)

Like the rabble, do you have one leg in the world and one leg in the kingdom? Some of us love the world so much that we miss it, but we also know enough about the kingdom to stay. Christians like this tend to lag behind. Often, they are the last ones to come to church and among the first ones to leave. At any rate, their group is easy enough to spot – they’re the disciples who have a noticeable lack of joy!

2. Immorality

This sin cost the lives of many wanderers. In one encounter in the book of Numbers, 24,000 Israelites died. It is worth looking into how this sin crept into the assembly. As God instructed his people to move towards the promised land, King Balak became afraid. Having heard that the Israelites had already defeated two kings, namely Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan, Balak knew that he could not win in battle, (**Num**

22:1-6) so he summoned Balaam, a sorcerer to curse them. After tempting him with bribes several times, Balaam still refused (since God had intervened and prohibited him from doing so.).

However, in **Num 25:1** the Israelites were indulging in sexual immorality with the women of Moab. How did that happen? The evidence points back to Balaam. He is mentioned three times in the NT as being responsible for this apostasy. A closer examination of the scriptures will reveal that though God told Balaam not to curse his people, in **Num 22:12** he still went back to God, hoping that God could be persuaded. Although Balaam resisted, his heart was not right (see **Rev 2:14; 2 Pt 2:15**). God's people were not attacked on the outside by man, but from the inside by sin. Balaam would not curse the Israelites but he taught Balak how to entice them. Balaam could not curse, so he devised a plan where God would curse them instead, because of immorality and idolatry.

(Note : Balaam was like Judas. Jesus was not betrayed from the outside, by Roman soldiers, but from within, one of his own. Where all else failed, money did the job.)

This sin took place just before they were about to cross the Jordan, after the 40 years' of wandering. This was the new generation of fighting men – they had already crossed the Zered Valley! They were camped right across from Jericho (**Num 22:1**) at Shittim. They were so close to crossing over! You would think they would have learned the lesson from their fathers. They got arrogant. They thought they were above it. This is a warning for all older Christians, we must never feel that we are above sexual temptation, or any temptation for that matter. **1 Cor 10:12** "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"

The consequence : **Num 25:9** – 24,000 died. If you love God, Jesus says that no one will be able to snatch you out of his hands (**Jn 10:29**). But be warned - Satan will use others to entice you and try to get you from the inside. Learn from the Hebrews, and stand firm against temptation.

3. Insubordination

There are many examples of insubordination, or rebellion, in the passages about the wilderness. Here are a few examples:

- Num 12:1** against Moses regarding his marriage, i.e. prejudice (Miriam's sin against Moses).
Num 14:1-4 Against Moses and Aaron, for trying to talk them into claiming the promised land.

Notice how they used their wives and children as an excuse to not be courageous and faithful. God had an answer for that in **verse 30-32** : “as for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land that you have rejected. But you – your bodies will fall in the desert. Your children will be shepherds here for 40 years, suffering for your unfaithfulness...”

What a lesson! Today, many married disciples are closer to God and more fruitful because of their children. Unfortunately, some Christians use their kids as an excuse for uncommitment. The children are the ones who suffer, the parents end up drifting away in lukewarmness, with some kids then repenting and making it themselves, and some being lost forever. Don't let this happen to you!

- Num 16:1** against Moses for supposedly setting himself apart.
Num 16:41 against Moses and Aaron for “killing” the people.
Num 17:5 against Aaron as the chosen high priest.

In **Num 16:3, 9-10** – Korah's complaint was that he was only a Levite (charged with the lesser duties in the sanctuary) rather than a full-fledged priest. He was jealous over his role (**Ps 106:16**). Perhaps Korah also had an attitude towards Moses for picking his own brother, Aaron, as high priest; i.e. an accusation of nepotism. Korah then spread his bitterness through gossip and slander, rallied support from others and confronted Moses and Aaron. Read **Num 16:1-3** carefully. (Ever notice how divisive people always have a reasonable justification for making disunifying comments about leaders?) Are you happy about the role you are serving in the kingdom?

God took them away by splitting the earth open and swallowing up Korah and his followers. However in **Num 26:11**, we are told that Korah's line of descendants did not die out. In fact, a number of psalms bear the heading "For the sons of Korah", which probably refer to his heirs. Apparently, they not only survived, but wrote some psalms and played a major role in the Jerusalem temple (**1 Ch 9:19, 26:1, 26:19, 2 Ch 20:19**). This not only shows the fairness and grace of God, it also teaches us that none of us are bound by our parents' sins or mistakes – we make our own life, and we can celebrate the victories with God.

Consequences

Sin Will Affect the Increase.

God had planned to increase their number if they had just been righteous. Here are just some of the verses:

Deut 6:3

Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may **increase** greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

Deut 8:1

Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and **increase** and may enter and possess the land that the LORD promised on oath to your forefathers.

Deut 30:16

For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and **increase**, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

Obviously, God wanted his people to increase!

The tribes were all counted after leaving Egypt and again 40 years later. By arranging these two censuses and placing them side by side, we are able to gather some useful information:

	Tribe	1 st Census	2 nd Census	% Growth (+/-)
1	Rueben	46,500	43,730	-6.0%
2	Simeon	59,300	22,200	-62.6%
3	Gad	45,650	40,500	-11.3%
4	Judah	74,600	76,500	+2.5%
5	Issachar	54,400	64,300	+18.2%
6	Zebulun	57,400	60,500	+5.4%
7	Ephraim	40,500	32,500	-19.8%
8	Manasseh	32,200	52,700	+63.7%
9	Benjamin	35,400	45,600	+28.8%
10	Dan	62,700	64,400	+2.7%
11	Asher	41,500	53,400	+28.7%
12	Naphtali	53,400	45,400	-15.0%
	Total	603,550	601,730	-0.3%

- a) The original doubt which started with the ten spies caused all of the fighting men to die. Obviously, lack of faith makes a difference when it comes to growth in numbers!
- b) The worst decrease in population was among the Simeonites(-62.6%). The sin led by a Simeonite leader in **Num 25:14** at Baal of Peor must have contributed to this. The number that died was about 24,000 (**Num 25:9**). Immorality causes lack of growth among God's people.
- c) In **Num 16:1-2**, a certain Reubenite went up against Moses. About 250 of the Israelites went up against them. This, too, must have had some influence on the size of their tribe over the 40 years. (-6%).
- d) Miriam's leprosy (Num 12:15) – the movement was held back seven days because of Miriam's sin.

Conclusion

1. The root sin is unbelief. But unbelief will to other sins e.g immorality, ingratitude and insubordination. We must always walk by faith.
2. Though we cannot speak in absolute terms about numbers and spirituality, nonetheless there seems to be a correlation. We know that not everything that grows is of God, but if it is of God, it will grow.

In real terms, the spirituality of the Israelites (or lack thereof), truly affected how many people made it into the Promised Land. In much the same way, the spirituality of disciples in God's kingdom affects the number of people who will make it into heaven! Wow! Each of our "righteousness levels" affects the "long-term growth" of the church. That's how God sees it. Does this help you to have a spiritual perspective about numbers? Do you desire to be more righteous so that more people will be saved? Righteousness is not passive behavior but active, it is about doing things for God because of your relationships with God, a God that does not tolerate sin, especially the three sins mentioned.

Decide today not to be part of "the rabble", who complained against God instead of repenting of ingratitude. Don't be immoral, or struggle with insubordination, but get rid of your sins! You will be happier, and you will help even more people to have a victorious life and go to heaven!

Nay-Sayers or Giant-Slayers¹

The Israelites arrived at Kadesh Barnea, which borders the land of Canaan. God told them that they would inherit a land that was rich in every way. God PROMISED; that's why it was called 'the Promised Land'.

The first thing God's people did was to send in twelve spies. Read **Num 13-14**. They all came back with a bad report, except for Caleb and Joshua. Ten spies came back spineless, not willing to walk in faith or trust the God who had already promised victory. We'll call these men the "Nay-Sayers". Their negative report moved the masses to "fears and tears." Their terrible lack of faith provoked the people to rebel against God's word and, therefore, God's leadership. Sadly, God was forced to pronounce judgment on them - 40 years of wandering for the 40 days the spies were in Canaan. The result - all of the fighting men died! The Sinai Peninsula became a vast cemetery. About 600,000 men died, not including women and children. That averages out to about **44 funerals** a day, and that's just with the men! Moses, who witnessed it all, day in, day out, really saw the power of God. In Ps 90:1-17, Moses, who may have written this at the end of the wandering period (compare with Deut 33), talked about how futile and short is a man's life, compared to the infinite God. Therefore stand in awe of God!

Incidentally, if we combine the accounts of **Num 14:1-2** and **Deut 1:19-23**, we see that the plan of sending the spies probably came from the people, not from God, though God then allowed it. God did this later again centuries later when the Israelites asked for a king. God allowed them to have one, even though He warned them about the possible pitfalls. True enough, most of the kings failed to lead in a godly way, and Israel collapsed.

God's original intention very probably was for his people to go in straight and capture the promised land (**Deut 1:27**). The people's plan of sending spies, though seemingly wise at first glance, led to faithlessness. How often do we do the same thing? Plan B may even work out O.K., but how much better off would we have been if we had stuck with God's plan?

¹ Based on a lesson with a similar title by Mark Hardgrove, 2440 Arbour Trace Vista Suwanee, GA 30024 USA.

What lead them to this faithlessness? What caused these men, who walked through the Red Sea ON DRY GROUND, to doubt God's power in Canaan? It was probably because they focused on the perceived challenges ahead and not on the power of God. They were defeated even before they faced the enemy. In **1 Pet 5:8**, Peter calls the devil a "*roaring lion*". Satan hadn't even attacked yet (In other words, those ten spies were scared to death by a roar! Hey, nobody has ever been killed by a roar!) We may laugh at their almost comical lack of faith, but the same thing happens to us today! We are faced with some big character changes, and we, too, focus on the challenges instead of God's power. We get scared just thinking of failure. (Roar !) And do you know how Satan tries to discourage a church? He raises up the Nay-Sayers, and they begin to preach the sermon of doubt and discouragement to others. They will give a thousand reasons why it can't be done - even though God says He will fight for us!

1. Nay-Sayers Will Doubt, Pout And Do Without

Twelve men went into Canaan, and twelve men came out. All twelve came back with the testimony that God's promises were real. They all claimed to believe in the God who fulfills His promises, BUT ten of them doubted that He really would do it.

All twelve men testified that Canaan was everything God had promised that it would be. They said, "*We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.*" (They even brought back proof of the fruitfulness of the land! **Num 13:27**).

But the ten Nay-Sayers continued, "But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there."

Even after Caleb had quieted the people and encouraged them to go on and possess the land, the Nay-Sayers continued their drumbeat of defeat. They said, "*We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are...The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.*"

Nay-Sayers DOUBT. They doubt themselves. They doubt one-another. But worst of all, they doubt God. Furthermore, if we listen to the Nay-Sayers, we are likely to start doubting ourselves. The Nay-Sayers could not get their eyes any higher than their problems and so they (and the people they influenced) began to POUT. The people had become infected with doubt and so they all began to fall into depression and despair. They began to pout and question God.

Their doubting lead to pouting (not to shouting)! Doubt ripped the praise from their lips and left them with the bitter taste of fear and discouragement. In their pouting, they began to say and think foolish things:

- a. **They looked back**, to the supposed “good old days”. They said things like, “*We would have been better off in Egypt.*” Or, “*We should have just died in the wilderness.*” They had lost the glory of the song they sang as they came out of the Red Sea and saw their enemies defeated behind them.
- b. **They turned on the leadership** and would have stoned those who dared believe that it could be done. They wanted a soft leadership that would not push them to believe, trust and obey.

They made excuses about why they could not obey God. In their pouting they used other factors as reasons why they could not win.

(Note : In Num 13:3-4, they used “protecting their children” as a reason not to go into Canaan, but at the end of the day, their kids were the ones who made it!)

And what was the fruit of all of this doubting and pouting? Victorious lives? Exceedingly great joy? Fulfilled purposeful lives? **NO!** Their lives were boring and routine. They kept going in the same cycle, wandering in the same paths (**Deut 2:1**). Instead of the blessings they had been promised, the Nay-Sayers had to DO WITHOUT. Instead of the delicious grapes and other things they could have been feasting on in the land of milk and honey, they got manna (which tasted like coriander seed and honey wafers...YUK!!!), quail meat and water for forty years!

The whole generation that refused to go into the promised land died in the wilderness. People without faith are doomed to go through the motions

of following God but without the joy! People who will not believe dwell in a quagmire of questions and the wilderness of worry.

Nay-Sayers never get to taste and see that “the Lord, He is good”. Nay-Sayers do not really enjoy their Christian walk. Their motto is, “Do not walk behind me, for I may not lead. Do not walk ahead of me, for I may not follow. Do not walk beside me, either, just leave me alone.”

