

Leeds Vineyard Life Facebook Page Posts: Bible in a Year 2019

GENESIS

Day 1 (Gen 1-3)

"In the beginning God..." (1:1)

There is no attempt to explain why, in the beginning, God was, and created... God neither provides nor needs any justification for his existence or actions. We later learn that he is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting (Ps. 90:2). It is comforting to know that he created and sustains our world. We do not live in a clockwork universe that God started and then left to wind down. "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." (Col. 1:17) 😊

Day 2 (Gen 4-7) - A Jewish Christian friend once told me that God thinks in pictures that repeat through Bible history. I love that Jesus is our Ark (Gen 7) today - in Him we are saved from Father's judgment against our rebellion, since He took our punishment on the cross (Is. 53:6/1 Peter 3). He's my shelter in the storms of life too...

Day 3 (Gen 8-11) Noah's gratitude for his salvation struck me today. He immediately sacrificed some of what was most precious to him (8:20). A lesson for me there I think... 😊

Day 4 (Gen 12-15)

Gen 12:1, 4 "The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go...' So Abram went..."

Gen 15:6 "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness."

I am thankful for Abram, who obeyed God even at 75. A nation emerged that brought Jesus to earth and ultimately into my heart. "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness" – reminds me that salvation is by faith in Christ alone. 😊 Thank you, Lord... 😊

Day 5 (Gen 16-18) I am struck by Abraham's concern for his nephew (ch 18). He stands in front of the Lord Himself and intercedes for Sodom, that God would not destroy it. And God agrees to every request Abraham makes. Wow. God was willing to preserve Sodom if only 10 righteous people were found. I am encouraged to keep praying for our city and for Headingley; and to be salt and light where God has placed me. May he use us to rescue hearts and minds, preserve goodness and be lights in our community. 😊

Day 6 (Gen 19-21) When faced with a choice, Lot decides what to do with his eyes, choosing the land that looked the best and leaving the rest to Abraham (ch 14). But today he had to flee for his life... Meanwhile, Abraham lies to two different kings about Sarah and is rebuked by them when God brings trouble to them. Today's Psalm (6) seems to fit really well - "Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, or

discipline me in your wrath. Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am faint; heal me, Lord... save me because of your unfailing love.”

I am thankful for God’s mercy and kindness to me, his healing, and walking with me still despite my failings... 😊

Day 7 (Gen 22-24). Welled up with emotion reading today’s passage. First the story of Father Abraham climbing Moriah to sacrifice his son Isaac (the site where Jesus was later crucified). Then the story of the same Father sending his Servant to a distant land to prepare a Bride for his Son. He gives gifts to the Bride, and brings her safely to the Son. Wow.

My Jewish friend (Day 2) also told me that women (especially brides) in the OT are often remarkable illustrations of the Church. Rachel is no exception... After Jesus’ return to heaven our Father, God, sent His Servant the Holy Spirit into the world to prepare a Bride (the Church) for the greatest marriage feast in history - when His Son Jesus finally receives His Bride (Rev. 19:6-9). Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit has given us spiritual gifts... Reading Ch. 24 in this light I feel completely overwhelmed by the love of God for the Church - of which we at Leeds Vineyard are a part. Thank you, Father... 😊

Day 8 (Gen 25-28) So much to draw from this passage. I am sobered by God’s command to Isaac not to go into Egypt even when famine struck. Isaac stays out and is blessed – with abundant livestock, crops, and wells. Everywhere he settles he digs a well and drinks fresh, clean water. He is so successful that rivals keep taking over his wells and he has to move on and dig new ones (he doesn’t seem to mind too much – God always blesses him!) I am thankful for God’s promises to us to bless us and keep us as we walk with Him (Psalm 1, Day 1). Wherever he leads us. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, “whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.” Thank you Jesus! Please keep me walking with you, trusting you to meet every need even if I am wronged... 😊

Day 9 (Gen 29-31) Found great encouragement from Jacob today... He faithfully works for someone who treats him unfairly for 20 years. But God gives him wisdom and a way out. “God honours those who honour him” (1Sam 2:30)... Father, help us to be faithful to you in everything, knowing that you are our “very great reward” (Gen 15:1). 😊

Day 10 (Gen 32-34) A new name is given to Jacob – Israel – after he wrestles with and is overcome by God. We get a new name when we are overcome by (and submit to) God – and our old nature is crucified with Christ (Gal 2:20, Rev 2:17). 😊

We can see a pattern emerging in the stories so far – the firstborn seem to oppose the second born. Cain slew Abel; Ishmael opposed Isaac; Esau opposed Jacob. Israel appears uncomfortable going with Esau after they are reunited – perhaps unwilling to trust his older brother given their history. We might see this first/second principle repeating as we keep journeying... 😊

Day 11 (Gen 35-37) Loving how God calls Jacob (now Israel) back to Bethel (House of God) where Jacob had built a pillar, and communes with him, renewing the promises to him. He tells him now to build an altar, and calls the place El-Bethel, God of the House of God. Paul tells us that we have an altar – the cross of Jesus Christ, where God himself was made a sacrifice (Heb. 13:10-13) and where we too can meet with God (Heb. 10:13). God gives us many precious promises there, such as “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Heb 13:5). Thank you, Father, that we can always come to you through Jesus. You don’t turn anyone away... 😊

Day 12 (Gen 38-40) Yesterday Judah saved Joseph’s life but today he misbehaves. But God’s plan is undeterred – he confesses and makes restoration to Tamar. Jesus is called the “lion of the tribe of Judah” (Rev. 5:5) – he is a descendant of their awkward liaison, through Perez. We see twins again; Perez is born ‘second’ because his brother pokes his hand out first - and again the younger is the chosen one... Thank you Father that your plans are bigger than our mistakes and life is not about being first... We are so glad to be in your family... 😊

Day 13 (Gen 41-42) Joseph is reminding me of someone I know... 🙏 A young person finds himself in a foreign land and becomes a faithful servant. He is falsely accused of a crime and imprisoned. He is released by a King who gives him the highest authority over all his kingdom. The people of the kingdom are blessed because of his wisdom and there is bread for all even in famine. Nations come to him for nourishment, nobody is turned away, and they live because of him... 😊

