

Getting Egypt Out of the Israelites

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When I was a small child, probably about eight and a half years old, my parents divorced. My mother and I and my three siblings moved from East Texas to southern Alabama to live with my grandma, who was my mother's mother. All the years of growing up from about eight and a half until I moved off to college, I lived with my grandmother. So, I got to know her over the years. She had a cute saying that she used to make, referencing herself, that I'm going to use as the introduction to the sermon today. Because she had been born and raised in Alabama and lived in southern Alabama most all of her life., she would joke sometimes and say,

“You can take the girl out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the girl.”

She was referring to how her upbringing and the environment she had lived in growing up had shaped and molded her personality. It had left a lasting effect on her. It's the concept we see in Proverbs 22 which says

“When you raise a child in the way they should go, when they are old, they won't depart from it.”

It's going to leave this lasting effect on them.

At this time of year of the Spring Holy Days, we tend to focus a great deal on the Exodus of Ancient Israel; their exodus out of Egypt and their journey to the Promised Land. That story teaches us a very similar lesson to the saying of my grandmother. If we look at that overall story, we know from the Bible that Israel actually started their exodus on the first day of Unleavened Bread—the fifteenth day of the first month—and journeyed to Mount Sinai, as Exodus 19 tells us, in the third month of the year. They entered into a covenant, as has been proven in previous sermons, actually on the day of Pentecost. when they ratified the covenant in Exodus 24. If you look at that whole process from leaving on the fifteenth day of the first month to making a covenant with God in the early part of the third month, that whole process took a little less than 2 months. That was just their “coming out” of Egypt. But if you look at it for the rest of their journey—from Mount Sinai to taking the Promised Land—that took forty years. That was a much more difficult process.

What we can see from this is that getting Israel out of Egypt is the easy part of the story. Getting Egypt out of the Israelites—that was the difficult part of the story. As we're going to see today, these events—particularly around the exodus and all that's recorded there—that God specifically recorded it as a teaching tool for us as firstfruits. So we could learn from this because it parallels our spiritual journey.

We are going to look at this story from this perspective and learn how the whole subject of Unleavened Bread and coming out of sin, coming out of Egypt, parallels with our lives. The easy part—as it was for Israel—is getting Israel out of Egypt. Getting Egypt out of the Israelites is the difficult part.

If you would like a title for the sermon it's:

Getting Egypt Out of the Israelites

We see this story in 1 Corinthians 10. It's a brief summary of a number of events associated with the Exodus in the first several verses. We will revisit this chapter a few times today.

1 Corinthians 10:1 *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,
2) all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,
3) all ate the same spiritual food,
4) and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. (NKJV)*

We have a brief summary here of their exodus going through the Red Sea. They were actually starting to receive the manna but notice the next verse.

5) But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. (NKJV)

They had all made that part of the journey up to Mount Sinai. But as we're going to see, that first generation all died off in the next forty years and didn't make it to the Promised Land. The easy part was getting the Israelites out of Egypt. Getting Egypt out of the Israelites, that was a lot more difficult. What became their stumbling block and failure was not just being physically delivered from slavery, it was getting "the effects" of Egypt out of their heads; out of their thinking, out of their culture, out of their lives. That was what continued to trip them up. There's an analogy here for our spiritual lives. Initially, when we first come into the truth, repenting and preparing for baptism can be a difficult process for us. Think back to all your time as a Christian and all the people you have known. I'm sure we have all known a lot of people who came into the truth and were very excited about it. They were very gung-ho, very dedicated, they repented, they were baptized and they received the Holy Spirit. But over time, something in their—from an analogy standpoint—"forty-year journey to the Promised Land" of overcoming, things got difficult and that is when people failed. The easy part is initially coming out of Egypt, the hard part is getting Egypt out of our heads.

Notice in verse 11, it will show us something interesting here.

11) Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (NKJV)

In other words, God intends for us to learn from these examples. There are two interesting things you will notice in this verse. I have to admit, for many years I read over this and I really didn't see that there were two distinct things here. I always just thought of this as, God had all this written down to teach us but it says:

“.. all these things happened and they were written for our admonition.”

