

The Wilderness Journey

Part 1

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Duration	01:24:09
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/aeb005/the-wilderness-journey

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[00:00:00] The book of Acts, chapter 13, verse 17 and 18.

The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people in their sojourn in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought them out of it, and for a time of about forty years he nursed them in the desert, so far.

Last week I was struck very much with the thought of the greatness of God.

I was reading about molecules and little atoms you can't even see with your eyes, and I was reading about the space between the neutron and the kernel of the nucleus, and then the [00:01:06] remark was made that when you could eliminate all the space between the neutrons and so go around the nucleus, when you would eliminate all the space and you would take a human body, it would be reduced to a little dot.

You can't imagine. And that is the greatness of God in little things. And when you see then the greatness of God in connection with the universe, these billions of stars, there are at least, until now they have discovered more than 100 billion of galaxies.

When you know that a galaxy consists of 100 to 200 billion of stars, you just can't imagine how great God is.

That's the God, our creator.

Now in the Bible we find about one chapter of the creation, and a few verses somewhere [00:02:01] else. But about the redemption, God as redeemer, you find so much in the Bible.

Now where we have been talking about is really, the last time when we took up this subject of the trip from Egypt to Canaan, is God as redeemer.

Now when we keep in mind the greatness of God as creator, how great is he then as redeemer?

I'd just like to share a few general thoughts with you, and then we will proceed with the slides, and then I'd like to just have a bird's eye view, as it were, with you, of the wilderness journey.

Now last time we have seen that the people of God was in Egypt, and we have seen how this applies

to every believer. The moment somebody is born again, he is in bondage, and it is God's thought to bring [00:03:01] him into the land.

The land is part of God's counsel, God's purpose. We will speak about that a little bit tonight, but of course if the Lord tarries and we would have another opportunity to speak on the land, then we would speak more about God's purpose. But in between, the land of Egypt and the promised land is the wilderness. Now just this general remark, we find that the wilderness is necessary to bring us into the good of the purpose of God, and we hope to see this tonight. The wilderness journey is not part of God's purpose for his people, of his counsel for his people, it is his ways with his people, and we hope to see that. And there is much to cover to find that out.

And I had just thought, you know, last time when we were speaking about the deliverance [00:04:01] from Egypt, we have seen the need for deliverance. And maybe there is still somebody here who needs to be delivered from the power of sin, from the power of Satan, from the power of death. We have seen the need for deliverance. Then we have seen in the Passover land the basis for deliverance.

And then we have seen, and we will show one slide about that, the way of God's deliverance, the deliverer himself. We have seen also, together, a little bit, that in these things God reveals himself. He is not only supplying our needs, but he has revealed himself as the deliverer in Moses, speaks of the Lord Jesus.

We have seen something of himself in the Passover land, and we see again his greatness when he delivered his people. There is, in other words, the work of God for us.

Keep that in mind. [00:05:02] Try to keep that in mind, that the first subject we had in the month of March is God's work for us.

And then when we understand that God has in his heart many blessings for us in store, which he had prepared already for the people of Israel from the foundation of the world, and for us Christians from before the foundation of the world, God had been thinking of you and me.

Isn't that wonderful? He had his counsel prepared already then, eternal purpose.

Now to realise this, to bring us into the good, so to speak, of this purpose, he uses the wilderness. And I'd like to divide this subject again in three points. The facts of the wilderness journey. That's what we have tonight. That's like a Bible lesson, I can't help it, but we have to face the facts. Then the second subject would be tomorrow, Lord willing, the lessons of the wilderness [00:06:07] journey. What can you learn?

Moral lessons, spiritual lessons.

And for the third meeting I have thought of the subject, the results of the wilderness journey.

What is the result of all these troubles we will see?

There is going to be fruit for God, and that is really a big subject.

The results of the wilderness journey. Now even when you would think about the facts of the wilderness journey, it is really a very vast subject, and we would need maybe 50 or 100 evenings together to go into little details, and then we only scratch the surface even then. So you know, this is such a vast subject. But it is good at any rate to start with it when you are young, like the children here, [00:07:01] and you will grow in the knowledge of these things gradually. So maybe we should proceed now first to the slides, just to go through a few of them, and then we would like to turn back to the Bible. So this is just a little reminder of what we had last time, God's deliverance.

We delivered the people out of Egypt, and then we find one of the first experiences, or the first experience really recorded at that time, was that there was water available when they had thirst, but then it was bitter. [00:08:01] And then the second experience with that was that they came to a place, the oasis, with palm trees and so on, that is the first wilderness experience. Then they came in the wilderness of Sin, here, and we will find... But you have to read it by hand. Wilderness is a place where there is no water, a place where there is no food, a place where there is no way to go, no highway like we, I travelled I don't know how many kilometres today, but there was no highway in the wilderness. So imagine a place, this world is a wilderness wide, as we sing in the hymn, where I have [00:09:03] nothing to seek nor to choose. How we need guidance, how we need food, how we need resources, we will see that with the Lord's help. And in the wilderness you don't even hear your own voice. A brother told me he was once really into wilderness and it was like if his voice was lost when he was speaking. So in the wilderness it's really nothing, but we'll come back on that. Then there was the need of food and God provided. He gave these birds and they had plenty of food. We will see that in Exodus 16, these birds, and then we find that God provided every morning the manna, every morning. You know, even the little children, they came out to collect the manna together with their parents, it was a nice experience. And so there was plenty every day, six days of the week, and Sabbath day there was rest. [00:10:07] And during 40 years they needed water.

The rock was smitten and the water was there. What a grace of God. Then immediately after there was an attack by the enemies called the Amalekites. Amalekites hit them in the back where they were weak, where the women were and the little children. And so that is an attack we have to think about too when we come to Exodus 17. And then there was this solution that Joshua was fighting against the Amalekites and Moses was spraying the mountain and his arms were supported by Aaron and her.