Thank you, Jesus, that you were a faithful servant. 😊 You were imprisoned because of false witnesses; you were put to death but raised to life again by your Father and given all authority in heaven and earth (Eph. 1:15, 1 Cor. 15:20ff). You are the Bread of Life to all who come to you (John 6:35), all the nations of the earth can come (Ps. 86:9); no one is turned away (John 6:37). All can eat and live... (John 6:44) I’m so glad I belong to you, Lord... 😊

Day 14 (Gen 43-45) Judah stands between the Ruler (Joseph) and his brothers and pleads for mercy for them – and his request is granted. He also pleaded for mercy for Joseph on Friday when his brothers were going to kill him... We see in Judah a glimpse of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Jesus. Like Judah, Jesus pleads the highest Ruler, God Himself, constantly praying for us (Heb. 7:25)... Thank you Lord Jesus that even as you pray for us, we can pray for our families and friends too – and you hear us! (Matt. 7:7)... 😊

Day 15 (Gen 46-47) Joseph’s family move to Egypt; but they don’t settle in Pharaoh’s palace or even the capital. They live separately, in farming country, and are nurtured there by Joseph. The rest of the inhabitants suffer hardship and lose all their possessions in exchange for food. Being separate turns out to be important - God protects Goshen from plague (Ex. 8:23-23).

Father we do not look for recognition or wealth – we are content to serve you wherever you place us, knowing that if we have you we will never be hungry or thirsty (John 6:35). Thank you that you keep our hearts safe as we walk with you no matter what happens (2 Tim. 1:12)... 😊

Day 16 (Gen 48-50) Struck by Joseph's tender care for his brothers and their little ones (50:21). And the way Jacob thought of the weaker during their earlier travels. He ensured the pace was not too much for the children or livestock. Sometimes when my heart catches a vision I want to push ahead quickly and see its fulfilment. I'm reminded of the importance of journeying together with my family, friends and church. Carrying one another's burdens and looking after each other with gentleness. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you know our weaknesses, and care tenderly for each of us at LV. You carry us in your everlasting arms (Deut. 33:27)... 😊

EXODUS

Day 17 (Ex. 1-3) Important things seem to be happening when people are alone with God 😊. Jacob was alone when he met and wrestled with God (Gen 32, Day 10). Today, Moses is alone in the wilderness and meets God in a burning thorn bush. I used to feel uncomfortable alone with God, I think I was worried I might learn something about myself that would disqualify me from acceptance. That evaporated as I experienced the glow of his love for me, just as I am, and now I treasure that time.

Like Moses, Jesus also spent time alone in a wilderness. Both had missions to rescue God's people from captivity, and both their missions began right after their wilderness times. (Both were nearly killed as babies by evil kings in Egypt too...)

Lord Jesus thank you that you have called each of us into your kingdom for a purpose. Please give us patience to wait for your leading, even if we feel alone in a wilderness. Thank you that you know how that feels... 😊

Day 18 (Ex 4-6) Some of us might know what it's like to live with challenges that need courage to overcome. It seems Moses had difficulty speaking (4:10). Some people think he had a stammer, others that he'd forgotten how to speak Egyptian or Hebrew since he left. Yet God asks him to be his mouthpiece to Israel and Pharaoh. He is worried, but God speaks with him kindly, allowing Aaron to be his voice. Moses will become one of the greatest figures of the Old Testament and still have followers when Jesus comes (John 9:28). His weaknesses were no obstacle to God.

Thank you, Lord, that our weaknesses are not an issue to you. You even choose the weak to shame the strong and the foolish to shame the wise (1 Cor. 1:27) 😊 There is work for everyone in your kingdom (Matt. 9:38, 28:19, 1 Cor. 3:9)... 😊

Day 19 (Ex 7-9*) I'm struck by the relationship between Moses and Aaron. They act as one together. Aaron only does what Moses tells him to do, as his prophet (7:1) and Moses is only doing what God tells him to do. They are sent into dangerous places with an unpopular message. 😊

Jesus was called Prophet and said that he and his Father were one; that he only did what his Father showed him to do. He came to a dangerous place with a message unpopular to many.

Thank you, Lord, that through your death and resurrection we can know you as our best friend and your Father as our Father. That as we walk with you we are safe, no matter where you send us or what you show us to do. And our message is good news for everyone whose heart you open. 😊

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Day 20 (Ex 10-12*) Moses' meetings with Pharaoh finally come to an end... Moses had no mandate to negotiate with Pharaoh – he was not looking for a deal acceptable to God and Pharaoh. God does not negotiate with the devil – Jesus overcame him once and for all through his death and resurrection (Heb. 2:14-15). God would not allow a single Israelite to be left behind – all were to be rescued, however young or old, despite Pharaoh's protests.

I love how the Israelites were to dress for a journey as they ate the Passover supper (12:11). They were saved from death by the blood and flesh of their lamb; they were then released from bondage in Egypt and could begin their journey with God - immediately. When we believe in and receive Jesus, we are saved from death and released from bondage. We then start a new journey – with Jesus and with others who have also received Jesus!

Thank you, Lord, that you did everything necessary to redeem your people from bondage in Egypt. And you've done everything we need to be free from the bindings of this world. Please keep us walking together with you as a church and as individuals, we trust you to lead us and guide us every step. 😊

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Day 21 (Ex 13-15*) Israel is led by God to a barrier (sea) where they are trapped. God has hardened Pharaoh's heart one last time and he is in hot pursuit; their very existence is under threat.

I've felt hemmed in by 'life' many times, often when faced with decisions. I find it really hard to decide what to do, and start to panic. Israel wondered if God had brought them into the wilderness to bury them. But God knows what he's doing. By Moses' staff (see [Helen Hicks](#) post yesterday) – a path is made in the sea. In a place where they are hemmed in and there are no paths, God makes one – and it's dry!

Lord thank you that you are faithful despite our weaknesses. Please keep our minds fixed on you so our hearts will have perfect peace (Is. 26:3), and make a way for each one of us through our situations (Ps. 77). 😊

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Day 22 (Ex 16-18*) Struck by the experience Israel has right after their escape from Pharaoh. Finding themselves in a wilderness and thirsty. Again, they wonder if God has brought them here to die... But God provides for them, and when Moses strikes a rock with his staff a stream of water flows out from which they drink.