What it's getting at is that it wasn't just that these were interesting events God decided to record for our benefit, He orchestrated these events as a teaching tool for us. He was planning way ahead so we would have these examples and they could be recorded. We have to realize when we look at this, He was orchestrating events to teach lessons. It wasn't just 'time and chance' that these things played out and He happened to decide to write it down. There was a lot more planning and detail that went into this picture.

In Numbers 13 we are going to see, as I mentioned, the whole process of the Israelites coming out of Egypt on the first day of Unleavened Bread. Their journeying through the Red Sea and getting out to Mount Sinai and making the covenant all played out in a little less than two months. Even though they had road blocks and they complained and murmured along the way, there really wasn't an attrition rate through this. Things went fairly smoothly. But once they tried to take the Promised Land, you see things go awry. Numbers 13:30 is picking up the story after they sent out the spies to check out the Promised Land. They spent forty days surveying the area and now they are giving the report.

Numbers 13:30 *Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.”* (NKJV)

They had some challenging situations there, but Caleb and Joshua had very positive attitudes. They thought that God has seen us through all of this, He can enable us to take the Promised Land. We don't have any reason to be concerned. But the people had a totally different approach. Notice verse 31.

31) But the men who had gone up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.”

32) And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.

33) There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” (NKJV)

Numbers 14:1 *So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.*

- 2) *And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!*
- 3) *Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"*
- 4) *So, they said to one another, Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."* (NKJV)

They had gotten out of slavery totally, they were free, they had made a covenant with God, but what was their desire? To go back to Egypt. So, getting them out of Egypt—that was the easy part—but they are still carrying Egypt in their heads. Getting Egypt out of them, that is the difficult part. This became their undoing. Beginning in Verse 26 this is the end result of what happened to that first generation.

- 26) *And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,*
- 27) *How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me.*
- 28) *Say to them, As I live, says the LORD, just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you:*
- 29) *The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above.*
- 30) *Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.*
- 31) *But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised.*
- 32) *But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.*
- 33) *And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness.*
- 34) *According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection.*
- 35) *I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.* (NKJV)

As you can see, what tripped them up was their inability to trust God. They were still thinking like slaves and the environment they had come out of. Egypt was so engrained in them despite all the miracles they had seen—the plagues in Egypt, the Sea that had parted and through which they had walked and which had drowned Pharaoh's army. They had been fed with quail; they had had manna fall from the sky six days a week to feed them. Yet, in spite of all they had witnessed, they still could not have faith in God. They were still not seeing this and trusting Him to deliver them and this became their undoing. This environment had so influenced them that they just cannot break free from

it. They came out of Egypt but getting Egypt out of them just proved to be an impossible task and they just had to die off.

I personally don't think that this outcome was a surprise to God. You don't have to read hearts; just look at a people with the basic concept—"the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior". When I say that, just look at their behavior as they journeyed out of Egypt. Even up to the Red Sea and the events that took place from there all the way up to Mount Sinai, even making the golden calf at Mount Sinai. What happened every time things looked difficult for them? Things looked challenging and hard and they had to have some trust in God—almost every time it was,

"We should have just died in Egypt, we should go back to Egypt, God brought us out here to kill us."

That was their track record every time. I don't think God sent them out there and then He was shocked that they had a bad reaction. You don't have to read hearts to look at this track record and say, the highest probable outcome is, when they see another big challenge, they are going to respond the same way.

This is alluded to in Deuteronomy 5:28; Moses is talking to the younger generation who actually makes it to the Promised Land, but he is retelling the story of what happened at Mount Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments and all that took place. He adds an interesting detail in verse 28.

Deuteronomy 5:28 *Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. (NKJV)*

Notice verse 29.

29) Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! (NKJV)

In other words, I wish they had the heart to follow through on everything they just said. He realized, they didn't. You don't have to be able to read hearts to figure this out because just look at the track record of their behavior all the way up to this point. It's pretty easy to project forward and say, I kind of know what the highest probability of this is going to be.