So this is the next picture which speaks of provision in the wilderness. [00:11:04] Here we find just another picture of that, how Moses' hand was held up. The other picture you saw his hand falling, failing, falling down. But here he is really undergirded as it were by Aaron and her. Here we have just an outline of the wilderness journey. So they left here from Egypt. It's not so clear but we have to be, where they passed the Red Sea but it was really the Red Sea. It was not a piece of dry land, it was really a Red Sea and for them it was dry land as we have seen the last time. But it was really through the sea they went. And then they came to the wilderness. Here they have the experience of magic and magic and magic and magic. Here they have the experience of Marah and Ammon and then the wilderness of Sin and then the attack of the Amalekites after the Lord had given water. And so they were moving through the wilderness, another wilderness here, Paran, the experience [00:12:02] of the 38 years there. And so then after a while they came here and they went up and they conquered pieces, some parts of the land here. We will see that. So it is a long experience. Here we have another view of the wilderness just to give an impression what the wilderness is like, looks like. But now there was another experience, after all these provisions in grace the people said all the Lord has said, we will do it. They didn't know themselves and we will read a verse or two about that. They

didn't know themselves and they placed themselves under the law and that was together with curse, you know, not only under the curse but also you see all these lightnings and [00:13:02] so on, it was a very terrifying experience, we will speak on that too. There is another here, picture which shows that Moses went up to speak with the Lord and these frightening circumstances, he went up and all the people were so afraid, you can read it in Hebrews 12, here another picture of that, here Moses went up to speak with the Lord, here another picture of that, here all the people, the bottom of the mountain and the mountain was even, as it says in the scriptures, was almost moving, it was shaking something, and in the meantime Moses was speaking with God and God gave him the law of the ten commandments written by the finger of God, just to give an impression, and it was in [00:14:07] Hebrew, you can be sure, next one, here just to see how carefully the Jews have kept the law and even till today it is carefully kept, carefully covered, you could speak a long time about that but we don't have time to do that now.

You see how Moses together with Joshua, who was in the lower parts of the mountain, went back to the camp and you know when they came down, what did they see, a terrible picture.

You see the clouds already becoming dark, it was a threat, it was hanging over the whole scene, they had introduced an idol, we will speak about that a little bit tonight and [00:15:04] tomorrow more, an idol that they had learned to know in Egypt, so you see here some of the influences of Egypt, and the whole people was playing and dancing around it, that was idolatry and fornication later on in time.

And then Moses, he just let them fall, these tables, these two tables, if he would have kept them in his hands, the whole people would have been distracted right away, because they had to do with a holy God.

So the people had failed and Moses recognized it immediately and he just threw the tables down, they were broken by the people and now they were literally broken.

And Moses, he took the calf away, the golden calf away, and he just burned it down and [00:16:06] then the people had to drink, you cannot see that here in the picture, the water together with the remainder of the golden calf, a terrible experience.

And then many were killed, three thousand were killed, but you know God's plans come through anyway, even after this experience we find that the tabernacle was set up, God had shown Moses during forty days, the whole system was set up as we find in the remainder of Exodus.

And then we come to, or maybe we go through that quickly, the ark, the center of this whole tabernacle system, the table here, and then we have the candlestick, we cannot speak on these things in detail like Paul says in Hebrews, here you have the altar where the incense was burned, so very interesting things we cannot study. [00:17:01] Here you have Moses again, with two little horns, due to a false translation, when his face was beaming, when he had seen the Lord, his face was beaming, Moses was speaking with the Lord, and then he beams, this word is sometimes translated with horn, and so therefore this statue, which was made by Michelangelo, and he had these two little horns, but actually it is caused by mistranslation of the beams, they are coming from Moses' face.

And here you see the order, as we find in Numbers 1, the order of the whole camp, centered with the tabernacle in the center, the whole camp was in order around the tabernacle, it was a wonderful thing to study.

It was the tabernacle of the testimony, and then God allowed that they received a proof [00:18:01] of the goodness of the land, the blessing of the land. The spies came back with this fruit, but the people rejected the land, the land of God's counsel, imagine, we ought to see that. Another experience in the wilderness was, then the spies, the manna God had given, and they were bitten by serpents, fiery serpents, and then the solution God gave was a brazen serpent which speaks of the Lord who took our place. So you see many, many lessons in the wilderness, and we are only speaking about the facts now of the wilderness, here you see just another picture of that. So there are many, many things, and then Moses, he had failed, he had, instead of the second time speaking to the rock, he had smitten the rock a second time, as if the Lord could die twice, and Moses could not enter into the land because of that. [00:19:02] And here you see how the Lord showed him the whole land before he died.

And then the end is that Moses looks here over the land, and then he was going to die. There was another one who would bring the people into the land, but that is for the next time if the Lord allows it.

So this is just a short outline, and in connection with the facts of the wilderness, a study for tonight, I'd like just to make a few general remarks first.

The word for wilderness, in Hebrew you'll find different words for that. Now one of the words, mitbar, speaks of a place of speaking.

[00:20:03] That's strange. When I was thinking about that, the wilderness, where there is nothing, no voice, no food as we have seen, no road, nothing, it's a place of speaking.

How can that be? And when I was thinking of that, I got the answer.

You know, the wilderness is the place where the people is reduced to nothing, but where God becomes all.

That's in a few words the thought of the wilderness. The wilderness really makes us do nothing, makes us realise that we are nothing, but God becomes all, everything.

Then there's another word which speaks of the aspect that it is a desolate place. So that speaks of the thought that there is no resources, there are no resources, that [00:21:03] it's desolate.

And this helps us to understand that in the wilderness the people of God is cast on God for resources. You cannot go to your neighbour, you cannot go to the store, you cannot go anywhere. You are cast on God.

Now this is very important, I'm now speaking only about the facts, but when you realise these things in your own lives, that we are cast on God really when we are going through the wilderness, that all our resources are in God only, not in ourselves nor in the brethren or anywhere, how important the lesson is. First of all to learn that God is speaking, secondly that all our resources are in him. Another word which is used for the wilderness speaks of drought, there is no water.

And another word is used which has the thought of darkness. [00:22:05] Now God gives light. You know, in all these situations the remedy is found in God.

God gives light and God gives water, as we have seen in the slide.

Maybe we should just go, take our Bible and just go through Exodus, a few chapters in Exodus and a few chapters in Numbers, and I would like to commend to you the reading of books like, written by Brother McIntosh on Exodus and Numbers, but also by Brother Darwin, the Synopsis, even other books like in the Bible Treasury, Wilderness Lessons and so on.