Are you a Nay-Sayer ? Ask yourself. Even better, ask your closest friends, and at least one leader, what they think. If the answer is “yes”, get help quick, before it is too late! You CAN change!

Many of us are not Nay-Sayers, but if we are not careful, we will find ourselves following in the footsteps of the Nay-Sayers. If we listen too long, as they tell us why “it can't be done”, then before we know it our heart will be filled with fear, our praise will be silenced, and our joy will be left bleeding in the desert of **despair**. Beware the Nay-Sayer.

Nay-Sayers doubt, pout and do without.

2. Giant-Slayers Will Believe, Achieve And Receive

Two men refused to go along with popular opinion. Two men stood their ground. Two men had the courage to believe that if God brought them to the promised land, God would lead them inside the promised land. Two men were prepared to “risk it all”, to even take on giants in the name of the Lord. These are the Giant-Slayers.

Let's look at the characteristics of Giant-Slayers.

First of all, Giant-Slayers BELIEVE. In the face of overwhelming odds, Caleb and Joshua believed. With the ten other men declaring that it could not be done, they placed their confidence in the Lord and said, “**Let's go!**”

The writer of Hebrews tells us that “. . .without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (**Heb 11:6**).

The Giant-Slayer takes God at His Word and believes in the promises of God. The Giant-Slayer stands on the Word, reads the Word, lives by the Word, speaks the Word and believes the Word. The Giant-Slayer will declare in the face of doubt and discouragement, *“Let God be true and every man a liar.”* The Giant-Slayer declares, *“Every promise in the book is mine; every jot, every tittle, every line!”* The Giant-Slayer has the promise in his hand, praise on his lips and victory stamped on his heart.

Giant-Slayers also ACHIEVE AND RECEIVE. Only two names among those of the twelve spies are remembered. The other ten names are right there in the bible, but no one remembers them. (Have you ever met a “Shammau”?) They faded into the dusty pages of defeated lives. But Joshua and Caleb are household names. Some thirty-five hundred years after this event, parents are still naming their sons “Joshua” and “Caleb”. These two men lived through the wilderness wanderings and came back to possess their possessions. Let’s look and see what happened to the two Giant-Slayers in contrast with the Nay-Sayers.

Nay-Sayers :

They saw the promised land, but never inherited it; they only had a little taste of the fruit.

They spent 40 years wandering around the hills; their lives became boring and monotonous.

They questioned God and were discouraged most of the time. Joy was a rare commodity, God’s promises were a distant fantasy.

They complained a lot. They constantly had negative and suspicious attitudes towards their leaders.

They compromised, which caused them to neglect fundamentals : they picked up idols (Acts 7:41) and forgot about their circumcision.

Giant-Slayers :

They suffered the consequences of the Nay-Sayers’ sins.

They saw all the Nay-Sayers die.

They saw unbelievable victories; such as

- the Jordan River dry up (Josh 3)
- the walls of Jericho fall (Josh 6)
- the sun stand still (Josh 10)
- the defeat of 31 kings, and (Josh 12)
- the promised land claimed (Josh 19)

Joshua and Caleb walked with God and because they did, they achieved what others did not. The coward dies a thousand deaths, but the men who dare to believe are not easily turned back. The Giant-Slayer achieves greatness because his trust is in the Lord.

What are the giants in your life? Here are a few common 21st century giants :

- the giants of lust and laziness
- the giants of discouragement and negativity
- the giants of fear and insecurity
- the giants of materialism and worldliness
- the giants of arrogance and self-reliance

Just as Joshua and Caleb entered Canaan and slew the giants that the other spies had feared, we, too, can be Giant-Slayers, and have great victories in our Christian lives !

Note : In **Num 20:14-20** when they finally decided to head towards the promise land, the Edomites took note and launched a huge army. However, when they were wandering for 38 years, the Edomites left them undisturbed; at least there was no recorded account of wars in the 38 year period. The lesson for us here is that Satan will only go for you when you are trying to go for it.

Conclusion

- 1) A Nay-Sayer or a Giant-Slayer - which of these two are you? Your faith will make a difference whether your walk with God is exciting or boring, it will determine whether your influence is positive or negative and it will most likely be the deciding factor in whether or not you and your loved ones make it to heaven !
- 2) The people devised their own way of conquering the promise land, which back-fired. Their faithlessness was under the pretence of being calculative and cautious. God allowed it to happen. He gave his “go-ahead”. The people could have still conquered the promised land if they had been faithful within their own plan. The remedy here was still faith. With or without sending spies beforehand, the essential ingredient was faith. Thus either way, faith was the remedy. If you have chosen a less favorable path, don’t get discouraged.

- You may have been worldly and have missed church meetings because of an extra course or job in the past.
- You, perhaps, are not able to get out of a situation (e.g. signed a contract) and have suffered as a result of the unwise decision.
- You may have fallen-away from God, married a non-believer, and are now worried about how you could ever be committed again.

There is still a remedy – Get back your faith and repent in this present situation. Have faith and be spiritual, God can still work around it. He wants you to make it by faith.....The theme in **Heb 11:1-40**.

And when do you need to become a Giant-Slayer?

Today needs to be the day that you stop running from the roar, resist the devil **and send him fleeing from you.**

Today you need to stand where Joshua and Caleb stood in **faith** and watch the giants fall!

Jesus in the Feasts of Israel

Feasts were a reminder of what God did for and through his people. He wanted them to remember his miracles. He established for them seven different feasts, of which the three main ones were the *Passover*, *Pentecost* and *Tabernacles*.

Passover This included the feast of Passover, Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits. Its purpose was to teach how to find God's peace.

Pentecost A single feast. Its purpose was to teach how to receive God's power.

Tabernacle Its purpose was to teach how to enter God's rest. It included the feasts of the Trumpets, Day of Atonement and Tabernacles.

(See Appendix D for the months of the Feasts)

1. Passover

Num 28:16-25

The feast of the Passover was the beginning of the barley harvest. Celebrated on the 14th of the first month (Nisan, which is in March-April) at twilight (**Lev 23:4-5**), this was to be a memorial to the Hebrews' deliverance from Egypt.

Ex 12:1-14, 43-48

This passage describes the procedure for celebrating the Passover.

Each family was to select a lamb on the 10th and observe the lamb for five days to be sure nothing was wrong with it. It had to be a lamb without fault and blemish. (**Ex 12:6**)

On the 14th, the lamb was brought to the doorstep and killed. They were to catch the blood of the lamb in a basin placed at the foot of the doorstep (**Ex 12:7**). The blood was then sprinkled on both sides of the door post until the blood of the lamb covered the entire entrance. Usually

the lamb would be killed around three o'clock to eat the meal by six o'clock.

The entire lamb was to be roasted and consumed. Nothing was to be leftover (**Ex 12:8-10**).

Not one bone of the lamb was to be broken (**Ex 12:46**).

The lamb was roasted in a spit shaped like a crossbar so that its body would be spread open.

They had to eat the lamb in haste (**Ex 12:11**).

They had to remove all leaven (yeast) from the household.

Traditionally during the Passover the eldest son was directed to make an inquiry and ask the father the following questions

Why tonight? The answer: a night to remember (**Ex 12:42**).

Why bitter herbs? The answer: to remember the anguish of slavery (**Ex 2:23**).

Why dip the herbs in salt water twice? The answer: the bitterness was greater than usual.

Why do we eat reclining? The answer: now we are free to go to God (**Ex 3:18-20**)^e.

Fulfillment in Jesus 1,500 years later:

Jesus was called or referred to as a lamb (**Isa 53**). John the Baptist called him the 'Lamb of God' (**John 1:29**).

(Scholars debate today on whether Jesus was crucified on Thursday or Friday. Regardless of which day it was, the parallels are still very apparent). We may deduce the following parallels:

Just as the lamb was to be without defect and blemish by observation for number of days, likewise Jesus, who was the Passover lamb, was tested. Jesus was observed and tested for five days by the religious leaders (**Mt 21:23-27**). They questioned his authority and used tricky questions (**Mt 23**) but found no fault in him. Jesus answered them perfectly.

Jesus hung on a crossbar just like the lamb on the spit.

His bones were not broken just as with the lamb for the Passover (**Jn 19:31-33**)

In the same way that nothing was to be leftover for the next day at the Passover meal, Jesus was hurriedly taken down from the cross before the Sabbath i.e. before 6 o'clock when the Sabbath would begin. (**Luke 23:54**)

Just as the Passover lamb saved the Israelites from the wrath of God, likewise Jesus was our Passover lamb that also saved us from God's wrath. (Please note that the Passover lamb does not take away the sins of the world but saves us from God's wrath, see **1 Co 5:7-8**)

If Jesus did die on Thursday, further parallels could be made of the day and the hour of his death. If Jesus was crucified on Friday it would have still been at the time of the regular evening sacrifice at the temple. That same afternoon "*from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, darkness came over all the land*" (**Matt 27:45**). The priest standing in the holy place would have witnessed this awful sight.

2. **Unleavened Bread**

When God delivered the Hebrews from Egypt, he brought them out in such a rush that they had no time to cook leavened bread. Leaven became symbolic of the Hebrews' old life of bondage in Egypt under Pharaoh. Unleavened Bread symbolized their putting off the old life of slavery in Egypt. Before the Feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread could be celebrated, all the leaven was to be removed from every Hebrew's home. The first day was a holy convocation, a special Sabbath where no work was to be done.

Fulfillment in Jesus 1,500 years later

In **John 6**, Jesus explicitly said that he is the bread from heaven, or the Unleavened Bread of God in the flesh. Leaven symbolized sin (**John 6:47-51**). Jesus took leaven of sin with him by his death. Our old attitudes and sinful ways are to be buried by him.

3. First Fruits

Lev 23:9-14

It was to be brought to the priest who would wave the sheaf before the Lord. It was to be performed the day after Sabbath (The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a special Sabbath).

Fulfillment in Jesus 1,500 years later :

Jesus was resurrected as the 'firstfruits' from the dead. His resurrection marked the beginning of the harvest of souls who have been set apart for and through Jesus Christ and Jesus was the best (**1 Cor 15:20-22, Romans 11:16**).

In the OT, if the firstfruits are accepted, then the rest of the harvest will also be accepted. Normally a farmer would pick the firstfruits from the crop and see if it is acceptable to him. If so, then the rest of the crop will also be acceptable. Therefore since God's accepts Jesus as a firstfruit, He will also accept us, Amen !

4. Pentecost

This day fell 50 days from the day of the unleavened bread to the day after the seventh Sabbath. The feast of Pentecost was at the completion of the wheat harvest. It lasted for a day only. Pentecost in Greek means fifty. It is also known as the feast of Weeks, Harvests and Day of Firstfruits. It lasted for one day.

Again the main activity was the presentation of a wave offering to the Lord. This time the bread baked must have yeast in it. The wave offering expressed the Hebrews' dependence on God for the harvest and their daily bread, so this was a thanksgiving offering.

It was supposed to be the anniversary of the giving of the Law. It was also a special Sabbath day.

Fulfillment in Jesus 1,500 years later :

In **Lev 23:15-16** just as the day of Pentecost was to be the day after the seventh Sabbath (be 7 full weeks 49 days+1 (day after) 50 days) from

the day of the firstfruits likewise, God sent the Holy Spirit upon his disciples after seven full weeks from the time of Jesus' resurrection.

On this day they were to offer two loaves with yeast. Yeast represents sin. The fine flour represented Jesus who was perfectly righteous and without sin. The wave loaves represent the Jews and the Gentiles, both contain the yeast of sin in their lives but both can receive the power of God to help them overcome their sin. Power fell upon all of them through the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2**).

5. Feast of Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets is actually part of the third feast, the Feast of the Tabernacles. This feast focuses on God's rest. It was to announce the arrival of the seventh month to prepare the people for the Day of Atonement which would be 10 days later. The day was marked by the blowing of trumpets and the offering of sacrifices. The Jews always blew their trumpets on the first day of each month (**Num 10:10**).

But on this day, the trumpets were blown extra long and loud, all day long. The type of trumpet blown was a ram's horn (Hebrew, "shofar"). The shofar was blown in remembrance of the ram that was sacrificed in place of Isaac. Trumpets were blown also to assemble the people to worship, to break camp in order to move on, and as an alarm in preparation for battle.

Fulfillment in Jesus 1,500 years later :

In **Rev 1:10**- John heard the voice like the blowing of a trumpet. Again in **Rev 4:1** a voice like a trumpet. **Joel 2:1** "*Blowing of a trumpet for the great coming of the Lord*". Jesus' second coming was also described as the trumpet call of God. (**1 Thess 4:5-17**)

6. Day of Atonement

Atonement means 'to cover'. This was a great day of national cleansing and repentance from sin. It was on this day that God judged the sins of the entire nation. In view of this, this day became known as the Day of Judgment. On this day, once a year, the High Priest would go behind the

veil into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the sacrifices and sprinkle it on the Mercy Seat. Thus, on this day, the sins of the nation were covered by the blood of the sacrifice.