This teaches us a very important lesson because, remember, as we read in 1 Corinthians 10, these things happened and they were recorded as a teaching tool for us. What we have to realize as well is just like that Ancient Israel, that first generation which came out of Egypt, just could not, of their own physical ability, get beyond the influence and the environment they had gone from to heal their minds. We are the same

way. In our Christian lives we have to have the healing power of the Holy Spirit to be able to change our minds and have us get Egypt—sin—out of our heads. It's one thing to make initial changes, to really change our hearts requires the miracle of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

2) *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

3) *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,*

4) *that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

5) *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.*

6) *For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

7) *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (NKJV)*

In other words, without the help of the Holy Spirit, we just can't do this on our own. We just don't have that capability. We have to have God's Spirit to have that healing of our minds.

8) *So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

9) *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

10) *And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

11) *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (NKJV)*

It is the ability of the healing power of the Holy Spirit that enables us to change. To not just make surface level changes and change some of our behavior, but that deeper level; living the Spirit of the law and changing our minds, our motivations, our attitudes and not just our behavior on the surface. To do that, just like Ancient Israel, that first generation which came out and which just couldn't just shake that upbringing—that influence—sin does the same thing to us. We can make those initial changes and then get baptized, but to really change who we are, that's going to require the healing power of the Holy Spirit because we just can't do it on our own. The Holy Spirit really enables that and renews our minds. We see this in Romans 12:1.

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

2) *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (NKJV)*

That 'renewing of our minds', that healing of who we are and really changing how we think inside, only comes through the Holy Spirit. We have to rely on God and His Power to be able to change what in us because we just don't have that ability on our own.

There is another big lesson that comes out of the forty-year journey that Israel had. We saw that they wound up getting sentenced to forty years in the wilderness until that first generation died off. But it wasn't like there was no big purpose for the younger generation as well, because there was. This also teaches us another important lesson about our spiritual walk.

Deuteronomy 8:1 *Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers.*

2) *And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.*

3) *So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.*

4) *Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.*

5) *You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the LORD your God chastens you.*

6) *Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. (NKJV)*

Notice these forty years were not just a situation to have that first generation to die off, it was specifically to test and try all the younger generation. They had to successfully pass these tests to be able to enter into the Promised Land. That's exactly how it works for us as well. We would all like a comfortable, easy slide into the Kingdom of God. But that is just not how the Bible describes how the path to salvation works. We'll see how this works in Matthew 7:13.

Matthew 7:13 *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*

14) *Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (NKJV)*

It directly tells us that the path to the Kingdom of God is not an easy path; it's a painful, difficult path that we have to struggle along and endure to the end. There is a great reward on the other side but it's not an easy path to get there. It's just like He described the forty years in the wilderness. You have gone through all this adversity and God took care of you—He fed you and made sure your clothes didn't wear out—but He tried you again and again with adversity that you had to overcome. That's exactly how our path to the Kingdom of God works out. It's only after we have successfully endured those trials that we can receive the crown of life.

James 1:12 *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved [notice there's a condition], he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (NKJV)*

Let me share with you the meaning of the Greek word for *proved* in English. It's transliterated into English as *dokimos*, Strong's #1384 and according to The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodiatas, it is defined as "proved, receivable, tried as metals by fire thus purified, hence to be proved as acceptable men in the furnace of adversity". It is only when you have been tried through the furnace of adversity that we can receive the crown of life; we have to successfully endure through that. And that can get hard, it can get old, it can get discouraging but that's what is required for the Kingdom of God. The Bible directly tells us it's not just through one short trial that we enter the Kingdom of God, it's through many tribulations. It's like there are multiple "decade journeys" of being tried again and again from multiple angles—that's how this works. Notice Acts 14:21.

Acts 14:21 *And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22) strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." (NKJV)*

It doesn't say through one short trial you'll enter the Kingdom of God and if you pass that test you slide into the Kingdom. No, it's being tried again and again through multiple angles and multiple scenarios for decades on end and you have to successfully endure through all this. Just to give you a personal example of an opposite attitude. When all the hypocrisy and issues were happening in Worldwide in the mid-90s and I had left and joined another organization, I remember talking to a number of brethren. There were a few who looked at the subject like this: "We passed the big test!"

