

Monday, March 20, 2023

Changing the Perception of God

The events of Mount Sinai initiated a transformation in the Israelites' perception of God and their understanding of how to worship Him. Unlike the gods of Egypt, their God was to be heard, not seen. In order to help them understand God's message at Mount Sinai, Moses cautioned the Israelites to be very careful about two things:

1. **READ: Deuteronomy 4: 9 – 14.** What did God tell them to remember about the Mount Sinai experience?

2. **READ: Deuteronomy 4: 15 – 20.** What did He tell them never to do? Why?

3. **READ: Exodus 20: 1 – 4; 34: 17; Deuteronomy 4: 23, 24; 5: 4 – 10, 22**
Which of God's commands shaped how the Israelites would know (experience) Him?
 - a. **READ: Psalm 115: 2 – 8.** How different would the Israelites' experience of God be from that of the visual gods of other nations? Why?

 - b. **READ: Deuteronomy 4: 25 – 29.** What would be the consequences if Israel disobeyed this command?

4. **READ: Deuteronomy 4: 5 – 8, 32 – 40.** What did Moses say to encourage the Israelites – who had just come out of a culture that identified with hundreds of visual deities – to be confident and secure in their identity as the people of the one true and invisible God?
 - a. Which actions and characteristics of God would make Him real, present, and important to the Israelites.

 - b. Which actions of the Israelites would make God real and present with them?

 - c. How important were God's words becoming to the Israelites?

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Learning to Live by the Word

1. **READ: Deuteronomy 6: 1 – 4.** As God led the Israelites to sanctuary and pasture in the desert, what did He begin training them to do?
 - a. What was God's purpose in doing this?
 - b. What did God desire for His people?

2. **READ: Exodus 25: 22; Numbers 7: 89; Deuteronomy 10: 5.** Desert shepherds lead their flocks by voice and word. God chose to lead His people in the same way. He first spoke His words from Mount Sinai, but His people were going to move on toward the Promised Land. How would God continue to speak His words to His people as the travel in the desert?
 - a. When God gave these instructions, what was He communicating about His presence with His people and the importance of the words He would speak to them?

3. **READ: Deuteronomy 6: 4 – 9; 11: 18 – 21.** In order to emphasize how seriously God took His command to live by His words, what did He tell the Israelites to do?
 - a. What do you think would be the impact of surrounding so much of life by the words of God?
 - b. Why was this **ESSENTIAL** that the Israelites do this for their children?

4. **READ: Numbers 15: 37 – 41; Deuteronomy 22: 12.** After spending 40 years teaching Israelites how to live on every word that came from his mouth, what did God tell them to wear? Why?

5. **READ: Deuteronomy 31: 9 – 13.** As Moses' life neared its' end, what did God instruct Moses to do to ensure that God's words would continue to be the formative influence in the lives of His people?
 - a. What did God command Israel to do every seven years?

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Learning is Lifelong

1. **READ: Exodus 3: 4 and Jeremiah 10: 3 – 6.** From the moment He first called Moses, God emphasized the importance of His word. In what way did God's communication differ from that of the gods Moses had known in Egypt?

2. How did God instruct Moses to lead the Israelites and what role were God's words to have in the at process?
 - a. **READ: Exodus 4: 2 – 9.** What signs did God provide to help Moses authenticate His message?

 - b. What impact do you think they had on Moses' experience of God?

As he led the Hebrews, Moses faced many challenges that shaped him in hearing and obeying God's words and in teaching God's people to do the same. Several of those challenges had to do with a crisis in the water supply, so consider what happened at Rephidim and Kadesh-Barnea:

READ and COMPARE:

Exodus 17: 1 – 7 (Rephidim) & Numbers 20: 1 – 13 (Kadesh Barnea)

3. When the crisis occurred, how did the people treat Moses?

4. What was the tone of their complaint, and against whom were they really complaining?

5. Where did Moses turn for help?

6. What did God tell Moses to do, and what about His instructions suggests that He wanted to teach His people through this response?

7. Did Moses obey God's every word?
 - a. What was the result?

8. What message, what lesson comes with you and your commitment to hear and obey God?

Thursday, March 23, 2023

Flawed, but Not a Failure

During the years God led His people through the wilderness, Moses was the unsurpassed example of **hearing** God's voice...listening and obeying the words of God. But even Moses had a moment of failure. At a crucial point in his leadership, Moses did not obey God's instructions and rebelled against the power of God's spoken word.

1. The Hebrews had been to Kadesh Barnea before the account in Numbers 20...forty years earlier.
 - a. **READ: Numbers 13: 1 – 20, 27 – 14: 10; 14: 20 – 23, 28 – 30.**
What sin did the Hebrews commit the first time they were at Kadesh Barnea?
 - b. What penalty did God impose?
 - c. **READ: Numbers 20: 12.** What sin did Moses and Aaron commit the second time the Hebrews were at Kadesh Barnea?
 - d. What penalty did God impose?

2. Even when God's people sin against Him and he must discipline them, God's loving, merciful, just, and forgiving character does not change. As you read the following passage, notice how God described and / or responds to the sin of Moses and Aaron:
 - a. **Numbers 20: 12 & 13**
 - b. **Numbers 20: 23 – 30**
 - c. **Numbers 27: 12 – 13**
 - d. **Deuteronomy 32: 48 – 52**

3. **READ: Deuteronomy 34: 10 & 11.** Although one of Moses last acts was sinful and cost him dearly, what does his epitaph reveal (in what it says and does not say) about God's forgiveness and desire to use His people to accomplish his purpose and bring about His kingdom?

