

# Leviticus

Led out of bondage by a holy God, Israel must now learn what it means to be His holy people. Thus Leviticus, the book of worship, follows Exodus, the book of deliverance. Leviticus addresses the question, "How can a sinful people worship and serve a holy God?" Taking its name from the priestly tribe of Levi, Leviticus outlines regulations concerning the priests and the worship in the tabernacle. It describes the appointed feasts and festivals and contains God's instructions for His provision for man's sin: the blood atonement.

FOCUS	HOLY SACRIFICES			HOLY SERVICE				
<b>DIVISIONS</b>	Offerings of Praise and Dedications	Offerings of Restoration	Holy Office of the Priest	Holiness in Daily Life	Holiness in National Life	Holiness for the Individual	Holy Priests and Holy Feasts	Holiness in the Holy Land
	1	3 : 4	7 : 8	10 : 11	15 : 16	17 : 18	20 : 21	23 : 24 : 27
<b>TOPICS</b>	Worshiping a Holy God			Walking with a Holy God				
	Vital Offerings			Various Obligations				
<b>PLACE</b>	Mount Sinai							
<b>TIME</b>	Approximately One Month							

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# Offerings of Praise and Dedication

*Key Passage: Leviticus 1*

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3
Burnt Offering	Grain Offering	Peace Offering
Sacrifices for Those in Fellowship with God		

**OVERVIEW** With the tabernacle completed, God now gives Moses instructions regarding the five types of sacrifices that would be offered in the tabernacle. Three of them—the offerings of an aroma pleasing to the Lord—were voluntary expressions of worship tailored to the person's ability to give. In the burnt offering, the worshiper declared his total commitment to God. Through the meal offering he acknowledged that his material possessions belonged wholly to the Lord. By means of the peace offering, the worshiper publicly expressed his thanks or made a vow of spiritual service to God.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Today you will read about three Old Testament sacrifices prescribed for each Israelite. But did you know that the New Testament describes at least three “sacrifices” prescribed for each believer—three ways for you to offer a sacrifice to God today?

*God knew  
all about  
our sins  
beforehand,  
and He still  
thought  
us worth  
saving.*

Instead of a whole burnt offering, you can offer your body as a pleasing sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1). In place of a grain offering, you might offer from your material possessions a pleasing sacrifice by helping someone in financial need (like the Philippians did for Paul; see Philippians 4:18). Instead of the peace offering, you could offer the “sacrifice of praise” to God (Hebrews 13:15), a verbal expression of thanksgiving for His care and provision in your life.

Today would be a good time to offer a sacrifice to God of a pleasing aroma. Take one of the three sacrifices described above and put it to work by committing each part of your body to God's service (living sacrifice), writing a check to someone in need (pleasing sacrifice), or sharing publicly God's goodness in your life (sacrifice of praise).

**INSIGHT** *Sacrifices for the 21st Century*

Animal sacrifices, so essential to Old Testament worship, ceased with the Messiah's once-for-all-time sacrifice on the cross. Yet Peter tells us that all believers are priests who should continually offer up “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God” (1 Peter 2:5).

# Offerings for Restoration

*Key Passage: Leviticus 4–5*

CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTERS 6-7
Sin Offering	Restitution Offering	A Second Look at the Offerings
Sacrifices to Restore Fellowship		Sacrifices Reviewed

**OVERVIEW** In addition to the three offerings of aroma pleasing to the Lord, God gives the Israelites two additional sacrifices. Both are required when sin has broken fellowship with God. The sin offering—covering sins of uncleanness, neglect, or thoughtlessness—provided restoration for the sinner while teaching the seriousness of sin and its consequences. The restitution offering—covering sins of injury to God and to others—provided not only for the restoration of the sinner, but for compensation to the injured party as well.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** In the margin, list five unpleasant but beneficial experiences from daily life—things you dislike doing (like going to the dentist), but know are good for you.

You probably don't enjoy the whine of the dentist's drill; but after all the poking and drilling and bitter taste, you find you enjoy a healthier mouth. Being corrected by a boss when you've made a mistake isn't pleasant either, but afterward you're glad your boss cared enough to confront you with the truth.

In the Christian life there are some equally painful but profitable exercises—such as obeying the biblical principle of restitution. When an Israelite caused injury to another, God's command was clear: "Make it up to him." Likewise, as a Christian, you have an obligation to repay those whom you have injured.

Think back over the past week. Is there someone whose character or possessions you have damaged? Have you asked for forgiveness? (That's hard.) Have you repaid what you owe? (That's harder still.) Take the initiative today to offer a restitution offering to God. You'll find the peace of mind and restored relationship well worth the pain.

*Life is a long lesson in humility.*

**INSIGHT** *And If You Need a Model to Follow . . .*

Zacchaeus, the tax collector who trusted Christ (Luke 19:1-10), beautifully illustrates restitution at work. The Law told a sinner to restore what he had taken or damaged, plus 20 percent. In his gratitude, Zacchaeus offered to restore fourfold what he had taken.

## ISRAEL'S HIGH PRIEST

# And Yours

Israel's high priest was the most important man in the religious life of the nation, for only he could offer the atoning sacrifice that God demanded. God still requires an atoning sacrifice for the sins of humanity; but in place of the temporary Aaronic priesthood, He has installed Jesus Christ, His own Son. He is our High Priest forever by virtue of His perfect sacrifice of Himself for our sins. Notice seven striking comparisons between these two high priests:

		ISRAEL'S HIGH PRIEST (LEVITICUS)	YOUR HIGH PRIEST (HEBREWS)
1	PERSON	Aaron or one of his descendants (16:3, 32)	Jesus Himself (4:14)
2	PLACE	Most Holy Place in the tabernacle (16:15-17)	Heaven itself (9:24)
3	OFFERING	Animal blood (16:14-15)	His own blood (9:12)
4	FREQUENCY	Once every year (16:34)	Once for all time (9:12)
5	EFFECT	Effective for the nation of Israel (16:34)	Effective to save completely (7:25)
6	DURATION	Effective for one year (16:34)	Provides eternal redemption (9:12)
7	PURITY	High priest needed purification himself (16:6)	Christ is perfect forever (7:26-28)

# Holy Office of the Priest

*Key Passage: Leviticus 9:23–10:7*

CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9	CHAPTER 10
Consecration of the Priestly Ministry	Inauguration of the Priestly Ministry	Regulation of the Priestly Ministry
Dedication	Duty	

**OVERVIEW** Israel's tabernacle, the place of communion with God through sacrifice, is entrusted to the custody of Aaron and his sons. The priestly corps must undergo a 10-step consecration process and a 7-day dedication period before they can begin their ministry of mediation. God's blessing—made visible by His fiery presence—suddenly turns into a curse as judgment falls on two of Aaron's disobedient sons. Their deaths remind all Israel of the solemn responsibility of serving a holy God. Obedience, not expedience, should mark God's people.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Nothing is as hard to gain, and as easy to lose, as a good reputation. One philosopher has observed, "To have lost your reputation is to be dead among the living." Perhaps as a child you heard your parents say, "Remember, what you do and say reflects on us." Your parents were telling you that the family's reputation was either being tarnished or enhanced by your actions.

