

Week 6

February 5 - February 11

In the wilderness. This week's passage covers the Hebrews "exodus" from Egypt, and their commencement into the wilderness. There are several terrific accounts revealing the power of God, as well as His evident concern for His people. We will observe the numerous "wilderness experiences" of the Israelites. Furthermore, we will see parallels with our "wilderness experiences."

February 5th

Exodus 13-15. "Why Lord?"

The sequence of events we read in this passage will become very familiar as we walk through the next several chapters. The Hebrews had been in slavery for over 400 years, nearly twice as long as the United States has been a nation. As it came to an end, they watched as God displayed His power before Pharaoh, and finally he yielded. And now they're free!

They celebrated their independence, and intentionally set a day aside to remember it annually. They left with the wealth of Egypt and God's leading. Then at the Red Sea they saw Pharaoh's army closing in. Their immediate response was, "Why were we brought out here to die in the wilderness?"—we will see that response appear several more times. Nevertheless, God provides another miracle. God delivered them, and they celebrated with song and dance. In the very next paragraph the people complain to Moses about a lack of good water.

God's answer to their "why's?" is found in 15:25; a "test."

How have you done with your wilderness tests?

February 6th

Exodus 16-19. "The Wilderness"

The Hebrews had just traveled two months, and over 100 miles out into the wilderness. What the wilderness was to them I believe is something we can relate to well. Their physical wilderness was also their spiritual and emotional wilderness. It was the place where God continued to test them (see 16:4 and 17:7).

What is the wilderness? It is a place where things are uncomfortable and unfamiliar. It is a place where we are forced to rely on God. It is a place of testing (faith, obedience, integrity, etc.). It is a place we come out of stronger, and if not, then we may be spending more time in it.

Moses spent his time in the wilderness prior to the exodus of the Hebrews. God was preparing his heart.

We each need to spend our time in the wilderness as God prepares us for whatever task He has in store. In the wilderness God presents us with challenges; changing our will, refining our character, developing our dependence on Him, and much more.

February 7th

Exodus 20-22:15. "Rules and More Rules"

Rules. It's not just the Ten Commandments. We will see that there are literally hundreds of rules as our readings continue.

Furthermore, it is not just the Old Testament, although some people have that idea. In the New Testament Jesus expounded on the commandments. He added statements of generosity to a rule about stealing (Mt. 5:40). He added statements of guilt if a person even thinks immorally (Mt. 5:28).

He changed the course from focusing externally to focusing internally. Although He added to it, He also simplified it. Jesus said the Law is based on Loving the Lord with all our heart and loving others (Mt. 22:40).

I appreciate the insight from the Life Application Bible: The rules God laid out "had several objectives: (1) to protect the nation, (2) to organize the nation, and (3) to focus the nation's attention on God."

The guidelines God gives us today also have our protection and direction in mind. God's instructions are not without purpose.

February 8th

Exodus 22:16-24:18. "Short Term Dedication"

This is an important passage to remember, because we will reflect on it again in just a few days. Think about what they have just seen. God's angel is before them leading the way (23:20). He will also go before them and destroy their enemies (23:23), but in a manner so organized that the land will not be harmed (23:27-31).

Furthermore, the people profess their allegiance to God, more than once, with the words, "We will do everything the LORD has told us to do" (24:3,7). And to top it all off, the leaders saw God! Over 70 men saw God and even shared a meal with God (24:9-11).

Can you imagine a series of events more life changing? Or was it? The very next time Moses sees these people they will be worshiping an idol (chapter 32). Their intimate encounters with God lasted forty days.

How long do your "mountain top" experiences last? May our dedication not be so short-lived.

February 9th

Exodus 25-28. "Symbolic Significance"

"The old system in the law of Moses was only a shadow of the things to come", evident in how "we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:1,19).

The detailed instructions for the tabernacle had purpose even beyond the immediate usable purpose for the Israelites. There was great symbolic purpose as God looked ahead to the One who would tabernacle among us (John 1:14).

There is symbolic purpose in some of the other items mentioned as well. The priest's clothing was to remind him of his place before God and his position as an intercessor for the people.