Paul tells us that Israel drank from a spiritual rock, Christ, in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:4) – it was Jesus that provided for them. 😊 And he is our Rock too. We can drink living water, and need never thirst again (John 4). Jesus becomes in us a stream of living water that can even flow out from us.

Lord we do sometimes feel dry, with a thirst that no drink can satisfy. Thank you that because of Calvary you can reach the deepest parts of our inner person, making us like a watered garden, because in us you are a spring of water, whose waters do not fail even in scorched places (Is. 58:11). 😊

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Day 23 (Ex 19-21*) Wondering how Moses felt when God spoke to him at Sinai... Alone, on a mountain smoking like a furnace, flames all about. Abram saw God as a smoking oven and flaming torch; Moses

also saw God in the burning bush; God led Israel as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, standing between them and their enemy when they camped.

What incredible things God said from the fire and smoke. That he had carried Israel out of bondage on eagles' wings and brought them to himself; if they would obey his voice they would be a special treasure to him, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. "We will do everything the Lord has said," they replied. Not just believe; but 'do'! 😊

Thank you Father that you are always with us. And as we walk with you and trust you, you renew our inner strength so that we also can rise on eagles' wings; we can run and not grow weary, walk and never faint (Is. 40:31). May we be your special treasure and bring joy to your heart today. 😊

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Day 24 (Ex 22-24*) "Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."" (Ex 24:8)

"In the same way, after the supper he [Jesus] took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."" (Luke 22:20)

Moses unites (1) the people with (2) the Book of the Covenant and (3) an altar by sprinkling with animal blood. They are now signed up... and the altar is their 'care plan' to fix any failures... 😊

I'm glad we don't need to sprinkle blood any more - either in practice or with words. The old covenant has passed away (Heb. 7:12) and we have a "better" one (Heb. 8:6). We >drink< the cup of this new covenant, by faith in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

Thank you, Lord, for making it possible for old, aching hearts to be made new. And kept new, under your care plan, deeply refreshed as we drink you into our hearts. We are so grateful. 😊

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Day 25 (Ex 25-27*) There is urgency in God's heart - as soon as his Covenant is made with the people, he reveals his deepest longing – one he still has today - to live among his people (25:8). Our reading is filled with instructions for making his new home. Paul tells us the tabernacle (tent) was a copy and shadow of what is in heaven itself (Heb. 8:5). This is incredible – and maybe explains the level of detail given. It must be as close as possible to the real thing. A foretaste of heaven on earth?

God's longing in 25:8 is ultimately fulfilled when he comes by his Holy Spirit to dwell in the tent of our bodies, making us his new home (1 Cor. 6:19)... Definitely a foretaste of heaven, more of the "now and the not yet" of God's Kingdom that David Flowers has spoken of. 😊

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for wanting to be with us. For wanting to make our hearts your home. For cleaning us up inside so you can come. We really don't feel worthy, but we will do as you said – believe in you, and receive you forever. 😊

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Day 26 (Ex 28-29*) Today we have instructions for the Priesthood – who they will be and what they will wear. We are told twice that Aaron as high priest carries the names of the children of Israel “before the Lord” - on his shoulders (28:12) and upon his heart, continually (28:29). He also carries their judgment on his heart, continually (28:30) so that God will be merciful.

The priests were intercessors, standing between the people and God himself, for the sake of the people. We are told that Jesus is our priest, a Great high priest (Heb. 4:14). That he is an intercessor - always living to intercede for those who draw near to God through him, and is able to save us (Heb. 7:24-25, Rom. 8:34). He totally understands our weaknesses, and sympathises (Heb. 4:15).

Thank you, Lord, that you bear our names before your Father continually. There are many names in our hearts too, and we hold them before you, that you would save each one; we believe your promise that we can ask for anything in your name, and you will do it (John 14:13). Please make us more like you each day... 😊

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Day 27 (Ex 30-31*) God instructs the building of another altar, to be placed inside the tabernacle (30:1-10). This is not a place of sacrifice of animals, it is beyond that altar. It is a place where sweet incense is to gently burn continually, day and night. It is refreshed every morning and every evening, at the time of sacrifice. It stands in front of the Mercy Seat, where God rests, with only a curtain (veil) separating them. The smoke of the incense would have penetrated the veil and entered the very presence of God.

Father, “May my prayer be set before you like incense” (Ps. 141:2). Thank you that our prayers rise before you in heaven (Rev. 5:8). You hear every prayer, no matter how short it is or big the ask. We thank you that you hear our cries (Ps. 18:6). 😊

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Day 28 (Ex 32-34*) Great encouragement for anyone praying for family and friends. Standing between the people and God, Moses intercedes with all his being on behalf of the nation and God agrees to be merciful (32:9-14). God's love triumphs over his anger at his people. God cannot resist the pleadings of his faithful servant. I believe this is the very heart of the ministry of intercession – part of the vision for Vineyard House that was mentioned this morning. 😊

Charles Wesley celebrated this event with a famous hymn, “Wondrous power of faithful prayer!”** We pray as people who are in Jesus and have Jesus in us (John 14:20), and we are privileged to be able to pray in the Holy Spirit (Eph. 6:18).

Thank you, Lord, that you hear our cries on behalf of family and friends. We ask that you would be merciful to each one and come into their lives. 😊

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** <https://hymnary.org/hymn/MHB1884/380>

Day 29 (Ex. 35-40*) The tabernacle is finally completed! I love the image of God in the cloud moving into his new home. And the people are content to wait for him to lead them when it's time to move on. Until God moves, the people stay, waiting on him faithfully. They've left houses in a fertile country and are now camping in the middle of a dry, barren wilderness. Yet they are in no hurry to move on; content to be right there with God himself, whose kindness is sufficient for them, supernaturally providing food and water each day.

Thank you, Jesus, that you are with us even through wilderness times. We will keep trusting your provision, whatever our situation. By your Holy Spirit, please "satisfy us ... with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days" (Psalm 90).

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LEVITICUS

Day 30 (Lev. 1-4*) When God first met with Moses he called to him out of a remote burning bush; he later called to him from the top of a mountain thick with smoke and burning fire; now God calls to Moses from his new home, a tent in the middle of the camp. Moses isn't told to live in isolation in a cave, or beat himself in order to hear God's voice. God has come among the people, into their everyday lives; God seems so at home with them.