It was also, therefore, a day of sorrow, repentance and confession of sins. It was a time to approach God with a broken spirit and a contrite heart. It was also the only required day of fasting. Anyone who would not repent of his sins would suffer death.

The Jews believed that the day of final judgment would come on the Day of Atonement. On this day, the future of every individual would be sealed and the gates of heaven would be closed. In the light of this the Jews performed many good deeds during the ten days between the Feast of the Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. This ten day period became known as 'Awesome Days' or the 'Ten Days of Repentance' as the people prepared themselves.

God also established in the Jewish calendar, every fiftieth year as a Year of Jubilee (**Lev 27**). This was a special year when all the prisoners were set free, property was returned to its original owner and the land rested without being worked. This was the year of proclaiming liberty throughout the land. It was a time of great rejoicing. The year of Jubilee begins on the Day of Atonement.

Fulfillment in Jesus 1,500 years later :

He fulfilled it by going into the heavenly Holy of Holies with his own blood which he shed for the sins of the world (**Heb 9:11-14**). Jesus would also return again to earth to free God's people once and for all from the trials of life. It will be a day of mourning for those who will be judged but a day of rejoicing for us who have been waiting for Christ's return.

7. Tabernacles

This was the last Feast and it was at the end of the harvest season. It is also called the Feast of the Booths (Sukkoth) because the Hebrews would live in a booth (sukka) or shelter during the feast (**Ex 23, Deut 16:16-17**). It was also known as the Feasts of the Ingathering and lasted seven days. On the eighth day there was a special Sabbath of rejoicing.

This feast has two aspects :

It looked back to the 40 years when the Hebrews were wandering in the desert living in shelters or tabernacles. They were always to be reminded that the wanderings of their forefathers were brought about by unbelief and disobedience, but they were only temporary. Yet during this time, God was in their midst providing for their every need and eventually brought them into the land of rest He had promised them. As a constant reminder, God commanded them to build booths or shelters to live in during this feast. So every year the Jews would gather the necessary wood and branches and build shelter in which they would live during the feast (**Lev 23:42**).

It also had a forward look. The shelter was loosely constructed so that Hebrews could see through its roof into heaven. This would remind them that they were pilgrims passing through this life and that God had an even greater rest for them in the future when he would come and live among them permanently.

God commanded more sacrifices to be carried out on this day than during any other feasts in the whole year(see Appendix C).

There were two Jewish rituals associated with the Feast of Tabernacles that illustrated the difference between seeking things from God rather than seeking God.

1) The pouring of water. This took place on the last day of the feast. This day was called Hoshana Rabba which means ‘Day of Great Hosanna’. This had both a physical and a spiritual significance. The rainy season was about to begin and the Jews needed the rain to soften the ground for plowing. In view of this, they made a special thanksgiving offering to God for the rain He was going to send. Spiritually it pointed to the Messiah who would give them the living waters of the Holy Spirit. This was the most joyous day of the celebration. In **Jn 7:37-39**, Jesus on this day spoke about living water, telling about himself.

2) The Lighting of the Temple. Tens of thousands of pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem would each carry a lighted torch. The entire city was illuminated for miles. This had a physical and spiritual significance. Plenty of sunshine was needed along with the rain for a successful season. They also acknowledged that God was the true light. It was also

here that Jesus made another statement, **Jn 8:12** “*I am the light of the world*”.

Fulfillment

This feast was not a shadow of any thing Jesus had done in reference to the cross but that he will come again to take us to rest from our temporary earthly booths.

Conclusion

Make sure you examine the feasts to see which applications are most needed in your life. Share this with a friend and/or your Bible Talk group. And remember, God wants us to enjoy our Christian lives - these were feasts not funerals.

Jesus in the Tabernacle

Imagine crossing through a desert on a camel and then stumbling across a tribe of two million nomads. Wouldn't it be amazing to find right in the middle of their camp an *eight-foot tall white curtain, covering half the size of a football field*? And yet, that's what you would have found if you had been crossing the desert of Zin nearly 3500 years ago. This was the Tent of Meeting, the Tabernacle.

1. The Tabernacle

The front of the Tabernacle is a shining, white linen curtain standing two and a half feet taller than an average Israelite. This was in sharp contrast to the drab, brown surroundings of sand dunes and more sand!

One fourth of the chapters in the book of Exodus deal with the Tabernacle and its regulations! (**Ex 15-30, 30-35**). Obviously, God felt the need to go into great detail about the tabernacle. In the book of Hebrews (New Testament), many allusions are made to the Christ and its connection to the Tabernacle. Although written sometime in 65-70AD, before the destruction of the Temple, the book of Hebrews makes no mention of the Temple. This also shows the importance of the Tabernacle.

2. The Outer Court and Furnishings

Door of the Outer Curtain (Ex 27:16-17)

It was a large curtain, made of fine linen, coloured in blue, purple, red and white.

Application : According to **Heb 9:8-9**, while the first Tabernacle was still standing, there was no access to God except through the priesthood. However, Jesus' death made it accessible for the first time (Matt 27:51). Before God became accessible, there was then a humble sense of distance between man and God. Later, the way to God was opened by Jesus. In **John 10:9**, He describes Himself as the Door. The way to God and to his holiness is through Jesus.

The Outer Curtains (Ex 27:9-19)

The curtains were made of white linen which made it impossible to see inside the Tabernacle from the camp outside. White linen signifies righteousness (**Rev 19:8**).

Application : The white linen curtains separated the Tabernacle from the outside world. It signifies that the righteousness of God should separate us from the world (**2 Co 6:14-7:1**). Are we eager to be part of the world or are we coming out of it? The Tabernacle itself was clothed by the white linen just as we are clothed by Christ, who is our righteousness.

When the priests offer the sacrifices, they were not distracted, because they couldn't look outside to the world, but only inside, towards the Sanctuary. The white curtains, also reminded them of righteousness, thus helped their mind to focus on God.

Within them, were the Outer Courts. These were the courts for which David longed and for whose gates he was willing to serve even as a doorkeeper (**Ps 84:2,10**). This is the door (curtain) which the people would enter with praise and thanksgiving (**Ps 100:4**).

The Burnt Offering Altar (Ex 27:1-8)

The altar was made from acacia wood overlaid with bronze. On this, the priests would offer various offerings. Through the burnt offering, the person would be accepted by God and forgiven (**Lev 1:4**). The blood was poured at the base of the altar and the burnt offering was entirely consumed by burning.

Application : We no longer need to offer any more sacrifices, but, God calls us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices (**Rom 12:1**).

The Laver (Ex 30:17-21)

The Laver was a large bronze basin containing water. Its exact dimensions were not recorded in the Bible. The priests were to wash their hands and feet here before they could offer the sacrifices or enter the sanctuary. Failing to do so would bring death! (**Ex 30:20-21**).

Application : Now that we have been cleansed at baptism, we, too can approach God without fear. Note: In the days of Solomon, the Bronze Sea was placed in such a position so that the priests could wash before entering the temple. It was large enough for immersion.

3. The Sanctuary Coverings

Sanctuary Coverings (Ex 26:1-14)

There were four layers. The outer covering or first layer was of sea cow skin. The second was of rams' skin dyed red. The third was made of goats' hair and fourth, was the Cherubim embroidered covering. Observe that the outer most layer was the toughest.

Application : We need to be tough on the outside but have God inside of us. Cherubim covered the entire tabernacle like angels surrounding God's people (**Ps 34:7, Rev 5:11**). The curtains were beautiful inside and outside.

Wooden Boards and Bars of the Sanctuary (Ex 26:15-29)

The boards were made of acacia wood overlaid with gold.

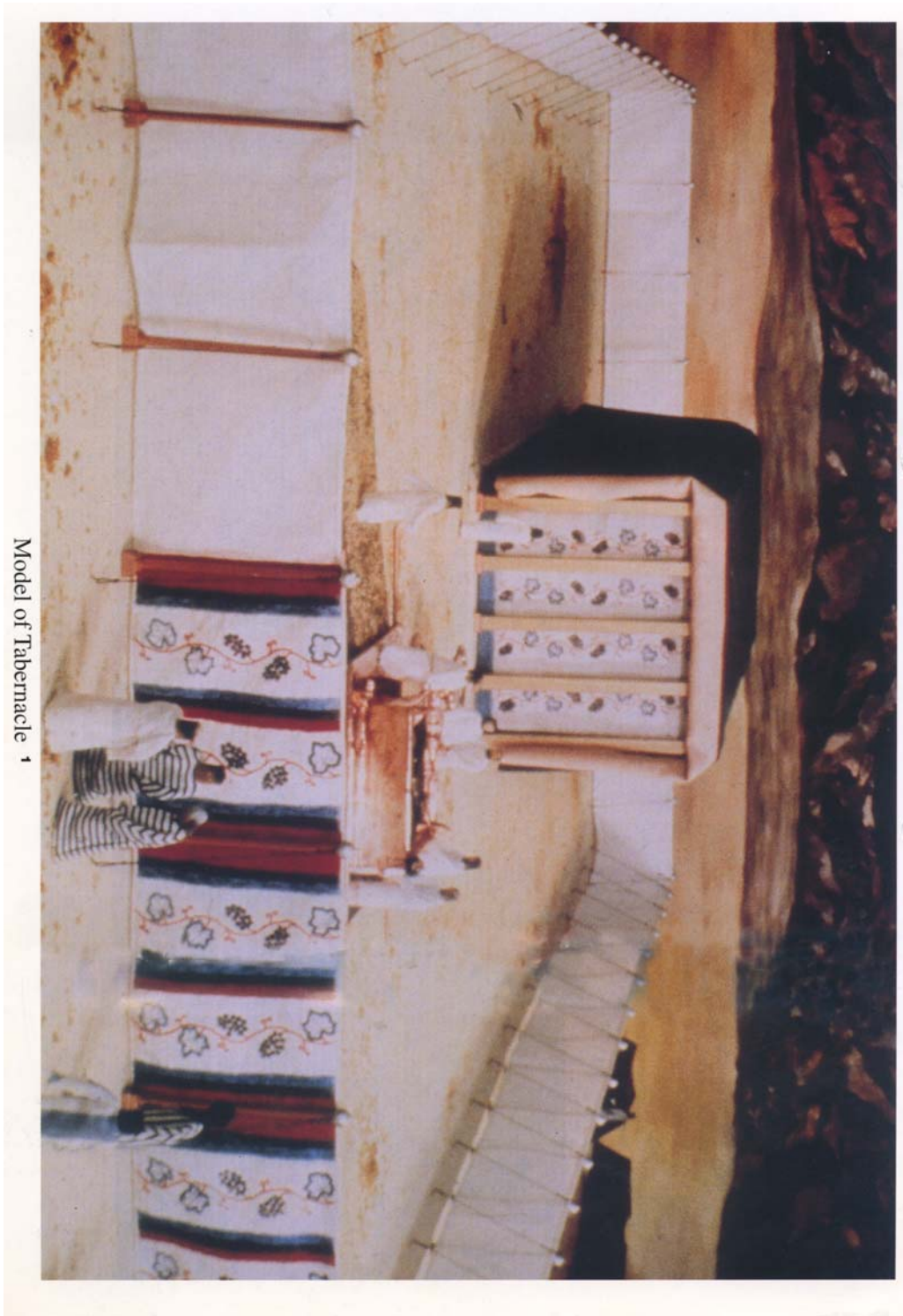
4. The Holy Place

Door to the Sanctuary (Ex 26:36-37)

The door was similar to the Door to the Outer Court but twice the height and half the length making a square.

Showbread Table (Ex 25:23-30)

The Showbread Table was placed on the north side of the Holy place. It was 1m long, ½ m wide and ¾ m high. Made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold, it had a crown made of gold. There were 12 loaves of unleavened bread, one for each tribe of Israel. They were replaced every Sabbath (**Lev 24:5-9**), fresh food for the priests. The Showbread is also called "The Bread of the Presence".



Model of Tabernacle 1

Application : The 12 loaves of the “Bread of the Presence”, one for each tribe, symbolizes that God will take care of his people. Our food is the Bread of Life, Jesus (**John 6:33**). Truly man does not live on bread alone but by the very Word of God. We need to daily come to Him, who gives us life through our Bible studies and prayer.

The Lampstand (Ex 25:31-39)

It was made of solid, pure gold, beaten out of a single piece and placed on the south side of the Holy Place. The book of Exodus does not mention its dimensions or pattern, only that it had branches and the bowls were to be formed like almonds in blossom. It was lit permanently all day. The priests were to top up the seven lamps with oil and trim their wicks every morning and evening.

Application : The church, like the Lampstand, needs to be constantly burning, providing light to the world always. We need to obey and in respect and fear remember that God can remove our lampstand (**Rev 2:5**). There needs to be a constant fire in our hearts.

