

Q4 L02 - **Moses' History Lesson** - 2021-10-09

Shawn Brummund: Hello, and welcome to another edition of the "Sabbath School Study Hour." It is so good to be able to have you join us here as we come together over the next hour. We open the Word of God, and we continue to study a new book that we just started studying in the Word, which is entitled the book of Deuteronomy, which is written by none other than one of the most famous prophets, Moses himself, so if you joined us last week, welcome back. For those of you who are joining us for the very first time, it's nice to be able to have you join in with us. We know that, if you do stay with us, that you will be blessed, that your knowledge of the Word will increase, and that your faith can increase as well.

So a special welcome to all our online members, to those who are watching on the various networks as well as online, and of course, we always are thankful for our local church family here in the Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh-day Adventist Church in the greater area of Sacramento, California, and again, it is always nice to be able to join our family with the international family that also is with us together.

We're studying our new quarterly, which is "Present Truth in Deuteronomy," and if you haven't gotten a copy of this yet, make sure that you ask your local church for a copy of this even if you're not a church member. Very rare to find a Seventh-day Adventist Church locally that doesn't have a couple extra copies of these that they have ordered just with you in mind that, if you're interested in studying and getting to know this book called Deuteronomy, that much better, this is your opportunity to be able to get one. Just go ahead and visit your local Seventh-day Adventist Church. You could also get an electronic version of that as well if you just do a search on the Amazing Facts website, which is AmazingFacts.org, so go ahead and take advantage of that if you'd like your digital copy.

Also, I want to make sure that you know about our free gift offer, which is "Riches of Grace" written by Pastor Joe Crews, and if you would like a copy of this particular booklet and learn more about the riches of God's grace-- what does that mean? What is God's grace, and why is it so valuable to us as human beings and believers? And so you can go ahead and dial the number 866-788-3966, and go ahead and ask for free Offer Number 152. That'll make it that much easier for the agents that will be answering those lines. So that's available in North America and the U.S. territories. We're happy to be able to bring that to you.

And if you'd like a digital download of that on your phone, you can go ahead and text the code "SH056," and you want to be able to text that to the number 40544. And again, that's available if you are in the United States or its different territories. And again, as you can see on the screen, there is also a website there that you can get a free digital download on the Amazing Facts website. So we want to make these resources as available to you as much as possible that you can continue to grow even outside of watching the "Sabbath School Study Hour."

I want to invite you to pray. Father in heaven, we want to thank You for this opportunity to be able to come together, to be able to open Your Bible. We thank You for the privilege of knowing that You can give us Your Holy Spirit when we ask. We want to pray that Your Holy Spirit will be upon us, that You will speak to each and every one of us that's in the Granite Bay Hilltop Church, as well as those who are joining us online and on the various networks. I want to pray, God, that You will fulfill Your purposes in us as Your Word comes to our hearts as well as to our minds. Help us to embrace the truth, to run with it, and to be blessed. And so we want to pray it in Jesus's name, amen.

Luccas Rodor: Happy Sabbath. It's so good to see you all, to be at church. It is so good to open God's Word. I am super excited for our lesson today. I believe Pastor Doug said last Sabbath that the book of Deuteronomy is his favorite book in the Old Testament, and it's definitely up there in one of my

favorites also. There's so much to learn, you know? In the book of Deuteronomy, there's so much for you to understand, so much to--so many details. I really like the details of the biblical text. So I'm just so excited for the whole lesson and excited to share this morning with you here that are present, also those that are watching from home. May God be with you and bless you as we open up the Word this morning and study from this week's lesson.

The title of this week's lesson is "Moses's--" or "Moses' History Lesson." And I like history. As a kid, growing up, one of the subjects that I liked the most was history. Problem with that was that I was born here in the U.S., and my father is a pastor, and so we moved around quite a bit. In our case though, we moved-- we moved around in the states for a little bit, then moved up to Canada for a while, and so the school system kind of changes, you know, from when you move from one country to the other, but it was still pretty similar once we got there, because I was still speaking English. So at least I have the language going for me.

And then we moved to Brazil, and things just got a whole much worse because there, the whole system changes, and they kind of change their emphasis a little bit. It was really interesting. But I've always loved history, learning about world history, Bible history, the national history of the country where you're at. It's always been fascinating to me. And so here, just learning about the different steps and the different things that the children of Israel were going through, especially here in this lesson, "Moses' History Lesson," it was quite-- I enjoyed it a lot this week, just going through the different aspects.

Now, I think that one of the most important things as we dive into this lesson is to understand about-- and one of those important things that we have to understand about the Bible is that all of it revolves around one crucial, one central person, which is--who? Jesus Christ. Without Jesus, taking Him out of the picture, everything else stops making sense, and that's why you'll have books and encyclopedias and commentaries today from different religions, different denominations, but when you find that the focus is not on Jesus, well something's missing. Something's wrong. It's like you don't have the central structure, the crux of the topic.