Perhaps that's why God responded with such frightening judgment upon Nadab and Abihu. By their carelessness and disobedience, they threatened God's reputation both inside and outside the nation of Israel—a grave sin indeed.

Our lives as Christians may be the only "Bible" some people will ever read. Do we reveal a holy God by our commitment to holiness, or do we smear His reputation with inconsistent lives? Write this thought on a card and carry it with you: "God's reputation is at stake in my life. I want to maintain it, not stain it."

Then each time you are tempted to stray from God's holiness, pull out that card. Read it; think about it; then let God strengthen you to be holy—and wholly His.

*No one can  
build a  
reputation  
on what he's  
going to do  
tomorrow.*

## **INSIGHT** The Danger of Failing to Live Up to Your Name

Nadab and Abihu were in danger of damaging not just their own reputations. If allowed to continue in their sinful ways, they would have dishonored both their families and the godly names they carried.

## Holiness in Daily Life

*Key Passage: Leviticus 11:44-47; 13:59; 14:54-57*

CHAPTER 11	CHAPTER 12	CHAPTERS 13-14	CHAPTER 15
Purity in Diet	Purity in Delivery	Purity in Disease	Purity in Discharges
Avoidable Defilement	Unavoidable Defilement		

**OVERVIEW** Worshiping a holy God demands a holy people. For this reason God gives Israel a series of regulations dealing with ceremonial uncleanness. Four areas are specified: dietary laws (describing edible and non-edible animals); childbirth matters; leprosy and other skin disorders; and bodily discharges. Each set of commands follows a general pattern. The worshiper's defilement is first described, then the means for regaining his purity are prescribed. It's a lengthy, detailed section—because holiness demands attention to detail.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** In Leviticus 11:44, God told Moses to tell the Israelites: "Be holy, because I am holy." Isn't God demanding something impossible and unattainable? Isn't He being unreasonable when He says: "Be holy"? From a human viewpoint, the task seems impossible.

It is impossible by human efforts alone to live up to the righteous demands of a holy God. But the Law was designed to teach the Israelites to be dependent upon God. Just as He provided sacrifices and rituals for cleansing His less-than-perfect people, so He wants to teach you that only through the supernatural provision of a sinless Savior, Jesus Christ, can you hope to achieve holiness.

Paul puts it this way: "Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord [by faith, trusting in Him], continue to live in him [by faith, trusting in Him]" (Colossians 2:6). In Christ's strength you can live a holy and pure life. Complete this thought from Leviticus 11:44: "Be holy [how? when? where? with whom?] because I am holy." Then work today on developing the habit of holiness in one area of your life.

**INSIGHT** *Leprosy Then and Now*

It is doubtful that modern-day leprosy (called Hansen's Disease and caused by bacteria) is the same as Levitical leprosy (a variety of skin conditions) or New Testament leprosy (which apparently was a white, scaly disease, much like eczema or psoriasis).

*The Lord has  
two heavens  
to dwell in,  
and the holy  
heart is one  
of them.*

# Holiness in National Life

*Key Passage: Leviticus 16*

CHAPTER 16	CHAPTER 17
Day of Atonement	Defilement by Blood
Holiness of the Nation	

**OVERVIEW** The great Day of Atonement observed each year was Israel's most significant act of worship. On that day, the nation gathered to watch in expectation as the high priest entered the Holy of Holies with the blood of atonement which would cover the sins of the entire nation for another year. Because blood was the central element in Israel's national and personal redemption, God prohibited the use of blood for any purpose other than sacrifice to Him.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** What would you do if God gave you the responsibility of atoning for your own sins? What would you offer as payment to satisfy His righteous demands: the deed to your house? your savings account? your awards and achievements? your spotless reputation? As sincere as these offerings might be, they would never be adequate to make amends for your sins.

Each year, as the nation of Israel stood in front of the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement and watched the high priest carry the blood of the sin offering into the Holy of Holies, the people were reminded again that atonement was God's idea. It was His provision for forgiveness of sinful people. He took the initiative to establish a sacrifice of atonement, which provided a blood substitute for the guilty nation.

Just as God provided the way to cover Israel's sins, so too He has sent His own Son as the once-for-all-time atonement for your sins (1 John 2:2). As you rejoice over that wonderful truth, make a list of three friends who need to experience Christ's forgiveness of sins. Pray today for each of the three names and be ready to share the truth of the gospel with them when God opens the door.

*Jesus Christ  
is God's  
perfect  
provision for  
imperfect  
people.*

**INSIGHT** *No Private Sacrifices Allowed!*

The restrictions against private sacrifices outside the tabernacle (17:3-4) were to prevent the people from copying their pagan neighbors, who often poured their blood sacrifices into the ground as food for their gods. Only properly ordained priests in the proper location (the tabernacle) could offer Israel's sacrifices.

# Holiness for the Individual

## Key Passage: Leviticus 19

CHAPTER 18	CHAPTER 19	CHAPTER 20
Purity in Morals	Practice of Love	Penalty for Disobedience
Holiness for the Individual		

**OVERVIEW** In addition to the regulations governing national holiness, God provides Israel with laws governing personal conduct and purity in relation to the family, the community, and society in general. Because obedience is His primary concern, God requires that violators of His laws be punished, and that the punishment be appropriate to the crime committed. God's strict guidelines for living reflect His desire that His people "be holy . . . because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own" (20:26).

**YOUR DAILY WALK** "Love your neighbor as yourself" (19:18) rolls off the tongue with a familiar ease. But putting it into practice is another matter. Of all God's commands, it may be one of the most difficult to keep. Why? Because loving your neighbor means you must be involved in the life of your neighbor. That's hard to do because a human being's natural tendency is toward selfishness, not selflessness.

The Old Testament Law was a challenge to keep because it made very specific demands on the individual. If an Israelite had questions about how to relate to his neighbor, the Law provided the answers (19:9-18). The New Testament is just as specific, and just as demanding—especially when it speaks of your relationship to your "neighbor." Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) points out that your "neighbor" is anyone who needs your help and whose need God has equipped you to meet.

Put God's command to love your neighbor into practice today by seeking out someone who needs help with yardwork, housework, or homework. Assist them in love and treat them as you would yourself.

**INSIGHT** "Do Like Me to Be Like Me"

More than 40 times in chapters 18–22 we read God's words: "I am the LORD," and, "Be holy." Without a doubt, the holiness of the Redeemer is the compelling reason for His insistence on practices of purity by the redeemed.