In their minds this was the 'big test' on the church and we successfully got through that one and now we could relax and hang on and slide into the Kingdom of God. It wasn't long before they figured out, that that was not accurate. It didn't work like that; it was not about one short trial and you just have to pass that one. It was getting tried again and again. It was like the waves of the sea. You get back on your feet from one and the next one comes at you. You keep getting hammered and that's why it says, "He who endures to the end receives it", because it's literally an endurance process. I'm sure for most of

us there are times that we go through all of this and just feel persecuted. “I feel like I’m getting picked on and beaten up with trials”. There is a reason you feel persecuted at times; it’s because you are being persecuted. That is a stated requirement of the process of salvation. Look at 2 Timothy 3:12.

2 Timothy 3:12 *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (NKJV)*

It’s an all-inclusive statement. It doesn’t say just the apostles, just the prophets, just this small group will get persecuted, but everyone else will have an easy slide. It doesn’t say that. It says *everyone* who wants to follow the path to salvation through Christ. He’s the one Name by which you can be saved—all have to be persecuted. It’s part of the process and the Bible tells us that persecutor is Satan. He’s ‘the roaring lion seeking whom he may devour’ and he is who is coming after all of us. That is literally how the process is designed.

I explained in a previous sermon about a year or so ago called “The Positive Side of Satan” where I went through this issue. People sometimes look at Satan’s rebellion and his role in the process as like it’s Plan B and that God didn’t see this one coming and decided to develop this into the plan. As I explained in that sermon, it wasn’t rocket science for God to look at this and realize He was going to have a group who were going to rebel. He made millions of angels, gave them free moral agency and a choice between life and death, He would be incredibly naive if He didn’t build into the equation that He was going to have some who were going to choose death. They had two choices. There was going to be a group who would make the wrong choice. Just understanding free moral agency, He knew that was going to happen. All you have to do is create free moral agency and wait and He’s going to have a group who will eventually make the wrong choice and then He could utilize them for His purposes until He’s done with them. That’s what He has done with Satan; Satan is that persecutor. When you are going through hard trials in your life and feel like you’re getting beat up and persecuted, there is a reason you feel persecuted. You probably are being persecuted, that’s part of the process. We have to realize there is a big purpose that God is accomplishing in all of this. Satan is trying to destroy us for evil purposes, God is orchestrating this for our ultimate good. Turn over to 2 Thessalonians 1:3.

2 Thessalonians 1:3 *We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other,
4) so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,
5) which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; (NKJV)*

Why do we suffer through persecution and trial after trial? To be worthy of the Kingdom of God. It’s evidence that God is working with us and He’s trying to refine and perfect us and we just have to trust Him and hang on and realize He’s working something out

here. Keep remaining faithful to Him and enduring and being patient with Him and trusting Him to deliver us through the hard trials that we go through because it's for a purpose. It's to refine our character, to test our hearts; it's simply how the process to salvation works. It's just like Ancient Israel. It was a multiple decade journey from the time they entered the covenant to make it into the Promised Land and what was that for? To test their hearts, to try them to see if they would be faithful and obey God. That is exactly the same thing that God is doing with us. That's why when you get baptized you have a multiple decade journey. In that time, you are getting chased by a persecutor; you have a "lion" chasing you. That's how the process is designed to develop our character and test us to see if we are going to hang in there and going to rely on God and His power and His vision for what He wants of our lives. Are we going to turn our will over to Him and let Him mold us into what He wants?

To learn some further lessons from this, we will return back to 1 Corinthians 10. As I mentioned, we are going to go through a number of examples that are alluded to in this chapter. We left off in verse 5. We're going to see in the next several verses, each one of them refers to an event that took place during the Israelites exodus out of Egypt; primarily their forty years in the wilderness. We're going to see a lot of these tie right back to the examples in the book of Numbers, which is basically the historical record of their journey through their forty years in the wilderness.

1 Corinthians 10:6 *Now these things became our examples [again these are things we are supposed to learn from, because there is a direct parallel between these stories and our spiritual journey], to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. (NKJV)*

Look at Numbers 11 to see the examples this is referring to. We're going to see one of the things they were lusting for was their physical comforts; their physical desires of the flesh, the things that they were placing their top priority on.