And so, really, Jesus is the lens. He's the filter by which you understand the entire Bible and the book of Deuteronomy. And so I find that that's just one of the main things that we have to focus on here. The lesson tells us this. It says--this is in "Sabbath Afternoon's" lesson. It says, "For He--" speaking about Jesus--"He is the one who created us. He is the one who sustains us and redeems us." And in a looser sense of those words, Deuteronomy reveals how the Lord continued to create, sustain, and redeem His people at this crucial time in salvation history. And so here what we see is that, as the children of Israel end that 40-year exodus--all of us are going through an exodus in life, friends.

All of us are going through an exodus. Life on this planet is an exodus, and as the children of Israel, they ended their exodus through the desert, right? After those 40 years, Moses needed to remind them exactly of this, of this reality that everything that they had, that everything that they were, that everything that they hoped to be came from God and God alone. It didn't come from their strength, it didn't come from their might, it didn't come from their numbers. It came from God. And this was a lesson that was drilled into them throughout their time in the desert. I mean, think about it: They had a cloud by day to protect them from the sun. They had a cloud of fire by night to give them warmth. Their food came from--Who? Their food from came from God. Their clothes were maintained. Their shoes were maintained. They were entirely maintained by God. And you'll see that they still had a hard time understanding this after 40 years, and, you know, they still had a hard time.

One of the most exciting times, in my opinion, in biblical narrative, is the end of these 40 years, as this generation of people who had only known God as their main provider-- they had only known God. They knew no other reality, and now they enter Canaan. They crossed the Jordan in this miraculous way.

There were some of them that, you know, most of them, that had been born in the desert. Actually, we only have two of them that actually went through the whole exodus from Egypt, the plagues, and all that stuff, that enter Canaan. Everyone else, they had only heard about these things, and now they see the Jordan opening up in the same way.

So that's not really the topic here, but I just find it exciting that you have this generation of people, and now Moses that will himself not enter Canaan, he starts speaking to them. And that's what Deuteronomy is. Deuteronomy is that instruction, that final instruction coming from the parent, coming from Moses, telling them what to remember and what not to get involved in. Friends, this is a principle that must stay in our minds today during our exodus also.

If we keep in mind how far the Lord has brought us, what he's done for us, how he has provided and sustained us--and I'm sure that everyone that is here right now, everyone that is watching at home, you know this: There are moments in your life that you can only describe as miraculous, moments where you can only say, "It was God." There's no other explanation. There's no other way. It had to be God.

And that confidence of what God has done in the past, well, that's a motivating force for the future. Ellen White, in the book "Life Sketches," she says, "In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I am filled with astonishment and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history." So this is what we truly need to remember here in this lesson.

Now, you might notice that, throughout the lesson, I'll be rushing a little bit because I do want to get to Thursday's lesson. Thursday's lesson is one of the biggest, hardest questions--or doubts, to understand one of the biggest questionings in biblical narrative, and I do want to get to that topic of Thursday. So we might rush a few of the other days, but I'm going to try to get through all of it.

On Sunday, you have a topic of "The Ministry of Moses." Now, it's very difficult for you to disassociate the influence of Moses from the Bible. He is everywhere. You see this man everywhere in Scripture, right? That's how important Moses was. After all, he's at the very foundation and core of our understanding of the biblical logic. How do we understand-- look, every religion, friends, has three crucial motives, all right? Has three crucial underlying, foundational cornerstones, every religion. Otherwise, it's not really a religion.

You'll find some religions that emphasize a little bit more or a little bit less, depending on, you know, on where they're coming from, but every religion has three cornerstones, which is origin, the origin of the world, the cosmos vision, right? How they see everything-- right?--the origin, or the Creation theology; the purpose, what are they doing here, what are they here for; and the destination. Where are they going? What's the endgame, right?

So you'll find that in Buddhism and Hinduism, you'll find that in philosophical religions or such as evolution, you'll find them trying to explain or are trying to describe their understanding of origin, purpose, and destination. In Christianity, you find that, also, when we find all three already presented in the first book of the Bible, in the first 11 chapters, really, you'll see the whole-- these foundational cornerstones, and the rest of the Bible kind of builds on that.

But who wrote this? Where do we get this from? From Moses. Moses is intertwined into the very fabric of the Bible. All that comes from the human instrument Moses. And even though Moses is--he is the author, he's the human author here of these six books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy, and then the book of Job, we can forget that he was also so much more. Moses wasn't only an author.

Actually, he became an author, I believe, later on in his life. He wasn't an author only, but he was very-- he was an exceptional leader, and we find that in Scripture.

Perhaps one of the best glimpses of this reality that we find is in Exodus chapter 32, verse 29 through 32. Look at what it says. Exodus, 29 through 32. It says, "Then Moses said, 'Consecrate yourselves today--' this is in the context of the golden-calf situation, all that thing that happened. We're going to talk a little bit more about it, but it says, "Then Moses said, 'Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother.' Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, 'You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord. Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.' Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, 'Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold. Yet now, if You will forgive their sin--but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.'"