The Golden Incense Altar (Ex 30:1-10)

The Altar of Golden Incense was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was situated in front of the Veil, the curtain which separates the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. It was $\frac{1}{2}$ m by $\frac{1}{2}$ m square, and 1m high. The priests were to burn incense at the altar in the morning and twilight, as a perpetual fragrance to the Lord. It had a golden crown at the top similar to the Showbread Table.

Application : Our prayers are like incense. (**Rev 8:3-5**).

5. The Most Holy Place

The shape of the Most Holy Place was a cube. The only other cube mentioned is in **Rev 21:16**, the New Jerusalem.

The Veil (Ex 26:31-37)

It separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies and was similar to the other doors.

The Ark of the Covenant (Ex 25:10-22) (See related class, Lesson 8)

The Ark represented their relationship with God. Its importance can be seen as it was the FIRST item that was to be constructed. It resided within the Holy of Holies. It was made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold and measured 1.5m long, 0.7m wide and 0.7m high and was carried by two long bars also made of acacia wood. There was a cover on the ark known as the Mercy Seat or Propitiation Cover. Here the blood of a goat would be sprinkled by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) every year.

Attached to the Ark's covering lid were two Cherubim. God's presence was not in the ark but hovered above it between the two Cherubim.

Within the ark were three very important items which form the Testimony (**Ex 25:21**):

- the two stone tablets which had the 10 commandments;
- Aaron's rod that budded (**Num 17:4-5**) and
- the golden pot of 'hidden' manna(**Ex 16:32-33**)

In OT no one could enter except the High Priest, otherwise be put to death. Today we can approach the throne in **Rev 11:19**. Do you appreciate this access to God?

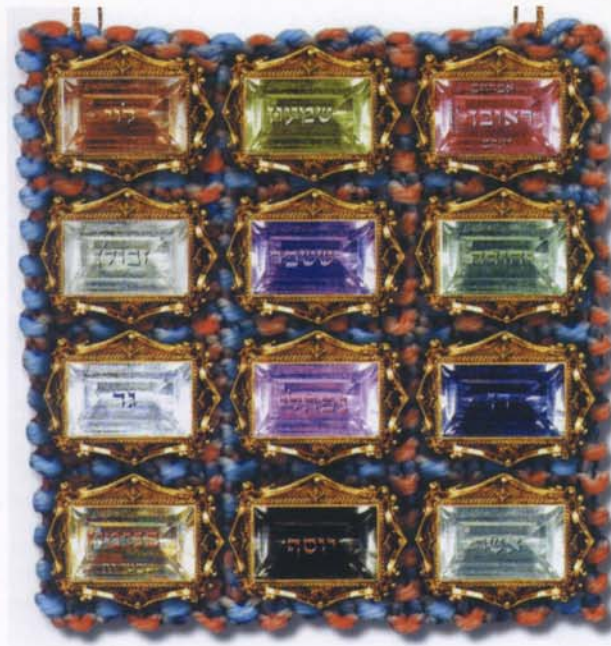
The High Priest and His Garments (Ex 28 & 39)

The High Priest was responsible for the Tabernacle, its daily offerings, and functions as well as the regular Feasts, Passover, Pentecost and Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur, he would bring in the blood of the sacrificed goat into the Holy of Holies.

His garments consisted of:

The Ephod The upper portion of the garment, was like an apron. It was made of four colours: blue, purple, scarlet and white linen interwoven with gold thread.

The Breastplate The breastplate was square and embroidered with gold. Set into it were 12 stones which symbolized the 12 tribes of Israel. It showed the High Priest bearing the burden of the whole nation of Israel.



The Breastplate
with the
12 Stones ¹⁹



THE
HIGH
PRIEST ²⁰

The Shoulder Stones This consisted of two stones, each with six names, one on each shoulder.

Blue Robe The High Priest had a uniform blue robe.

Application : Jesus is our High priest carrying our sins to God, clothed in righteousness, mediating between God for us, offering a sacrifice for our sins.

The High Priest served the most by carrying the whole nation into the Holy of Holies and offering the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. The people could not enter the Holy of Holies and meet God but the High Priest would bring them in symbolically through the stones on the Breastplate and the Shoulder Stones. We can't enter into heaven to meet God but we can bring people to God by preaching the word. The greatest service we can offer is the bringing of people to God and the salvation that He offers.

God's love for His people was very clear. The names of the 12 tribes were in precious stones to show how significant God's people are to Him. They were near to his heart (12 stones on the breastplate) and not a burden to carry (Shoulder Stones). He wanted to have a relationship with all no matter how small or poor the tribe was. They were all represented by the High Priest. All the saints are dear to Christ.

Mal 3:17 Would you wear a shirt today with the names of all your Bible Talk members written in precious stones, because they are precious to you? God did.

How near should we place Christ's name to our hearts since he is pleased to lay our names close to his?

The Levites (Nu 3:3-37)

All the Levites wore fine, white linen. They were divided into three groups, Kohath, Gershon and Merari. The priests were expected to follow all the regulations about consecration. They checked that all the sacrifices were without blemish, washed their hands daily before entering, and ensured the oil was sufficient. There were so many areas where they could cut corners.

Application :

The members of the priesthood were given special privileges and clothings. They were respected by the people and sometimes even feared by them. Yet all of this was not to give them a good life or a personal blessing. God demanded service. They received the tithe and a portion of the offerings. **They were expected to serve more than the rest.** They were in charge of many things and expected to do a great job. Whether it was preparing the sacrifice, counting the money, making the oil, refilling the oil, removing the dead animals or simply carrying the Tabernacle, they were there to serve the people.

How are you serving the people in your lives today? Our families, in school, in the office? How about in church? Are you offering yourself or hiding? Are you cutting corners? And when you offer yourself, do you complain or are you grateful and joyful?

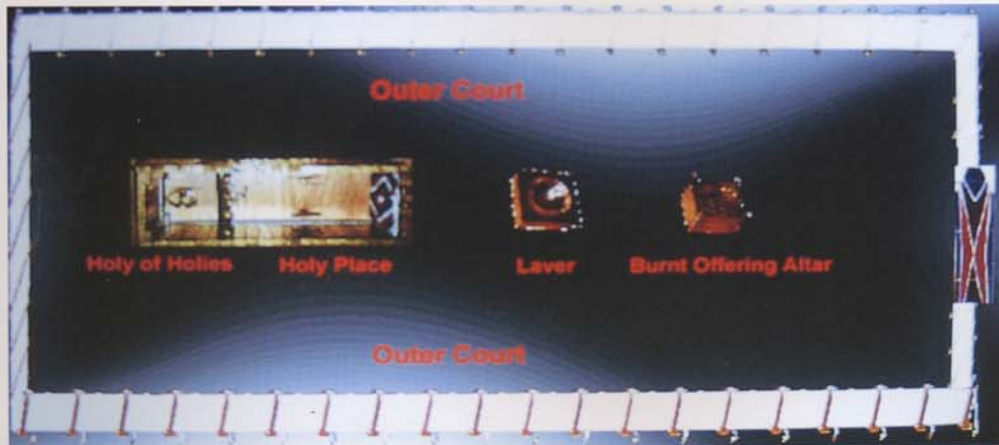
Conclusion

Read the book of Hebrews and meditate on all the parallels between the O.T. and the N.T. You should be convicted and inspired by Hebs 13:10 – we are the priests for the Heavenly Tabernacle about which those in the O.T. knew nothing. Let's make sure we are truly serving in our roles as God's priests on earth.

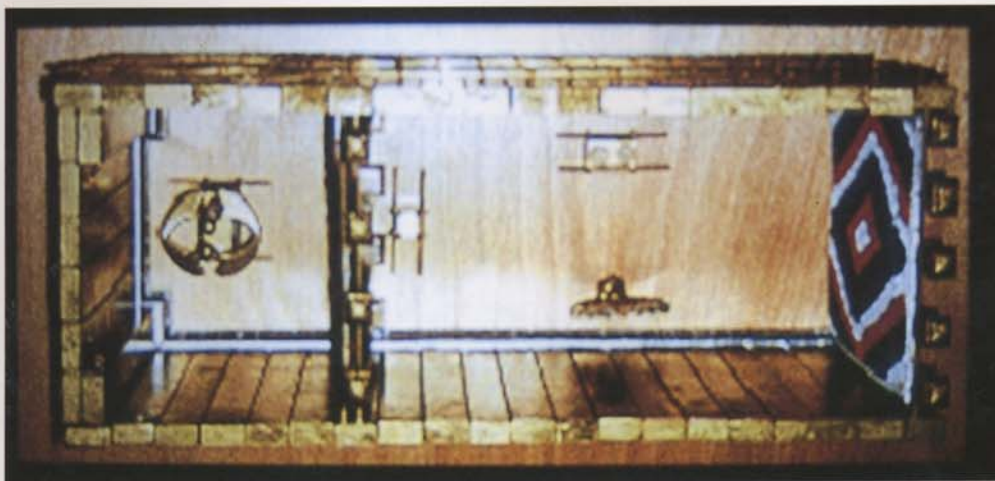
1. THE TABERNACLE



Front view of the Tabernacle ²

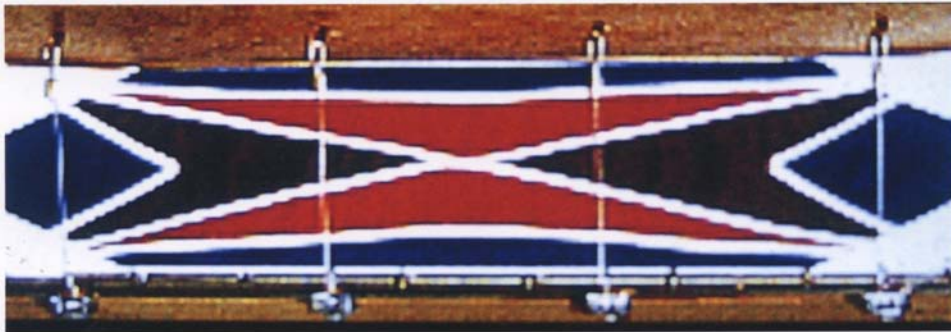


Top View of the Tabernacle ³



Top View of the Tabernacle Sanctuary ⁴

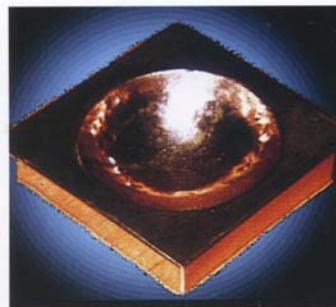
2. THE OUTER COURT AND FURNISHINGS



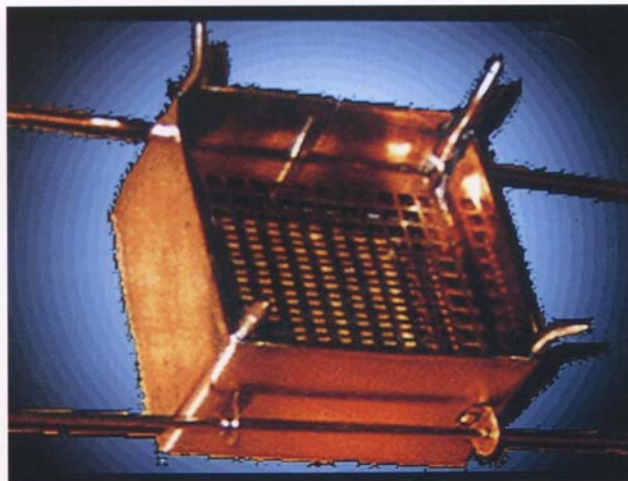
Door to the Outer Court⁵

Outer Curtains⁶
(left)

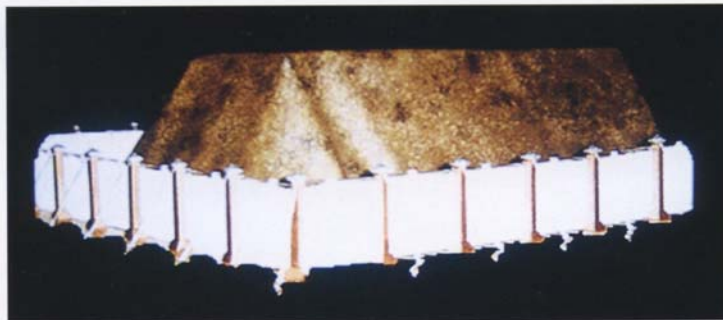
The Laver⁷



Burnt Offering Altar⁸
(bottom)



