

THE L.I.F.E. PLAN

DEATH OF A GENERATION

BLOCK 2

THEME 4 - THE WILDERNESS

LESSON 4 (52 of 216)

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THEME 4: THE WILDERNESS

LESSON 4 (52 OF 216): DEATH OF A GENERATION

LESSON AIM: There are always consequences when God's people disobey.

SCRIPTURE: (Numbers 32:13)

And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.

A fresh, new beginning lay before the people of Israel as God brought them out of Egypt. For hundreds of years they had been in Egypt, many of them with the oppressive foot of slavery across their necks. Their situation is one of the greatest spiritual lessons in Scripture. Israel felt the consequences of their enslavement in Egypt for their entire history. In a sense, they never completely got over it. It hounded them for all of their history in the Bible and continues to influence them today. Their situation stands as an illustration of every person's enslavement in sin as a result of the fall. Although a person believes on Christ and becomes a Christian, the struggle with the flesh, the fallen nature, hounds us for the rest of our life on earth.

God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt with an awesome and dramatic display of his glory and power. By the infliction of ten plagues upon the people of Egypt, God brought them to a place where they were willing to let Israel go and worship God. Israel had seen all of this. We might think they would have been convinced themselves as to the power of God and that he had their best interest in mind when he brought them out of Egypt. The problem was, however, that Israel had become accustomed to their slavery. They had gotten used to their cruel and meager existence. Bad as it was, at least it was predictable. They knew what they could expect from their condition of slavery. To walk with God in his plans was totally new to them. To walk by faith was a way of life that they did not know. It was scary, unpredictable, and they were not good at adapting to this new way of life. It was easier to manage the slavery than to live according to the plan of God, especially when they did not know how to put one spiritual foot in front of the other one in order to walk with God.

Not long after leaving Egypt, it became apparent that they needed a lot of food and water. Where was this going to come from? Up to now, they had been fed on a slave's diet; whatever they could get, whenever they could get it. There was no time to plant in the wilderness and wait for a harvest. They needed food and water and they needed it now. They soon began to murmur and complain and long for the scraps they had been eating in Egypt. All they could do was to look backward to their slavery. They did not know how to look ahead and trust God to provide the things they needed. And, they apparently were not willing to learn how to do this. All they knew was that their stomachs were growling and they wanted food right now.

God met their needs as they wandered in the wilderness. He fed them with bread, called manna, out of the sky. Each morning when they got up, the ground was covered with their food. All they had to do was to go out and gather enough of it for that day. God was teaching them that to walk by faith was a daily exercise, and that he wanted them to trust and depend upon him every day for everything. He also gave them water to drink. A rock followed Israel through the wilderness and from this rock, on certain occasions, God brought water for them to drink. We learn in the New Testament that this rock was actually Jesus Christ. He was with Israel everywhere they went and was there to meet their needs. They only had to trust him. God also clothed them for the years they wandered in the wilderness. He made their clothes and shoes last throughout these years. Even though they traveled many miles, their clothes never wore out. Can you imagine wearing the same pair of shoes for 40 years?

Early in their journey after leaving Egypt, they came up to the edge of the land that God had promised to give them. Moses took one man from each of the 12 tribes of Israel and sent them as spies into the land. They were to survey the landscape, learn of the peoples who were living there, and bring back a report of what they found. After 40 days, the spies returned to the camp of Israel to give their report. They had found a land truly blessed by God and overflowing with abundance. In fact, they said that the land flowed with milk and honey. It was there just ahead of them. All and more they had ever dreamed of. But, there was a problem. There were some awfully big people living in the land. They called them giants and said that compared to them, the people of Israel looked like grasshoppers beside them. This struck fear in the hearts of the people of Israel. They did not want to risk going in to take the new land as God had wanted them to do.

Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, spoke up in favor of going in now to take the land and conquer the people. They said with the Lord's help, it was entirely possible for Israel to take the land. However, the fear of the people won the day. They refused to follow the bold spies into the future God had waiting for them. For this cause, Israel suffered the consequences of disobeying God and having their own way. God pronounced a judgment upon them for their disobedience. For each day the spies had spent searching out the land of promise, Israel would spend one year wandering in the wilderness. Forty days of searching turned into forty years of wandering because they refused to obey God and go into the land. Of course, the larger issue in the entire situation was that Israel was not willing to depend upon God to be with them, lead them, and help them each day in their quest for the land of promise.

Over this period of 40 years, Israel continued to be a stubborn and stiff-necked people, refusing to be led by the Lord. For this stubbornness and hard-heartedness, God passed another judgment on this generation of people. Only two of the entire generation were allowed to finally go into the promised land 40 years later; Joshua and Caleb. Their offspring went in with them, but the entire generation of Israel who had been brought out of Egypt died in the wilderness without ever setting a foot in the new land. Obedience may be scary, and following God into the unknown takes a lot of courage. But to disobey him always ends with dire consequences which are more costly than obedience. The same is true today. We should learn from Israel's example.

LESSON OUTLINE

BLOCK 2

THEME 4: THE WILDERNESS

LESSON 4 (52 OF 216): DEATH OF A GENERATION

I GOD DELIVERED ISRAEL FROM EGYPT

- A. 400 years in Egypt
- B. Egypt plagued

II GOD CARED FOR ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS

- A. Food from the sky
- B. Water from a rock
- C. Clothes did not wear out

III ISRAEL'S FEAR OVERTOOK THEM

- A. Refused to go into promised land
- B. Died in the wilderness

SCRIPTURES TO BROADEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Disguised as a rock, Christ followed Israel in the wilderness
1 Corinthians 10:4
2. Israel's clothes did not wear out
Deuteronomy 29:5

LINES OF THEOLOGICAL CONNECTION

1. ANTHROPOLOGY
 - Obedience
 - Disobedience
2. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD
 - Protects and preserves his people
 - Provides for his people
 - The longsuffering of God
 - God is just in his judgements

LESSON GLOSSARY

1. Manna
A bread provided daily from heaven by God
2. Consequence
A result or effect of an action
3. Murmur
To speak in a low voice expressing discontent

QUESTIONS ANSWER KEY

1. What does Israel's slavery represent to us today?
Our slavery to sin without Jesus
2. Why did Israel not enter the Promised Land immediately?
They feared the giants and did not trust God to take care of them
3. What did God provide for Israel while they wandered in the wilderness?
He led them, fed them, gave them water, and protected them from their enemies
4. How many of the children of Israel who left Egypt entered the Promised Land?
Only two (2) – Joshua and Caleb
5. How many tribes were there among the children of Israel?
Twelve
6. Did Moses enter the Promised Land?
No
7. What does Israel's example say to you today about trusting and obeying God, or not?
Student response

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LESSON 4 (52 OF 216): DEATH OF A GENERATION

QUESTIONS TO INSPIRE THOUGHT

1. What does Israel's slavery represent to us today?
2. Why did Israel not enter the Promised Land immediately?
3. What did God provide for Israel while they wandered in the wilderness?
4. How many of the children of Israel who left Egypt entered the Promised Land?
5. How many tribes were there among the children of Israel?
6. Did Moses enter the Promised Land?
7. What does Israel's example say to you today about trusting and obeying God, or not?