Friends, this text is so rich with details. There's so much going on here that we could have an entire week just talking about these few verses. We really could. But we just don't have that time right now. The context, as I said before, is the golden-calf incident. The children of Israel had left Egypt. The Lord had delivered them through a mighty hand, the ten plagues, we see the opening of the Red Sea, and then, at this moment, only three months later, three months later, three months after seeing the plagues, three months after seeing the Red Sea open, three months after--you know, they were already having their manna. After three months-- that's it-- they fall into this horrible moment, this horrible, terrible sin. And we're going to talk a little bit more about what they actually did, on Thursday.

But at this moment, God comes to Moses. He appears to Moses, and He says, "I'm going to destroy them, and I'm going to make you into a big, a huge, an entire nation." And so one of the questions that emerges from this is "Why? Why is God acting this way? Why is He reacting this way?" I mean, no doubt, sin is horrible, sin is terrible, and they have just committed a grave sin, but didn't God already know about it? Isn't God omniscient? Why does He react this way?

It seems, in a very superficial reading of the text, it seems as though God is this, you know, childlike, temper-tantrumist being that just gets angry, loses his temper, and it's up to Moses to, kind of, hold the reins on this all-powerful, tiny little child, crying out and kicking around in a temper tantrum, "I'm going to destroy them. I'm going to kill them." And the question that emerges is "Is that really who God is? And it's up to Moses, the human, fallible figure to, kind of, rein him in?"

After everything that happened in Egypt, all of the plagues, everything that God had done, all of the powerful wonders that God did, is this how it should end, to then, here at this moment, just wipe them out in Kadesh Barnea?

Friends, something that we need to understand-- and this is very important. If you don't understand this in the biblical text, you're going to miss out on a lot. One thing that you need to understand is God is not that volatile. God's wrath in Scripture is not an explosion of passionate emotion. It's not. And we might be tempted to think it that way by reading the text, but God's wrath in Scripture is not an explosion of emotion, a passionate explosion of emotion. He's not losing His temper. It is the result of His holy character. That is God's wrath in the Bible. It's a result of His holy character.

Now, this will get a little bit technical, but I really want you to understand this. God's wrath in the Bible is not "affectus." It's "effectus." These are two Latin words. And "affectus*" means that it is not affected by passion or by emotion. "Affectus," it denotes passion. "Effectus*" denotes the effect. There is a technical effect. God's passion or God's emotion in Scripture, it's not effected by this explosion of wrath. It is an effect of His holy character. It's an effect of His attribute of holiness. It's an effect of who He is.

It's a result of who He is. God's wrath, again, is not affectus, or passionate. It's effectus. It's a result of His holy character.

God's wrath is holy because it is entirely exempt from sin. So why does God say the things that He says to Moses, then? Why does God explode, or apparently explode, saying, "I'm going to destroy them. These people are stiff-necked people." Why does God react this way? You know why? It's for Moses's benefit.

Do you remember in the beginning of the story when God calls Moses? How does Moses react? Is he excited to go? Does Moses want to go? Does he? No, Moses does not--he absolutely doesn't want to go. Moses comes up with some very good excuses. Moses was very good at making excuses. He comes up with some very good excuses, justifying why he shouldn't go, and we're going to talk a little bit more about that later. But here, in this moment, we find Moses, the same one that was reluctant to go, the one that did not want to go, we find Moses, the one who had come up with all the excuses not to become the great leader that he became to this multitude of millions of people, here we find him doing exactly what, if you had told him that he would be doing this, months before, he would've called you nuts, crazy. "Me? Interceding for them? I'm out of it. Don't count me in."

But here, Moses, he is acknowledging how much he cares for these people, how much he is invested in their future. And so God, through His dealing with Moses in this situation here of the golden calf, God is teaching Moses that he cares, that he loves, that he is invested in these people. Moses realizes, "Ha, I do care. I care so much that, Lord, if you don't forgive them, then take my name out of the book." That's a lot of love, isn't it? For how many people--for who would you be capable of saying that to?

Moses, friends, is a type for Jesus. We find a very clear representation right here, an example of what "substitution" means. In "Patriarchs and Prophets," page 330, it says, "While Moses was on the mount, God presented to him, not only the tables of the law, but also the plan of salvation. He saw that the sacrifice of Christ was pre-figured by all the types and symbols of the Jewish age, and it was the heavenly light streaming from Calvary, no less than the glory of the law of God, that shed such a radiance upon the face of Moses. The divine illumination symbolized the glory of the dispensation of which Moses was the visible mediator, a representative of the one true intercessor." And so in this situation, in the story, we see that Moses, he prefigures, he's a type for Christ.

Now, the people didn't need Moses to substitute them. As Moses offered, he said, "Look, Lord, just take my name out if you can't forgive them." The people needed Jesus. They needed the future Messiah, the Holy One of Israel that would redeem them from their sin. But one thing that I want you to understand is that God is not this passionate, petty, emotional, childlike, temper-tantrumist being that is just kicking and exploding with wrath.