Numbers 11:4 *Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; [in other words they yielded to their lusts] so the children of Israel also wept again and said: Who will give us meat to eat?*

5) We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;

6) but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!"

7) Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium.

8) The people went about and gathered it, ground it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil.

9) And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it. (NKJV)

It wasn't an issue that they were starving to death and they had nothing to eat. God was taking care of their basic needs; food was falling from the skies six days anyway and on

the sixth day they received twice as much, so that they had manna to eat on the Sabbath. They are not starving to death by any means, God is taking care of their nutritional needs every single day. It's just not as enjoyable as they would have liked. Now they are looking back at the food they got to eat in Egypt when they were slaves and miserable and were begging to get released from that slavery. They are now glamorizing it and thinking, if only they could just have that wonderful food they had in Egypt. What they were yielding to was their physical lusts. Their lust for physical pleasures and the desires of the flesh and what they were desiring for. This doesn't turn out well for them. Notice verse 31 to see how this ends.

31) Now a wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground.

32) And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. (NKJV)

They were just gorging and taking as much as they possibly could, but there was a negative end to this story.

33) But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague.

34) So, he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving. (NKJV)

They were complaining, they wanted to have their physical desires fulfilled and God said, "Okay I will give you quail until you're so full you're sick of it." But then they wound up with a plague and died because of it.

There's another lesson we can learn from this as well. This is the second time throughout their journey that God has specifically brought quail to them. There is a significant event that takes place between these two. In Exodus 16 notice they were complaining for meat to eat here as well, but what I want you to notice is that Exodus 16 takes place before they enter into a covenant with God, Numbers 11 happened after. One of the lessons here is accountability and how accountability grows. The more we have a stronger knowledge and have made a formal commitment, God takes that more seriously; He plays more hardball.

Exodus 16:1 *And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt.*

2) Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

2) and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

3) Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

4) For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

5) But thus, you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. (NKJV)

What he was telling them was there was a progressive nature to this. It wasn't just the issue of marrying the pagan women or giving your daughters to their men and have them marry and having these intermarriages, it was the progressive nature of sin. You're going to make one mistake and your emotions are going to get played upon and then you're going to be dragged into another mistake and it's going to keep growing. It's one of the big lessons we need to learn. This was a point that Paul was making in 1 Corinthians 5. We'll see Paul was addressing an issue that was taking place at the church in Corinth. They had a man there who was attending services and was part of the congregation. He was having an adulterous relationship with his step-mother. As Paul even points out, this was even shocking behavior among the Gentiles; they don't do something this twisted. But it was being tolerated in the congregation and Paul is telling them to put him out until he is willing to repent. Later in 2 Corinthians he does repent and Paul said as he has stopped doing it, they were to bring him back into the congregation as he has repented. But when he was actively taking part in this. The congregation was taking an approach that is typical of our culture today. Today we hear a lot about being tolerant and open-minded of other life styles and that is exactly how the congregation was with their attitude. "We're kind, we're understanding, we're accepting" and they were proud of this. Paul is directly correcting them that this was not only bad because of that situation, it was the progressive nature of sin and what they were going to wind up doing was that everyone would become leavened. Because they were tolerating this, it would justify more sinful and bad behavior and would grow like an infection.

1 Corinthians 5:1 *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! (NKJV)*

This is even shocking for the people in Corinth and Corinth was known for sexually immorality.

2) And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. (NKJV)

In other words, they were proud of their tolerance and open-minded approach. They would fit right into the politically correct culture that we have today.

- 3) *For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.*
- 4) *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
- 5) *deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*
- 6) *Your glorying is not good. [They were openly proud of their approach] Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*
- 7) *Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*
- 8) *Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*
(NKJV)

This ties into the whole analogy of leavening. The whole idea with that is you have to take action to stop leaven. You can make some raw dough and not leaven it and leave it out exposed to the air and yeast spores in the air, given a little time, will infect the bread and spread through the whole thing. You have to actively take action to try and stop this from happening. Once it gets started it's like an infection that grows and grows until you stop it. That's the very nature of sin. That's one of the big lessons of leavening and why we deleaven every year as a part of Unleavened Bread, to teach us that very point. We can see what happened with Israel who wasn't just violating one instruction of God—one commandment they had been given—it was understanding that you compromise in one way and that leaves you vulnerable to another. It just continues to grow if we don't take action to stop it. That's why Paul was saying to put this man out, get this influence out of the congregation. Now, when he repents and has come to his senses and stopped doing this, that's a different story. Be forgiving, give him a second chance and let him come back but don't tolerate this behavior and encourage it.