There are many, many things to learn for us. But we limit ourselves now to the facts.

In Exodus 15 we have seen how the people was delivered from Egypt. [00:23:05] You got it?

Exodus 15.

But in the same chapter, where they started to sing, we find a very negative experience.

And this is the first real wilderness experience. And it is important for us to realise this, that in Exodus 15 at the end of the chapter we find that from verse 22, there was no water.

And they came to a place where was water, but then they found out that it was bitter. That is what we have to find out. When we leave Egypt under God's hand, we have to find out that this world cannot supply our needs.

That is a bitter experience, but maybe that is only once necessary. [00:24:02] There are other experiences in the wilderness you find during the whole journey, but this is an experience you have to learn once.

And then we find that God provides, we cannot enter into the details now, but God gives a solution and it points to the Lord Jesus. Just in a general way, I hope to speak on that more in detail tomorrow, we find that in every situation, the Lord Jesus is the solution.

So that is a very important lesson to learn. In all these types, we will find out that the Lord Jesus actually is the solution. And then we find how God provides now, from himself, shelter.

They came to a place, Elim, with twelve springs of water, there was no bitterness any more, and there was the palm trees which would speak of victory, and trees in itself would speak [00:25:02] of protection. You can have many thoughts in connection with this. So God's provisions in the wilderness. That was the first experience in the wilderness in the first month, but now in chapter 16 we come to the second month.

So that is a totally new experience. Maybe they had brought some bread wisdom from Egypt, we read that in chapter 12, that they took some bread wisdom, but now it was gone, all was gone, what now? A brother calculated once that to feed such a people in the wilderness you would need at least 15 train wagons a day, 15 train wagons a day, minimum, to feed normal people like we eat, they would need maybe 40 train wagons to feed such a people.

Now God provides, that is what we find here in chapter 16. [00:26:01] We can see the murmurings of the people, God finds a solution, that is in the birds we have found.

That is what God gave to still, as it were, the murmuring, that speaks again of the Lord Jesus, his death.

That was in the evening, you remember the Passover lamb, when was it killed? Between the evenings, that was a reminder of the cross. Now here again we find a reminder of the cross, but then the next morning the Lord gave the manna.

Now there are many, many lessons in connection with the manna, but where did it come from? It came from heaven, where God is.

So that is a new experience, and it speaks, when you would read it in John 6, you can find the answer.

It speaks of somebody who came from heaven to Lord Jesus, who came down to do God's will.

So what does the manna teach us?

[00:27:04] To do God's will.

It teaches us of obedience.

It is teaching us of dependence.

So just a few things we find here in connection with the manna, God's provision for the wilderness journey, and it lasted the whole trip, till the end, till they came over Jordan. In Joshua 5 you find it for the last time. Now we have no time now at the moment to enter into the details of this chapter, but this is one of the most wonderful chapters of the wilderness journey, to see God's provisions in grace for a people.

And even after they murmured, or after they failed, after they sinned so many times, the manna was always there.

It's always available. When we have failed, when we have sinned, when we have murmured, it's always available. [00:28:02] We can always turn to the Lord Jesus and learn from him, to feed on him, to learn to be dependent, to learn to be obedient, to learn to do the will of God. So many things you find in this chapter.

Now we come to chapter 17, and there we find another provision which lasted for the whole trip, and that was the water which came from the rock.

Again, here it speaks of the Lord Jesus, but now of the Lord Jesus who is smitten, but who is in the glory. There's a shade of difference. The one who was smitten is now in heaven. I would refer now to another chapter in John, now to John 7, where we find that it was necessary for the Lord to be glorified, and then the Spirit would come. [00:29:05] So in chapter 6, food for the wilderness, the life of the Lord Jesus down here, the one who descended seven times, you find it in John 6. And then in Exodus 17, we find that the one who was smitten, the rock, who is Christ, the first Corinthian stand, is now the one who is in the glory. And what did he send from the glory? Whom did he send? Excuse me.

He sent the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit comes here in this time and is there, a provision for the whole wilderness journey.

Now we have seen on the slide that after this experience, right away there was a battle. I'm just referring to where you can find this back in the New Testament. You can find this back in Romans 8 and in Galatians 5. This is the battle between the flesh and the spirit. [00:30:02] It's not the battle of Romans 7, it's the battle of Romans 8, so to speak. Romans 7, there you find out that this new nature has no force, no power against the flesh. But then, in Romans 8, we find the power of the Holy Spirit. And we find in Galatians 5 that the spirit and the flesh are always opposed. But the Holy Spirit is going to win. But it is an experience for all generations.

These are things to learn, and for every generation, for the young children, for the older ones, for us.

And this is a fight, as we find here, chooses man, in verse 9, and goes out to fight with Amalek. You remember in Exodus 13, could they do anything against the power of Pharaoh to be delivered from Egypt?

They couldn't do anything. God would battle for them.

[00:31:03] But here, it is a battle in us, which takes place.

And it comes very close to us.

But there is, again, the remedy.

Who was in the glory? Who is in the glory? The Lord Jesus is there. Moses, you find here, you remember in the picture, Moses is a staff, speaks of the Lord Jesus, who is in the glory. He has all authority, the staff speaks of authority. You have Aaron there on the mountain, you remember the picture, Aaron was there, speaks of the Lord, who is the high priest. He was here on earth, he knows exactly what's going on here on earth, what is in our hearts. And then there was Her, the man who is mentioned, who is named Her, who speaks of the Lord Jesus in his purity, the name literally means pure.

So there is the Lord Jesus in this threefold aspect, the righteous one, the just one, the [00:32:02] pure one, the high priest, and the one who has all authority. All is there for us.

And down here, in this wilderness scene, is Joshua, who speaks also of the Lord Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit, in us, among the people of God. So just a few details I mentioned, and then you'll find that in verse 16 the conclusion is, for the hand is on the throne of Jah, Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. You see how that goes on. In Deuteronomy you find it back, in the days of Saul you find it back, you find it even in the days of Esther, when Haman, the Agagite, was trying to kill all the Jews. You see, this conflict goes on. Now in chapter 18 we have another picture, how Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, came back, which is why we cannot speak on these things in detail.