*The primary test of life is not service but love for both man and God.*



# PLACING THE BOOKS OF Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy

TIME LINE	1450 BC	1425 BC	1400 BC
HISTORICAL BOOKS	Leviticus (1 Month, 1444)	1 Chronicles 1–2	Deuteronomy (2 Months, 1405)
POETIC/PROPHETIC BOOKS	(None)		
BIBLE MILESTONES	First Census (1444) 12 spies sent out (1444)	40 years of wandering (1444–1405)	Second Census (1405) Death of Moses (1405)
ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD	Late Bronze Age (ca. 1500–1200)		Oldest record of writing in China (ca. 1400) Iron weapons introduced (ca. 1400) Amarna tablets in Egypt (ca. 1400)

# Holy Priests and Holy Feasts

*Key Passage: Leviticus 21*

CHAPTER 21				CHAPTER 22	CHAPTER 23
Disqualifications of a Priest Through				Duties of a Priest in	
1	Defilement	15	16	Defect	24
Holy Priests				Holy Feasts	
				Ceremonies	Celebrations

**OVERVIEW** Privilege carries with it responsibility, and in the case of Israel's priests, the responsibilities of serving a holy God become quite demanding. The priests must avoid defilement which others might ordinarily experience. They must be without physical defect in order to serve in the sanctuary. They must bear the responsibility for maintaining purity in Israel's sacrificial worship. They must preside at Israel's yearly feasts and sacred assemblies. It is a demanding assignment to lead a nation in corporate worship of a holy God—a privilege not to be taken lightly or entered into casually.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** If you discovered that your dining room had been “bugged,” would you have some embarrassing conversations to explain?

Unfortunately, in many Christian homes the main course for Sunday dinner is often “roast preacher.” It's an easy habit to slip into, but one that can produce harm and bitterness.

In Israel's system of worship, the priests carried much of the responsibility for leading corporate worship. Today the church no longer has a “priestly class,” but it does have those specially gifted, trained, and set apart for the work of the ministry (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1). Like the priests of Old Testament times, these leaders have given of their time and energy in order to lead you in worship.

How often do you “remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you” (Hebrews 13:7)? Take a few minutes to write a thank-you note to your pastor or church leader, expressing gratitude for the consistent spiritual investment that person makes in your life.

*It is easier  
to follow the  
leader than  
to lead the  
followers.*

**INSIGHT** *Probing a Priestly Prohibition*

Priests with physical defects were excluded from offering sacrifices (21:17-21), though they were entitled to the privileges of priesthood such as eating the priestly portion (21:22). God was not relegating them to second-class status, but merely showing that the special service of sacrificing unblemished animals before a holy God required unblemished priests.

## Holiness in the Holy Land

*Key Passage: Leviticus 25*

CHAPTER 24	CHAPTER 25	CHAPTER 26	CHAPTER 27
Provision for the Sanctuary	Protection for the Land	Obedience and Disobedience	Vows and Tithes
Honoring God's Property		Honoring God's Program	

**OVERVIEW** The closing chapters of Leviticus contain a variety of instructions for Israel when the people occupy the promised land. Oil and bread must be provided for the sanctuary. The death penalty must fall on those who blaspheme the name of God. The land must be given periodic rest during the sabbatical and jubilee years. God promises to honor obedience to His commands and reward disobedience with stern judgment. The work of the Lord must be faithfully supported by the tithes of God's people, and vows must not be entered into lightly.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** People are born with an innate desire to possess. Children at play argue loudly, "That's mine!" Though adults usually tend to be more civilized about it, you'll find the same sentiment voiced repeatedly: "I want what's mine!"

God recognized this tendency in His people and instituted ways to help teach them a crucial spiritual truth. Every seventh year all land was to remain uncultivated in order to remind the nation that the land belonged not to them, but to God. And every 50th year, known as the Year of Jubilee, all land that had been sold was to be returned to its original owners. God would give the land a Sabbath of rest (25:2). They could enjoy it—not as permanent owners, but as foreigners and temporary residents (25:23).

How do you view your possessions? Do you hold on to them tightly, or have you recognized them as something graciously loaned to you by God? Remember, a steward is someone who owns nothing, but is responsible for everything entrusted to his care. To reinforce that truth, choose one room of your house and list everything in it. Then across the list, write these words: "Mine by stewardship, His by ownership." Get the picture?

### **INSIGHT** Captivity Foretold

One of the earliest predictions of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities occurs in today's reading (26:33-35). Israel knew from the start what would happen if the people disobeyed God's Word. Yet centuries later it would come true.

*If you owned everything your heart desired, chances are your heart would desire something else.*

# Numbers

**N**umbers is the chronicle of Israel's years of wilderness wandering between Sinai and Moab. Named for the two numberings of the nation, the book begins about a year after the Exodus and ends 40 years later as a new generation prepares to cross the Jordan and occupy the promised land. Detailing the lives of such men of God as Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, Numbers teaches that while God's discipline may sometimes be severe, He patiently waits to reward those who obey His Word.

FOCUS	WALKING			WANDERING			WAITING											
<b>DIVISIONS</b>	Counting and Camping	Cleansing and Congregating	Criticizing and Complaining	Twelve Spies and Death in the Desert	Aaron and Levites in the Wilderness	Snake of Bronze and Story of Balaam	Second Census and Laws of Israel	Last Days of Moses' Leadership	Sections, Sanctuaries, and Settlements									
	1	4	5	8	9	12	13	16	17	20	21	25	26	30	31	33	34	36
<b>TOPICS</b>	Law and Order			Rebellion and Disorder			New Laws for the New Order											
	Moving Out			Moving On			Moving In											
<b>PLACE</b>	En Route to Kadesh			En Route to Nowhere			En Route to Canaan											
<b>TIME</b>	Two Months			38 Years			A Few Months											

# Counting and Camping

*Key Passage: Numbers 3*

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4
Population of the Nation	Placement of the Nation	Placements of the Levites	Posts of the Levites
People		Priests	

**OVERVIEW** With the laws given and the ceremonies specified, God now commands Moses to count the people and position them in a square formation around the tabernacle. The number of fighting men (603,550) suggests a total population in excess of three million men, women, and children. The Levites are then positioned and numbered, and each priestly group is assigned a work detail in connection with the care and transporting of the tabernacle.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** What is it that we all have the same amount of, but no one ever seems to have enough of? (Hint: The answer is not IQ, money, or credit card accounts.)

You probably guessed it. The one commodity shared equally by all members of the human race is time. Whether you are a peasant or a president, God's gracious gift of time comes to you in bite-size, 24-hour chunks—no more, no less. Perhaps you have been frustrated in your attempt to manage your time and accomplish everything you set out to do each day. If so, consider this: You have all the time you need to accomplish everything God intends for you to accomplish today. That means if you are too busy to do the things you know God wants you to do, then you are busier than God intends for you to be.

Analyze your time priorities. Across a sheet of paper, draw seven columns for Sunday through Saturday, and divide each day according to the way you normally spend it. Is there adequate time for sleep? Bible study? prayer? recreation? family activities? If not, what needs to change if God is to be honored by your use of time?

*There's no time like the present to procrastinate.*

## **INSIGHT** The World's Largest Campground

If the population estimate of three million is accurate, and a minimum living space is allowed for each Israelite's family and flocks, the camp of Israel must have been enormous—covering more than 100 square miles (about twice the size of San Francisco). Yet through a detailed, God-given plan for pitching, striking, and moving camp, Moses maintained order in the nation.