I'm struck by the detail God gives about the sacrifices, and the need to keep coming back to make them. Sins transferred symbolically to the animals by pressing down on their heads, just as ours were transferred to Jesus (who had a crown of thorns pressed onto his head) on the cross.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that when you came to earth you came right into our towns and cities, and revealed yourself to us in ordinary life. And became the ultimate sacrifice for us, taking away our uncleanness and making us new if we come to you, because you still want to be with us today... 😊

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Day 31 (Lev. 5-7*) I love that there are different options for the offerings depending on wealth; compassion for the poor is at the heart of this new nation. If you can't afford a lamb or goat as a sin offering you can bring a couple of doves or pigeons. If you can't afford those you can bring some flour. This is the same as the grain offering in 6:14 - the flour was mixed with olive oil and incense, and had to be without yeast (unleavened), i.e. "matzoh" (2:4, 6:17).

A local baker confirms that yeast does nothing for bread except make it puff up, and can even ruin the bread. Yeast is used as an image of sin in the Bible (e.g. Matt. 16:6). Lucifer's original sin was to be puffed up with pride, and humankind followed him. It is believed that the grain offerings represent Jesus as the bread of life (Jn 6:35), and unleavened bread Jesus' sinlessness. 😊

Thank you, Lord, for being perfect in every way, and showing us the path of humility and servanthood. For coming from paradise to earth, that we might be lifted from earth to paradise. Please make us more like you each day...

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Day 32 (Lev. 8-10*) Sobering to read of the demise of Nadab and Abihu, who brought unauthorised offerings to the Lord. They had heavy responsibility as priests, maintaining the nation in right standing before God through their service. Yet for some reason they err. It's not that they offer sacrifices to idols, fake gods; they offer fake sacrifices to the One True God, against God's command. At the very start of the ministry of the tabernacle, after fire has leapt dramatically from within the tabernacle to consume an offering, disobedience has crept in, possibly through drunkenness (10:8-10).

Father we are sobered by how serious was the ministry of the priests. Thank you that we have the privilege of being a kingdom of priests to serve you today (1 Pet. 2:5, Rev. 6:1, 5:10). May the sacrifices of our lives be pleasing to you through Jesus (1 Pet. 2:5-9)... 😊

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Day 33 (Lev. 11-13*) Lots of detail today about how to diagnose leprosy in someone... A terrible disease that was more than skin deep. I am struck that there is no mention of a cure; anyone with leprosy was without hope of healing.

A leper came to Jesus one day and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus broke with tradition and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was gone (Matt. 8:2-3). 😊

Leprosy seems to be used as an illustration of sin in the Bible. Like leprosy, sin is more than skin deep; sin makes us unclean on the inside. And there is no cure for sin except through Jesus. But just one touch from Jesus and our sin can be washed away (Rev. 1:5), we can be made new, "ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven".**

Thank you, Father, that Leeds Vineyard is not a community without hope. Thank you that through Jesus we can each receive your healing touch upon our lives, our minds and hearts washed and made new (Rom 12:2, Acts 15:8-9)... 😊

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** "Praise my soul the king of heaven", Hymn by HF Lyte

Day 34 (Lev. 14-15*) Today we learn what happens if a person with skin disease recovers – an offering must be made so they can be declared 'clean' and not 'unclean'. A first bird is killed over fresh water in a clay pot; then a living bird, some wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop are dipped in the blood and the blood sprinkled on the person. The person is pronounced 'clean' and the living bird released – both are free to go! Jesus commanded the man healed of leprosy to go, show himself to the priests, and offer this sacrifice (Luke 5:12-14).

The wood, scarlet (red) yarn and hyssop reminds me of Jesus – he was nailed to wood at Calvary and offered drink from a sponge on a stick of hyssop. Blood and water flowed out of him when his side was pierced (John 19:34). He carried our sins in his body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24) and rose from the dead – death could not hold him! And it cannot hold us either - when we receive Jesus we are cleansed by his blood, set free from our past and released like the second bird. 😊

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you can make me clean and whole on the inside, which is what you really care about. Please cleanse us of anything that does not please you. Thank you that you can make every heart clean and new, no matter how disqualified we might feel (1 Cor. 6:11, Heb. 10:22). 😊

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Day 35 (Lev. 16-18*) We are seeing that Leviticus is the priests' 'employment handbook'. Ch. 16 describes the annual ceremony of Yom Kippur, when the personal sins of the chief priest and his family

would be atoned for (passed over) by God. Paul says that Jesus' blood was an atonement for our sin (Rom. 3:22-26). Jesus' blood permanently removes our sin, not just covering it. 😊

We discover the origin of the expression "made a scapegoat" today too. 😊 First a bull is offered for the sins of the priests (16:11); then two goats are brought, this time for the sins of the people. One goat is sacrificed, and the blood sprinkled on the altar. The priest lays his hands on the head of the second, confessing the sins of the people, before it is released into the wilderness. The two goats are like one goat that dies for sin and removes it from God's presence. 😊 Unlike the second of yesterday's birds, this second goat is not dipped in blood to cleanse it – the goat carries the sin away.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you have carried the sin of our past further than the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12). You forgive us and remember our sins no more (Heb. 8:12). We are so thankful! 😊

Day 36 (Lev. 19-20) A key theme echoing throughout today is God's desire that the people 'be holy, because I am holy' (19:2, 20:7, 20:26).

In Rev. 19:8 we are told that the Bride of Christ, the church, will wear "Fine linen, bright and clean... [and the] fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people." God wants his people pure, clean, unmixed, uncontaminated, just like him... I wonder if this is why they couldn't mix linen and wool in their clothes (19:19).

"The greatest miracle that God can do today is to take an unholy [person] out of an unholy world and make [them] holy, then put [them] back into that unholy world and keep [them] holy in it." - Leonard Ravenhill.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you call each of us to be like you. You don't care about our past, we all find equal opportunity to be made completely new through believing in you, and receiving you. We receive you fresh, again, into our hearts today... 😊

Day 37 (Lev. 21-23) When I was a child, my sister and I always found a calendar wrapped up under our Christmas tree. Most of what we would do over the coming year was set by that calendar.