However, I was considering what it would do for us to wear some of the items Aaron was to be clothed with. What if you had the names of people written on a chest-piece you wore over your heart? (28:29). What if you wore a medallion across your forehead that read, "Set apart as Holy to the Lord"? (28:36). Would you live, act, react, or respond differently?

February 10th

Exodus 29-31. "Conviction"

Eric Liddell was the "flying Scotsman." He set an Olympic record in the 400-meter run at the 1924 Olympic Games. Although favored at 100 meters, he had withdrawn from that race because the qualifying heats were to be run on a Sunday, a day he had firmly set aside for worship and rest. Instead, he spent the next several months training for the 400. Incidentally, he also won a bronze in the 200.

Liddell lived out his convictions even when the whole world encouraged him otherwise. His actions would also fall under the category of integrity. Moreover, he was willing to follow his heart regardless of the outcome. We may not be rewarded this side of Heaven for abiding by our convictions. In fact, it could be a bit painful.

Yet, that is where the rubber meets the road. Take a minute to think through your convictions. What are they? How much pressure would it take to change them?

"Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it" (James 4:17).

February 11th

Exodus 32-34. "A Man of Great Character"

Moses was an amazing individual. He was the instrument God used to change the heart of Pharaoh. He was the man who led God's people out of Egypt. He held his staff over the water and the Red Sea opened up. He talked with God and met Him on the mountain. Through the LORD, he provided water and food. Moses counseled, and judged, and led.

Moses was gone from their presence for forty days. During that time, they rebelled against the Lord's instructions and refused to worship Him, but instead chose to worship a golden calf.

God told Moses that He would destroy them for their terrible sin and instead make "Moses into a great nation" (32:10). Moses pleaded with God to not do that. Instead, Moses asked God to forgive them (32:32).

I believe God was testing Moses' character, and Moses passed the test. The Israelites could not have had a better person leading them through the wilderness. May each of us be that for others.

Week

February 12 - February 18

Exodus 35-40; Leviticus 1-8; Numbers 7-9

This week's readings continue in the detail of the covenant that God established with Israel. You will read about the building of the tabernacle and the details associated with it. Following the construction of the tabernacle, the Lord gives instruction as to how He is to be worshipped. In all of these instructions we find an underlying need for us to do things God's way. Whether it is a willingness to give or submit, it is dependent upon a heart that is willing to do things God's way.

February 12th

Exodus 35-36. "Stop Giving!"

I have yet to meet a church that has more money and resources than it can put to use. However, that is exactly what we see take place today. God's people give above and beyond what is needed to build the tabernacle.

Now, my intent with today's devotional is not to go off on the importance of giving, but I do want to note something interesting in Ex. 35:20-22. What most catches my attention isn't what they brought or even how much they brought, but rather how they brought it. Everyone whose hearts were willing brought what they could. I think it is safe to say that not every Israelite gave to the building of the tabernacle, rather only those whose "hearts were stirred and desired to do so" gave their offerings.

This is how it is to work in our own lives. God doesn't want us to give out of compulsion or obligation. If that is why you give then you should keep your money. Look at Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11. They gave out of a wrong motive and were dishonest in their giving. May you give as the Israelites gave, with willing hearts.

February 13th

Exodus 37:1-39:31. "Lost in the Details"

I recently returned from a retreat with some middle school boys. While at this retreat, I discovered that they can easily get lost in the details of a story and totally miss the point. I hope that isn't the case for you as you read this passage today. I say that because, in the middle of all those details, is a simple phrase "just as the Lord had commanded Moses." All of those details were important because they were commanded by God. It is not as though the craftsmen could have changed their minds and disregarded the instructions from God. They followed every single detail God had given them

God gave them great detail on the tabernacle and he gives us detail on how to live as well. So, are you willing to live life God's way? Or are you going to ignore God's instructions on how to live? The craftsmen of Israel were willing to follow God's instruction and build His way. If you will do the same, your life will be one of beauty just like the tabernacle was.

February 14th

Exodus 39:32-40:38; Numbers 9:15-23. "Time to Go Again"

In our first seven years of marriage, my wife Kristi and I (David) had seven different addresses. We would often make jokes about being part nomadic or having the "year-and-a-half itch. However, through those years and all the moves, one thing was consistent – it was always our decision when we moved.