# Cleansing and Congregating

*Key Passage: Numbers 5:11-31; 6:1-21*

CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 8
Separation from Defilement	Service for the Dedicated	Presentation for the Leaders	Presentation of the Levites
Cleansing		Worship	

**OVERVIEW** With the Israelites numbered and positioned, God further prepares the nation for entering the promised land by giving Moses instructions for cleansing and worship. First, Israel must be free of defilement from immorality and suspicions. The people must sense the sanctity of binding commitments such as the Nazirite vow. They must provide for the material needs of the tabernacle. And they must have a purified group of Levites to minister effectively for them in the corporate worship and celebration of the nation.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** A jealous husband. A suspicious wife. The combination can eat like acid into the marriage relationship. For this reason, God provided the seemingly strange ritual of Numbers 5:11-31 in order to deal decisively with jealousy and suspicion in the home. The ordeal by “bitter water” was designed to dramatize the bitterness and heartache caused by festering jealousy.

Today, the problem of jealousy remains just as widespread and malignant. But God’s prescribed cure has changed somewhat. According to James 4:7-10, it involves three parts: (1) submission to God; (2) confession to one another; (3) restoration in forgiving love. As with Numbers 5, the process is painful, but necessary.

Examine your heart right now. Are you harboring suspicion or jealousy toward a spouse, Christian friend, or family member? The place to begin is by talking to God. Confess your wrong attitude and appropriate His forgiveness. Then confront the other party in love. It won’t be pleasant, but when the alternative is simmering bitterness and broken fellowship, wouldn’t you agree that God’s way is best?

*Envy shoots  
at others  
and wounds  
itself.*

**INSIGHT** *No Wine, Corpses, or Haircuts Allowed*

The requirements of the Nazirite vow might seem strange unless understood in their symbolic sense. Wine symbolized comfort and enjoyment. Death and corpses represented defilement. Long hair stood for God-given strength and dignity. By avoiding the former two and maintaining the latter, a Nazirite declared his or her total devotion to God.

# Criticizing and Complaining

*Key Passage: Numbers 9–10*

CHAPTER 9	CHAPTER 10	CHAPTER 11	CHAPTER 12
Pillar of Cloud	Command to March	Complaint over Food	Challenge to Moses
Beginning the Journey		Bemoaning the Journey	

**OVERVIEW** Finally, the day has arrived for the nation to pull up stakes and set out for Canaan. As silver trumpets herald the journey's commencement, the huge camp prepares to march. The long-awaited move has begun. But all too soon, gratitude turns to grouching: The people complain about their daily diet of manna and express jealousy over Moses' leadership. In the midst of miraculous provision, there is persistent complaining, until at last the weary Israelites arrive at Kadesh-barnea, on the very border of Canaan.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** How many things can you think of that were truly "good" about the "good old days"?

When you experience adversity—even though you're obeying God—you may catch yourself looking back on the "good old days" with a twinge of nostalgia. Memory is selective. Current difficulty often seems to bring to mind only the best of yesterday.

The Israelites had hardly broken camp when they began to complain about God's daily provision of manna. To hear them tell it, you'd think they had left paradise in Egypt (11:5). But their foresight was even worse than their hindsight, for they forgot God's promise of future blessing. God never intended for His children to spend the rest of their lives in the desert, eating manna.

Have difficult times caused you to look longingly on the way life used to be? To help you keep your eyes focused on God's purpose for you, write these verses on an index card and carry it today:

"One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). Keep looking up, and you'll never want to look back.

*Those with their eyes fixed on the past risk a severe collision with the future.*

**INSIGHT** Ark in the Middle, Ark in the Front

Compare Numbers 2 and 10, and note that the ark enjoyed a position of prominence both in the camp and on the march. Can you suggest a reason for each position?

# Death in the Wilderness

## Key Passage: Numbers 13

CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 14	CHAPTER 15	CHAPTER 16
A Divided Opinion	A Disbelieving People	A Divine Code of Law	A Disobedient Korah
Spying Out the Land		Spelling Out the Law	

**OVERVIEW** At the Lord's command, Moses selects one man from each tribe to form a spying party to survey the land of Canaan. They return 40 days later, all having seen the same thing but with a divided opinion as to what it meant. The majority opinion: "The people are stronger than we are." The minority opinion: "We shall surely overcome." Disheartened and faithless, the people threaten to stone Moses and return to Egypt rather than face what seems to them certain massacre. God's punishment for their unbelief is severe: one year of wilderness wandering for each day the spies were in the land—and death in the wilderness for that entire generation. Yet, God's plans will not be ultimately thwarted, as seen in the laws which He gives them to practice in the land.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Two bricklayers were asked what they were doing. The first replied, "I'm laying brick"; the second, "I'm building a great cathedral." Same task, same bricks, two different perspectives.

On the verge of entering the promised land, the Israelites evaluated the spies' report. The land flows with milk and honey, but it also overflows with fortified cities and giants. Obviously, there could be only one response—"Let's go!" The question was, in which direction? Joshua and Caleb responded with faith: "Let's go forward!" The other 10 spies responded by feelings: "Let's go back to Egypt!" Majority opinion prevailed, and Israel traced circles in the desert for 40 years.

Where is God stretching your faith today? Spy out your situation and make a list of what you see. Then ask yourself two questions: "How could I respond to this without faith? How should I respond to this in faith?" Then do the thing that will please God.

**INSIGHT** "Hey, Moses, You Remind Me of Someone . . ."

He was a humble man. His own people wanted to stone him, but in turn, he asked God to spare their lives. He was innocent, but he had to share the same punishment as his followers. He eventually delivered them into a new life in the promised land. Does Moses remind you of Someone else you know?

*No one  
deserves  
the title  
"giant" when  
measured  
against an  
omnipotent  
God.*



# Aaron and Levites in the Wilderness

*Key Passage: Numbers 18, 20*

CHAPTER 17	CHAPTER 18	CHAPTER 19	CHAPTER 20
Special Rod of Aaron	Special Duties of the Levites	Sacrifice of the Red Cow	Angry Sin of Moses
Reminders of the Future		Reminders of the Present	

**OVERVIEW** As the grumbling generation marches through the wilderness outside the promised land, their discontent focuses on Moses and Aaron. Only a miraculous budding of Aaron’s rod can convince the people that Aaron represents God’s authority. In this context of rebellion, God again emphasizes the Levites’ role in the service of the tabernacle, and provides the red cow as a means of cleansing the people from the ever-present defilement of death. Eventually, Moses is affected by the nation’s complaining attitude as well. In a moment of anger he strikes the rock instead of speaking to it as God commanded, and so forfeits his privilege to set foot in the promised land.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** In the margin write three things that you feel are essential for your future security. Now go back over your list and cross off any item that could easily be destroyed by a natural disaster or a financial reversal. Is there anything left?

God made it clear to Aaron and his family that their security was to be in Him alone, even as they enjoyed their new homeland. God had faithfully supplied Aaron’s daily needs in the past (18:18-19), and He would do the same in the future. This was true also for the nation as a whole. God had been their great Sustainer, and would continue to provide even when they possessed wealth of their own.

Though owning property or having a bank account is not wrong, the danger is in allowing such things to crowd out your daily dependence on God. You may be in “good hands” financially, but you’re in better hands with God. Reread Numbers 18:20 to remind you that true security comes from God.