Turn back to 1 Corinthians 10:9.

1 Corinthians 10:9 ... *nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;* (NKJV)

We are going to see, as we turn to the specific example, this is referring to the book of Numbers. The example is only going to refer to Yehovah as an active character in the story. The reason I mention that, is that some people take this particular verse that refers to "don't tempt Christ" and in the original story you read that Yehovah is the One being referred to. Then people say, that Christ is the God of the Old Testament because it says don't tempt Christ—the story speaks of Yehovah and not anybody else so Yehovah must refer to Christ as well. It's a generic name. That's the logic that's built from there.

Before we go any further, I want you to see is that this is a very shaky case to make. The reason being, that if you look at manuscripts of the New Testament, what you'll find

is that it's debatable which is the exact word that is being used here as the reference for Christ. There are manuscripts that have it reading as *Christ*, there are manuscripts that have it reading the *Lord* and there are manuscripts that just say *God*. So, you can get down to which manuscript you want to use as the one that has it right or make the argument three different ways. Just to make this point, let me quote from a couple of the commentaries. My only point here is simply to note that there are manuscripts from which you can argue this in multiple ways.

First, this comes from Elcott's Commentary for English Readers, specifically referring to verse 9.

Neither let us tempt Christ, better neither let us tempt the Lord as some of them tempted and perished by serpents.

"There is much controversy as to whether the word here is God or Christ or the Lord. Each having a certain amount of manuscript support."

The commentary goes on to make their argument as to which is correct and again, that's not my purpose here. Let me also quote from Jamieson Faucet and Brown, also referring specifically to this verse.

Tempt Christ —So the oldest versions, IRENAEUS (264), and good manuscripts read. Some of the oldest manuscripts read "Lord"; and one manuscript only "God."

Again, my whole point here is that you could argue this subject in multiple ways, depending upon which manuscript you went to. So, it's a real shaky case to take that one verse and say that this is conclusive proof that Christ is the God of the Old Testament. There is a mountain of evidence that you could go through, showing there is only one Yehovah, that is one unique name which refers to one Individual. The Bible constantly contrasts Yehovah with His Servant, His Companion—referring to Christ—there is a lot of evidence for that. This would be basing a case on one particular scripture with very arguable manuscripts associated with it. As we're going to see, Yehovah is going to be the One referred to the most.

Just to support this a little further, I would like to quote from a translation of the Bible called the Good Speed Translation. Here's how it read verse 9.

Let us not try the Lord's patience too far as some of them did and were killed for it by the snakes.

Tempting God is just pushing His patience too far, as we are referring to. In Numbers 21 we'll see the original story being referred to where they are killed by snakes.

Numbers 21:4 *Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way.*

5) *And the people spoke against God and against Moses: Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.*"

6) *So, the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.*

7) *Therefore, the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So, Moses prayed for the people.*

8) *Then the LORD said to Moses, Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live."*

9) *So, Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.*

(NKJV)

You might have noticed in our culture today, sometimes it's not unusual for a bronze serpent to be associated with healthcare and this is why, because of this specific example of how they looked at it and were healed from the snake bites.

I also wanted you to notice that previously when we talked about the quail, I mentioned there were two events where God gave the people quail. The first time is before they make a covenant with God and He was very patient. There was no plague, they were griping and murmuring about their physical comfort and God gave them what they were asking for. But the second time He does it, after they have made a covenant with Him, they had witnessed His miracles, they had so much more experience and knowledge, but then there was a plague and they were punished. It worked out similarly here. They had a plague and they were punished for their reaction. Notice an example in Exodus 17 where it also says they were tempting God and trying His patience but He was a lot more understanding and was more merciful with them getting away with this. Exodus 17:1.