[00:33:01] And then we come to chapter 19, of Exodus, and the conclusion, one of the verses we should read is verse 4.

Ye have seen what I have done to the Egyptians, and how I have borne you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself.

That's what's in God's heart, to bring a people to himself. Not only to deliver them, not only to free them from the power of Pharaoh, he wants to have this people for himself, but not only for himself, he wants to have it close to himself.

You see, that's the point. It speaks of God's love for the people. But did the people realise this?

They had no knowledge of God at one hand, they had no knowledge of themselves at the other hand.

God would bless them, they would have a feast in the wilderness, as God said in the beginning of this book, but instead of a feast, what are they going to have here in this chapter? [00:34:07] Curses, lightnings as you have seen, a trembling mountain, and a trembling people.

Terrible change. And what caused all this change?

It was the simple fact that he said, in verse 8, all that Jehovah has spoken will we do.

They didn't know themselves, they didn't see that they were not able to do this. And this is an experience we have to go through too. This was not given to an unbelieving people, the law was not presented to a people in Egypt, it was presented to a people which was delivered.

Think of the Galatians, and then you see how this is a real, actual thing, this is not only history, but there you see the danger for us, as we will see later on in the lessons [00:35:04] of the wilderness, but just I remind you of this. People which had the Holy Spirit, the Galatians, and they placed themselves under the law. So this is a real danger for the people of God. Then all blessings are gone, the nearness is gone, there is no nearness, there is distance, threat, you can read it in Hebrews 12, terrible picture.

Now what happened at that time? You have seen that Moses received the instructions to build the ark. Now you come to Exodus 25, the tent, the tabernacle, and so on.

Now we cannot speak on these things now, but I just remind you of the desire God had in his heart to dwell among his people.

We see the full development of this thought of God's dwelling place in the land. [00:36:03] You can read Deuteronomy 12, you can go through the books of the kings and so on, you find a temple, there you have God's dwelling place in the land. You can read of it in the Psalms, but God didn't want to wait so long, he wanted to dwell with his people right then.

Therefore, and we have seen that in Exodus 15, God can dwell with a redeemed people, that is the basis. Redemption is the basis that God may dwell with his people, only on the basis of redemption. But God doesn't want to wait until they are in the land of his purpose, he dwells with them right there in the wilderness. And there is the response from the people's heart to make this dwelling place. That's what we have seen in Exodus 15. And now God says, okay, you want to do this? I'll give you the instructions. That is what you get in Exodus 25, 26, the tabernacle, 27, first the altar, and then

[00:37:04] also you find the whole court.

These things speak, and just one remark of this, are all connected again with the Lord Jesus.

The ark was the centre of it. The ark speaks of one person who is God and man in one person. This is a mystery for us, we cannot understand it. God and man in one person, but not only as he was here on earth, the ark, the whole tabernacle system is connected with the Lord Jesus as he is now in the glory. Do you remember that Moses was on the mountain when God gave these instructions? And so the Lord Jesus is in the glory, and from the glory he built, as it were, the whole church, because the tabernacle now would speak of the church. So this is very rich material, as I may say. It reveals the glory of God, the glory of the Lord Jesus.

But what do the people do? [00:38:01] We find provisions even, how to maintain these things in the high priest and his sons, in chapter 28.

We find everything in order. In God's thoughts everything is in order.

But what was the situation with the people? What did they do in the middle? We turn to chapter 32.

Verse 1, when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people collected together to Aaron and said to him, Up, make us a god. There you find idolatry.

Imagine, Moses on the mountain, which speaks of the Lord Jesus in the glory.

What did the church do?

They said they wanted to see something, they wanted to see their gods, they introduced their gods.

This is in the church history, how the statutes were introduced, how heathen influences were [00:39:07] introduced into the church, a terrible history. So God's side, all is well, all is glory.

On the people's side, all is failure, total failure, Aaron and the whole people. You can read that in Exodus 32, and tomorrow, Lord willing, we will speak on that more in detail.

And then, in chapter 33, we find how Moses, in verse 7, took the tent and placed it outside the camp.

Even in such a situation, there is a remedy, how to come together, because God's thoughts never fail.

The whole people can fail, we may fail, but God's thoughts never fail, and he will maintain his thoughts in a remnant, in a day of ruin. That's what we have here in chapter 33, verse 7, and so on. It's wonderful to study these verses, and then connection with Hebrew 13, just indicate [00:40:04] this. And then you find how God will go with them, to lead them. First he wants to send an angel, but then Moses prays. Moses has done intercession for the whole people. Moses did not seek his own glory, Moses sought God's glory. How many lessons we have here. And he interceded for the people, he showed true love. And then there is this wonderful answer, that he may see the glory of God in the back parts, because God had not revealed himself yet, as he would do in the New Testament.

And then we find how the whole tabernacle system was set up in the remainder of the book. And then we come in chapter 40, when all was set up, and God came down, as it were, in the cloud, and the cloud filled the whole tabernacle. The glory of God was there. [00:41:01] What a picture.

Now, to realise this, the people had failed.

And I would say the grace of God, after the introduction of the law, is even greater than before.

You know, before we have seen the grace of God, provision of God, the manna, the water, many provisions of the grace of God. But then the people had said they had placed themselves under the law, and they should die immediately. And we have seen how Moses, he threw the tables down, the people were not killed, and we have the intercession of Moses, and I would say the grace of God after that is even greater. But there is another point, and that's what we find in Numbers. God is at the same time maintaining his rights, his righteous government. But to see here this picture of the glory of God in the tabernacle, it is so great to [00:42:01] see how God identifies himself with such a people, and that's even today. We have nothing to boast in, nothing to glory in, that the Lord will identify himself with his people.

That's a great thought. And then God is going to communicate his thoughts. The whole book of Leviticus is God's communications with Moses. Jehovah calls to Moses, and then in the book of Leviticus you see how he can approach God, how he can serve God in the sanctuary, how he can be in his presence.

That's the great thought of the book of Leviticus. But we will go over that now, and then we come to the book of Numbers.