3. THE SANCTUARY COVERINGS



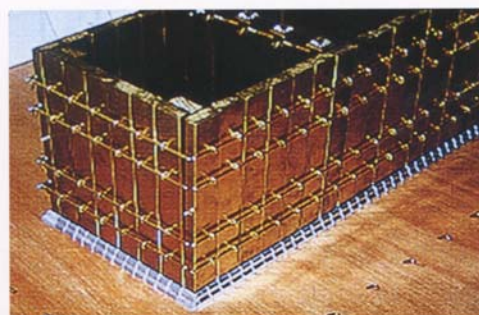
Outer
Covering ⁹



Cherubim
Motif
Covering ¹⁰



4 Types of
coverings ¹¹



Boards and Bars
of the Sanctuary ¹²

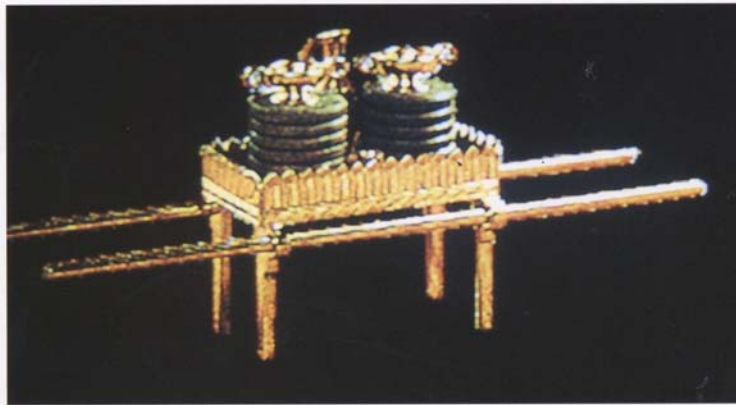
4. THE HOLY PLACE



(top) Door to the Holy Place ¹³

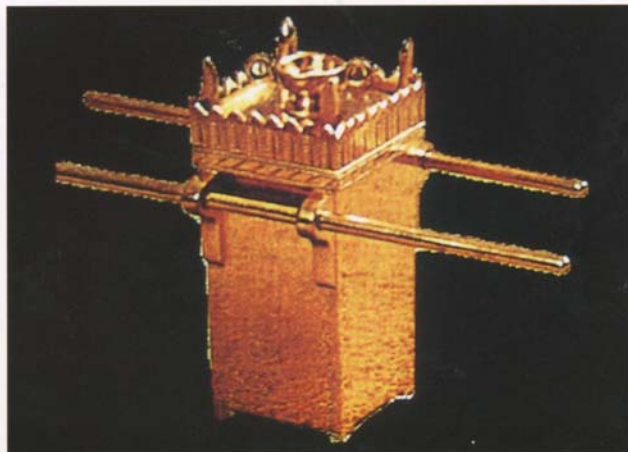


(right)
The Lampstand(Menorah) ¹⁴



The Showbread
Table ¹⁵ (Top)

(right)
The Altar of
Burnt Incense ¹⁶



5. THE HOLY OF HOLIES



The Veil(Curtain) ¹⁷



The Ark of the Covenant(drawing) ¹⁸

The Incense of Prayer and Anointing Oil

I. The Incense of Prayer

“In the days when priests were allotted duties in the temple by the casting of lots the lot to burn the incense was considered the most important and also a great privilege. It would be the most honorable service in the daily ministry. Every priest would be given this privilege only once in their lifetime, if ever. Another priest would carry a golden censer filled with incense in a silver vessel and a third priest a golden bowl with burning coals from the burnt offering altar. When they entered the Holy Place, they would strike a large instrument to signal all the priests to be ready. Then the coals and incense were arranged on the incense altar. The President of the Sanhedrin would then give the command to burn the incense. All the priests would then leave the Holy Place and worship God, spreading their hands in silent prayer. Only the incensing priest would remain inside the Holy Place until after burning the incense. During this deep silence, the cloud of odors would rise up before the Lord (**Rev 8:1-4**). The incensing priest would then come out and read the blessing from **Numbers 6:24-26**.”^f

Fifteen hundred years later, Zechariah (**Luke 1:8-25**) was chosen to burn incense during his duty as a priest. Everyone was outside praying, and we can just imagine his fear as he saw the angel of the Lord. The crowd was wondering what was taking so long, as they eagerly waited the priestly blessing.

In the NT, God uses incense to symbolise the prayers of his people. See **Rev 5:8**, “.....golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayer of the saints”.

As we see in **Ex 30:7-8**, Aaron was to have burned incense every morning and evening. At all times it was supposed to have been fragrant. A parallel for us is that prayer should continuously be done. (**Eph 6:18, 1 Thess 5:17**).

It's great to pray at a set time, but we should make opportunities to pray at other times!

A passage in **Ex 34** describes how the incense was made. All of the ingredients had a purpose. If incense represents prayer, then we might say that the ingredients could also be some sort of a representation. We can learn to improve our prayers by examining the ingredients and studying how it was made.

Four Things Were Needed To Make Incense God's Way

1) The Need for Balance

God specified that the four ingredients for his incense (resin, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense) be mixed "... *all in equal amounts.*" (**Ex 30:34**). There wasn't supposed to be an overdose of any one spice, but a balance between all four. Some of them even had an unpleasant odor on their own, but together, they smelled heavenly! Likewise, the ingredients of our prayers should be balanced. Sometimes all God hears are about our problems. What about thanksgiving, praise? Do we thank him for our problems? Are we open and real? What about making requests on behalf of others? We need generally to cover all the categories for an awesome "blend of incense".

2) The Need for Effort and Time

All the ingredients for the incense were found within a reasonable distance of the area of Palestine. However, *it took effort and time to collect them and bring them together.* Likewise it takes TIME and EFFORT to develop a great prayer life.

3) The Need for Brokenness

The ingredients had to be pounded and broken again and again. Are you at this state when praying? David in **Ps 51:16-17** prayed to be broken. A broken spirit and a broken heart. Some of the ingredients, if not broken, would not give the sweet smell. Do you break and crush your sinful nature? That's when your prayers will move God. **Jas 5:16** "*The prayer of righteous man is powerful and effective.*" Prayer is a blessing. It is a privilege. It is a means of communication. We have to be careful that it does not become a religious duty and the best way to ensure that is to keep our hearts broken and soft before God.

4) The Need for Fire

A fire was needed to light the ingredients. Smoke by its very nature rises upwards. The smell and smoke of the incense was to rise heavenward to God. God is not literally “up”, but we think of prayers as going up to God. The smoke would rise as a sweet-smelling aroma. How was it produced? When the ingredients were lit by fire. In the same way, our prayers need to be on fire! There needs to be intensity. Intensity will bring the fire from the heart and send the incense upward. If we have the proper ingredients and if we have an intense attitude of heart, our prayers will rise and come before God automatically. And God will find it a sweet smelling prayer.

Try to picture yourself on the other end as God listening. See how inspired you get, or how bored! I believe that God deserves better than what we have offered him on many occasions. Let’s be balanced with the “ingredients” of our prayer, put in effort and time, make sure we are broken before God, and combine it all with intense passion! Then we’ll be sending up sweet-smelling incense to our God!

<div> MAIN OFFERINGS </div> <div> BURNT: THE ENTIRE SURRENDER (OLAH) TO GOD OF AN INDIVIDUAL OR THE CONGREGATION </div> <div> SIN: TO MAKE ATONEMENT (CHATAT) FOR THE PERSON OF THE OFFENDER - TO COVER OUR SINFUL NATURE </div> <div> TRESPASS: TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR (ASHAM) A SPECIFIC OFFENCE DONE IN IGNORANCE </div> <div> PEACE: TO COMPLETE OTHER (SHELEM) SACRIFICES WHICH ALWAYS PRECEDED IT </div>	<div> THE LOTS OF THE PRIESTS </div> <div> LOT 1. CLEANING THE ALTAR AND PREPARING IT FOR THE DAY'S SACRIFICES </div> <div> LOT 2. KILLING THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL, CLEANING THE LAMPSTAND AND THE ALTAR OF INCENSE </div> <div> LOT 3 . OFFERING UP THE INCENSE </div> <div> LOT 4. LAYING THE PIECES OF THE SACRIFICIAL ANIMAL ON THE ALTAR AND CONCLUDING THE SACRIFICE </div>
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Charts of Offerings and the Lots of the Priests ²¹

II. The Anointing Oil

Anointing with oil served many purposes in the Bible. One of these occurred when oil was poured over the head of an individual to signify that he had been chosen for a specific purpose. This happened first in **Lev 8:10** when Moses anointed Aaron as High Priest of all Israel. This type of anointing is seen in the NT as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In fact the word “Christ” (in Hebrew “Messiah”) means “the Anointed One”. Jesus refers to himself this way in **Luke 4:18**

1) The Preparation

A. *Crushing*

To produce a ‘hin’ of olive oil, olive leaves had to be crushed; about four liters of oil were required. Interestingly, the word “Gethsemane” in Greek means “olive press”. You could say that the crushed olive is a type of Christ. In Gethsemane, Jesus started to feel the crushing weight of our sins. **Luke 22:44** records, *“And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.”* Jesus, in Gethsemane, experienced the crushing weight of our sins. Afterwards, he was glorified and then the Holy Spirit was given. In **Jn 7:39**, we read *“By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit has not been, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

B. *Standards*

Absolute standards had to be met : 500 shekels of liquid myrrh, 250 shekels of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels of fragrant cane, 500 shekels of cassia and a hin (4 liters) of olive oil – **Ex 30:22-33**. God had high standards. Cinnamon, for instance, was very hard to come by, but God still expects it in his oil. God still has high standards. God expects our best as he gives us the best. There are standards of holiness for when the anointing of the Holy Spirit takes place. From **Acts 2:38**, as well as other passages, we know that repentance must precede baptism. When God gives us the Holy Spirit he expects a standard of holiness to be present and to continue. **1 Pet 2:9** *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God...”*

C. *Ingredients*

- a. *Myrrh* – Myrrh was a pain killer. It was used to deaden pain. Myrrh spoke of the fact that Jesus came to bear our pain and hurt. Jesus did not deaden the pain of the crucifixion He took the pain on our behalf, *“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”* (1 Pet 2 : 24)

- b. *Cinnamon* – Cinnamon oil was flammable. It would burn; you could use it to ignite a fire. This speaks about the Spirit of fire that comes in anointing. Jesus will baptize us with fire. Cinnamon speaks about the fire of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not to remove pain, but to help us to be zealous for God. The fire should energize us to be zealous and serve God, *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire.”* (I Thess 5 : 19)

- c. *Calamus* – This was a scented cane. It grew along the waterway and when it blossomed, the harvesters would pick all the flower petals off and crush them. When they were crushed, then the fragrance would be extracted. Likewise the fragrance of our lives can sometimes only come out when we are crushed. When Jesus was crushed at the cross, we see the beautiful result : love and forgiveness, no evil thoughts, no vengeance. God is looking for such fragrance when we are crushed and bruised.

- d. *Cassia* – From the bark of the cassia tree, cassia means “to split, to scrape out, to purge.” Cassia bark was used as a laxative, a cleansing agent. It would clean you out. This symbolizes the purifying effect of the anointing of God upon your life. The Holy Spirit will convict us, as it says in **Jn 16:8**, *“When he comes , he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me”*.

2) The Pouring

A. Amount

Four liters of oil were used in the anointing ceremony. A description is found in **Ps 133:2**, “*It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard*”. Obviously, this was not a sprinkling of oil with just a few drops, but pouring of the oil. God anoints us like this today. He pours out His Spirit. Not just a few drops - he pours it all out. God fills us with his presence and his power.

B. Fragrance

When all the spices were combined , they produce a great fragrance!
After their anointing,
Aaron – a slave from Egypt, smelled like a high priest;
Elisha – a farmer, smelled like a prophet;
David – a shepherd, smelled like a king.
When we are anointed by the Holy Spirit, God sees us differently. We are special. We are ready for service for him. The old is gone, the new has come.

3) The Priesthood

Every disciple in the NT (**1 Peter 2:9**) is anointed and regarded as a priest. As such, we all have responsibilities to administer for and on behalf of others. Notice also, that the anointing was not for a personal blessing, but for service. There must, therefore, be a sense of service to God and to his kingdom, as it says in **Eph 4:12** “*to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.*”

4) The Plagiarism

Anointing was never to be imitated or substituted. In **Ex 30:31-33**. God demanded that there should be no plagiarism whatsoever. Those who did so must be cut off from his people. It was for priests only. Unfortunately, there is much plagiarism today in Christianity. There are a tremendous amount of abuses. Anointing is done without holiness. People want power without righteousness. They want gifts without sacrifice. Anointing is not

based on talent. Anointing is not based on sweat. Anointing is not based on emotionalism. Anointing is not based on keeping rituals. Anointing is not based on legalism. And anointing does not make you rich or give you a different personality. Candidates for anointing in the NT are the disciples of Christ. (**Acts 2:38**). When God selects you and calls you, you get anointed. Let us therefore be ready for his call to service, and grateful that we have been deemed worthy of anointing with his Holy Spirit!