As you read today, that was not necessarily the case for the Israelites. How would you like it if every day you woke up and had to check if the cloud had moved to know if you were leaving or staying? It didn't matter how much you liked your current spot, if the cloud was moving, it was time to go. I would imagine that many of us would begin to complain and grumble if we had to live like that. And yet in a way we do live this way. If you are at all concerned with being in God's will and He says "go," then you will go.

Are you willing to follow God's direction? If God were to say "go," would you go? How will you go? Will you complain and grumble or will you go joyfully knowing that God is leading you?

February 15th

Numbers 7. "A Living and Holy Sacrifice"

Over the course of twelve days the twelve tribes of Israel gave their gifts of dedication for the tabernacle. You probably noticed that all twelve gifts were identical. To me this is a remarkable thing. Bible Commentator Matthew Henry notes that this points to the "equal share" that each tribe had in the tabernacle and altar. I am sure that it was tempting to those tribes with greater resources to out-give the other tribes. And yet none of them did.

Under the Old Covenant, all people came to God through the system of sacrifices. Today, under the New Covenant, all people come to God through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

The tribes gave their dedication offerings in recognition of the importance of the tabernacle. So, what is an appropriate offering for us to give in recognition of Jesus? Romans 12:1-2 says that we are to give our whole life as a "living and holy sacrifice." Now that is an offering that truly shows we all have equal share in the sacrifice of Christ for our salvation.

February 16th

Numbers 8:1-9:14; Leviticus 1-3. "Willing to Believe"

There were numerous types of sacrifices in the Old Covenant system of worship. In our modern mindset, we might wonder why all these sacrifices were necessary. It is difficult for us to relate to and understand this system of worship and forgiveness that God had ordained. However, there is a connection between their receiving of forgiveness and our receiving of forgiveness, and that connection is Christ.

Leviticus 1:4 says that a man was to "lay your hand on its head so the Lord will accept it as your substitute, thus making atonement for you." Why would killing an animal while placing a hand on its head atone for sins?

As people, we generally want to make up for our mistakes. We also want to attempt to earn God's favor and forgiveness. However, this is impossible for we cannot repay the debt we owe to Christ. Forgiveness is only received by a willingness to believe according to God's system, whether that is belief that God would forgive based on an Old Testament sacrifice, or if it is trusting in Christ's sacrifice for us today.

February 17th

Leviticus 4-6. "Seeking Forgiveness"

Is it possible to sin without knowing it? Absolutely. Many times, when we sin against another person, we may not be aware of it for some time. And sometimes no one else is aware either. The instructions regarding the sin offering we read today were to be followed "when they became aware of their sin" (4:14; 23; 28; 5:5; 17). God does not expect us to seek forgiveness for sins we are unaware of. However, how we respond to the realization of sin in our life is critical to our spiritual health. In the Old Testament they were to bring a sin offering in order to seek the Lord's forgiveness.

For the New Testament believer, the command is still to seek forgiveness. 1 John 1:9 tells us that "if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong." When you become aware of sin, are you willing to seek forgiveness from the Lord? What about seeking forgiveness from a person you may have sinned against?

February 18th

Leviticus 7-8. "Worship with a Willing Heart"

The theme that has been running through this entire week is a willingness to do things God's way. Worship for Israel was very detailed. God had directed through Moses how they were to worship Him.

As Christians and members of the new covenant, we do not have this amount of detail from the Lord for our worship services. At best we have some principles in the New Testament and the model of the first century church in the book of Acts. Even though the amount of detail differs, the need for a willingness to worship God according to His way remains.

In your worship, is it more about God or more about your wants and needs? Are your preferences in worship more important than God's desires? What are you doing to cultivate a willingness to do things God's way? Spend some time with God today, as Moses did, asking Him to show you where you need to submit more to His way.

Week 8

February 19-25, Leviticus 9-26

We are in the heart of Leviticus this week and holiness is the topic. Now, I've got a confession to make, and perhaps you can relate to what I'm going to tell you. The first few times I took on reading through the Bible, when I would get to the book of Leviticus I would accomplish some of the fastest speed reading you could ever imagine. As you go through the book you read about rules for cleansing, rules for food, rules for priests, and so on. Regardless of my initial reaction, there is a theme that runs through the book that is perhaps more essential and impactful to my everyday life than maybe the themes in many of the other books.