Numbers actually is plural because of the fact that there are two numberings. The people of God was numbered twice, at the beginning of the trip and at the end, in chapter 26, 27.

[00:43:03] So this is why the book is called Numbers.

But in the Hebrew it is related to the wilderness, because the first verse it says, and Jehovah spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai.

Now just keep this in mind, in the wilderness of Sinai, that was the place where they fell. That was the place where God gave the law, because they asked for it. And this is the place where God is to maintain his rights. And so you find here a thought in the book of Numbers that is in connection with the government of God. At the beginning... [00:44:07] ...of failure in connection with the unfaithfulness of a woman.

So here you find a suggestion of failure. First of all, the camp is to be in order, so in verse 2 it is a matter of removing what is unclean.

But then in verse 5, 6, until the end of the chapter, the whole picture of this woman who is thought, or her husband, does not longer trust her, so there is this thought of unfaithfulness.

And that is what happened with the people of God then, they were unfaithful, as we have seen already in Exodus 32, but also in connection with the church, the thought of unfaithfulness. [00:45:01]

Then you find in chapter 6 again the remedy. The remedy is that there is a man totally for God, again the Lord Jesus, and of course we may apply this, we may have a desire to follow these instructions, but again we find the remedy in the Lord Jesus. And then at the end of this, there is blessing for the whole people. How wonderful this is.

Failure, you will say, all is lost. When you see Exodus 32 you think, it's all over, it's all over. No, it's not over.

God has a man in store, and there is going to be a blessing for the whole people.

Now we come to chapter 9.

I have said there is... the people of God in the wilderness is moving because God wants to have a testimony, therefore it is the Ark of the Testimony, we have had in Exodus [00:46:05] already the Tables of the Testimony, and you have the Tent of the Testimony. It's a witness for God in this world.

Could Israel be a witness for God when they were in Egypt? No, they were under bondage, they were slaves of Pharaoh.

Are they free to serve God there? No, they weren't. But now they were free, and all was ordered by God's instructions that they could be people as a witness for himself.

Now what is the basis of all this? Again we come to the Lord Jesus, the Passover lamb. Here it is not as in Egypt, but here it is, the Passover lamb where they feed upon, but I would stress one point here, I think that is the point of cleanness is brought out. In the wilderness it is a matter of being clean for God. [00:47:03] In order to be a witness for God you have to be clean, that's the instruction here in chapter 9, verse 6, and so on, the whole first part of the chapter.

Now we come to three ways God is going to lead his people.

We have said we need guidance, we have seen something of that in Exodus, but now we find three ways God is guiding his people, and just try to keep that in mind.

We all have ears, we have eyes, and we have a heart.

Now I would suggest that the cloud is in connection with the eyes, the trumpets you get in chapter 10 are in connection with our ears, and the ark which we find at the end [00:48:03] of chapter 10 is in connection with our heart, it's a matter of love. Now just briefly, go over this, we find three ways, or three means, actually, by which God is leading his people. We have said they are going to move, all the chapters in the beginning are preparation for that, and now the moment is to be there that he has to move, in chapter 10. Now God first gives the cloud, the cloud is to the regnum, and we have seen the cloud at the moment that they left Egypt, fire, light, protection, and a cloud would give also refreshing in the heat of the wilderness sun.

Many things we find in connection with the cloud, the cloud which speaks of the glory of God.

Cloud, maybe you could link also with the Holy Spirit, the direction of the Holy Spirit. [00:49:07] Now you have to have a good eye, not only a good eye, the eye has to be directed on the tabernacle. You

see again, when we understand what a tabernacle means for God, a place where he can dwell, but amidst a people which is moving towards the land, then we can understand that all depends on what the ark is going to do, all depends on what the tent of the tabernacle is going to do.

And the first thing, as it were, to move was the cloud, so you have to see always on the cloud.

Now, that's an important exercise for us, to have our eyes directed in the right direction.

There are so many attractions around us, so many things would divert us, but the eyes [00:50:01] are directed on the cloud. The second point is the trumpets, which we find in chapter 10. Now these trumpets, we could speak long about all these details, but you can read it and also with these books I mentioned, you find here a perfect provision, again, God's provision, how to find the way. I said in the beginning there was no way, there was no road, so God is going to give the way, by the cloud, by the trumpets, the trumpets were also necessary of course for other things, for the meetings, how they came together, but the trumpets were also given when there was an alarm, when there was something wrong with the people of God, could well be, then the alarm was blown, but the trumpets are given here in this chapter in the general setting of a moving people, people is going to move, they need the trumpets to listen, to be ready, we find the trumpets for us in the New Testament, again. [00:51:06] But then there was a third thing, a third point. Imagine the whole camp was ready, the ark in the midst, so it was ordered by God, the ark in the midst, the centre, but we find in chapter 10 there was one man who was there who didn't belong to the people of God, it was Moses' brother-in-law, and he had a very smart idea.

You know, Hobart, this man was very well known there in the wilderness, he knew the way, we would say, but that was not going to work out that way.

This was really, as it were, competition between human intellect, human experience, [00:52:05] and the leading of God himself, there cannot be such competition. And we find that the ark went before them, we read maybe verse 33, and they set forward from the mountain of Jehovah and went three days' journey, and the ark, the covenant of Jehovah, went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.

Not to tarry permanently, of course, you cannot have a resting place in the wilderness, you are moving towards the land, but on your way you need rest, and this is what we find here, to find out a resting place for them.

No permanent rest available in the wilderness, but there is the ark, where God has found perfect rest, and he is going to indicate the way. He doesn't make reproaches to Moses, he just goes before them, and therefore I say this [00:53:08] is a matter of our hearts. We find here that Moses failed in connection with his love for the ark.

So our eyes direct on the cloud, our ears ready for the trumpets, our heart directed to the Lord Jesus, the ark, who is in the glory, but at the same time who is among the people of God. How great he is.

Now all is ready, and then what do we find?

Just briefly, chapter 11, the murmuring, what is the answer?

Fire from God.

You know, it's no longer the perfect grace we had before.

God has to deal now with the evil.