*If money  
can’t buy it,  
it’s probably  
worth having.*

**INSIGHT** *Don’t Touch That Grave!*

Because a Jew was defiled by touching a human grave (19:16), tombs in Israel were often whitewashed so that unwary passersby could avoid contact with them. This helps explain why the Pharisees were offended when Jesus denounced them in Matthew 23:27 as “whitewashed tombs.”

## Bronze Snake and Balaam

*Key Passage: Numbers 21*

CHAPTER 21	CHAPTER 22	CHAPTERS 23-24	CHAPTER 25
Three Victories, One Defeat	Balaam's Call	Balaam's Prophecies	Balaam's Influence
Snake of Bronze	Story of Balaam		

**OVERVIEW** The wanderings are drawing to a close and the movement of the people becomes more purposeful. They are heading for the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan River and poised just opposite the promised land. Along the way they face both physical and spiritual conflict. Militarily, they enjoy victory over the Canaanites, Amorites, and Bashanites. But constant grumbling about the food and water results in God sending fiery serpents in judgment. The advance of the Israelites causes the king of Moab to hire a diviner, Balaam, to foretell the future and to curse the nation of Israel. Instead Balaam blesses Israel and predicts how she will prosper.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Are you a roller-coaster Christian—up one day and down the next? It's a frustrating feeling, but what is the secret to consistency in the Christian life?

In the space of a single chapter (21), the nation of Israel conquered three national powers. Smashing victories! Stunning triumphs! But for some of the people, it wasn't enough. To their way of thinking, God wasn't working fast enough. After all, they were still on the wrong side of the Jordan and didn't possess a single spadeful of the land they had been promised. Their impatience led to criticism about the living conditions, the length of the journey, and God's timetable.

One key to consistency in the Christian life is simply giving God time to work. Rough edges take time to smooth. Growth to maturity never occurs overnight. But each day can represent a significant step in the right direction. Tuck a note in one of your shoes tonight to remind you when you awaken tomorrow of the step toward maturity the next 24 hours can bring with God's help. (You might want to read Colossians 2:6-7 as you start the day.)

**INSIGHT** *The Far-Reaching Influence of Balaam*

Balaam's idea was simple: "If you can't curse a people, corrupt them so God will have to chasten them." Notice in Revelation 2:14 how his teaching was still being felt 1,500 years later.

*The world is not nearly so shocked at hearing Christianity preached as it is at seeing Christianity practiced.*

## Second Census and Laws of Israel

### *Key Passage: Numbers 27*

CHAPTER 26	CHAPTER 27	CHAPTERS 28-30
Counting the Nation	Calling a New Leader	Clarifying the Code of Worship
Another Census	Another Captain	Another Challenge

**OVERVIEW** A final census of the people, ordered by Moses prior to entering the promised land, reveals that the old generation has died off—a fact that signals an end to the 40 years of wandering. Following the census, God designates a new leader to replace Moses. Although Moses survived the judgment of his generation, he would not lead the people into Canaan. Next, he reviews for the new generation the various sacrifices of worship—as well as the daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly celebrations—to ensure that the nation does not overlook any of its holy obligations or divinely assigned remembrances.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Would you rather be known for your good reputation or your outstanding character?

Though reputation and character are often used as interchangeable terms, their meanings are vastly different. Your reputation is what others think you are; your character is what God knows you are.

For all his humanness, Israel's great leader revealed a striking depth of character when God told him that he would soon die. Instead of complaining, Moses expressed concern over the welfare of the people. Forty years of wilderness travel, during which time his ability and reputation as a leader were frequently under fire, served not to shatter his character, but rather to shape it.

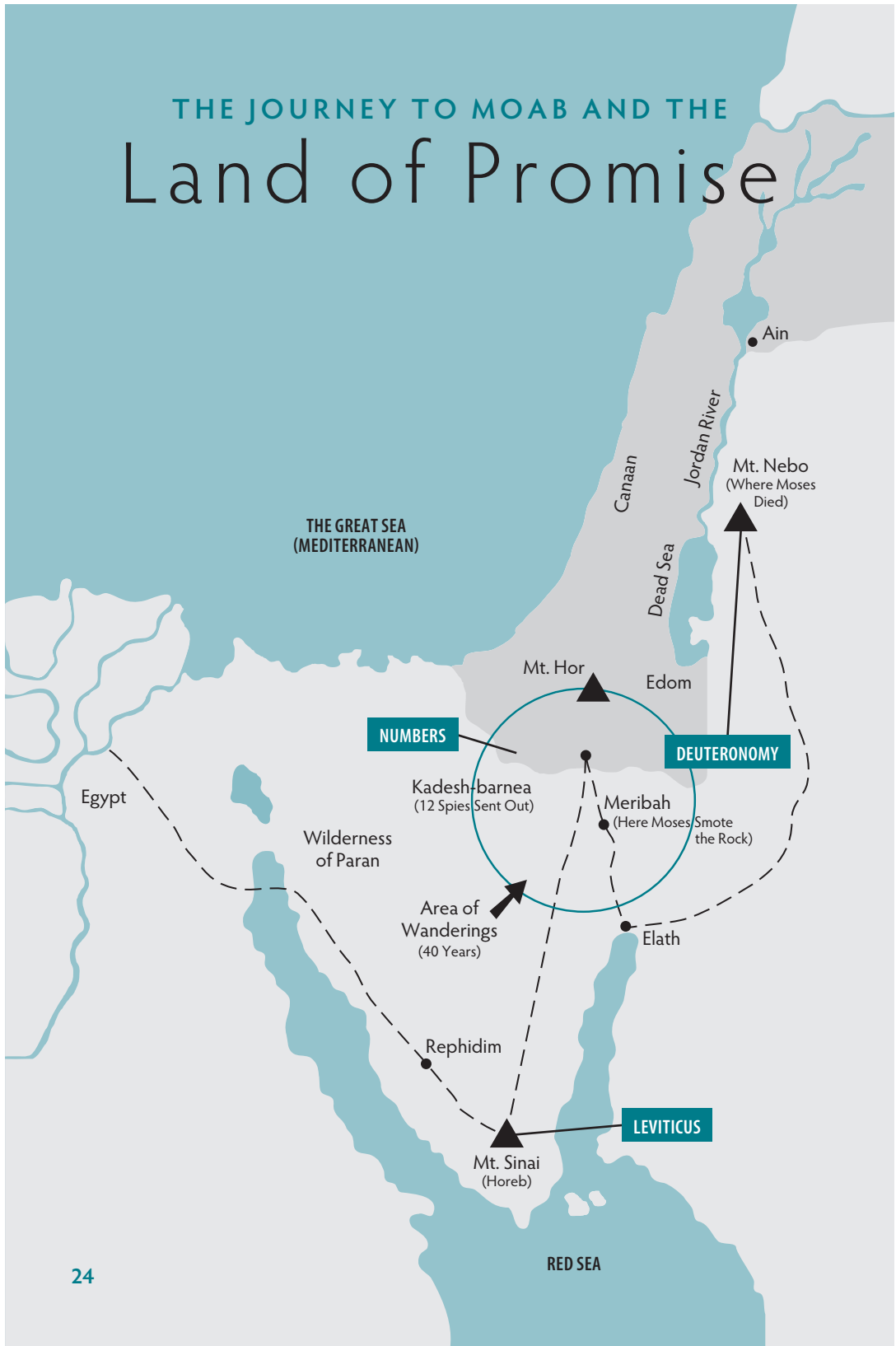
What circumstance has God brought into your life to build your character: A difficult relationship? A conflict at work? A physical or financial problem? Complete this sentence by writing in the character-shaping experience you face today: "God, build my character today as I face the challenge of \_\_\_\_\_."