Lev. 23 is Israel's calendar - a lunar calendar running in monthly cycles of 28 days. It governed their activities as a nation and as individuals including festivals and farming. We will see its significance grow as we keep reading the Bible right through to the gospels and finally the book of Revelation. The feasts reminded Israel how God had miraculously provided for them in the past, encouraging them to trust him for the future. Passover reminded them of God's deliverance from Egypt (Ex 12:17) and Booths (shelters) reminded them of his provision in the wilderness (Lev. 23:43).

Father we marvel at how you cared for your chosen nation Israel – Pharaoh could not hold them against your will and they thrived in the barren wilderness. We thank you that we are also a chosen generation, a holy nation, your special people, called out of darkness into light (1 Pet. 2:9). We are so thankful for your protection and provision. 😊

Day 38 (Lev. 24-25)

“... until the Year of Jubilee. Then they and their children are to be released...” (Lev. 25:40-41)

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me [Jesus]... to proclaim good news to the poor... to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.... Today this scripture is fulfilled” (Luke 4:18-21)

Jesus was reading (from Is. 61:1-2) in the days leading up to the Passover. At that time, every 50 years (the Year of Jubilee), servants had to be released and property returned to its original owner as we read today. Jubilee points to Jesus – he came to bring good news, setting you and me, oppressed by our brokenness, free. He does this by baptising us in the holy spirit and coming to live in us by the holy spirit.

As if to underline this, the holy spirit came on the 50th day after Jesus rose from the dead, at the feast of Pentecost 😊 Pentecost is the birthday of the church - 3000 people became Christians that day. It was the time of the first ('early') harvest (Israel had two harvests per year).

Thank you, Lord, that you came to bring freedom and healing to everyone who will receive you. We gladly receive you fresh today; please keep pouring out yourself upon us, by your holy spirit, and help us to share this good news with others. 😊

Day 39 (Lev. 26-27)

Leviticus is set at Mt Sinai, on the journey from Egypt to Canaan, the Promised Land. We’ve read the instructions given by God for maintaining the Covenant between himself and the people. The Priests (from the tribe of Levi) are to act as ‘maintenance guys’ that keep the Covenant in force when the people are disobedient, by various offerings.

They are about 11 days walk from their final destination, all set to go. Some amazing words are spoken to them in 26:3-13. If they will follow God’s commands, they will never lack rain, harvests and peace - “You will still be eating last year’s harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new”, says God (26:10). Who wouldn’t love to hear these words spoken over them. 😊

Jesus said, “If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love... I appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will remain—so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you.” (John 15).

Father, we are filled with joy reading your words to Israel - how you would make them fruitful and protect them, lavishing your love upon them. Thank you for the gift of your holy spirit to us, bringing that same love of God into our hearts and making our lives fruitful too. Please help us to listen to your voice, to hear you, and follow you each day. 😊

Day 39 Extra:

Bible in a Year: Tomorrow we start a new book, Numbers – another good time to start reading if you haven't already!*

Genesis: the book of beginnings, including the calling of Abraham to leave his homeland and follow God's leading by faith, ending with his descendant Jacob (Israel) well looked after in Egypt during an international famine.

Exodus: The stay in Egypt leads to Israel's descendants ("Israel") becoming enslaved to the Egyptians.

☹️ They are miraculously released by God through Moses 😊, who acts as an intercessor between Pharaoh and Israel. After redeeming them from slavery, God makes an agreement (Covenant) with them in the wilderness outside Egypt where he miraculously provides for them. 👍

Leviticus: God knows the people will be unable to keep the Covenant ☹️, so he organises a "Covenant maintenance program" right there in the wilderness. 😊 The descendants of Aaron, Moses' brother (tribe of Levi) will serve as Priests "inbetween" God and Israel. God will live in the middle of their camp in the back room of his own tent ("the Tabernacle"). ☺️ The Priests will serve God in the front room of the tent and around the tent, making offerings for the people. God will overlook their faults and his plan can continue – God will lead them to a land that will be 'heaven on earth' for them... 😊

Numbers: The story continues...!

* The LV website has lots of info on how to get started:

https://www.leedsvineyard.org/Articles/535018/Leeds_Vineyard/Resources/Teaching_Series/The_Good_Book/3_Resources.aspx

NUMBERS

Day 40 / 9 Feb. (Num. 1-4)

“Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, is to have charge of the oil for the light, the fragrant incense... charge of the entire tabernacle and everything in it, including its holy furnishings and articles.” (4:16)

“1. A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify, a never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky. 2. To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill; O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will! ...” Charles Wesley

I'm struck by the responsibility held by the Priests to keep the charge of the God's tent; dismantling it, carrying it, erecting it, serving in and around it. ☺ It's sobering to reflect on our responsibilities as Christians: our bodies are temples in whom God lives by his holy spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), and we are living stones, forming a spiritual house [the church], a holy priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5), planted right here in Leeds. God has work for us, reaching out to those who do not yet know Jesus, and teaching one another about him ('the great commission', Matt. 28:19). I'm thankful that God has given us all that we need to live and serve him well through the knowledge of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:3). ☺

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that although >you< build your church, you have made us a kingdom of priests (Rev. 5:10) and you choose to work through us, by your holy spirit. It can feel really overwhelming at times. We trust you to keep leading us in all that is happening in our church on Sunday and throughout the week. We are so glad that we all get to play a part. ☺

Day 41 / 10 Feb. (Num. 5-7) I think it's significant that the Aaronic blessing (6:24-27) follows God's instructions for the Vow of the Nazirite (nazir means “branch”). Men or women could voluntarily set themselves apart for God for a time and not shave, touch dead bodies or drink wine. They would become wild-looking, as if something was wrong with them. Wine represents joy in the Old Testament – they probably had little or no joy at this time. But eventually they could shave and drink wine again, and their joy was restored. ☺

Samson was called to be a Nazirite from birth, as was John Baptist, and both were extraordinary people. Jesus is once called ‘a Nazarene’, a word similar to Nazirite in Hebrew. Isaiah calls Jesus a Branch (Is. 11:1). ☺ Like the Nazirite, Jesus had “no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him” (Is. 11:2). He suffered greatly but the suffering came to an end and God gave him the highest honour in heaven; he abstained from wine after the last supper and said they would all drink wine together in his Father's kingdom (Matt. 26:29). ☺

Lord Jesus we want to follow in your footsteps. We really don't mind what other people think of us and are willing to be different for you. Thank you for giving us new wine to drink even now - your holy spirit, who brings us joy. Please help us to be joyful in suffering for you. ☺

Day 42 / 11 Feb. (Num. 8-10)

“... present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering... ready to do the work of the Lord.” (8:11)

“... offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God--this is your true and proper worship.” (Rom. 12:1)

We know that the people brought their offerings to the Levites (priestly tribe) for them to offer to God, so the (Mosaic) Covenant could be kept in force. 😊 But today we discover that the Levites are themselves offered by the people to God, once they have been made ceremonially clean (8:21). 🙏 They are living offerings, living sacrifices.