God doesn't lose His temper that way, friends. God doesn't experience emotion as we humans do or as we expect Him to. God is way beyond us. He way surpasses us. Monday's lesson, "Fulfilled Prophecy," one of the great biblical lessons, one of the great biblical topics that we find in Scripture, in the Bible, and that is exemplified through the story of Moses, here in the book of Deuteronomy, is that Jehovah is a God of prophecy. He is a God that, while He is outside of time, in the sense in which He created time, He also includes Himself in time in the sense where He interacts with creatures of time. And so Jehovah, Yahweh, here in this book of prophecy, He reveals prophecy. He reveals what is going to happen in the future.

One of the best examples of this is in Amos chapter 3, verse 7, where we read, "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets." Friends, our God is a Teacher-God. Among the attributes of God, He is omnipotent. He is omniscient. He is all-powerful. Among these

great qualities and attributes of God is one of His great attributes which is He is transparent. He is a Teacher-God. He wants us to understand His process.

Couldn't God have gone like this and created the world and the cosmos and the universe? Couldn't He have just snapped His fingers, and everything was ready, everything was already made and planned and in place? Of course, He could, but He didn't. He went through a process. He created the light. Before, in some time of the universal history, He had created the waters that were there already, and then He creates light, and then He divides the day and the night. And then He creates atmosphere, and He divides the waters, and then He creates the dry land and the vegetation, and He creates--do you see that each step of the week of Creation had to have happened the way it was?

God is a Teacher-God. He wants us to understand His process. Prophecy is God allowing us to understand His process. He is telling us before it happens so, when it happens, we might understand that He hasn't lost control, that He is doing exactly what He had planned in spite of the curveballs and despite of the detours that happen. God is always in control. The example provided here in the lesson is the example of the 40 years that they would spend in the desert, right? Numbers chapter 14:34, says, "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, 40 days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely 40 years, and you shall know My rejection."

This is one of the texts that we use to understand that, in prophecy, one day equals one year. This is one of those texts. And so, here, we see God using prophecy to explain what is going to happen and what the people could expect. Guys, friends, God has not left us alone. God has not abandoned us to be wandering about without an idea, without an inkling of an idea of what's happening in our world.

God has not abandoned us. The lesson here is telling us, it's affirming to us that, when God says that something's going to happen, you can take it to the bank it's going to happen. Of course, there's the reality of conditional and unconditional sins--prophecy, sorry-- conditional and unconditional prophecies. For example, Jonah going to Nineveh and telling them that they will be destroyed if they don't turn from their evil ways--conditional or unconditional? Conditional. They turned from their evil ways, and they were forgiven. They weren't destroyed.

The Second Coming of Jesus, conditional or unconditional? Unconditional. Jesus will come. Want you or don't want you, rain or shine, Jesus will come. Unconditional. But the lesson is teaching us that, when God said or says that something will happen, it will happen. And we see multiple applications of this truth throughout the Scripture. We find, you know, texts that are very central to our identity as Seventh-day Adventists. We find Daniel chapter 8, the 2,300 years. Daniel chapter 9, the 70 weeks. We find in the New Testament the prophecies of Revelation chapter 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. Chapter 10, that describes the whole situation happening with the Millerite movement. Everything that happens tied to Daniel chapter 8, verse 14, and Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 and 25, you see that revelation is in God's character because He's telling us what will happen.

These are great examples throughout the Bible of God revealing that He is a Teacher-God, that He is in control, that things might seem out of place, but He knows exactly what is happening, and He's never caught by surprise. Our God is never taken by surprise. His hands never tremble.

One important thing to remember, friends, is that prophecy is not given with the intent of keeping us guessing. That's not what God is doing. Unfortunately, there are many people that don't understand this truth, that don't understand this reality, and they go about as though with tinfoil hats on their head and crystal balls in their hands, coming up with all sorts of weird calculations and mental gymnastics to prove that Jesus will come back in a certain day or in a certain year, in a certain period and that certain

things will happen, and they want to say that "This is this plague, this is that plague," things that have not happened yet, things that we don't know exactly how they will pan out.

Jesus Himself told us, "Don't come up with dates. Don't come up with dates." He couldn't have made it clearer, and, yet there is a large quantity of us that insist on trying to be some kind of new news: "Jesus will come back in this year and that year because this calculation says this." That's not the purpose of prophecy. That just makes us weird. The purpose of prophecy is not to make us weird. The purpose of prophecy has been revealed in John chapter 14, verse 29, where Jesus says, "I tell you these things before they happen, before they come to pass, so that, when they come to pass, you may--" what? "Believe."

The purpose of prophecy is to construct and edify our faith. That's the purpose of prophecy. It's for us to see, "Well, God said this was going to happen, and now it just happened. God is still in control. God still knows." That's the purpose of prophecy. It's not for us to keep on guessing. You know why? Because, when you spend time on those things-- oh, I'm not saying that you shouldn't study prophecy. Of course, you should.

We should be vivid students of prophecy but for the right reason because, when we do it for the wrong reason, then we lose all focus on the rest of the gospel. Friends, the gospel is not only the gospel, according to Revelation or according to Daniel. The entire gospel is necessary. So understand that the purpose of prophecy is to edify our faith, and that's why this is a church that is so centered on prophecy because we believe that the more we understand the events that are happening in the world around us, the more we understand that God is in control and that we are good when we are by God's side. That's what's happening so that you may believe God is in control.