The theme is holiness. Prayerfully, as you read this book you will see something that relates very directly to yourself, and that is that God desires that His people are holy and pursuing holiness. "For I am the LORD your God. You must consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy... For I, the LORD, am the one who brought you up from the land of Egypt, that I might be your God. Therefore, you must be holy because I am holy." (Lev. 11:44-45).

February 19th

Leviticus 9-11. "Fear is Respect"

Since the start of Leviticus, we have been reading very specific rules for the priests concerning offerings. Chapters eight and nine were discussing their ordination ceremony. It was an elaborate time of dedicating themselves to the service of God.

They were the intercessors for the people, and it was a position only available to the descendants of Aaron. For Nadab and Abihu, perhaps some of this went to their head. Pride may have been a factor in their sin (10:1-2). Alcohol may have been an issue (10:8-9). Complacency was possibly an issue, as they really did not care to follow the rules about where the fire and the incense came from. But, one thing that most certainly was a factor was their disrespect for the Almighty God.

I have a problem with Christians who say, "We really don't need to fear God. We just need to respect Him." The character of the Holy One, Judge and Creator demands something more than respect. "He will be glorified before all the people" (10:3).

February 20th

Leviticus 12-14:32. "Vitamin Be One"

This section covers some things that are kind of unpleasant just to read about. But, amazingly, it all goes back to the theme of Leviticus—holiness.

I have read historical accounts of the physical health of the Israelites compared to other nations of their time and area. The Israelites were far healthier. Their birthrate was higher. The longevity and health of the nation just seemed much stronger. Why? The rules.

There are so many directives concerning purification procedures for water and food, contaminated materials, circumventing contagious diseases, etc.

Again, we are reminded of the fact that God's rules have purpose. God wants holy people set apart for Him. Yet, in addition to being the Almighty God He is also their Protector. God takes care of His people even through a series of rules designed to protect them from disease and sickness.

It is this kind of reminder that we need to prompt us to remember that God's intentions and purpose are far more arranged than our short-term vision would let us think.

February 21st

Leviticus 14:33-16:34. "Covering is Not a Cure"

Once each year the Israelites would confess their sins, and the high priest would enter the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle (and temple later) to make atonement for them as a nation. This was called the Day of Atonement, and it was obviously, one of the most important days of the year.

The ceremony had very specific rules that the high priest was to follow. The animals had to meet certain standards. The process was to symbolize certain things as it followed a very rigid procedure. There was a great deal of blood spilled out and sprinkled at the front of the Ark of Covenant. And, understand this, it had to be performed each year—it was temporary.

Atonement is only a bandage and not a cure. Atone means "to cover." Their sins were just being "covered" up each year, yet it all looked forward to a perfect sacrifice that would remedy that problem.

Forgive means "to cancel." Jesus Christ's sacrifice made forgiveness possible. Prayerfully, we never take it for granted.

February 22nd

Leviticus 17-19. "Be Holy Because Your Lord Is"

The thought of exactly how to be holy has suffered from many false concepts. In some circles, holiness is equated with a long list of "don'ts." For others, holiness means a particular style of dress or mannerisms. And for still others, it may mean an unattainable perfection.

A word study reveals that to be holy is to be morally blameless. It is to be separated from sin and consecrated to God. A holy life is one lived in conformity to the moral precepts of the Bible and in contrast to the sinful ways of the world.

Jerry Bridges wrote, "Surely God has not commanded us to be holy without providing the means to be holy. The privilege of being holy is yours, and the decision and responsibility to be holy is yours. If you make that decision, you will experience the fullness of joy which Christ has promised to those who walk in obedience to Him."

"...seek to live a clean and holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

February 23rd

Leviticus 20-22. "Calling Sin 'Sin'"

Homosexuality. Bestiality. Adultery. Incest. These are terms that when mentioned can bring a look of disgust or shock upon our face. Are we allowed to talk of such things? Are we allowed to say such things are wrong, violently wrong?

We are being inundated from our culture with the idea that we should not stand and loudly label certain things as sin. We are taught that inwardly you may believe what you would like, but don't outwardly express your disdain for moral depravation.