Thank you, Lord, that just like the Levites you have called us to present our bodies to you as living sacrifices, that you might use us in your work. Thank you that you make us holy and pleasing to your Father by washing us in your blood and filling us with your Holy Spirit. Please lead us and guide us, that we might truly worship our Father in Spirit and in truth in all we do (John 4:23-24). 😊

Day 43 / 12 Feb. (Num. 11-13)

“When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down.” (Num. 11:9)

“The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35)

“I pray that out of the riches of His glory He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.” (Eph. 3:16-17)

Some striking detail about the arrival of the manna, whilst some folks were complaining about it. 🙄 First the dew, then the manna also came down. I love how God records this detail despite the context – miraculous provision even to the ungrateful.

We know that water (and wine) are illustrations of the Holy Spirit (who is living water, John 7:38-39). Jesus compared himself to the manna and said he was living bread (John 6:49-51). We know that Jesus was formed in Mary after the Holy Spirit came upon her; and Paul says that when the Holy Spirit fills us, Jesus dwells in us. 😊 I like to think of this when I read about the manna.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you give us yourself like the manna from heaven, by your Holy Spirit. Thank you that you are faithful, even though we are sometimes ungrateful. Please keep us feeding on you in our hearts, we know you are always with us. 😊

Day 44 / 13 Feb. (Num. 14-16)

“Christian focus is overwhelmingly on sin sin sin sin sin sin sin. What a nasty little preoccupation to have dominating your life.” Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion

“..forgive the sin of these people...” “I have forgiven them, as you asked.” (Num. 14: 19-20)

Reading through Leviticus and now Numbers, we might get the impression that God himself has a

preoccupation with sin - and is causing the people to be similarly preoccupied. The sacrificial system dominates daily life and the yearly calendar. ☹️

It's important to God that humankind understands the seriousness of sin, which leads to brokenness and unhappiness. ☹️ He wants us to be happy – for ever! 😊 Ultimately sin is rebellion against God; against the way he has made the creation, including you and I who live in it. Israel's rebellion and complaining is directed squarely against God and his servant Moses. I guess it's easy for us to look down on them, reading with hindsight...

If we had a serious, debilitating illness, we would likely be preoccupied with it until a cure was found. So with humankind and God. God knows that a time of judgement is coming on all humankind because of our sin and rebellion, and is desperate to save us from "the coming wrath" (1 Thess. 1:10, John 3:16). Perhaps this is why God is willing to squander so much of his creation (through the blood-soaked sacrificial system) teaching Israel (and us who read today) the seriousness of sin. The more they sinned, the more animals they had to bring. But the sacrifices point to the forgiveness and new life that is available to everyone today through the death and resurrection of God's Lamb, his Son Jesus Christ, who died for sin once and for all. 😊

Atheists like Dawkins can offer no such hope to the world – the very word sin shakes their naturalistic (godless) worldview. But Jesus offers hope to everyone! 😊

Father, thank you that you did not leave us helpless, lost in darkness; but you sent light into the world in the person of Jesus Christ. We are so thankful to know your forgiveness and have Jesus in our hearts, by your Holy Spirit. Please bring light and life to every part of our lives today. 😊

Further Reading: John Lennox, "Gunning for God", Ch. 6 ("Is the Atonement Morally Repellent") - some good insights into the beliefs of the New Atheists like Dawkins in the context of sin and God's solution. (Lennox is a Christian and Prof. of Maths at Oxford; his debates with Dawkins and Hitchens are YouTube hits)

Day 46 / 15 Feb. (Num. 19-21) Now In Stock – Jars of Pre-Prepped Offering – just add water!

Today we are introduced to a key sacrifice. A perfect red heifer (relatively rare animal) was taken outside the camp, slaughtered and burned whole on an altar. ☹️ The priest had to throw cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet material onto the heifer as it burned. We saw these three items earlier – on Day 34 – and how they remind us of Jesus' death on the cross, which took place outside the city of Jerusalem. The ashes of the heifer could be stored, and used for cleansing or sanctifying people or objects by simply mixing the ashes with fresh water and sprinkling. 😊 Instant cleansing, whenever needed...

Paul refers to the heifer's ashes (Heb. 8:13) and says that if they could make people outwardly clean, how much more will Jesus' blood cleanse our consciences by the Holy Spirit - making us inwardly clean! That's so much better than any outward cleaning... 😊

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for dying for us on the cross, taking away our sin, our guilt and shame, and making us new. We are so very grateful to be able to have peace in our hearts and minds... 😊

Day 47 / 16 Feb. (Num. 22-24)

“What hath God wrought?” (Balaam, Num. 23:23, King James Version, KJV)

“What hath God wrought?” (Samuel Morse, first commercial telegram, 24 May 1844)

“God... made us alive with Christ even when we were dead...” (Paul Eph: 2:4-5)

Balak, King of the Moabites is worried about the arrival of the Israelites, whom no enemy has yet defeated. He summons a diviner, Balaam, and tries to bribe him to curse Israel. But Balaam looks to God, and three times God speaks blessing through him, and no curse. 😊

The secret to Israel’s success is not its own physical (“natural”) strength, but God’s strength. 🙏 It is God who is working through them, protecting them and blessing them. Israel and her people are a miracle nation with incredible potential, and we might well agree with Balaam, “See what God has done!” (23:23, NIV). Recognising the power and potential of his new telegraph system,* Samuel Morse quoted this verse in the first commercial telegram (see above). 🤖

Like Israel, our strength as Christians is not from ourselves but from God himself. Our new lives are God’s gift to us, and he promises to supernaturally watch over us and all that we do. Even when things don’t seem to go well, we know that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him...” (Rom. 8:28). 😊

Thank you, Father, for your supernatural care for Israel as you prepared the way for Jesus to come to earth. We are so grateful to you for making us alive through Jesus, and that your plans for us are “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jer. 29:11) 😊

Day 48 / 17 Feb. (Num. 25-27)

God reminds Moses of his failure at Meribah, and that he will die before he enters the promised land (Canaan). I love that Moses’ first concern is for the people – he doesn’t want them to be “like sheep without a shepherd” (27:17). He has a true pastoral heart. 😊

Moses has changed God’s mind more than once through his intercessions, but this time he makes no such attempt. He humbly sets Joshua before Eleazar and commissions him for the leadership of Israel. Joshua is a person of great faith. He earlier described the people of Canaan as food for Israel – “we will devour them,” he said. “Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us.” (Num. 14:9).

