

## THE EXODUS ERA [EXODUS, LEVITICUS, & NUMBERS]

### COMPREHENSIVE QUESTION:

What light does the law(s) of Moses throw upon how and why God's people in every age should love God, themselves and others?

## INTRODUCTION TO EXODUS

The title "Exodus" comes from the second century B.C. Septuagint Greek [LXX] translation of the Hebrew and Aramaic Old Testament for Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria, Egypt, and means "going out". The book treats the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt as a liberation/ redemption (6:6; 15:13). Throughout the rest of the Bible this Exodus becomes the model of Yahweh's redeeming or saving activity in history. Through his salvation God created a people for himself; and then called them to live according to his values for human society. The law given to and through Moses is, thus, not a means of their salvation, but a consequence of that salvation. This general pattern of first grace [God's active love], then commitment [faith], and then law [about loving God, ourselves and neighbours] is repeated many times throughout the Bible. Exodus also reveals much about appropriate and inappropriate responses to God's saving activity, as well as about God's disclosure of his own character, his commitment [covenant] to his people all his personal name [Yahweh]. Moses, the central character after Yahweh himself, becomes the model for all future leaders of Yahweh's covenant people. Through him God introduces appropriate modes of worship, behaviour and thought for all his people.

## ANALYSIS OF EXODUS

1:1 - 6:27	The bondage of the Israelites in Egypt & the call and training of Moses.
6:28 -15:21	The redemption of the Israelites from Egypt.
15:22 - 17:16	The Israelites traveling in the wilderness to Mt. Sinai.
18:1-27	Moses' father-in-law brings Moses' family plus leadership advice.
19:1 - 24:18	Yahweh's covenant with Israel at Mt Sinai.
19:1-15	The covenant introduced and embraced in principle by the people.
19:16-25	The disclosure of Yahweh's majesty.
20:1-21	The giving of the Ten Commandments [The Decalogue].
20:22 - 23:33	The Covenant Code.
24:1-18	The ratification of the covenant.
25:1 - 31:17	Directions for building the portable sanctuary and for worship in it.
31:18 - 34:35	The covenant is breached and renewed.
35:1 - 39:43	The sanctuary and high priestly vestments made.
40:1-38	The consecration of the sanctuary and its priests.

TRAIL II -- SECTION 1: Exodus 1:1-2:25.

1. According to 1:5 & 7 how was God faithfully fulfilling his promise to childless Abram (Gn 12:2), in spite of his family's later unfaithfulness while sojourning in Egypt for several generations (Js 24:14)?
2. Why was the king of Egypt worried about the Hebrews (1:8-10)? How frequently, even today, is there fear and distrust of distinct ethnic or recent immigrant groups within a nation? For similar reasons? Are these concerns ever justified? Why? Do governments today respond similarly to the Egyptians then? What do we call such strategies? How culpable are they? Why? Are they ultimately successful?
3. What are the legal and illegal ways in which the oppressed Hebrews dealt with their plight? How do persecuted peoples deal with their plight today? How did God respond to their approaches? How might you have coped under similar circumstances?
4. How was Moses prepared from birth onwards to perform his life's work? What positive and negative experiences have you had preparing you for your life's work? Have you found that God can even use your sinning to accomplish his good purposes in and thorough you? Would that, however, justify your sinning? Why (Ro 3:8)?
5. What further light do 6:20; Ac 7:20-29 and He 11:23-27 throw upon this story? Where did the extra information come from?

TRAIL II -- SECTION 2: Exodus 3:1-4:26.

1. What might Moses have learned about God and himself from his burning bush experience? Have you had such landmark experiences? How so? What did you learn about God and yourself through them? Were they all equally pleasant or unusual experiences? How so? Was that important for your learning or remembering?
2. How does God meet each of Moses' four objections to being called to serve him? Why is God not pleased with Moses' reluctance to accept his call (Ro 12:3-8; 2 Co 3:5f)? How are you responding to God's call to serve him in a particular ministry/ service (1 Co 12:4-6) or place (Jn 15:16; Ac 16:9f)? Why does God sometimes call us to do what seems to us to be impossible (3:19f)? How is God's call always still realistic (3:12, 20f; 4:12)?
3. How does the context here help us to learn the meaning of "Yahweh", God's personal name? Seeing as the name "Yahweh" was said in Genesis to have been frequently used in the Patriarchal era, even to directly address God, might the verb "know" in 6:3 connote something deeper than mere acquaintance with the name? In light of what is said in 6:7; 7:5; 8:10; 9:14-16, 29; 10:2; 11:7 (Is 52:6; Jr 16:2; Ez 37:6, 13; Ps 83:18), what could that involve? In light of 3:15 why don't English speaking Christians today regularly address God by his personal name "Yahweh", rather than by the formal title "LORD" [Sovereign]? Why do we continue to follow this impersonal practice of 1<sup>st</sup> century rabbinic Judaism, even though there is rabbinic evidence that Jesus himself sometimes used "Yahweh" publicly? Furthermore, how can we follow the psalmist's exhortations to "praise the name of Yahweh", i.e. "Hallelujah", if we shun using the personal name God revealed to his covenant people? What do you think the "jah/yah" in "Hallelujah!" means anyway?
4. What is Moses' first step in obeying Yahweh's call? How does God respond both to confirm his call and to test the seriousness of Moses' commitment (Gn 17:9:14)? How important was Zipporah's role? Are there any parallels in your experience of God? What?
5. What role can signs and wonders play in generating faith (3:2-6; 4:1-9, 21; 7:13; Jn 2:23; 3:2; 7:31; 10:38; 41f; 11:47f)? Is this still common in our scientific age? Was Christian faith based on signs, even in a pre-scientific age (4:30f; 5:20f; 6:9; Nu 14:11, 22; Jn 2:23-25)? What might we, therefore, expect today?