Tuesday's lesson, "A Thousand Times More Numerous," on Tuesday's lesson Moses, he evaluates the fruitfulness of the children of Israel, right? The people, as they were exiting--I just made-- I think I made that word up, but they were exiting through the desert those 40 years, and Moses, he takes his time to evaluate how much God has blessed them, how much God has been by their side, leading them and guiding them and conducting them.

And what I find interesting is that, in his perception of how the people had fared during their time in the desert, he never attributes to himself any quality of his leaders or his capacity as a leader. He never attributes to himself, "Well, I did this. I'm a good leader. I led them through all of--" you don't see that in Moses, do you? Well, you see here, as an authentic spiritual leader, he recognized that the true power that was by the people's side was--who? Jehovah, Yahweh, the Lord God Almighty.

Once again, Moses, he admits his fallibility, his incapacity that, by himself, he could guide this great multitude. What does he say here in Deuteronomy chapter 1, verse 9 through 11? He says, "And I spoke to you at that time, saying, "I alone am not capable. I alone am not capable to bear you. The Lord your God has multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. May the Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you as He has promised you." And so, in his reminiscing of the events, Moses seems to pull back from the center stage to cast all light on God: "God has done this. The Lord has done this."

Friends, this is true integrity, and this is what experts in leadership consider to be the first and most important virtue of leaders: integrity. Deplorably some leaders are like that small rooster. Have you ever heard the story of the rooster that would puff up his chest and go up to the fence every morning? And it'd started crowing as the sun came up, believing that it was by his noise that the sun, the star, was coming up. Some leaders are like that.

What we see here is Moses declaring God's graciousness and acknowledging that the hero of the story has always been God. However, leading such a great multitude, it did take a heavy toll on Moses. Here we have a biblical example, and this is why this is good, all right? Here we have a biblical example of what burnout syndrome is. Moses, with all those people, he couldn't do it on his own. He said it himself, "And I spoke to you at that time saying, 'I alone am not capable of bearing all of you.'" Chapter 1, verse 12, "How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints?"

And so in order to share the burden, Moses and the children of Israel, they get organized. They divide up leadership. And here we see the biblical precedent for an organized structure. Look at what the lesson says in Tuesday's lesson: "Thus, even when the Lord was so powerfully present among them, there was need for organization, for structure, for a system of accountability. Israel was a qahal, which was an organized assembly, a precursor to the New Testament ekklesia, or ekklesia, the Greek for 'church.'" And it goes on to say, "The church today, as the qahal back then, needs to be a unified body with people fulfilling various roles according to their gifts."

Now, friends, I've heard, in multiple places, people speak down and accuse and then talk badly of an organized church, the organization of the church: "The church doesn't need organization. It doesn't need to be organized in any kind of structure. God will lead. God will guide." Yes, God will lead, and God will guide, but He set the precedent.

In the Bible, you see, both in the Old Testament and in the New, you find an organized structure. You find an organized people, an organized church. God found that important because dividing up the roles of leadership into the different qualities and different talents that people have, well, then you share the load. How else could we have, for example, the educational system that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has? Worldwide, we are the second largest private educational system on the planet. You know who we lose to? Catholic Church because they've been around for 2,000 years. We've been around for, what, 180?

Second, why? Because we feel that, first of all, education is important, and it is a great way to preach the gospel and, secondly, because we're an organized church. Because we are organized and we have these levels of structure, we find that, throughout the world, wherever you go, you will find an educational group for children to learn and to be educated in the ways of the Bible, the ways of Scripture. How else without this organization? What about the missionary force that we have, sending missionaries out all over the world? The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the church with the greatest presence anywhere, even in countries where we can't have people officially--North Korea, that 10/40 Window, in Arabia, in the Middle East, there are Seventh-day Adventists preaching the gospel.

One way or another, the message of the gospel, the three angels' message is being preached. How else without this organization that God Himself set the precedent in the Scripture? What about our media ministries? How? How can we have such a united message, a united front, without being organized? Ministries such as Amazing Facts International that sends out the gospel around the world. Hope Channel, 3ABN, channels that preach the-- how else without organization? Health ministries, clinics, hospitals all over the world-- so you see that there is a need for organization. We need to be organized.

Wednesday's lesson, "Kadesh Barnea." Wednesday's lesson is kind of a hybrid between Wednesday and Sunday, so it touches up on part of what we talked about on Sunday's lesson. It overviews the events that transpired in Kadesh Barnea, regarding the people's rebellion against God. And since we talked about this on Sunday, I don't want to get too deep into it, but, you know, perhaps just as important as understanding what Moses intended to do for the people or what he told God that he would do for the people, "Take my name out of the book."

Just as important as that is the nature of the argument that he used to dissuade God from destroying the rebellious nation. He says here, "Lord, it won't go well for You if You do this. It's not going to be good. It won't look good. Think about what the Egyptians will say and everyone else will say about You," and you can see that in Numbers chapter 14, verse 16, where Moses says, "Because--" and here he is saying what the other peoples would say if God really destroyed the children of Israel. He says, "Because the Lord was not able to bring these people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore, He killed them in the wilderness." That won't be good for Your reputation, Lord.