Jesus in the Sacrifices of the Old Testament

The main idea of sacrifice in the OT is that idea of substitution and atonement (covering); substitution in that they had to substitute their sins with the life of an animal; atonement in that the blood of the animals will atone or cover for their sins. God commanded many different sacrifices in the OT. Altogether there were about 11 such public sacrifices. The total number of four footed animals needed for all these public sacrifices per year were about 1,200 (see Appendix C). This did not include all the private ones that the Israelites had to do. All these sacrifices pointed to Christ, as it says in **Heb 10:11-12** “Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins”. But when this priest (Christ) had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. However, we will focus our attention on three particular sacrifices.

Their Order and Meaning

In the OT, there were several types of offerings given, such as the sin offering, the fellowship offering, the wave offering and the freewill offering. Most Jews in their day would offer one of these offerings. However, there were several offerings that were very unique which closely parallel the sacrifice of Jesus.

They are:

The **Red Heifer** sacrifice for purification from defilement due to physical contact to death.

The **Scapegoat** as a sin-offering for the whole nation of Israel.

The **Cleansing of the Leper** for purification from leprosy or uncleanness.

1. The Sacrifice of the Red Heifer (Num 19)

A heifer is defined as “a young female cow that has not had a calf”(Oxford). **Num 19:2** further states that it is to be without defect(not diseased, maimed or injured and never yoked i.e. never been used in the fields or to carry/pull anything. Most cows today are brown or black and white like the Dutch cow. Who has ever heard of a red cow?

The red heifer was sacrificed *outside* the camp(**Nu 19:3**) unlike most other sacrifices (**Lev 4:12,6:11**). In the Temple period, the red heifer was sacrificed at the Miphkad Altar, probably located on the Mt of Olives, not too far from Gethsemane. The reason was because the priest making the sacrifice must be able to see the burnt offering altar^g(see map 22). Since the east wall was lower and Mt of Olives taller than the Temple Mount, only from the Mt of Olives could a person look into the Temple Courts. Tradition has it that there was a double arched roadway from the east gate to the Mt of Olives^h.

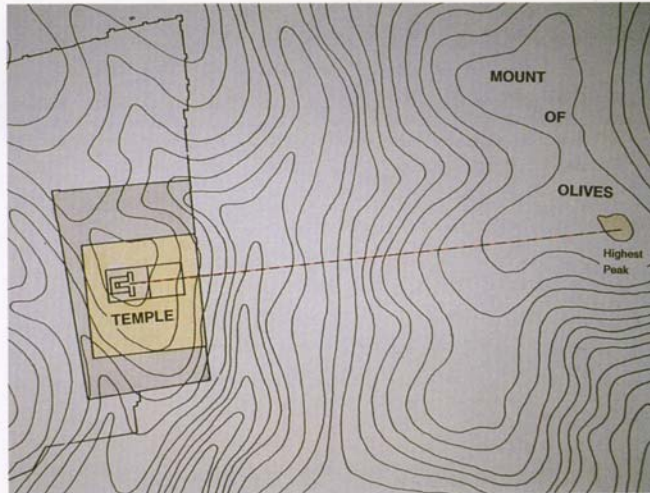
The blood of the heifer was to be sprinkled seven times toward the Tabernacle although outside the camp and not on the altar within the Tabernacle. The whole heifer was to be burned including the hide and blood with cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool thrown into the fire and then its ashes collected and kept outside the camp (**Num 19:5-6,9**). The priest slaughtering the heifer, the one burning the heifer and the man who picked up the ashes all became ceremonially unclean until evening. Also when the ashes were used for the water of cleansing, the person who sprinkled the water and anyone who gets into contact with the water became unclean until evening (**Num 19:7-8,10,21-22**). The ashes were to be added to fresh water and then sprinkled on anyone or object that had come into contact with a dead person or bone or grave on the third and seventh day. Otherwise the person was to be cut off from Israel. (**Num 19:11-13**) They would sprinkle the person/object seven times.

The water of cleansing made from the ashes was also to be used to purify the Levites(**Num 8:7**) and purify the spoils from war(**Num 31:23**). It was not a daily sacrifice, but once and for all, that is until the ashes ran out.ⁱ It was for purification from sin(**Num 19:9**), to take away the defilement of death, the uncleanness caused by death. Sin-offerings for the whole nation were normally a male animal except the red heifer, a female.^j

Fulfillment in Jesus:

The Red Heifer symbolised Jesus. Similarly Jesus' blood purifies us and allows us to be cleansed before God (**Heb 9:11-14**).

There are reasons to believe that Jesus was crucified on the Mt of Olives. Firstly like the red heifer he was sacrificed outside the city (camp). Further, the centurion saw the curtain torn, the dead raising (**Mt 27:51-54**), and this could only be possible from the east as the curtain was



Location of Red Heifer Sacrifice ²²



The High Priest in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement
Dressed only in White Linen Garments ²³

facing east and the tombs were to the east the Temple. Also, the east road leading to Jerusalem had more traffic and the Romans often crucified people where many would see them and be frightened into submission.^k See **Heb 13:10-13**

The sacrifice was a heifer, a female instead of a male. Jesus was betrayed for 30 shekels the equivalent price for a female dedicated to God (**Lev 27:4**). As the priest became unclean and the unclean person who was purified became clean, Jesus, our priest became unclean on the cross so that we who are unclean can become clean. Jesus' sacrifice was once and for all, never to be repeated. Similarly the Red Heifer sacrifice was rare because it's hard to find a red cow! According to the Mishnah, only nine red heifers have been sacrificed since the time of Moses.^l Its blood was sprinkled outside the camp seven times (seven signifies completion) so also Jesus' blood was spilled outside the camp and with his last breath, he said "*It is finished*".

2. Scapegoat (Leviticus 16)

On the Day of Atonement, there were three types of sacrifices: the daily sacrifices, the festive sacrifices for the priesthood and the people and finally the scapegoat (Hebrew – "Azazel"). The scapegoat was to be a sin-offering for the people.

Basically two goats were to be chosen and lots cast, one for Jehovah and one for Azazel. It was thought that both goats would be one and the same sacrifice even though only one was killed. The Jehovah goat would be slain and the Azazel goat would be turned to face the people as though waiting to receive the sins of the people. The High Priest would then lay both his hands on the head of the goat and confess all the sins of the people and put them on the goat's head. The goat was to carry on itself all of their sins and led *outside the camp* to the wilderness (a solitary place) and be released. The blood of the Jehovah goat that was sacrificed was sprinkled seven times on the Mercy Seat and then its body burned *outside the camp* at a clean place.

Fulfillment in Jesus:

The Azazel took all the sins of the people on its head while the Jehovah goat was a sin offering and similarly Jesus was both the sin offering for

the people and took upon himself all the sins of the people. In the same way that the scapegoat was released outside the camp and the Jehovah goat was burned outside the camp, Jesus' sacrifice was done outside the city. Like the sin-bearing Azazel presented to the people before being led to the wilderness, Jesus was presented to the people and led forth outside the camp bearing our sins. The scapegoat sacrifice was to be once a year and so Jesus was to be sacrificed once only. On this day the High Priest was to wear only white linen garments instead of his normal golden linen garments to signify that we must be righteous to approach God.

3. Purification of the Leper (Lev 13-14)

Leprosy (or infectious skin diseases in general) was the emblem of sin and death. People infected with such diseases were excluded from the camp during the wanderings. However, when a leper is cured from his affliction, he is to be accepted back into the camp.

Steps of Purification :

The priest examined the leper outside the camp.

If clean, a sacrifice would be made *outside the camp* to make the person ceremonially clean. Two live clean birds and cedarwood, hyssop and scarlet yarn would be used.

One bird would be killed over a clay pot of fresh water. The live bird would be dipped together with the cedarwood, hyssop and scarlet yarn in the water mixed with the bird's blood. Then the leper was to be sprinkled seven times with the water.

The person would then wash his clothes, shave ALL of his hair and bathe and be ceremonially clean but must stay outside his tent seven days. On the seventh day, he was to repeat this and then he could stay in his tent.

On the eighth day, he would make an offering of two male lambs and one ewe lamb, as a guilt offering, sin offering and burnt offering.

Fulfillment in Jesus:

We were outside God's kingdom and in death because of our sins. The similarities between sin and leprosy are amazing.

Leprosy	Sin
You won't feel its effect immediately. It kills you slowly.	You won't feel its effect immediately. It kills you slowly.
It causes numbness in our nerves.	It causes our hearts to be numb.
It makes us unclean in God's sight.	It makes us unclean in God's sight.

Jesus is our priest who has left the camp (heaven) to examine us and declare us clean and made an offering for us, to bring us back into the camp just as the leper needs the priest to leave the camp and do the same for him. The bird dipped in water mixed with blood is similar to our baptism in water mixed with "Jesus' blood" which allows us to come back to God and His kingdom. Jesus removes the "sins" of our past which clings to our "bodies, hair and clothes" just like the leper who washes and shaves his body. We should also imitate the leper by giving God the 'offerings' of our lives.

Special note : All the three sacrifices point to Jesus and have several amazing similarities. All the three sacrifices were either made or completed outside the camp. They all had some connection to death: the red heifer was to purify you from physical contact with death, the scapegoat to remind us that the consequence of sin was death (sin requires atonement which could only be done through the blood of a sacrifice; **Lev 17:11**) and the cleansing of the leper, the living death of spiritual uncleanness.

Conclusion

It's incredible the amount of internal evidence in the Bible itself which points to the type of sacrifice that the Christ would be. It shows the harmony between the OT and NT. You can also see how God's plan slowly unfolded to the people, starting from the sacrifice of Isaac on Mt Moriah to the Law of Moses with all its commandments for purity and sacrifices, right up until the last prophets. Let's be grateful for the work and planning that God put in to get our sins forgiven and begin His relationship with us!

The Wanderings of the Ark of the Covenant

Moses received the Law at Mount Sinai on two stone tablets. He also received instructions on how to make the Ark of Covenant and the Tabernacle. In fact, the first thing God commanded regarding the Tabernacle was about how to build the Ark, which would eventually contain the two tablets, a golden pot filled with manna and Aaron's almond staff that budded.

God intended that the Israelites would know where to march by following the cloud that covered the Tabernacle. They journeyed where God led. There was even a proper order by which the tribes were to march. The Levites (Kohathites) carried the Ark on their shoulders by means of two long staves (poles) and were positioned at the very centre of the march, with six tribes ahead and six tribes behind the Ark.
(see Appendix B)

Stages of Wanderings of the Ark of the Covenant

1. Dizahab (Num10:11-36; Num 11)

After a year at Mount Sinai, they went, with the Ark leading them, to a place three days travel away. This place may have been Dizahab since: Three days travel of the Ark (about 16 miles a day for those carrying the Ark would cover about 47 miles). The people probably took longer to travel, at a rate of about 6 miles per day with children, flocks. The place must have been by the sea since quails came to them. This was the journey of the Israelites away from Sinai, and God used the Ark to lead the way.
Note : Taberah (**Num 11:3**) may have been another place, while they were heading for Kibroth Hattaavah (Dizahab).

2. Hazeroth (Num 11:35; Num 12)

Most explorers have identified Eiu Hudra with Hazeroth. (See Palmers, p256, Leen Ritmeyer, "From Sinai to Jerusalem", p18) Here, Miriam was made leprous because she opposed Moses' marriage to a Cushite (Ethiopian) woman. She was there for seven days. Miriam's sin affected the movement of the whole assembly.

3. Kadesh-Barnea (Num 12:16; Num 20; Num 21:1-9)

They were here for at least 40 days. (**Deut 1:46** alludes to the fact that they were here for a long time.) They wandered around the Sinai Peninsula then they came back to Kadesh. Here, from Kadesh they went to Mount Hor where Aaron died. Then they traveled on the route to the Red Sea to go around Edom.

4. Plains of Moab (Num 21:10-35; Num 25:1-3)

Here they defeated Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, King of Bashan. They pitched their tents for the last time outside the Promised Land. Balak, King of Moab tried to use Balaam to curse them. God intervened, though the Moabites enticed the Israelites to sexual immorality and the worship of their idols.

5. Crossing the Jordan River (Josh 3)

Although Moses could not lead his people into the Promised Land, his successor Joshua did so. Before crossing, Joshua sent two spies to gather information on Jericho (**Josh 2:1**).

It was a test of faith at harvest time, when the river overflowed its banks. Snow on Mount Hermon would melt and the sudden volume of water could turn the shallow stream into a swiftly flowing river with dangerous currents. The English expedition that sailed down the Jordan in the 19th Century estimated the Jordan, while flooded, was half a mile wide. Such an obstacle was no deterrent to the two spies on their way to and from Jericho.

This was the second time when the Ark went before the Israelites. Before it was kept at the centre of the tribal groupings. Here they were to walk at a distance of about 1km behind the Ark. As soon as the Ark touched the waters, the river piled in a heap. They crossed over in one day!