*Reputation is precious, but character is priceless.*

**INSIGHT** "All Right, Everybody, Count Off!"

The census taken in chapter 26 served at least three purposes besides merely "counting heads": (1) It measured Israel's military strength; (2) it provided the records necessary to divide the land properly; and (3) it supplied accurate genealogical records, which would be needed by future generations.

# THE JOURNEY TO MOAB AND THE Land of Promise



## Last Days of Moses' Leadership

*Key Passage: Numbers 32*

CHAPTER 31	CHAPTER 32	CHAPTER 33
Defeat of the Midianites	Decision of Reuben and Gad	Details of the Wandering
Moses the Commander	Moses the Administrator	Moses the Traveler

**OVERVIEW** Moses' final acts of leadership before his death involve conquest and consolidation. Midian, which had led Israel into idolatry, is judged as 12,000 Israelite troops annihilate this powerful people and collect a wealth of spoils. Next, the tribes of Reuben and Gad ask to settle on the east side of the Jordan. Moses grants their request on the condition that they help the remaining 10 tribes complete the conquest of the promised land first. The section closes with a review of the geographic movement during the 40 years of wandering.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** If you have ever watched a quiz show where contestants are faced with the difficult choice of (1) keeping what they have already won, or (2) risking it all on the possibility of winning an even bigger prize, then you'll understand the situation in today's section.

With the lands of Jazer and Gilead conquered, Reuben and Gad wanted to settle there. They were willing to help conquer the rest of the land, but they liked what they saw east of the Jordan River and weren't willing to take a chance on what they hadn't seen. This was contrary to God's intention for His people. He had already promised the entire nation victory over the Canaanites if they would just trust Him. By settling for God's second best, Reuben and Gad set the stage for future strife.

How is God asking you to step out in faith into unknown territory? The temptation will be there to settle for the security of the status quo—and miss the blessing God has for you. Instead of being controlled by a fear of the unknown, let your actions be guided by a confidence of the Known—the God of Israel who never slumbers or sleeps (Psalm 121:4).

*Fear is of the flesh, and panic is of the devil.*

### **INSIGHT** The End of Balaam

Israel's conquest of Midian included the execution of Balaam (31:8). This judgment may seem unduly harsh for the one who had blessed the nation, until it is learned that Balaam masterminded the scheme to defile the Israelites with Midianite women (31:16).

## Cities and Settlements

*Key Passage: Numbers 34:1-15; 35:9-34*

CHAPTER 34	CHAPTER 35	CHAPTER 36
Dividing the Land	Designating Cities of Refuge	Detailing the Law of Inheritance
Partition	Protection	Provision

**OVERVIEW** Now God specifies the boundaries of the land and appoints the men who will oversee the work of dividing it among the remaining tribes. The cities in which the Levites will live are designated, as well as the cities of refuge for those guilty of unintentional murder. Since the land is apportioned through the male side of the family, the case of a family in which there is no male heir is clarified by Moses, who specifies that all land must stay within the tribe to which it was originally given.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Why do some people seem to enjoy the blessing of God more than others?

God's best for Israel was complete possession and enjoyment of the land of Canaan. The equitable division of the land among the tribes and families showed that God's blessing was designed to touch every person in the nation. The only prerequisite for enjoyment of that blessing was a believing faith, demonstrated by obedience to God.

*The way of  
uprightness  
is the way  
to heavenly  
wealth.*

As you look at the people whose lives seem to overflow with God's blessing, you may be tempted to think they have a special key to His storehouses which you don't possess. Turn to the New Testament and read the first 14 verses of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. There you'll find a reminder of just how rich you are as a Christian. Itemize the parts of your spiritual inheritance that you own but are not presently enjoying: forgiveness (unshackled from your past), acceptance (seeing yourself as God sees you), redemption (set free from sin's bondage to serve God), etc. Now what do you need to do in order to enjoy what you already possess?

**INSIGHT** *The Old Testament Right to a Fair Trial*

Because the nearest relative of a victim of murder had the right to avenge the death, cities of refuge were necessary to provide protective custody for an accused manslayer until the legal process could be carried out (35:10-15, 22-28).

# Deuteronomy

The last of the five books of Moses, Deuteronomy reviews the 40-year period of the nation's walk with God and previews the new relationship soon to begin in Canaan. Taking the form of a series of sermons, the book addresses the new generation emerging from the wilderness march. Moses reminds the Israelites of the central importance of obedience and stresses holiness as a way of life. Everything—possession of land, victory over enemies, prosperity, and enjoyment of life—depends on these valuable lessons.

FOCUS	BACKWARD			INWARD			UPWARD	
DIVISIONS	Reviewing the Wanderings	Renewing God's Demands for Obedience	Remembering Lessons in Obedience	Religious Laws for Canaan	Civil Laws for Canaan	Societal Laws for Canaan	Commitment to the Covenant	Farewell and Death of Moses
	1	4 5	7 8	11 12	16 17	20 21	26 27	30 31 34
TOPICS	Lessons from the Past			Lessons for the Future			Lessons of a Leader	
	The Obedient Life			The Orderly Life			One Man's Life	
PLACE	Moab (North of the Dead Sea)							
TIME	About Two Months							

## Reviewing the Wanderings

*Key Passage: Deuteronomy 1, 4*

CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4
Postponement of the Land	Promise of the Land	Possession of the Land	Principle from the Land: Obey!
Looking to the Past			Learning from the Past

**OVERVIEW** The first of Moses' three sermons in the Book of Deuteronomy reviews the history of the nation and traces God's dealings with His people. Because of unbelief, the Israelites failed to possess the land God had promised them. But even their disobedience could not annul the promise of God. Israel would one day dwell in the land, though an entire generation had died in the wilderness for failing to believe God. True to His word, God overthrew nation after nation during Israel's relentless march to the Jordan River. The lesson from the past is painfully transparent: Blessing and victory follow obedience, but disobedience brings only defeat and heartache.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** What have you learned during the months or years you've been walking with the Lord?

The story is told of a high school teacher who spoke with excessive pride of her 38 years of (mediocre) teaching experience. Her principal responded with a chuckle, "Well, that's not quite correct. Actually she's a first-year teacher—38 times over." Do you see the difference? Each year that teacher was making the same mistakes she made during her first year—mistakes which should have been corrected long ago. She never profited from her past errors and so was destined to repeat them again and again.

Moses tried to shake the nation of Israel from its complacency by pointing out the deadly consequences of past disobedience. As you read today's section, you could almost hear him plead with the people to open their eyes and learn from their sordid history.

Are you wiser in the ways of God today for having seen Him work in the past?