We serve the same great King as Joshua. He defeated our enemy on a cross at Calvary. Our boast is in God, and his great strength, not in our own strength, as we saw yesterday. 😊

Thank you, Father, that though our enemies can seem mighty, you are Almighty – our strong tower, our refuge, the one who lifts us up and carries us when we are weak. Thank you that underneath us are the everlasting arms, and they will never let us go (Deut. 33:27). 😊

Day 49 / 18 Feb. (Num. 28-30)

“Offer one lamb in the morning and the other at twilight... This is... an aroma pleasing to the Lord” (Num 28:4, 8)

A sacrificial lamb starts and ends each day for the Israelites, a pleasing (“sweet”) aroma. King David asked that his prayer might be like incense, and the lifting up of his hands like the evening sacrifice of the lamb (Ps. 141:2). He saw worship as a way of laying down his life to God, as a sacrifice, and wanted to please God in it. The most powerful person in Israel loved to worship God. 😊

Jesus talked about worship when he met a woman at a well. She was battered and bruised (at least on the inside), and some of us know how that feels (David too)... Jesus told her that he wanted to give her the Holy Spirit like living water to drink (John 4:10-14), like a glass of tap water, so that she need never thirst again. He told her that his Father was seeking people who would worship Him in Spirit and in truth (4:24).

Jesus’ promise is that the Holy Spirit becomes in us “a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14), enabling us somehow to rise in worship toward heaven in our hearts, immersed, baptised, in God’s perfect love, which takes away all fear (1 John 4:18). 😊

Lord Jesus, as we have drunk from cups today to quench thirst, so we drink you into our hearts now, that the thirst of our hearts for love, peace, forgiveness, acceptance, may be truly satisfied by you... Please immerse us again in your love, by your Holy Spirit, and enable us to bring pleasure to you in our worship today. 😊

Day 50 / 19 Feb. (Num. 31-32)

Sobering events today. Moses’ last commission is to “Take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites” (31:1). So Israel fights them and all the men of Midian are killed, including Balaam whom we met on Saturday (Day 47). 😞

It turns out that Balaam found a way to help Balak (King of Moab) after all (God would not let him curse Israel on Day 47). He teaches the Moabite women to commit fornication with the men of Israel according to the Moabite religion which saturated their culture (25:1-3, Day 48). One Israelite had the nerve to bring a girl into the camp for this and both lost their lives, with all the other men involved (25:5-9). 😞

In letters to new testament churches, both Peter and Jude mention Balaam as an example of one who does evil for profit, like the false prophets and teachers of their day (2 Pet. 2; Jude 1:11). The harsh consequences for those involved reflects God’s jealousy for his people. He is desperate to protect Israel from corruption.

God is jealous for his church today too, and warns us against becoming entangled with the world. Just as God wanted to bless Israel, he wants to bless us - “...immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power...” (Paul, Eph 3:20).

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you are jealous for each of us as individuals and as a church, and want to pour out your living water into our hearts (see Day 49). Please continue to protect us from those who might work against us; fill us with your joy, which is our strength (Neh. 8:10), so we can stand our ground when trials come, having your perfect peace. 😊

Day 51 / 20 Feb. (Num. 33-34)

Now by the Jordan on the edge of Canaan, Moses details the travels of Israel to date. And God gives him instructions for the next stage – moving into their new home. 😊 Some work ahead for them - they are to be careful to >drive out< the current inhabitants and >destroy< everything relating to their false religion – “their pictures... molten images... high places” (KJV). They are not told here to destroy the Canaanites themselves – they have the chance to run away as Israel advances.

But why should they run if they were there first..? 😡 God is angry with Canaan because they are rebelling against him by worshipping idols and sacrificing their children. 😊 God is being merciful - handing their land over to a new nation, to bless the whole earth through Israel’s presence there (Gen. 22:18). 😊 Israel must do a thorough job or else any Canaanites that remain will be “thorns in your sides” (33:55).

There are parallels between Israel’s human enemies and our spiritual enemies. We too must be ruthless, and “throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles” (Heb. 12:1-3). God has given us armour for protection – his armour, not the kind that humankind develops. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph 6:12) Like Israel, we are promised victory if we keep trusting God’s Spirit to help us (Rom. 8:13). 😊

Thank you, Father, for your patience with Israel and your patience with us. We are very thankful because we don’t always find it easy to keep going. But we are convinced that you are able to look after us until we finally meet, face to face (2 Tim. 1:12). 😊

Day 52 / 21 Feb. (Num. 35-36)

We are reminded that God takes the killing of a human being very seriously, whether accidental or intentional (God talked to Noah about this in Gen.9:5). Killing pollutes the land (Num. 35:33) and requires death in order to ‘atone’ (make amends) for it. 😊

If you killed someone and had intended to harm or kill, you were to be put to death by a relative of the deceased (their ‘avenger/redeemer’). If you did not intend harm or death, you could run to a ‘city of refuge’ set aside to keep you safe. You had to remain there until the current high priest died, when you were free to go. If you came out before then, the avenger/redeemer could legally kill you...