Now, Moses was a specialist in this type of argumentation, right? Remember that he tried to dissuade Jehovah with his arguments before in that "impossible mission of leading out the children of Israel." "Those people won't believe that You sent me, Lord, I'm heavy of tongue. I can't speak very well. Come on, Lord, send someone else--don't send me-- someone a bit younger, a bit more energetic, a bit more capable. He'll be more hip than me. It will be better for Your PR, for Your public image. What kind of choice am I? I'm just an 80-year-old man. Smells like sheep. I've been out in the desert way too long. Lord, this is a crazy idea."

And curiously, Moses seems to be the realistic of the story, and he always seems to be the one with the big, impossible dreams. But we know that God chose the right man. God chose the right man. Well, isn't it extraordinary how audacious Moses is in his words and how patient God is in hearing him and listening to him?

Again, all of this, friends, for Moses's benefit. God didn't need to be told these things, God knew. It was all for Moses's benefit. As a Father who patiently listens to His small child and descends to his level of understanding to relate to him, to be with him, to connect to him, that is our God. And so I find that a very important lesson from Wednesday's lesson.

Now, Thursday, and this is where I wanted to get, and I have a little less time than I intended. This is one of the hardest subjects of the entire Bible. Deuteronomy chapter 2, verse 33 and 34, is an example, "And the Lord our God delivered him," the Amorites, "over to us, so we defeated him, his sons, and all his people. We took all his cities at that time, and we utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city. We left nothing remaining."

Now, what's going on here? Why is God doing this? This sounds like genocide. Is that the God of the Bible? How do we understand this reality? Well, first of all, friends, we need to understand the difference between polytheism and monotheism, all right? Now, it seems very obvious, doesn't it? What's the difference between polytheism and monotheism, or paganism and monotheism? What's the difference? That's what it seems, right? That's what anyone would say. It's the number of gods. In one, you have many. In the other, you have one.

Friends, that is not entirely true because the primary difference, the primordial difference between monotheism and polytheism is not really about the quantity of gods but the quality of the gods involved. Let me explain polytheism a little bit for you. In polytheism, humans found themselves-- in the beginning of the world, right? And this is after the flood. This is after they had forgotten all about the God of heaven. They find themselves alone in this universe at the mercy of the elements, the mercy of this powerful world, rainstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, unrelenting heat coming from the sun, destroying their fields and their crops-- earthquakes, all of these things. Nature is powerful, but it's so very unpredictable. And so, logically these humans seeking to create a truce between themselves and the world around them, they need to find out some way to be a little bit in control, to be able to do something to escape from these forces of nature.

Now, today, with the technology that we have, we understand what's happening with rain and earthquakes and thunderstorms, but they didn't have that. What could they do? How could they possibly find a truce between these powerful forces of nature? Now, in these pagan religions, there was no Creator God, one great God. On the contrary, there was a very large range of powerful entities that they knew as gods. And these entities were usually capricious, indifferent, and very much fallible. They didn't really care much for humans, but sometimes, when they got bored, they found amusement torturing, tormenting the humans in the world down below. But humans could try to buy, at least, their allegiance and, at most, their help.

You see, while they were powerful, while the sun god, the rain God, the wind god, the earth god, while they were powerful-- all of them were powerful-- they were not all-powerful. Do you understand what I'm saying? They couldn't do everything. They didn't control everything. The power of the sun was very strong, indeed, but it didn't have any sway over the rain. Actually, the rain god was the sun god's enemy. And so that's how the humans would interpret the ebb and flow of nature. If it's raining today, the rain god is winning the battle. If there's unrelenting heat, well, the sun god was winning the battle. Those were the battles of these strong gods. They're fighting, and the one that's winning is the one that we're seeing--the wind, the earthquakes, the tornadoes. That's how we know. That's how they gauged which were the powerful gods. The gods were fighting amongst themselves for supremacy.

What this means, ultimately, is that every god has their own area of power, but at the same time, every god has their own weakness. These pagan gods had needs that could be exploited, and so in order to survive, the pagan nations had to do basically two things: First of all, they had to choose their god. And so, if they were living in a very hot place in the desert, they would choose the sun god. If they were living on the coastal regions as the Philistines, for example, they would choose a god such as Dagon, the fish god. If they were living in the jungles or in the forest or in the mountains--everything was conditioned to where they lived because they needed the protection, and they needed the fertility coming from these gods. Do you understand?

Everything revolved around fertility. The multiplication of their food, the multiplication of their animals, of their livestock, everything revolved around fertility when it came to these gods. And so, once they chose their god, next, they would need to do their best to appease that God. Like I said before, since these gods were not all-powerful, they had vulnerabilities and needs. And if they had needs, they could be bribed or, better, bartered with. And the train of thought was "If I give this god something valuable, then maybe he will care a little bit more about having fish in my river or of protecting my crops and my fields from the merciless sun god.

