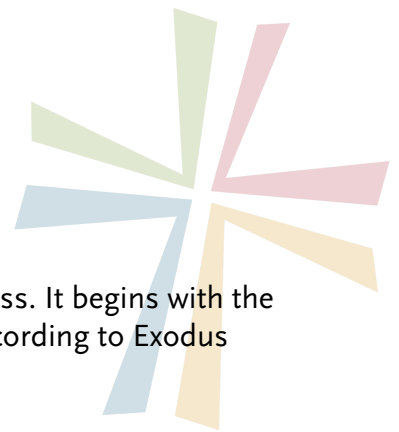


SERMON EXTRAS

SEPTEMBER 2, 2019



Episode 3 in the Bible covers the years the Israelites were in the wilderness. It begins with the Exodus from Egypt after 400 years in slavery (430 years to be precise according to Exodus 12:40) and ends with their entry into the Promised Land.

HOW LONG DID THE ISRAELITES ROAM IN THE WILDERNESS?

Forty years. Some estimates say the direct route to the southern border of the land of Canaan from Egypt would have taken just 11 days. However the people would have faced resistance from the Philistines who lived along the sea coast. God knew that after years in slavery they would not be ready to fight, so they were taken south toward the Red Sea. (*see Exodus 13:17f*)

Later, when they were camped at an oasis called Kadesh Barnea, twelve spies (one from each tribe that originated with the twelve sons of Jacob) were sent into the land of Canaan to bring back a report. God's plan was for the people to enter the land but fear overcame them. Only two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, tried to rally the people, but the other spies started spreading false reports, so God consigned the people to roam in the wilderness 40 years, one year for each of the 40 days the spies were in the land. (Numbers 14:34) This, in effect, was a generation. Out of all the people who left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb would enter the promised land.

WHAT ARE THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE CALLED?

All of these events are contained in what is called the **Pentateuch** which means "five scrolls." The centerpiece of these books is The Torah which contains the Ten Commandments, and the 600-plus laws that Moses receives from God detailing what it means to live by these commands. These laws have been divided between **Laws of Morality** (directing the way the people live together) and **Laws of Purity** (defining their holiness or distinctiveness as God's people.) Because Moses is the central figure in the story through whom the law is given, these are also known as the Books of Moses.

- **Genesis** means "beginnings." It describes the beginning of the world considering why God created, not necessarily how. These are also the stories of the Patriarchs.
- **Exodus** means "exit, departure" because it begins with the liberation of God's people from slavery in Egypt.
- **Leviticus** means "related to the Levites." The Levites were priests. Levi was one of the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel). His heirs were the priestly tribe. Moses and Aaron were Levites. The Levites were responsible for all affairs related to the temple and ritual practices (or the Purity laws). Leviticus 17-26 is known as "The Holiness Code."
- **Numbers** is appropriately named for the census that was taken of the people in the wilderness. This book also tells the important stories and events that happened during those years.
- **Deuteronomy** means "repetition of the law" taken from 'deutero' (second) and 'nomos' (law). It repeats the giving of the Ten Commandments and many of the laws given through Moses.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GOLD CALF?

Sunday we recalled how Moses crashed the first tablets with the 10 Commandments because of his outrage that the people made an idol to worship. Interesting calves were popularly worshipped by other religions in that area at the time. God gave Moses two new tablets that went into the Ark of the Covenant which will figure prominently in the religious life of the people for years to come, but what happened to the calf?

According to Exodus 32:20 (*but the whole chapter is important to read!*), Moses burned the calf in the fire, ground it into a dust, sprinkled it on the water and made the people drink it! Now just carry that thought out biologically for a minute. What happens to the majority of the liquid you drink? Moses was teaching the people that anything you can do that with, is no god!