Paul tells us that Jesus is the one to whom we flee for refuge (Heb. 6:18). As our great high priest, he died that we might go free (Heb. 2:9). 😊 But Jesus is so much better than those cities of refuge – no crime is too great that you can’t come to him and be saved. Even wilful murderers can flee to Jesus,

because Christ “died for all” (2Cor. 5:15) and “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Eph. 1:7). 😊

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for being our shelter and refuge. No matter what our past, you can make us flourish in your house “like an olive tree” and we will “...trust in God’s unfailing love for ever and ever.” (Ps. 52: 8) 😊

Day 52 Extra:

Bible in a Year: Tomorrow we start our 5th book, Deuteronomy – “second law”. The whole book takes place in a single day. It is Moses’ personal summary of Leviticus and Numbers, and sets the scene for the future, which will be a fresh beginning for Israel.

It’s another good time to start reading if you haven’t already!*

Genesis: the book of beginnings, including the calling of Abraham to leave his homeland and follow God’s leading by faith, ending with his descendant Jacob (Israel) well looked after in Egypt during an international famine.

Exodus: The stay in Egypt leads to Israel’s descendants (“Israel”) becoming enslaved to the Egyptians. 😞 They are miraculously released by God through Moses 😊, who acts as an intercessor between Pharaoh and Israel. After redeeming them from slavery, God makes an agreement (Covenant) with them in the wilderness outside Egypt where he miraculously provides for them. 👍

Leviticus: God knows the people will be unable to keep the Covenant 😞, so he organises a "Covenant maintenance program" right there in the wilderness. 😊 The descendants of Aaron, Moses’ brother (tribe of Levi) will serve as Priests "inbetween" God and Israel. God will live in the middle of their camp in the back room of his own tent (“the Tabernacle”). 😊 The Priests will serve God in the front room of the tent and around the tent, making offerings for the people. God will overlook their faults and his plan can continue – God will lead them to a land that will be ‘heaven on earth’ for them... 😊

Numbers: Israel heads for the promised land 😊 but their behaviour unravels quickly and they end up wandering for 40 years in the wilderness 😞. Only two people will survive these wanderings and enter the promised land – Joshua and Caleb. 👍

Deuteronomy: The people are poised to enter Canaan, their new home... 😊

* The LV website has lots of info on how to get started:

https://www.leedsvineyard.org/Articles/535018/Leeds_Vineyard/Resources/Teaching_Series/The_Good_Book/3_Resources.aspx

DEUTERONOMY

Day 53 / 22 Feb. (Deut. 1-3)

Moses gathers the children of Israel together at Jordan and speaks to them one last time. Jacob (Israel) gathered his twelve sons together in a similar way (Gen. 49) before he died, and blessed them. Moses has a shepherd's heart (Num. 27:27) and is anxious for Israel to obey God and enjoy future blessing. 😊

The nation is here 40 years later than God intended. But the complainers have now all passed away and a new generation will enter Canaan. Moses cannot join them as he also was disobedient – he must hand over leadership to Joshua (Hebrew for 'Jesus'). He will lead the people to their inheritance (1:38).

Moses is the mediator of the Old Covenant; he was the first to break the law (literally) when he smashed the tablets on which the commandments were written. 😞 He is the 'law' person. But Jesus is the 'grace' person - "...the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17) 😊

Paul tells us that "...the law was our guardian until Christ came...." (Gal. 3:24). "For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son" (Rom. 8:3). It is Jesus, not the law, that brings us to our inheritance (Rom. 8:17). As if to illustrate this, it is Joshua who will lead Israel to their inheritance, and not Moses...

Thank you, Lord Jesus, that just as Joshua led Israel to their inheritance, so you lead us to ours – which is to be with you for ever (Ps. 23:6, Ps. 16:5). Please help us to walk by faith, our eyes on you and not our circumstances. Thank you for giving us your grace and strength to do so. 😊

Day 54 / 23 Feb. (Deut. 4-6)

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength [resources]." (Moses, Deut. 6 :4-5 - aka "The Shema")

"Therefore, I urge you ... to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.... be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Paul, Rom. 12: 1-2)

The Shema is prayed twice daily by orthodox Jews even today. From the inside of their beings outwardly the people are to love God – with all their heart, soul and resources. Likewise, in the world, from inside their homes outwardly they are to honour God (6:6-9). * It follows Moses' repeated warnings against worshipping false gods. These have no power to help them if they hit trouble (4: 28); 😞 God wants his people to know things as they really are, and not believe in fantasies. They will enjoy unprecedented blessing, wisdom and international respect if they listen (4: 5-8). 😊

Paul is on the same page as Moses, over 1000 years later. Our entire beings (from the inside out) are to be presented to God, as living sacrifices, our minds renewed by the Holy Spirit. Only then can we avoid deception and know reality. The Holy Spirit brings life (2 Cor. 3: 6) and fills us with "all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19). He gives us inner power to "keep things real" and help others find reality in Jesus too... 😊

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of your Holy Spirit, and for your word that refreshes our innermost being. We renew our commitment to you today and ask you to continue the work of transforming every part of who we are, to make us more like you. 😊

* this passage suggests children's education begins at home (6:7)

Day 55 / 24 Feb. (Deut. 7-9)

Moses again cautions Israel to completely cleanse Canaan when they possess it, "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God." (7: 6) The gift of the land is not because they are large (they are the smallest), "But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath..." (7: 8) He warns against being drawn away from God. Intermarriage with Canaanites (7: 3-4), their religious practices (7: 4, 7: 25-26), and complacency (8: 12-13) are snares to avoid so as to enjoy constant blessing.

John later gave a similar warning to the church. "For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever." (1 John 2:16-17)

If we do fail or mess up, we must not give up. Jesus is with us by his Spirit. He is faithful to forgive our sins and cleanse us (1 John 1:9). Just as Moses ground up the golden calf into fine dust, and "threw the dust into a stream that flowed down the mountain" (9:21), so a stream of living water that flows from our Father's throne (the Holy Spirit), is able to wash all our sins away and give us new life (Ezek. 47: 1-12). 😊

Thank you, Father, for opening our eyes to reality, to see how helpless we are outside of Jesus. Renew our hearts today in the cleansing flow of your river of life, washing away memories that haunt us and breaking the chains that bind us in things we don't want to do any more. Fill us with the knowledge of your glory and tender love by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 4:6). 😊

These notes were originally posted on the Leeds Vineyard Life Facebook Group. The earliest post (Day 1) has been extended and minor edits made to a small number of early posts to improve clarity.

The daily reading scheme is based on the Year of Biblical Literacy scheme available at <http://bible.realitysf.com/>

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