Second point, in verse 4, and so on, there is discontent, they are no longer happy with [00:54:02] God's provisions, and we have seen the worst provisions by God's grace, in abundance. Under the influence of Egypt, they were not ready, they were no longer happy with it. The result is a plague.

God judges that.

You know, they were happy with the food of slaves, in verse 5 you find all these types of food that belonged to Egypt.

These were all kinds of fruit that were down on the earth, but not like the fruit in the land were on trees, which speaks of heavenly influences, was all down on earth. It was food for slaves, and they were lusting for that again. How terrible picture. Now we are not better than they, we hope to speak on that tomorrow. We will find out that we are not better than they were. They wanted to go back to Egypt, here you find a tendency to go back to Egypt. Now, after that, you find a third failure, in chapter 12.

[00:55:10] There is Miriam and Aaron who spoke against Moses.

Here is the answer, what God gives, leprosy.

It is in the judgment of God, and the judgment of God, that Miriam is struck with leprosy. How terrible. And now we come to chapter 13 and 14.

The land of God's purpose is despised.

You remember the slide with these beautiful fruits from the land? What is the response?

It is totally rejected.

We hope to speak on that tomorrow, a little bit, in connection with some New Testament portions.

But here you find unbelief, so try to keep this in mind.

These forms of evil, the murmurings, the lusting to go back to Egypt, outbreak against Moses' [00:56:06] authority, then unbelief in connection with God's counsel, a rejection of God's counsel.

We read in the Psalms that they despised the good land.

God had in his heart to bless his people, to have them with himself in his land. We have seen he brought them already to himself, and he wanted to have them with himself in the land of his purpose, and they rejected. It was by unbelief.

And then we find in chapter 14 how they wanted to go up then, and then it's disobedience. So two forms of failure here, unbelief and disobedience.

And we find here also the answer of God. We have said every time we find God's answer right away in his righteous dealings. What is the answer here? They shall not enter into the land. That's the answer God gives. [00:57:01] You know, God's righteous dealings with his people is very, very serious. When we despise the land, we shall not enter into it.

And we find here, too, that the flesh is incapable of entering into God's purpose. That is very important. Who will really appreciate God's counsel, God's purpose? It's not the flesh. The flesh sets it aside.

There is no link between God and the flesh, impossible. So here we find the suggestion there is a work of God needed. That's what you find in this new generation, which we find later on in the book, and what we have in Caleb and Joshua. In Caleb and Joshua you see faith, faith is a work of God, in the soul, and you find that they appreciated the land.

So the flesh is incapable, but now I would like to mention just briefly the resources God gives, because I said, on the one hand, God is now dealing with these forms of evil [00:58:05] in numbers, but he is giving also his resources. That's what we find for us in the New Testament, in Hebrews, where we have the word of God, in Hebrews 4, and the Lord Jesus as the high priest.

Maybe we will speak on that a little bit tomorrow, if we have time, in Hebrews 3 and 4. We will find that there is this experience of the wilderness, they rejected the land, and then God is going to give a resource when there is evil. He judges evil, but he gives a resource, and that is the word of God. When you read in Hebrews 4, from verse 12, you find the word of God as a perfect resource for the wilderness journey, and when there is failure. And you find the priest, the Lord Jesus as the high priest, seven points in connection with the high priest. It is wonderful to meditate upon.

But there is one thing you have to learn, that the flesh cannot be changed, cannot be [00:59:04] ameliorated. It is evil, and it will always remain evil, and that's what we find in these chapters.

So how serious this failure was.

And then when you think in chapter 16, what's going to happen in chapter 16, it becomes worse and worse. But then between these two pictures of failure, you find chapter 15, and it is really marvellous. We have seen that the flesh is incapable to appreciate God's purpose, but what's God saying in chapter 15, verse 2, in the middle of the verse? When ye come into the land of your dwellings, here you find how God's purpose is unchangeable.

Now, God's purpose, as we find also in the New Testament, does not change. The people may fail, the people may not appreciate it, but God keeps it before his heart, and [01:00:06] he places it before the heart of the faithful, I think. That is the thought in chapter 15, that God is placing the value of the land before the faithful.

And in connection with this, God is speaking about sacrifices. And there's a wonderful chapter which speaks of the riches of the land, but what's the people going to do in the land? To be occupied with sacrifices, again the Lord Jesus. All these sacrifices speak of the Lord Jesus. Now God is, as it were,

here encouraging the faithful, you know, you are in the wilderness now, but keep thinking of the land, keep thinking of what you are going to do there when you will be in the land.

On the one hand we see all the people is excluded from the land, who were unfaithful, who acted by the flesh, and only Caleb and Joshua are going to be there with the new generation. [01:01:03] Caleb means, I translate it in a free way, with all the heart.

You know, that's a test for us. Is my heart really 100% ready for God's thoughts?

Do I appreciate God's purpose?

What is the land with the Lord Jesus in the glory? What this means for God?

Am I really 100% on that line?

And so we find in chapter 15 that God draws our attention to the one who never failed. We have failure in the wilderness many, many times, but in chapter 15 our hearts are drawn to the one who never failed and who gave this perfect sacrifice. And then we come to chapter 16 where we find, I would call it apostasy, when we compare [01:02:01] this history, as we hope to see maybe tomorrow in a closer way, with the history of the Church, we find that the end of the history is apostasy.

It is with the people of Israel in a future day apostasy, and it will be with the Church apostasy.

It is rebellion, but in principle we find it already very early in the history of the Church, how there was rebellion against the authority of the Lord, how there was a rebellion against the authority of the Holy Spirit. And I remember a tract written by Brother Darby in the last century which speaks about the sin against the Holy Spirit. There was clergy, so systematised sin, as it were, against the Holy Spirit.

This is what you find here.

The flesh wanting to have a place, sharing the authority, or putting aside the authority even, of Moses and Aaron.

[01:03:03] There are many different ways this can happen. Sometimes it has happened by the introduction of rational systems. You find it in Colossians, these dangers. Sometimes this evil came out in the form of rituals, but in both ways it is the will of the flesh which rebels against the authority of God, against the authority of the Lord Jesus, as the true Apostle and High Priest.