6. Jericho (Josh 6)

Here the Ark of the Covenant was again the focal point. Obeying God's commands to Joshua, the Israelites marched around the city once a day for six days, the armed men preceding seven priests blowing trumpets who went before the Ark that was carried by its staves. The multitude of

Israel followed behind. On the seventh day, the Ark would have presumably been carried around seven times as God brought down the walls.

7. Gilgal (Josh 7; Josh 8:1-9)

This was the first site of their encampment. Here the Israelites were circumcised before engaging in any battle on the other side of the Jordan.

Again here, Joshua and the elders, after their initial defeat by the “few” men from Ai, fell before the Ark to entreat God’s help (God then revealed that an Israelite had taken something from Jericho, the city that was accursed. The culprit, Achan, was discovered and punished). Then they returned to Ai and were victorious.

8. The Valley where the Sun Goes Down (Josh 8:30-35)

Moses commanded (**Deut 11:29-30**) them to pronounce the blessings and curses on Mount Gerizim and Ebal respectively. Joshua obeyed and brought, not just the fighting men, but the entire Israelites. (This command was fulfilled a few days after they crossed the Jordan). They left their new found home in Gilgal to trek up this valley into the heart of enemy territory when so far they had conquered only two cities!!

Their dependence on God was incredible. They had the faith to do this even though they knew they had many more cities to conquer. See **Jos 12:24** – they eventually conquered 31 kings in all!

(Also **Jos 8:33** – What an impressive fight!)

[Today this valley is called Wadi Fari’a. In summer a traveler coming up from the Jordan would see the sun set exactly at the end of the valley (p31, Leen)]

The Ark was right at the centre of the crowd at Mt Ebal and Mt Gerizim! Imagine about 1 million people pronouncing the curses and then another 1 million pronouncing blessings – a great “visual aid” for God’s people for years to come.

9. Shiloh (Josh 18; Josh 19; 1 Sam 1)

During the long wars against the Canaanites in the heart of the country, the Tabernacle and the Ark stayed in Gilgal. Then in **Josh 18:1**, they set up the tabernacle at Shiloh. This area was chosen because Joshua wanted a secluded area for the Tabernacle. From here, three men from each of the remaining seven tribes were sent out to measure the land. These men came back and then cast lots at Shiloh, (as in **Josh 19:51**) at the door of the Tabernacle and the land was allocated to the different tribes. This shows also the centrality of the Ark. Later, after many years, in **1 Sam 1:7,24** the Ark was in the same sort of permanent structure referred to as the “house of the Lord”.

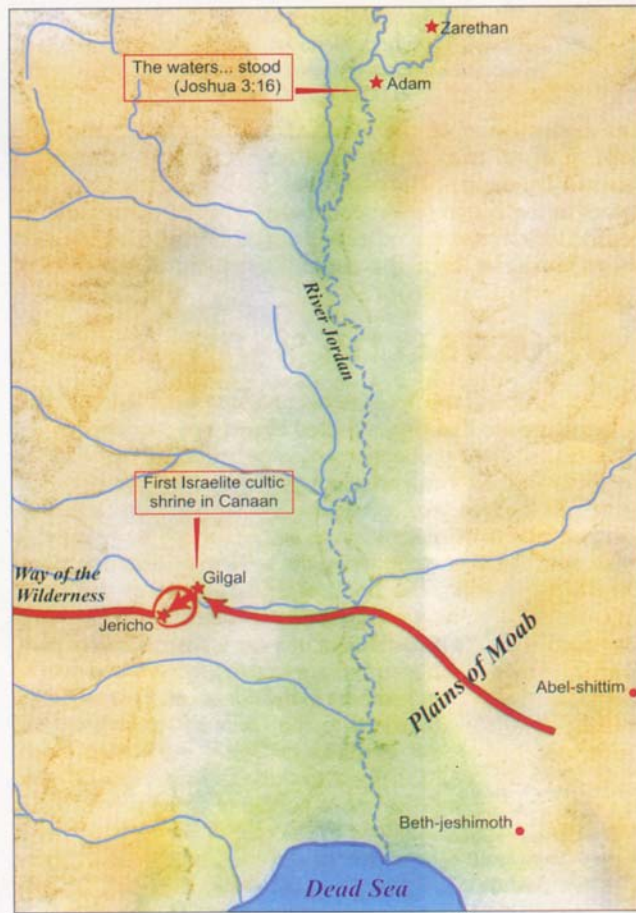
10. Aphek (1 Sam 4)

Israel was being defeated by the Philistines. The Elders sent for the Ark of the Covenant in Shiloh to help lead them in battle. Although terror seized the Philistines, they were still victorious. The news that the battle had been lost and the Ark taken brought Eli to his death. It was then sent wandering for about seven months through enemy territory (**Ps 78:60-61**).

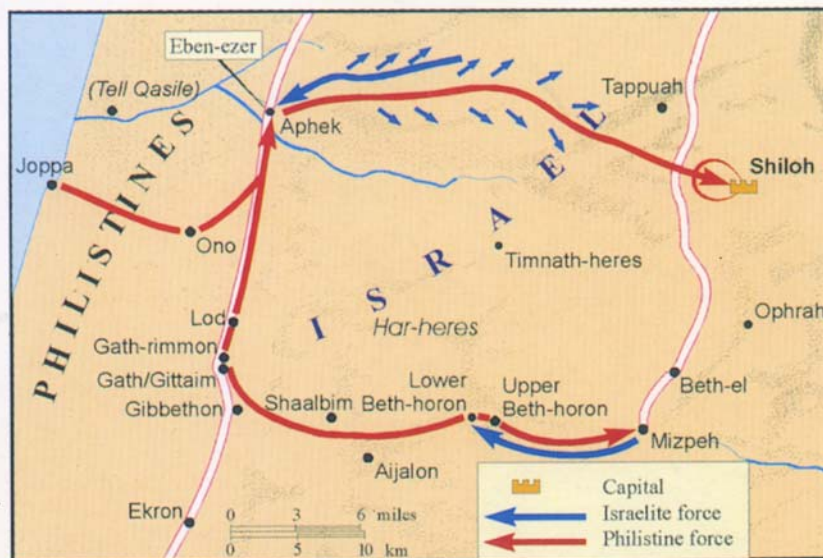
11. The Philistines (1 Sam 5; 1 Sam 6:1-18)

After they captured it, they took it to Ebenezer and then to Ashdod. The Ark brought trouble to them. Here, in Ashdod, the fish god Dagon was worshipped. (Ashdod was located close to sea). The Ark was placed alongside to Dagon, which shows that the Philistines had a great respect for the Ark. However, the image of Dagon toppled. Then a plague broke out. Then the pagans, out of terror, sent the Ark to Gath. Another plague broke out, so they sent the Ark to Ekron. From here the Ark was returned to Israel in the Judean foothills by two milking cows.

LESSON EIGHT – THE WANDERINGS OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT



Crossing the River Jordan. ²⁶



The battle of Eben-ezer. ²⁷

12. Beth – Shemesh (1 Sam 6:19-21; 1 Sam 7:1)

Some of the men of Beth-Shemesh, after their celebration at the arrival of the Ark, failed to accord the ark proper respect, resulting in the destruction of 50,070 men. Like the Philistines, they reacted in terror.

13. Kiriath-Jearim (1 Sam 7)

The Ark was kept here for twenty years after being brought from Beth-Shemesh. Samuel, the prophet, took charge and God brought about great victories. There was finally a righteous prophet. God restored back the good fortunes of Israel.

14. Looking Toward Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:1-11)

When David became king, the Ark of Covenant was removed from Kiriath-Jearim. He did not follow the scriptural stipulation that the Ark be carried by its staves on the shoulders of Kohathite priests (**Num 4:15**). They paid the price of this violation. See also 1 Chron 13,15. Uzzah who presumably was guiding the cart while his brother drove it, touched the Ark in an attempt to steady it and was struck down instantly. This tragedy caused David to change his mind about bringing the Ark up to the City of David. Instead, it was brought into a nearby house – again that of a Gentile.

15. The House of Obed-Edom (2 Sam 6:10-16)

The name “Obed-Edom the Gittite” implies that he was from the Philistine city of Gath, as was Goliath the Gittite. According to the late Prof. Benjamin Mazar (Leen, p51) the house of Obed-Edom was located in Jerusalem, outside the City of David. This appears reasonable as the distance between the house of Obed-Edom and the City of David does not seem very far. Here the Ark remained for three months.

16. The City of David (2 Sam 6:12-19)

David, during his long flight from Saul and his seven years in Hebron, longed for Jerusalem. – **Ps 43:3-4**. With great joy he brought the Ark back. God blessed him tremendously thereafter. The Ark had now arrived at its last station before it was installed in the Holy of Holies of the Temple built by Solomon, David’s son.

17. In the Temple (1 Chron 28:2)

The Ark and the Tabernacle had been separated since the capture of the Ark by the Philistines. Solomon built a temple where he kept the Ark (**1 Chron 22:5**). The Ark finally rested here. According to **1 Kings 8:4**, the Tabernacle and all its vessels were brought into the Temple at the same time. Here the Ark and the Tabernacle were finally reunited. At last the staves were removed from the Ark, **1 Kings 8:8**; since this was the permanent resting place for the Ark. As far as we know from Scripture, the Ark remained here until the reign of King Manasseh, who set a graven image of the asherah he had made in the Holy of Holies and presumably moved the ark (**2 Kings 21:7, 2 Chron 33:5**).

A generation later, Josiah commanded the Levites to put the holy Ark back in the temple, another reason to believe that Manasseh had removed it (**2 Chron 35:3**). *Following its restoration from Josiah, we hear no more of the Ark.* There is neither any mention of it in the list of Temple treasures carried off to Babylon when the city fell in 586 BC (**2 Kings 25:13-17**) nor does it appear on the Arch of Titus in Rome, which depicts the triumphant procession of the Romans with the spoils of the Jerusalem Temple after its destruction in AD 70. Tradition has it that Jeremiah hid the Ark on Mount Nebo in Jordan (see the book of 2 Maccabees 2:1-8, found in the Apocrypha). Many rabbis believe that the Ark is hidden somewhere beneath the temple mount till today.

Lessons Learned from The Ark and its Journeys:

The Ark of the covenant was a sacred object, so sacred that only a select group of people were able to touch it without getting zapped! Maybe you've seen the movie "Raiders of the Lost Ark".... It was sacred because it represented the leading of God; the relationship between God and the nation of Israel; and the presence of God.

Today, we do not have such a visual aid, but we have a direct relationship with God who manifests Himself in Three Persons. (See Isa 9:6,7; Titus 3:4-7 and 2 Cor 13:14). He is, God, our Father, who we worship, trust and follow. He is also God, the Son, who brings us into a relationship with the Father through his blood which removes our sins. Thirdly, He is God, the Holy Spirit, who lives in us; we can constantly enjoy the presence of God.

The Ark was the most sacred element of the Tabernacle; without it there was no Tabernacle. Sacred is defined in the dictionary as "something regarded as too important to be changed or interfered with" (Collins Dictionary). Some of us have lost the attitude that God and His commands are sacred and should not be interfered with. Do you have a sacred or casual attitude about our spiritual lives? Do you miss your Q.T.? If it is sacred, nothing will interfere or change it! Do you go to God for strength and direction? Or is your Q.T. an obligation and a duty because you are a "Christian"? Do you go to God in awe, begging for mercy, like the Israelites did when they approached the ark? Or are you instead approaching God, demanding your 'rights', becoming bitter if God doesn't comply immediately?

The sanctity of the Ark resulted in three absolutes. The Ark was to be worshiped alone, revered and definitely not manipulated.

1. Sacred And Worshiped ALONE

How are we worshipping God? Do we worship Him and Him alone? Or do we put an idol right next to God like the Israelites did? (1 Sam 5:1-5, 2 Kings 21:7-9) It is an insult to God when we try to put an idol next to him. Here are three tests to see if you have an idol right next to our God!

- i) Does it affect your Q.T?
- ii) Does it affect your mission?
- iii) Does it affect your church attendance?

2. Sacred And Feared

Many times the Israelites showed disrespect for the Ark.

- i. **1 Sam 6:19-20** 70 died for looking at the Ark.
- ii. **2 Sam 6:6-7** Uzzah died for touching the Ark
- iii. **2 Kings 21:7, 2 Chr 33:5** Manasseh was judged by God for removing the Ark.

(see **2 Chr 35:3**. Josiah, his grandson found the ark and restores it to its rightful place)

If they had feared God they would have read God's commands and thus would have known how to handle the Ark. As it was, they were flippant and had a casual attitude about it.

Do you have a casual attitude about God's word? Do you feel the urge to read the morning papers and check your e-mails before reading the bible? Do you get more joy and inspiration reading other religious books, commentaries than the word of God? There is nothing wrong reading them, but to be more DEPENDANT on them than the word of God is not right. The word of God needs to be feared and loved more than any other books.