Everything, again, had to do with fertility, procreation, survival, and this is where the rationale for sacrifice comes into play because the more painful, the more explicit, the more sensationalistic, dramatic, and outrageous the sacrifice, the more the god would see that the people were serious in serving it. And so the more outrageous, the better. And what better way to catch the attention of a temperamental, indifferent being, some bored egomaniac entity, or deity, than through some kind of dramatic act, say, such as ritualistic and ceremonial harlotry or child sacrifice? And that's where the atrocities were committed in these nations, horrible, vile acts of violence, bloodlust, chilling cruelty, something totally different from the logic involved in monotheism.

You see, when it comes to the One God, to one supernatural entity, Master of the universe, Creator of the cosmos, who brought everything into being, how do you barter with Him? What needs does He have? What do you have that you could offer Him? Does He need anything that you could offer? What do you give to someone that has everything? And so that's why monotheism was so strange to these peoples. They couldn't understand it, not only because of the fact that it was only one God versus so

many, but because the quality of this God. What could you do to bribe Him? How do you barter with this God? And so the logic of monotheism must be something entirely different, mustn't it?

Unfortunately, we absolutely don't have time to go into that, but here we understand precisely who these people were, who these other nations were. These were nations that practiced bestiality, necrophilia, pederasty and pedophilia as rituals for worship, incestuous relations, human sacrifices, child sacrifices, right, and the list goes on. God had given these people centuries to turn back, to change their ways. Genesis 15:16, "But in the 14th generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

God is giving them time to change. God is giving them a chance to change, but they ignored these calls of grace, and they descended into their own self-created hell. Their hearts had petrified, fossilized. Despite all the opportunities God gave them to change, nothing else could be done for them. And so God's order to execute them, to exterminate them, friends, was an act of mercy. It wasn't an act of wrath. It wasn't affectus. It was effectus. Effectus.

It was not done out of wrath or anger. It was done out of mercy because children did not go by un-raped in those nations. They grew, learning that that's how you bartered with gods. Many were sacrificed and killed. Imagine going into a church and seeing the scene of an orgy. That's what they had. And so until we get to that point, our world is not worse than it was back then yet. And so God, out of mercy, He decided to use Israel as an instrument to provide mercy and an end to these people that had only misery in their life.

Of course, it's difficult to understand this. It's very difficult. But here we see the foreshadowing of what is going to happen in the very end, when God, a holy God, destroys sin and sinners, providing final rest to those that did not choose life. You can't choose life-- you can't choose death and continue living, friend. It doesn't work that way. When you disconnect yourself, that's what happens.

Our time is over. I hope that you--I had more here about this. Unfortunately, we weren't able to get through it. My prayer is that God will lead you in answers and finding answers for these subjects. There's so much to understand through studying the lesson, so that's why I urge you to study your lesson. Study it. You will have a lot of answers to some of these difficult questions, or at least you'll find where to look for the answers. May God bless you, and I'd like to finish with a word of prayer.

Dear Father, thank You so much for Your love. Thank You for guiding and leading us and giving us a good morning. Please help us understand these realities that the lesson puts in front of us, Lord. Help us have patience with our own lack of understanding, and let us seek truth, Lord, and seek understanding as You have promised to provide it for us. Give us a good Sabbath, a good day ahead of us. I asked in Jesus's name, amen.

May God bless you. Have a happy rest of the Sabbath Day.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing, free resource, not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544, or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the "digital download" option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want, and most important, to share it with others.

Announcer: "Amazing Facts Changed Lives."

Justin: Growing up, as a kid, my mother was, like, on drugs and alcohol, lots of fighting in the home. My mom would be abused mentally, verbally, physically. Went from California to Oregon, spent some time in Oregon, and it was just the same cycle of drugs, alcohol, violence. My mom's boyfriend would go to jail at times. She would wait until he would, you know, get out of jail, and it was back to square one.

The drugs and alcohol escalated to a lot harder drugs-- crystal meth, cocaine, and lots and lots of alcohol, so I started using the alcohol too, as a medication. It was like it took the misery and the fear that I had. I wanted to drown all that misery. Times, I would just grab, you know, a bottle of beer and go out into the desert and just drink until sometimes I'd just pass out in the desert somewhere and wake up the next morning and, you know, and I just couldn't find rest.

My step-dad had gotten me a motorcycle, and so I started riding motorcycles. I'd drink a lot of beer, get on the motorcycle, ride into the desert, do donuts and just, you know, just ride on private property. People would chase me off, and I was just causing-- stirring up dust and rocks and just causing chaos. And the adrenaline rush that I had was so exciting, and the feeling of it was so intense that I loved it, and I forgot about all my problems, you know, at the moment, and I thought that material things would make me feel so good.

And so I started working, started making money, had a responsibility, but as time went by, I had more money, so I would, you know, use my money that I made to buy drugs and alcohol. I got pulled over drinking and driving. I ended up going to jail for a couple days. I lost my job because I missed work for a few days. Lost my girlfriend. Lost all the money that I had. So once again, I was empty. No money, no drugs, no alcohol, and that was a turning point in my life.

