

QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

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*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry
for the Christian community*

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THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

The Church (God's new covenant people) is not a replacement for Israel (God's old covenant people). Both covenants are eternal. However, there are wonderful similarities in His dealings with both bodies, and we can learn much from studying the way in which He dealt with Israel.

1. Coming out of Egypt - Exodus 11 v 1 to 15 v 21

- a) A nation is born. The cauldron of Egypt had turned Jacob's family into a mighty nation. As we are individually called out of the world we are being formed into a mighty kingdom, 1 Peter 2 v 9.
- b) A bitter/sweet experience. They had made many friends and acquaintances in Egypt and absorbed much of the culture over 430 years. These had to be left behind. As we come to Christ divisions are inevitably created with our non-Christian friends and relatives.
- c) A work of God. The first nine plagues were either duplicated by Egyptian magicians or could be explained away as natural phenomena. With the tenth plague there was no mistaking the hand of God. In the case of our own conversion, it is not moral improvement, but a clear act of divine grace and spiritual power – a new birth.
- d) A covering of blood. The Children of Israel were each covered by the blood of a lamb. So are we.
- e) A clean break. After the Red Sea crossing there was no going back. We are now a separated people, and we should live accordingly.
- f) A guiding spirit. In all the wilderness years they were under the guidance of the pillar of cloud/fire. We are each under the personal leading of the Holy Spirit.
- g) A cause for praise. Moses and Miriam led the praise, Exodus 15 v 1 – 21. For us, the Lord has put a new song into our mouths and given us a heart of praise.

2. The first steps - Exodus 15 v 22 to 16 v 36

- a) The bitter waters of Marah. Their apparent desertion by the Lord, and then His provision of bitter water, was designed to remove their taste for the things of Egypt. Often, we pass through barren and even bitter times, but it is to remove our worldliness and prepare us for the life of pilgrimage.
- b) The rest and joy of Elim. After times of testing and refining, the Lord frequently gives us times of refreshing and comparative rest.
- c) The provision for the journey. God's food, the heavenly manna, was:
 - i) miraculous.
 - ii) sufficient.
 - iii) nourishing.So with us the Word of God, our heavenly manna, is all of this.

3. Focus on leadership - Exodus 17 & 18

- a) Water from the rock. At a time of spiritual barrenness, the leaders, collectively, had to seek the Lord forcefully.
- b) The place of intercession. As the enemy strikes (at the weakest point, Deuteronomy 25 v 17 – 18) so some are called to fight, and some are called to intercede. Both jobs are equally important.
- c) One body, many gifts. Moses accepted his father-in-law's good advice and saw that God had given gifts for much delegation. The clear anointing of the Spirit on these others is recorded in Numbers 11 v 16 - 17 & 24 – 30.

4. A relationship with God. Exodus 19, 24, 32 & 33 v 1 – 6

- a) God's covenant grace.
 - i) God's transport - Exodus 19 v 4, Deuteronomy 32 v 10 – 11.
 - ii) God's treasure - Exodus 19 v 5, Deuteronomy 7 v 6, Titus 2 v 14, 1 Peter 2 v 9.
 - iii) God's throne - Exodus 19 v 16 – 20, Jeremiah 3 v 17, Hebrews 12 v 18 – 24.
 - iv) God's trinity - Exodus 24 v 9 – 11, Exodus 33 v 18 – 23, 1 Timothy 6 v 16, but note John 12 v 41 and Hebrews 1 v 3. The "Theophany"; the visible presence of God in the form of Jesus in the Old Testament.
- b) Man's uncertain response.
 - i) Man's impatience - Exodus 32 v 1.
 - ii) Man's inconsistency - Exodus 32 v 2 – 4.
 - iii) Man's idolatry - Exodus 32 v 5 – 6.
 - iv) Man's intercession - Exodus 32 v 11 – 14.
- c) Only second-best? Exodus 33 v 1 – 6. The loss of God's closest presence.

5. Moving on with God - Numbers 10 v 33 to 12 v 16

- a) Morning and evening prayer - Numbers 10 v 33 – 36.
- b) Lack of contentment - Numbers 11.
 - i) Lack of gratitude for God's provision.
 - ii) The rabble amongst them.
 - iii) Loss of faith
 - iv) God's anger is the penalty of ingratitude.
- c) Self-pity under pressure - Numbers 11 v 11 – 15.
- d) Youthful over-enthusiasm - Numbers 11 v 28 – 29.
- e) Family jealousy - Numbers 12.
- f) God defends the meek - Numbers 12 v 3.
- g) Judgement and mercy - Numbers 12.

6. Questioning God's promises. Numbers 13 & 14

- a) The joy of resting in God's promises - Hebrews 3 v 1 – 3, 12 – 19, 4 v 1 – 11. Finding God's purpose for our lives, and accepting it, is the place of rest for us.
- b) Checking God's promises - Deuteronomy 1 v 22, Numbers 13 v 1 – 25.
- c) The reality is as good as promised - Numbers 13 v 27.
- d) There are obstacles to cross before receiving the promise - Numbers 13 v 28 – 29, and faith is required first - Numbers 13 v 30 & 14 v 9b.
- e) Unbelief is contagious - Numbers 13 v 31 – 14 v 1.
- f) Unbelief is the start of a downhill path - unhappiness 14 v 1, rebellion 14 v 4, anger 14 v 10, death 14 v 12.
- g) The danger of losing God's promises - Numbers 14 v 26 – 32.
- h) The intercessor is always available - Numbers 14 v 13 – 19.
- i) Blessings and curses affect succeeding generations - Numbers 14 v 18 & 31.
- j) We cannot enter into God's promises in our own strength - Numbers 14 v 39 – 45.

7. Rebelling against God's authority - Numbers 16 & 17

- a) Point at issue; who bears God's authority?
- b) The rebels' faulty judgement (v 3), not all were holy, and anyway, God appoints leadership.
- c) The spirit of true leadership; the contrasting spirit between Moses (v 4 – 11) and the others (v 12 – 14).
- d) Moses left the decision with God – v 16 – 17 & 28 - 38.
- e) God's mercy is greater than his judgement, but judgement nevertheless, v 41 – 50.
- f) God honours His true servants - Numbers 17.