So here we find how the flesh wants to have a place in God's things. You know, the flesh reveals itself in many, many ways in the wilderness, but when it reveals itself in this way, to have a high place in the things of God, that is, I think, the worst revelation of the flesh, the worst manifestation of the flesh, and God deals with this. And again at the end of the chapter, or in chapter 17, but at the end of the chapter you find Aaron as the High Priest, you find the remedy, and in chapter 17 you find the [01:04:05] answer again. You know, I said, I keep on repeating this, but always the answer again is the Lord Jesus. In chapter 17 we find another picture.

God is confirming now that the place of Aaron is the true High Priest, and again we find here how the Lord Jesus is the true High Priest on the basis of his resurrection. You find here life out of death.

That speaks of resurrection. So God sets up now his High Priest, the others are set aside, who are after the flesh, and God gives his High Priest on the basis of resurrection.

And let's add this, this is also the way to enter into the land. Because we have seen people fail, here they stand up against Moses, they will never enter [01:05:01] into the land, were it not on the basis of the High Priest.

Just a few thoughts about that, and then we are almost at the end.

Here we find Christ as the High Priest, as we said, in resurrection, the power of life out of death.

And then in chapter 18 we find the whole company associated with him, because there the Lord is now speaking to Aaron, this Aaron who received his place, who was established by God.

God is speaking to him now, and there is to be a whole company linked with him. That's what you have in chapter 18, a company identified with him, and with the sanctuary, as I said in the beginning, how important it is to relate everything to the sanctuary.

Then we come to chapter 19, where we find the dangers of the wilderness, even for the [01:06:03] people who were left at that time.

Even this new generation we will find later on, they would have dangers in the wilderness. And then we find here again God's provision.

And again it speaks of the Lord Jesus, when I am defiled through wilderness experiences, it is an occasion to appreciate more the death of our Lord Jesus, and that the water of cleansing, as it is brought out here in this chapter, is applied. The third day, which speaks of our conscience, is affected, touched, and there is restoration on the seventh day, in verse 12. But it is, again, something of the Lord Jesus, that we would appreciate his death, and that God gives a solution, when there is defilement, he has a solution. [01:07:01] So that is what we have in chapter 19.

Just by the way, we find now, in three ways, water. In chapter 19 we find a water of purification, to take away defilement. In chapter 20 you find water from the rock again. The people have thirst again, and then Moses failed. But God gives water in his grace, it is really unbelievable how great the grace of God is, that for such a people, full of rebellion, God gives water.

It's really, when you think about it, unbelievable how great the grace of God is. But we need it, we need it.

So here is the water from the rock, an answer to the cry of the people. Moses did not understand the grace of God, he struck the rock, and he failed. And again, in God's righteous government, Moses was not allowed to enter the land, because of this.

[01:08:05] And we find here, in this chapter, that Moses should have used the staff of Aaron, of the priesthood. We have seen in chapter 17 the importance of the priest. The priest is going to introduce the people into the land. The priest is going to help them, but everything fails, and Moses did not understand it. So Moses failed.

And then in chapter 21, we find the water in connection with God's purpose. And I'd like to say a few words on that, just briefly, against failure.

In chapter 21, we find how the people were impatient, and then how they despised, again, the bread, in chapter 21, and no water, in verse 5.

And then Jehovah sent fiery serpents, you know, again, judgment. [01:09:02] But on the other hand, God's full provision of grace, God's judgment on the one hand, in his righteous dealings, but then there is full provision in his grace. And I think here it is in connection with the fact that God is now going to introduce them into the good of his thoughts. In chapter 20, we find that Aaron died.

So Aaron is linked with the people in the wilderness, with provisions for the people in the wilderness. But when a new high priest comes, Eleazar, God gives this new high priest in view of the land. So I would suggest this, from chapter 21 on, the eyes are now directed to the land, towards the land at least. So there is a turning point here.

We have seen the goodness of God, to give abundant supply, but now we find also how God is helping his people to enter into the enjoyment of his purpose.

[01:10:09] And just, when we keep this in mind, that Aaron passed away, this marks the change, the turning point.

And we have now the people of Israel, the elect, the others had fallen down in the wilderness, and those who were the new generation, with Joshua and with Caleb, they are going to enter the land. After this experience, this last experience, and again, when we compare this with John 3, we will find how this is linked with the deepest thought of God. Again, how there is provision, the Lord Jesus was the one who took our place, as the brazen serpent took the place of the people.

And that there is now complete condemnation. God condemned what he had to condemn in Christ, in his sacrifice, not in his life, but in his sacrifice. [01:11:11] So here we find really a turning point, because then, as I said, here is water for the third time. Not water of purification, not water in connection with the thirst of the people in the wilderness, but now water which comes when the staves of the princes hit the wilderness.

It is really a change, you know, when you read on from verse 10, and the children of Israel journeyed and encamped in Abbas, and they were removed from Abbas, and so on, toward a sun rising, and then they start to sing, in verse 17, then Israel sang this song, the second song, the first was in Exodus 15. During the wilderness, murmurings, failure, no song. How often this happens in our lives. [01:12:03] And then at the end, there is this song, rise up well, sing unto it, and so on, well which princes digged. Now we could compare this with John 4, as I said, John 3 we find the brazen serpent, and John 4 we find his water, which speaks of eternal life. Now, really these are things in connection with God's purpose, which comes out now. And then we find in chapter 21, how they move towards the victory.

They conquer two kings, and this is part of the land already, you know.

God is going to bring people into the land, but there are two kings they have to conquer, and these belong not really to the land, this part, but here.

And we find in Deuteronomy that God gave that part to them too. Moses gave it to them, [01:13:03] because this land would speak of two things, the earthly blessings which we receive from God's hand. And this is very important to learn, that it is in God's heart to give his people the earthly blessings. These two kings had, as it were, usurped these blessings for themselves.

There was one king who was very proud, that is what we find in verse 27, and very famous.

The poets spoke of him, come to Heshbon, let the city of Sion be built and established. So there we find the self-importance of man, who uses these blessings, these earthly blessings, for himself, who becomes very famous. And we find a second aspect in verse 33, in the king who was called Og, who had a long bed. That was all.

[01:14:05] You know, many people use blessings for themselves, just for themselves, a long bed, and the whole life consists of this. No, God's going to give these blessings to his people.