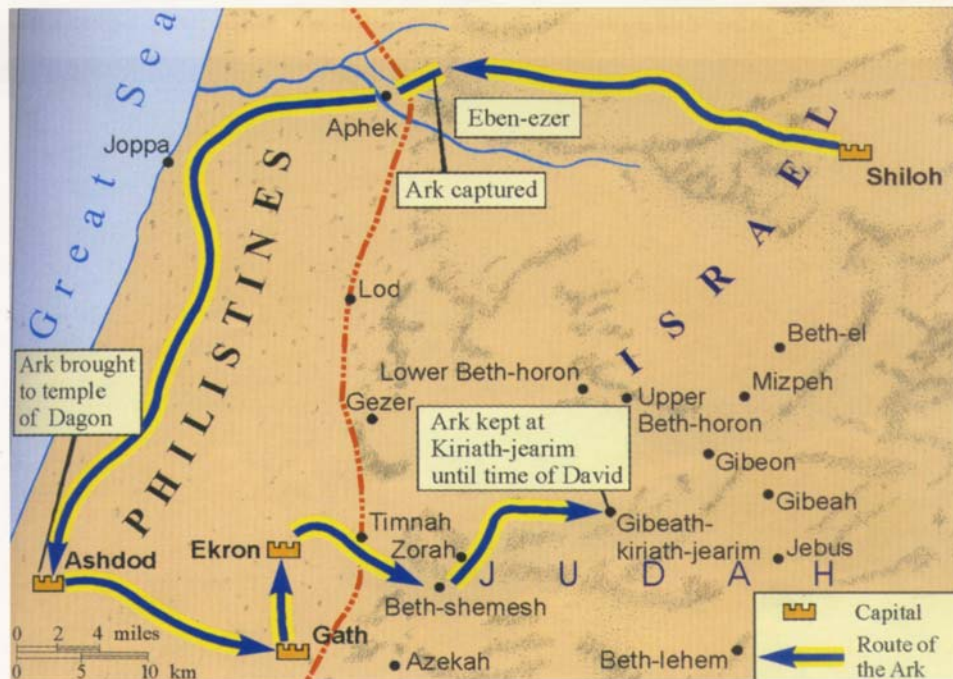
How much do you fear God in your hearts? Proverbs 1: 29-33 says that fearing God is simply a choice, not a gift. Looking at God's creation and acknowledging his power is a good starting point in developing the fear of God. When you look at the creation, do you fear God?

3. Sacred And Not To Be Manipulated

The Ark didn't guarantee success. Even when God's people had the Ark with them, they still needed to *exercise their own faith and courage* before any victories were achieved!

Kadesh Barnea (Negative example)

Joshua's time – Jordan crossing, Jericho march, defeat of the 31 kings.



Map of the Ark's Wandering in Philistia ²⁸



David brings back the Ark to Israelites at Kiriath-Jearim ²⁹

The Ark couldn't be "purchased cheaply"! It only belonged to the Israelites. One had to be in a covenant relationship to have access to God through the Ark. Only the Israelites enjoyed that special relationship. The humorous story of the statue of Dagon, the Philistine god, falling down illustrates this point very well. (Oh well, "Raiders of the Lost Ark" is still a great movie)

The Ark's supernatural power could not be manipulated by human will. God refuses to be manipulated and to be "used" to accomplish our own will. He was creator of heaven and earth and therefore stood above creation and its laws. He came in sovereign freedom. No one forced him to come. He came down and instead used his creation (the smoke, fire and earthquake) to come close to his people. He, the sovereign God, was not to be controlled or manipulated. The Philistines treated the Ark as if it were a talisman, as did the Israelites in the time of Eli as judge of Israel. The Ark was brought from Shiloh to Aphek to triumph over their enemies. They were manipulating God. They thought if they were physically closer to the Ark they would win the battle. Little did they know that since their hearts were distant from God, the Ark didn't matter. Their hearts had gone astray but they were trying to manipulate God. Although they had unity and zeal, (1 Sam 4:5) defeat was inevitable since the hearts of Eli's sons, who served as priests, were wicked. The Ark, which was supposed to represent their relationship with God, was not to be used to manipulate God.

Do you manipulate God? Do you pray to God to only make you successful? Do you look at your Christian life as a career in the corporate world? Do you feel that you are using God?

4. Sacred And Will Pour Out Blessings On The Righteous

In contrast, when the Ark was not treated with contempt, the Israelites experienced victory. This is apparent in the following periods:

- Finding a camp site for the Israelites at Dizahab
- Crossing of the Jordan
- Defeat of Jericho
- Announcing of curses and blessings in Mount Gerizim and Ebal. (Even though only two kings had been defeated up to that point, 29 other were subsequently defeated by Joshua as the Ark was kept in Gilgal.)

- King David – The kingdom flourished
- King Solomon – The kingdom continued to blossom

Joshua and David both led God's nation during its greatest periods.

- i. They were known for their fear and obedience.
- ii. They guarded the Ark well.(In David's case, he had to learn a lesson first)

God will bless you if you put him at the center of his life. This is a guarantee. This does not mean that we will not have to go through hard times but that God will always pull us through.

Conclusion

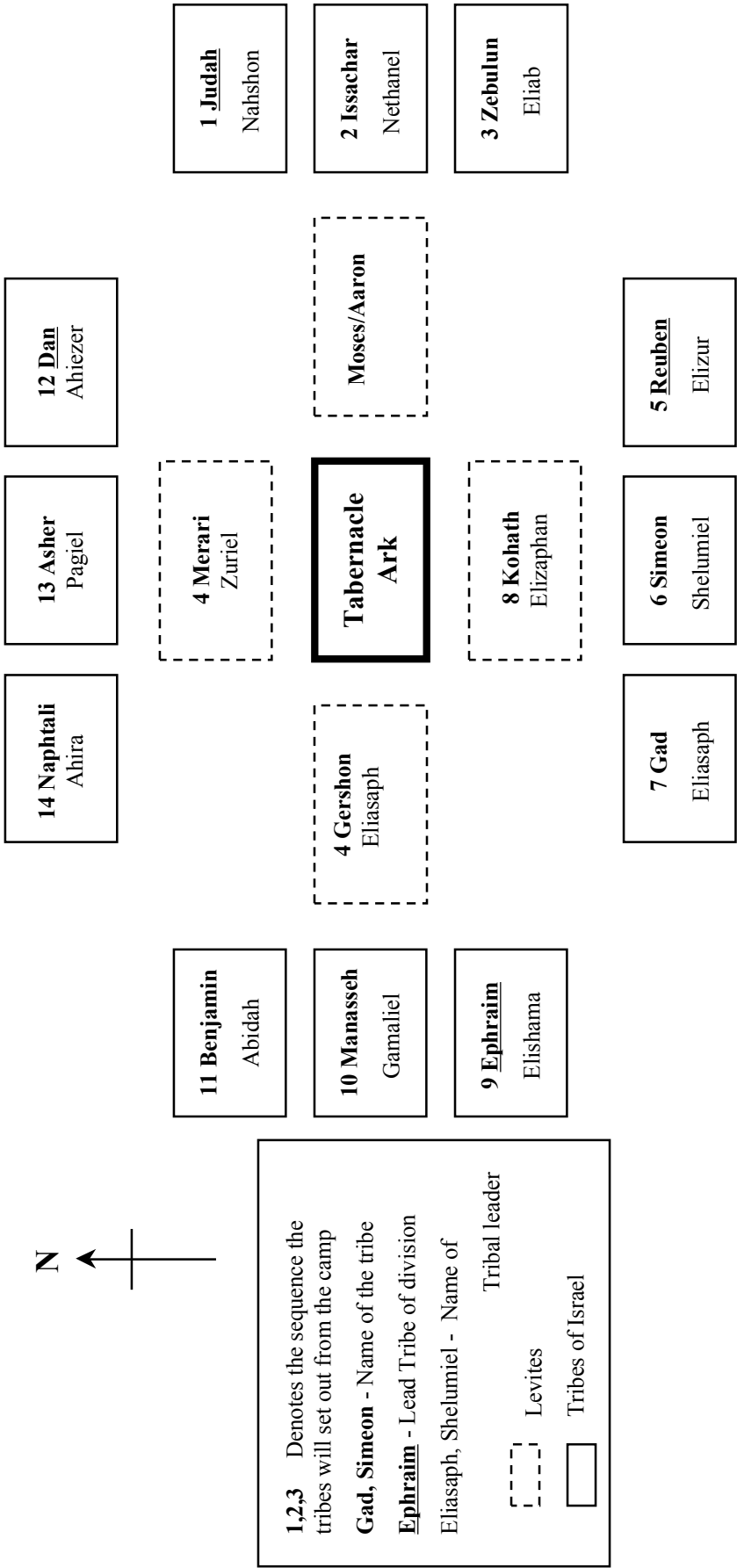
1. How are you making God the center of your world? Do you treat your relationship with God as sacred? Do you respect His word? Do you miss your quiet times? Are you holy? Seek the Rewarder, not the reward!!

2. During the 38 year period, though they had the Ark, they, according to **Acts 7:42b**, worshipped idols and forgot circumcision **Josh 5:5**

They had the Ark but worshipped idols. You may have the access to God but in your hearts worship idols. Likewise with Dagon idol in the Philistine territory.

3. No magic or any force in creation could be used to manipulate God. God refuses to be manipulated. Do you manipulate God? Do you go to him only in times of trouble? Do you remember him at all times? Do you treat him as one that you are fortunate to have a relationship with? Do you manipulate him, using him to achieve your own personal and selfish desires?

APPENDIX A : Layout Of the Israelite Camp



APPENDIX B

Order of March : The Position of the Ark relative to the 12 tribes during their march

1. Judah
2. Issachar
3. Zebulun
4. Reuben
5. Simeon
6. Gad
7. **Levites (Kohathites) –
The position of the Ark**
8. Half tribe of Ephraim
9. Half tribe of Manasseh
10. Benjamin
11. Dan
12. Asher
13. Naphtali

APPENDIX C

The Number of Animals Sacrificed for A Given Year

Feast	Scripture Reference	Bull	Ram	Lamb	Goat	Daily Sacrifice	No. of days (Hebrew)	No. of Sabbaths	No. of Months	Total No. of Animals	Total less Daily Sacrifice
Pentecost	Num 28:26-31	2	1	7	1	2 lambs				13	11
Passover		2	1	7	1	2 lambs				13	11
Feast of Trumpets		1	1	7	1 (male)	2 lambs				12	10
Tabernacle											
> 1st Day		13	2	14	1 (sin offering)	2 lambs				32	30
> 2nd Day		12	2	14	1 (sin offering)	2 lambs				31	29
> 3rd Day		11	2	14	1 (sin offering)	2 lambs				30	28
> 4th Day		10	2	14	1 (sin offering)	2 lambs				29	27
> 5th Day		9	2	14	1 (sin offering)	2 lambs				28	26
> 6th Day		8	2	14	1 (sin offering)	2 lambs				27	25
> 7th Day		7	2	14	1 (sin offering)	2 lambs				26	24
> 8th Day		1	1	1	1 (sin offering)	2 lambs				12	10
Day of Atonement	Num 29:7-11 Lev 16:1	1 for people 1 for priesthood	1 for people 1 for priesthood	7	1 (sin offering) 1 killed, another freed	2 lambs				15	13
Daily Offering						2 lambs	354			(354 * 2)	708
Sabbaths (weekly)				2				354 / 7 = 51		(51 * 2)	102
Monthly		2	1	7	1				12	(12 * 11)	132
First Fruits	Lev 23:9			1							1
Grand Total											1,187

(Note : For New Moon sacrifice, see p.82)

APPENDIX D

JEWISH CALENDAR

Sacred	Civil	Name	Modern Calendar	Farm Season	Feast
1	7	Nisan(Abib)	Mar-Apr	Barley Harvest	1) Passover 2) Unleavened Bread 3) Firstfruits
2	8	Iyyar(Ziv)	Apr-May	Barley Harvest	
3	9	Sivan	May-Jun	Wheat Harvest	4) Pentecost (Weeks)
4	10	Tammuz	Jun-Jul	Grape Harvest	
5	11	Ab	Jul-Aug	Olive Harvest	
6	12	Elul	Aug-Sep	Dates-Figs Harvest	
7	1	Tishri	Sep-Oct	Early Rains	5) Trumpets 6) Yom Kippur 7) Tabernacles (Booths)
8	2	Heshvan	Oct-Nov	Plowing	
9	3	Kislev	Nov-Dec	Wheat-Barley Sowing	
10	4	Tebeth	Dec-Jan	Winter Rains	
11	5	Shebat	Jan-Feb	Almond Bloom	
12	6	Adar	Feb-Mar	Citrus Harvest Latter Rains	
13		Adar Sheni		Intercal ary Month	