**INSIGHT** *Words Worth Repeating*

How much practical application do Moses' sermons to his people in the Book of Deuteronomy carry? Just ask Jesus, who quoted this book three times to fend off Satan in the wilderness, one for each offer Satan made (Matthew 4:1-11).

*To overlook one's own faults is to miss a valuable free education.*



# Reviewing God's Demands

*Key Passage: Deuteronomy 6*

CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 7
Restating the Ten Commandments	Revealing a New Command	Repeating a Future Hope
Laws from Sinai	Law of Love	Certainty of Victory

**OVERVIEW** The second (and longest) of Moses' three sermons starts in chapter 5 and ends in chapter 26. He begins by reviewing the Ten Commandments, the foundational expression of God's moral and spiritual requirements for humanity. He then stresses the importance of loving God and passing on His Law to succeeding generations. Moses realizes the need for Israel to keep the Law and to teach future generations God's commands if they are to be what God desires: an obedient people, conquering their foes in God's strength.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** If a "god" is defined as "anything that has the potential to replace God as the focus of your life," what will be the most dangerous god you encounter today at work? At home? On your campus? In your leisure-time activities?

As Moses repeated God's Law to the people, he emphasized one command: "You shall have no other gods before me" (5:7). Why that command? Because he had indelible memories of the golden calf incident at Mount Sinai. He knew the ever-present danger of substituting something for the all-important Someone. In addition, Moses had keen foresight. He knew the religious "climate" into which the people were about to move: a land filled with idolatry and un-abashed immorality which, if permitted, would turn the Israelites away from God.

Go back over your list of potential gods. Have you allowed one or more to take a "controlling interest" in your life? If so, circle the ones that need to be rooted out. Then invite the one true God to return to His desired (and proper) place in your life.

*Idolatry is anything that cools your desire for Jesus.*

**INSIGHT** *Listen Up, People*

Deuteronomy 6:4 begins the celebrated Hebrew Shema ("Listen"), which consists of vv. 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37-41, and is recited twice daily by devout Jews. The command "Listen, Israel" is repeated in some form seven times in Deuteronomy (4:1; 5:1; 6:3-4; 9:1; 20:3; 27:9) to emphasize Moses' appeal for obedience on the part of the nation.

## Lessons in Obedience

*Key Passage: Deuteronomy 9*

CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 9	CHAPTERS 10-11
Remember the Lord's Provision	Remember Israel's Provocation	Respond with Obedience
God's Part	Moses' Part	The Nation's Part

**OVERVIEW** Moses continues his second sermon by calling upon Israel to remember God's miraculous care throughout the wilderness experience. As He provided abundantly in the past, so He will provide in the future. But Israel must not forget her sinful past—especially the golden calf incident and its tragic consequences. The choice is Israel's to make. If she will love and obey, God will shower her with blessings; if she rebels, God's judgment must surely follow.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Who or what are the "Anakim" in your life? If you're not sure, spend a few extra minutes in chapter 9.

The sons of Anak were a race of giants greatly feared by the Israelites. When the spies made their report about the promised land (Numbers 13:26-33), it included two specific references to the Anakim: first, an observation that was true ("We even saw descendants of Anak there," 13:28); second, an interpretation that was false ("We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are," 13:31). For 40 years these towering giants stood as a taunting symbol of the nation's unbelief. So tall and formidable were they that the nation had coined a saying: "Who can stand up against the Anakites?" (Deuteronomy 9:2). But Moses assured the people that God specializes in dealing with Anakim. God would go before His people to destroy the giants and to give them the land as He had promised.

What impossible situation seems to stand in the way of your spiritual progress? God's word to Israel is also aimed at you: "The Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you" (9:3). He can handle your "giant-size" situation.

**INSIGHT** *Phylacteries—A "Binding" Practice*

The Pharisees of Jesus' day (and orthodox Jews of today) practiced Deuteronomy 11:18 by tying small boxes containing verses of Scripture to their foreheads and arms when they prayed.

*When your heart is filled with faith, there is no room left for fear.*

## Religious Laws for Canaan

*Key Passage: Deuteronomy 12:1-16; 14:22–15:11*

CHAPTER 12	CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 14	CHAPTER 15	CHAPTER 16
Regulations for a Holy Land Involving . . .				
Offerings	False Gods	Food	Finances	Feasts
"Obey all these regulations . . . so that it may always go well with you and your children" (12:28).				

**OVERVIEW** From the general principles of the Law and exhortations to obedience, Moses now moves to more specific regulations governing life in the promised land. God Himself would specify the place and manner of worship, and Israel must reject all idolatrous practices. Purity, tithing, release from debt, and servanthood are all ways in which Israel can demonstrate her unique relationship with God. And the nation must be careful to observe all the feast days that mark important events in her miraculous history.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Today, pierced ears are considered fashionable. But in Israel, ears were pierced for a vastly different reason.

In today's reading Moses gives instructions concerning the release of servants after a six-year period. Once in a while there arose a situation in which a servant so loved his master that he did not wish to be set free. He would prefer to remain under his master's protection, devoted to his work, rather than to set out on his own. As a perpetual sign of this new relationship, the master would pierce the servant's ear, thereby proclaiming to the world, "This is my beloved servant; I am perpetually his beloved master."

In Psalm 40, David picks up this image: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced. . . . I desire to do your will, O my God" (40:6, 8 NIV).

What about your ears? Have they been pierced for the Lord? Are you the property of the Father, ready to do His will as a loving servant? If not, give God your ears—and life—right now.

*Service is the overflow of superabundant devotion.*

**INSIGHT** "You are not to do as we do here today" (12:8)

The disruption of life caused by the conquest of the land east of the Jordan may have made orderly worship impossible. This verse may have been intended to prohibit the use of private altars for worship or sacrifice. Once in the land, only one central place of worship would be sanctioned.

## Civil Laws for Canaan

*Key Passage: Deuteronomy 17–18*

CHAPTER 17	CHAPTER 18	CHAPTER 19	CHAPTER 20
Choosing a King	Testing a Prophet	Providing a Refuge	Waging a War
National Affairs			International Affairs

**OVERVIEW** Because Israel was a civil society as well as a religious community, laws governing national affairs were as vital as religious statutes. In today's reading Moses delivers a set of regulations providing for justice and impartiality in the settling of a wide variety of situations that might arise in the life of the nation. Included are laws governing kings, priests, and prophets; peacetime and war; national and international affairs; the guilty and the innocent.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** "Now, I don't know if this is true or not, but did you hear about . . . ?"

If you've ever been the subject of such talk, you know the pain and destructiveness of hearsay. God hates rumors, hearsay, and gossip. That's why He designated a system of justice in Israel whereby no action could be taken against an accused person until two or three witnesses had testified to the truthfulness of the accusation (17:6-7). This law required a thorough investigation and gave the accused the right to be confronted by his accusers. The system was so effective that it became standard practice in the New Testament for handling church discipline (2 Corinthians 13:1). Jesus reaffirmed the Old Testament law when He said: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault. . . . But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses' " (Matthew 18:15-16).

God's principle is clear: You are responsible to investigate a charge of wrongdoing against a fellow Christian before acting on it or telling someone else about it. Remember to squelch rumors and hearsay before they hurt someone else.