But they have to conquer these kings, they have to learn these lessons, that it's not to be used for themselves, it's to be used in fellowship with the Lord. And then we find in chapter 22, how near the end of the wilderness journey, and you find then how Balak wanted to curse the people of God.

And then we find how God allows that this prophet comes, and that he gives four prophecies, which speak of the people of God, the elected people of God. They are now seen as the ones who are prepared for the land, who are going to enter into the land, [01:15:01] and before they do that, Satan wants to get rid of them, he wants to curse them. But we find here, first, in the first prophecy, it is a sanctified people.

The second is, it is a justified people, there is no accusation to be brought against them. That's what you find in the Romans, 8 at the end, no accusation, no condemnation. They are beautiful in God's eyes, that's the third. And then in the fourth, you find how the coming of the Lord is brought out, as a star out of Jacob, the coming of the Lord, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel. So there you find already a millennial picture, and all the peoples subjected under his authority. But we come to that already now in the kingdom of God. So here are many lessons again. And then we find at the end, just before they enter the land, [01:16:02] failure again, failure. After these prophecies, failure, fornication.

Associations through the Midianites, Midianites were related to them, and they were used by Moab, by the king of Moab and the daughters of Moab, to make the people fornicate and to make them serve the idols.

Idolatry, fornication, terrible situation.

And again, God's government, he has to come in, in government, in judgment, but this is the last you find about that.

And then God is presenting a new generation in 26. When all the others have been put aside, even through these experiences of chapter 25, God presents now in chapter 26 a new generation.

And two things, you find Caleb and Joshua again there.

[01:17:01] They belong to the old generation, as I may say. So they form the link between the old people and the new. That is faith.

And then there is a special mention of these daughters of Zelophehad, five daughters who appreciated the land. You find them back in chapter 27, and also the end of Numbers, who really appreciated the land. Now this is for us.

Faith, Caleb and Joshua, overcomes all the complaints, all the hesitations and so on, all the unbelief of the people. But at the other hand, real appreciation for the land is in these daughters of Zelophehad. That is what is necessary.

And then that is what we find in chapter 27.

In connection with God's purpose then, they appreciate God's purpose.

So you find, as it were, what we have in 2 Corinthians 5, this new generation is really a new creation. [01:18:01] And we hope to see that in the third evening, in connection with the results of the wilderness journey, what God works out.

What you also find in chapter 23, one of the remarks, I hope to come back on that, what God has wrought. That is the end of the wilderness.

And then God gives the new leader in chapter 27. And then chapter 28, 29, we cannot speak about, but these are wonderful chapters. There you find the value of the Lord Jesus, the sacrifice in connection with the wilderness journey.

And then in chapter 32, you find that the people fall short.

We have spoken of these two kings, and there are now two and a half tribes who think, okay, that's enough, we will stay there. So they fall short of God's purpose. They do not enter really into the land, they stay at the other side. [01:19:01] They appreciate these blessings that God gives them, but again, failure, because they fall short of the purpose of God. The purpose of God was to have them here in this land, and these two and a half tribes did not really enter into these thoughts. So this is the last hindrance, the last experience.

So I would say you need real exercise to go into God's purpose.

Then we find, again, a preservative against that, a remedy against that, and that's again a matter of love. I have said love for the Ark is necessary to go through the wilderness, and it is a matter of love for the Lord, as he is now in glory, to be occupied with the land, to be occupied with God's purpose. When I have real love for the Lord Jesus, I will be occupied with God's purpose. [01:20:01] That's what you find in Ephesians. In Ephesians 3 in particular, you find the prayer of Paul that the Lord Jesus would dwell in our hearts.

It's a matter of love. So that would be the preservative, not to fall short of the purpose of God. And then in chapter 33, we're almost done now, we find that they come to the last part of the wilderness, in verse 48, and encamped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan of Jericho.

So here we find the last encampment. It's the last phase of the wilderness journey. You find a whole review in chapter 33. You could study this chapter and you have really a good review. There are some other reviews, but this is the most complete review. And so God wants us to bring there, at that point. I think every believer has to come in his own experience with the Lord to that point, [01:21:03] that he would reach the plains of Moab. And what are you going to do in the plains of Moab? You are not in the land yet, but the whole book of Deuteronomy is given there, the plains of Moab. So the plains of Moab is the wilderness experience past, all the possible failures we have seen, you have all passed that. There is real faith, there is real love, the work of God, of course, and you are occupied with the land. You have not reached the land yet, but the book of Deuteronomy is full of the land. So this is a marvellous picture. This is the place that God wants to bring us in our experience, as the experience of the people of God at that time. And again, in closing, I would like to remind you of these daughters of Zelophehad who appreciated the land, and you find them back in chapter 36. The whole chapter of 36 is occupied with the inheritance. God wants to have an inheritance, isn't that great? [01:22:03] This great God, he wants to have an inheritance in his people. He wants to share this with his people. So you are occupied then from that moment on in the book of Deuteronomy with the land, though you are not in the land yet. That's what you have in Philippians, for example, the experiences of a believer like Paul, all the experience of the wilderness past, but still not in the land. But the land was in his heart. And so you find in the New Testament, the land was in his heart. But the land was in his heart. And so you find in the New Testament, letters, epistles which speak of the wilderness experiences, Romans, different wilderness experiences, Corinthians, Hebrews, but you find also epistles like Philippians which speaks of the land, you are not there yet, but the full joy of the land is already in your heart. [01:23:01] So maybe we will find a few lessons then tomorrow with the Lord's help, what all these things mean for us, and then what the result is for the last time. And that is wonderful, at least for myself, I found to see the result of the wilderness. God allows all these testings, and then what is the fruit of all these things? It may have been a little bit dry tonight, but I can't help it, these are the facts. But when we come to the lessons, and especially to the results, you will be full of joy, it will not be longer dry anymore. This is dry stuff, because this is wilderness, the sand was dry, but what we will see is that there will be fruit for God even in the wilderness. That is not dry, that is wonderful, but just bear with me for that, we have to go through it, and then we come to that, when you see the result, the work of God, even in the wilderness, it is wonderful. So let's try to come to that point.