At this time, I was living with my grandfather, and as I was flipping through the channels on the satellite system, I found "Amazing Facts." Pastor Doug Batchelor was telling his-- sharing his testimony about how he was living in a cave, and he struggled the same struggles of alcohol and drugs. And I continue to read the book, "The Richest Caveman," and it really impacted my life and really related to the things he was struggling with and all the events that took place in his life. And when I started reading the Bible, Philippians 4:13, says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And I recognized that I had no strength, I was weak, and I was wretched, and I needed help. So I just asked the Lord, I said, "Just help me, Lord," and the Holy Spirit convicted me, and I decided to be baptized and to give my life to Jesus Christ.

A few years after the Lord took the temptation of drinking and doing drugs, He gave me a beautiful wife I met at church. Now I have a beautiful baby boy, two-year-old baby boy. Just exciting to see, you know, what God is doing for my life and my family. I met with some friends from my local church that I was attending, and they had told me about Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism training seminar. The AFCOE to Go program really inspired me and motivated me to tell young people about, you know the same struggles that I was struggling with to help these kids give their life to Jesus Christ, and there's nothing, else that you could ask for. I'm Justin, and God used you to change my life.

Announcer: "Amazing Facts Changed Lives."

Ruben: You know, we grew up in a neighborhood up in the Midwest that was a pretty bad neighborhood, and when I became a teenager, I started using drugs. I was on--I started using meth when I was, like, I think, 16, 15, something like that. I was having some problems in my life. I really didn't know how to deal with. The only thing I really knew was violence.

So this night here, I was going to inflict violence on myself. I was really high and really depressed, so I took--you know, I had this .40 caliber. So I remember I put one in the chamber, and I stuck it to the side of my head like this. And that gun had a hair trigger, you know. I remember I was tapping it because a

part of me said, "No, I don't want to do this," but there was something very evil present there, saying, "Do it." I just said to myself, I said, "God, if You're real, show Yourself to me."

My mother took me to church when I was a little kid, and we used to sing "Jesus Loves Me," and I remembered that song. It started playing in my mind, and I almost had, like, a vision of me as a little kid. You know, and in Sabbath school, we used to bang those sticks together and sing, "Jesus Loves Me." And I heard that in my mind. So I said, "Wow." So I just, kind of, like, put the gun down, and I kind of fell on my bedside there, and I said, "Lord." I just basically, just, prayed this crazy prayer. I says--you know, I told Him everything that was wrong with me.

And I remember, one day, I was driving around. I kind of felt lost, and I drove by this church, and I seen Tom out there. Tom was just out there watering the flowers, you know.

Tom: So I caught a vision out of the side of my eye, this big, husky guy with tattoos, walking up and saying, "Hello," and so I asked him if I can help him. He told me that he drives by the church on occasion, and every time he goes by, he's thinking if he should stop in.

Ruben: After he showed me around the church, you know, I was like, "Okay, man, it's nice meeting you," and this and that. So I jumped in my car, and I started heading down the driveway, and the next thing you know, in, like, my peripheral vision, I see him coming around the corner like Jerry Rice running a football. No, not that fast, but, you know, he was taking off after me, and he says, "Hey, hey, hey, hold on, hold on."

Tom: I asked if he would like to have some Bible studies, and he said, "Yeah."

Ruben: He would come by the house, and we'd all start--we'd start hiding the beer cans and trying to air out the weed smell, and there was a presence that came with Tom that was comforting. You know what I mean? Even though I wasn't taking the Bible studies as serious as I should have, looking back, there was just a presence about him being there in the house that was comforting. I told Tom, I said, "Tom, you know, you can't win everybody."

Tom: I looked at him, and I knew. I said to him, "Ruben, I never get anybody." I says, "The Holy Spirit will do that," and I kind of in my heart knew that the Holy Spirit was going to work on Ruben.

Ruben: So then, Tom kind of left the picture for a while, and then I think, one day, at my mother's house, they were watching "The Final Events of Bible Prophecy." So I watched that, and I remember the scene where they had the hellfire and stuff. You know, they're outside the city, and it showed the hellfire coming down and burning people and stuff, and I remember saying to myself, "That's where I would be right there." After the hellfire scene, I saw the saints in the city, in the New Jerusalem, and Jesus recreating the earth. And I said, "I want that to be me and my family."

There was something about the way Doug preached and things that I felt that touched me because he's kind of like myself, you know? He's--he didn't grow up like that, you know? He done drugs and things, so I kind of found these common grounds that I had with him, and I liked how he just, kind of, like, kept it real with his preaching. And then Pastor Rodley came to the church, and I got to know him very well, and we started doing some finishing studies. He wanted to make sure I understand what I was doing and things and baptized me, my wife, my brother.

No matter what you've done, where you come from, where you've been, no matter how bad of a sinner you think you are, the Lord Jesus loves you no matter what you've done.

Doug Batchelor: Friends, it's because of God's blessing and your support, thousands of others, just like Ruben, have found Jesus and eternal life.