**INSIGHT** *The Motive Behind the Monarch (17:14-15)*

Although Israel's request for a king would seem harmless enough, 1 Samuel 8:4-9 reveals that this desire for a human monarch was indicative of Israel's refusal to retain God as her true King.

*Envy is usually the mother of gossip.*

## Societal Laws for Canaan

*Key Passage: Deuteronomy 23:1-8; 26:16-19*

CHAPTERS 21-22	CHAPTERS 23-25	CHAPTER 26
Domestic Relationships	Defending the Weak	Donation to God
Family Matters	National Matters	Tabernacle Matters

**OVERVIEW** The concluding portion of Moses' second sermon contains a variety of wise guidelines for life in the promised land. Moses anticipates (and resolves) situations that could arise to disrupt the smooth functioning of Israel's society. In areas as diverse as marriage, capital punishment, purity, and tithing, Moses provides God's view of what should and should not be done.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Can you identify with this humorous sign?

**Plan Ahead**

Then you might get a chuckle out of this tidbit: A man whose life was notoriously cluttered and confused asked that this epitaph be etched on his tombstone: "Organized at last!"

If you are one of those impeccably organized people who plans everything well ahead of time, then you may skip today's devotional reading. But if you're like the majority of the human race, you may find Moses' example in today's reading very helpful. He greatly served Israel by giving the people clear directions in anticipation of a number of difficult situations. What can you learn from him?

Take the matter of potentially sinful situations. You have a child causing you disciplinary problems. You have a boss or fellow employee who irritates you. Why not plan right now the biblical, God-honoring response you will make the next time that situation arises? Make three columns on a sheet of paper and write down (1) the anticipated situation; (2) your natural response; and (3) your prayerful, planned response. Keep that sheet handy and with God's help, plan ahead to glorify Him in the midst of a difficult situation.

**INSIGHT** *High-Rise Living, Old Testament-Style*

God directed that all homes be built with a railing around the roof (22:8). In a society where roofs were used as patios or extra bedrooms, this would have avoided falls and accidental deaths.

*Many errors in life result from an inability to sit still long enough to read what God has written.*

# Commitment to the Covenant

*Key Passage: Deuteronomy 29–30*

CHAPTER 27	CHAPTER 28	CHAPTER 29	CHAPTER 30
Curses for Disobedience	Blessings for Obedience	The Covenant's Demands	A Life-or-Death Decision
The Covenant Concluded		The Covenant Ratified	

**OVERVIEW** In today's reading Moses concludes his presentation of the new Law for the new generation. First, he sets forth the consequences of obeying and of violating the covenant. Complete surrender to God's will as revealed in the Law will bring blessing upon the nation, the family, and the individual. Crops will flourish, cattle will multiply, and daily needs will be met. On the other hand, disobedience will result in disaster: pestilence, plagues, and ultimately removal from the land. The responsibility is left squarely on the shoulders of the people. They are free to choose the path they will take, but they are not free to escape the consequences of their choice.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Do you ever find the will of God elusive or unclear? You have an important decision to make, and you want to do the right thing. You want to honor God. But which direction should you take? First, turn to the Word of God. God has something to say to you, and it's contained in the Bible. All that remains is for you to read and obey it.

God is not in the business of hiding His will or making it difficult to understand. To the Israelites Moses wrote: "What I am commanding you today is not too difficult or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, 'Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?'" (30:11-12). God's will for you is not in a heavenly fog; it is a down-to-earth reality you can understand.

Read 30:11-20 twice. Then list three things that characterize God's will for you today. Don't worry about the things in the Bible you don't understand; think about the things you do. And "do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5).

**INSIGHT** *The Day the Slave Markets Were Glutted*  
The horrible curse of 28:68 literally came true. After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the slave markets of Egypt became so glutted with captive Israelites that there were not enough buyers for them all. God always keeps His promises.

*Perfect conformity to the will of God is perfect liberty.*

## Farewell and Death of Moses

*Key Passage: Deuteronomy 31, 34*

CHAPTER 31	CHAPTER 32	CHAPTER 33	CHAPTER 34
Moses' Successor	Moses' Song	Moses' Farewell	Moses' Funeral
The Final Days of Moses			

**OVERVIEW** Moses' long and illustrious life is drawing to a close. During his final days as Israel's leader, he delivers some significant words of counsel to the priests, the Levites, his successor Joshua, and the entire nation. He has learned much during his 120-year walk with God, and his final words of warning and encouragement deserve careful attention. To make his last utterances easily remembered, Moses writes them down in the form of a song. After blessing each of the 12 tribes, Moses climbs Mount Nebo for a final look at the promised land, and there he dies a strong and vigorous man.

**YOUR DAILY WALK** Do you have trouble identifying with a great Old Testament saint such as Moses? Moses was a unique historical figure. He stood in the very presence of God, performed miracles before Pharaoh, parted the Red Sea, turned rocks into drinking fountains, and died at the age of 120, still full of youthful vigor.

The Bible paints Moses in very human shades, though. He spent the first two-thirds of his life wrestling with his calling before he finally yielded to God's will. Being a man of action, he found it frustrating to administer the affairs of a large, rebellious group of people. In a moment of impatience and anger, he struck a rock instead of speaking to it, thus denying himself the opportunity to set foot in the promised land. Yet, God's commentary on Moses is this: "No prophet has arisen . . . like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face" (34:10).

Let the words of Deuteronomy 29:29 provide a fresh motivation for you to know and do God's will next month as you follow in the footsteps of Moses.

*No one is so old as the one who has outlived enthusiasm.*

### **INSIGHT** The Promised Land at Last

Moses, deliverer of his people, never set foot in the promised land. Or did he? Though he climbs Mount Nebo for one last faraway look at Canaan before his death, he is seen inside the promised land years later on the Mount of Transfiguration, along with Jesus and Elijah (Matthew 17:3; Luke 9:30-31).

# HE GAVE IT, So Claim It

**P**icture this: You discover you've won a two-week vacation in the Caribbean, absolutely free, and all you have to do is claim your prize. Do you wait for the prize to appear? No—you claim it! You were promised the vacation, but you have to claim it.

Now think about God's promises to His people. This month you saw Him guarantee a lush, fruitful home to the Israelites who fled Egypt. Yet they sadly and unnecessarily postponed the blessings of this promised land because of their lack of faith.

Throughout the Bible God makes many promises: assurances of provision (Matthew 6:31-34); of an abundant life (John 10:10); of freedom from fear and worry (Deuteronomy 31:8; Philippians 4:6-7); of love, joy, and peace (Galatians 5:22-23); and much, much more.

But every promise has two aspects: the promise itself and the claiming of that promise by the

person to whom it is given. Like a free trip pledged to us, we must take hold of God's promises by faith so we can benefit fully from them.

Perhaps the most important gift from God that we can claim is the promise of eternal life. Jesus says: "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John 10:27-28). Now that's a prize worth claiming!

Won't you claim eternal life through Jesus Christ? All you have to do is confess your sins, accept the living Christ as Savior and Master of your life, and believe in—lay claim to—your gift of salvation.

*If you want to speak to someone about beginning a relationship with Jesus, call 1-888-NeedHim.*