We're tutored into reasoning that black and white standards are gone and gray is the norm. Yet, God's Word has never looked very gray to me.

Furthermore, we must understand that calling sin what it is, will be what leads us to the salvation of God. Until we understand our need for salvation, we will not be looking for it. Paul said, "I would not have known what sin was except through the law" (Rom. 7:7). "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

February 24th

Leviticus 23-25:23. "Refocus"

Israel was instructed to remember seven specific holidays each year. Some festivals lasted one week and others just one day. But each holiday represented something important: Passover reminded them of God's deliverance from Egypt, Unleavened Bread reminded them of their new way of life, Firstfruits reminded them of God's provision, and so forth down the list.

Apart from reminders, God's established holidays also provided rest and renewal. God felt so strongly about the importance of each of these that He also established a Sabbath day of rest each week.

Rest. It is vital for us physically in order to maintain what we need to do.

Renewal. It is vital for us emotionally as sometimes our joy is replaced with drudgery as we carry on.

Reminder. We need these things spiritually as we refocus on a variety of items; our gratitude to God; our life's perspective; and, our fellowship with our Creator.

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), so keep each area of your life healthy.

February 25th

Leviticus 25:24-26:46. "Blessed by God"

"...anyone who believes in Jesus Christ will never be disappointed" (2 Peter 2:6).

In chapter 26 God promises a long list of blessings if the Israelites obey Him. Their harvests will be plentiful, they will live securely, He will live among them, and on and on.

However, He also says that they will receive a long list of punishments if they disobey Him. Their enemies will eat their crops, their land will be devastated, they will die in slavery, and so forth.

When we live in obedience to God, what kind of blessings will we receive? Does God give you peace? Does your conviction give you direction? Do His promises give you hope?

How often do you consider the blessings of God? Have you ever seriously tried to count them "one by one" as that old song suggests? I would challenge you to list as many as you can. Embark on proving the truth of Proverbs 10:6; "The godly are showered with blessings."

Week 9

Week Nine — February 26th - March 4th
Leviticus 27; Numbers 1-6, 10-18

The theme for this week is sacrifice. Recently you have read much on the various sacrifices that the Israelites were to perform in their worship of the Lord. This week we are going to explore what it means for us to sacrifice.

One of the key verses that will be brought up this week is Romans 12:1-2: "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice — the kind He will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is."

May you, as you read this week, ponder the ways in which your life can be a living and holy sacrifice.

February 26th

Leviticus 27; Numbers 1. "The High Cost of Sacrifice"

The last chapter of Leviticus is concerned with redeeming that which was dedicated to the Lord. The act of redemption was a major part of life for the Israelites. For the 21st century Christian it is not something we often think about. When is the last time you heard someone talk about redeeming? If anything, we use the word to speak of getting even which isn't the biblical meaning.

Redemption is an important concept for us though, because if you are in Christ then you have been redeemed (Titus 2:13-14). You may have noticed the cost involved with redeeming in this chapter. If someone or something is going to be redeemed there is always a cost.

So, if we are redeemed and if there is always a cost associated with redemption, then how are we to pay the cost? Fortunately, for you and me, Jesus paid the cost for our redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19). It is a cost far beyond what we could afford.

February 27th

Numbers 2-3. "Sacrificing Our Freedom"

As I reflect on the responsibilities given to the Levites, I am rather overwhelmed. Could you imagine being responsible for taking care of the one place where the true God could be worshipped? Wow! Then I think about the fact that they didn't aspire to this, but that the Lord chose them and they were born into it. Their whole purpose in life was the proper care and operation of the tabernacle.

Now, this is not all that different than for us today. Like the Levites, we have been chosen by God and then given a purpose in life. We do not inherit this based on our genealogy, but we are born into it, for every believer is born of the Spirit (John 3:5). The Levites were instructed as to what their purpose was – they didn't get to choose. In the same way, God directs and gives each believer significance and purpose. This is what I mean by sacrificing our freedom. As chosen people, we are not free to declare the purpose for our life. Our purpose, one that will bring real meaning and significance, comes from above.

February 28th

Numbers 4-5. "Sacrifice of Fellowship"

In the instructions that the Lord gave to Israel through Moses, purity was greatly stressed. There were a number of reasons for this, and the one given in this passage is because the Lord dwelled in their camp.