Exodus 17:1 *Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink.*

2) *Therefore, the people contended with Moses, and said, Give us water, that we may drink." So, Moses said to them, Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the LORD?"*

3) *And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"*

4) *So, Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!"*

5) *And the LORD said to Moses, Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go.*

6) *Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.*

7) So, he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us or not?" (NKJV)

Notice they were pushing the envelope in trying His patience. But He provides them with water and there is no plague and no situation where a lot of them are killed because of their griping. Notice His different approach prior to them making a covenant with God and the more serious accountability that comes afterwards. We are in the same situation. God is a lot more merciful with us before we are baptized because He knows we don't really know a lot better and He is slowly leading us as babes to get to know Him. After we make a formal commitment and particularly after we have had a chance to grow and learn more and develop more in our lives, the accountability becomes stronger and stronger. "To whom much is given, much is required". We are always held accountable for that which we know. We can't play games with God. When we understand something, we need to be living it because once we have that knowledge, then we are accountable for it. That's a lesson we all need to learn.

Look at the last example in 1 Corinthians 10

1 Corinthians 10:10 *... nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. (NKJV)*

This is referring to an example in Numbers 16:41. It's important to set this scene before we read this example. Realize, this was taking place the day after the events of Korah's rebellion. Korah and a group of other leaders among Israel basically rebelled against Moses and Aaron and said that they take too much upon themselves. They said God worked through them too, so they deserved the same respect as them. Ultimately God proved who He had chosen for this particular role and the ground opened up and swallowed Korah and all those who were following him. A very dramatic miracle takes place in the sight of Israel. It's blatantly obvious that God's will had been demonstrated and there was really no question or anything to be debated. But even after witnessing this, the very next day the people are murmuring about it. Pick up in verse 41.

Numbers 16:41 *On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, You have killed the people of the LORD." (NKJV)*

It's almost as if Moses and Aaron were powerful enough to have separated the earth, swallowed these people and closed it back up and they could somehow have pulled that off. That was just ludicrous.

42) Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

43) Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting.

44) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

- 45) *Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.” And they fell on their faces.*
- 46) *So, Moses said to Aaron, Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun.”*
- 47) *Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So, he put in the incense and made atonement for the people.*
- 48) *And he stood between the dead and the living; so, the plague was stopped.*
- 49) *Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident.*
- 50) *So, Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped. (NKJV)*

In spite of all they had seen, all that God had done for them, all the miracles, the people still couldn't have faith in God and were still complaining and griping about everything. One of the big lessons for us in this is learning to wait on God, to trust Him, to put faith in His justice that He will ultimately work things out. Sometimes that's not as fast as we would like to see. Sometimes we have to endure things and wait for Him to deliver us up from our trials.

A final scripture is Psalms 37. We see an example of King David. David certainly had lots of trials during his time. At times he was surrounded by adversaries who were all trying to do him in. He writes an important Psalm talking about this and how we need to trust God and just wait on Him to deliver us.

- Psalm 37:1** *Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.*
- 2) *For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb.*
- 3) *Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.*
- 4) *Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*
- 5) *Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.*
- 6) *He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday.*
- 7) *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.*
- 8) *Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret—it only causes harm.*
- 9) *For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.*
- 10) *For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more.*
- 11) *But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. (NKJV)*

He is reassuring us that we just need to be patient. Rely upon God, rely upon His strength to deliver us and even when we are being persecuted, when we feel in our lives we are being persecuted, we need to have faith in Him and trust that He is going to ultimately deliver us. We may not immediately see that and sometimes we may have to endure pain and just wait and trust in Him. Realize that He will ultimately deliver us and give us the “Promised Land” just like He did with Ancient Israel.

As we go forward from this Sabbath, let’s learn these lessons and learn to trust in God and not fall into the pitfalls that Ancient Israel did. Realize that coming out of Egypt initially, coming out of our initial sins is the easy part; the hard part is enduring to the end and making it into the “Promised Land”. The hard part is getting Egypt out of us. Getting our sinful nature to change and that is a long, hard, difficult process that we all have to work through. Let’s learn the lessons of this and learn to wait on Yehovah.