Praise God that we live under a covenant of grace and not one of law as the Israelites did. And yet, even though we are called to grace, we cannot ignore the need for purity. God demanded purity because he dwelled among Israel. God now, through His Spirit, dwells in the life of every believer and in the community of believers as a collective whole. His expectation is still purity in the lives of believers and in the community of believers. As a new creation, we are made pure by the blood of Christ, and we maintain purity by confessing our sins (1 John 1:9). Unfortunately, some within the community of faith stop practicing personal confession and knowingly and willingly engage in sin, thus defiling the church. As with Israel, the church must take action to remove those who defile the community (1 Cor. 5:5). However, we must not forget that once purity is restored, through forgiveness and grace, fellowship is also to be restored.

March 1st Day 60

Numbers 6 and 10. "Dedicated to Sacrifice"

The Nazirite vow was a special way for an Israelite to dedicate one's self to the Lord, and he knew that it came with certain restrictions. We even see this practiced by the Apostle Paul who shaved his head because of a vow (Acts 18:18).

Not every Israelite would make a Nazirite vow, but every believer who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit is already dedicated to the Lord. We do not operate with a list of restrictions like one who has taken a Nazirite vow. In fact, we operate with a higher standard. Romans 12:1 says that we are to be a living and holy sacrifice. We show our dedication by not copying the ways of the world. We are then to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This is different than being the same person with some additional rules. It is a change of the entire person. When we come to faith in Jesus it is more than a ticket to Heaven. It is dedicating our whole life to the Lord. Have you truly dedicated your whole life to the Lord?

March 2nd

Numbers 11-13. "Whining and Complaining"

I have overseen a few short-term mission trips with teenagers, and am preparing for another. It has been my experience that the most important rule for keeping the group together and focused is that there is no complaining. Anytime you choose to follow the Lord's leading there will be some form of sacrifice associated with it. Whining or complaining communicates an unwillingness to make that sacrifice.

It is obvious here that many of the Israelites and the foreigners who were with them had reached their limit of personal sacrifice and had begun to complain. They were prepared to return to slavery in Egypt because the sacrifice was too great.

Returning to slavery may sound silly to us. Personal freedom is worth the sacrifice, isn't it? While this may be true, how often are we tempted to return to being slaves to sin because the sacrifice of following Christ is too great? As you follow Christ, remember his sacrifice, and what he gave up to secure your salvation.

March 3rd

Numbers 14-15. "Missed Blessings"

The report from the spies truly tested if Israel trusted God for their protection. Already struggling with the level of sacrifice expected of them, they decided the prospect of engaging the inhabitants of the Promised Land wasn't worth it. The people ignored the fact that the Lord was with them (Num. 14:9).

You might find it easy to criticize their lack of faith as I often have. The harsh reality is that we sometimes do the very same thing. We size up a situation and decide the cost is too great, and instead of trusting in the Lord's protection and provision, we make a fear-based decision and miss out on God's blessings.

Why are we prone to fear? The Apostle John tells us that perfect love casts out all fear (1 John 4:18). As broken yet redeemed people our love for God is being perfected. As this process continues fear is diminished and love will increase. As God's faithful love continues to work in our lives, our love for Him grows, and our willingness to sacrifice and follow Him grows as well.

March 4th

Numbers 16-18. "Rebellion of Korah"

God's justice is not often talked about in our churches. We would much rather talk about His love and mercy and grace. The story of Korah, Dathan and Abiram is a vivid reminder that our God is a just God who cannot let sin go unpunished. These men were challenging the leadership of Moses and Aaron, and worse, they were in rebellion to the Lord.

For me, the difficult part of this passage is that the families were punished as well. This is an illustration of God's very own description of himself in Exodus 34:7, "I will show unfailing love to many thousands by forgiving every kind of sin and rebellion. Even so I do not leave sin unpunished, but I punish the children for the sins of their parents to the third and fourth generations."

As unfair as it may seem, we see the impact parental sin has on children lived out every day. Some will walk away from the Lord because of the sins of their parents. To those who are living with the impact of a parent's sin, know that there is grace available in Jesus to break that bondage of sin.