TRAIL II -- SECTION 3: Exodus 4:27-6:27.

1. Why did Aaron go to meet Moses way out in the wilderness, even far from where Moses was living (2:15; 3:1)? Has God ever arranged an important and timely encounter for you? To what effect? How well do you respond to God's directions? What may be missed if you don't obey?
2. What accounts for the change of the Israelites' attitude to Moses and his mission from 4:29-31 to 5:20f and 6:9? How are your convictions influenced by your changing circumstances and feelings? Why is it important to remember this?
3. What can we learn about the complexity of rights and wrongs in labour relations from the interaction between Pharaoh-and the Hebrew foremen? What has been your experience in this sphere of life? How have you participated as a Christian?
4. How closely can you identify with Moses in his responses, multiple delays, setbacks and criticism? How might Yahweh's answer to Moses (6:1-8) help you cope in similar circumstances? How would you characterize how Moses talks to God here? Should you talk to God that way too? Why?
5. Which of the seven aspects of Yahweh's promised deliverance of the Israelites do you find relevant to your life? In what ways?

1. In what ways do 4:10-16 and 6:30-7:2 illuminate the relationship of prophets to God on the one hand and to their audience on the other?
2. What were the plagues, their escalation and interconnection? What value is there in trying to discover their possible natural causes and causal interconnections? Can God use natural causes to accomplish his purposes? Why? Whom did they hurt the most? How well did they influence Pharaoh's willingness to bargain with Moses?
3. What were the purposes of the plagues? Why were they necessary? Does God have to go to such lengths today to reach people? Why? Even his own people? Why?
4. What did it take to convince Pharaoh's magicians [soothsayer priests] and servants that they had to reckon with the reality of Yahweh's superior power and sovereignty (8:18f; 9:20f; 10:7)? What more did it take to convince Pharaoh himself (9:27)? What does it take for you to come to that realization? Why?
5. Why did Yahweh harden Pharaoh's heart (4:21; 7:3-5; 9:12; 10:1f, 20,27; 11:9f; 14:4, 8, 17f, 25)? What seems to have been involved in the hardening of a heart (7:4, 13f, 22f; 8:15; 9:7, 12, 17, 29f, 34; 11:9f; 13:15; Dt 2:30; Js 11:18-20; Pr 28:14; Is 6:10; 63:17; Mk 6:52; 8:17)? Has your heart ever become hardened? When? Why? Do you think God was involved? Why? Who else? Could both be involved? How so?

1. What further information do you find here on (a) the interconnection and escalation of the plagues, (b) the developments in the bargaining with Pharaoh and (c) the purposes of the plagues?
2. What is the difference between true repentance and sorrow for sin's consequences? If the root meaning of "repentance" in the Old Testament is "to turn around", then what role must fear/revering Yahweh and humility play in true repentance (9:30; 10:3)? How are your confessions of sin much like Pharaoh's? Why? How, then, are hardening one's heart and sinning related (9:34)? How can sinning be against both God and people (10:16)? Whenever this is the case, do both God and people have to be involved in the forgiveness of the sin (10: 17)? How well do you remember this in your life? Whose forgiveness was Pharaoh most concerned about here? Why?
3. What role did Pharaoh's servants play in this negotiation (9:20f, 10:7f)? What role can even believers play in positively influencing relevant authorities (Jn 7:45-52; 19:38f)? How successful can we expect to be? Why?
4. When can darkness be felt (10:21f)? Have you ever experienced this? How did it make you feel? Why do you think that that was?
5. Does Moses' reply in 10:25f make sense? Why? Do you ever not know how you should worship/serve God until you arrive where it should happen? How so?

1. How was the judgement on Egypt both religious and political (9:27f; 10:16)? Does this still sometimes need to be the case even when there is a general separation between church and state? Why? When?
2. Why were no bones of the paschal lamb to be broken (12:46; Nu 9:12; Jn 19:33, 36)?
3. How was the annual Passover Festival a fitting memorial of the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt? In what ways do you, your family and your church regularly remember how God has delivered you (Cl 1:13; 1 P 2:9)? How do Baptism and the Lords Supper/ Holy Communion/ The Eucharist help remind Christians of the exodus [going out, departure] which Jesus our Paschal Lamb accomplished for us (Is 53:6f; Lk 9:31; Jn 1:29,36; Ac 8:32f; Ro 6:1-9; 1 Co 5:7; 1 P 1:18f)?
4. How could it have been that a mixed multitude of peoples (12:38, 49) were involved in the Hebrew's exodus from Egypt and even in their Passover celebration of that deliverance? How does this foreshadow the wider fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Abram/Abraham (Gn 12:3; 22:18; Gal 3:8f)? What, however, might the rabble element in this multitude have contributed to the unrest later in their wilderness wanderings (Nu 11:4)? What can Christian congregations learn from all of this about how to treat enquirers and new converts to Christianity from secular and pagan backgrounds?
5. How is the dedication of all firstborn sons to Yahweh tied both to the exodus from Egypt and to the promised settlement in the land of Canaan (Gn 15:13-16)? Could there be here a lesson for contemporary Christians about putting God first with respect to our families and possessions? What one?

1. What might it have meant to Joseph's descendants, all of the Israelites, and to Moses to have Joseph's embalmed body right there with them on their long journey back to Canaan (Gn 50:24-26; Ex 13:19; Js 24:32)?
2. How is Yahweh like a good shepherd carefully guiding his people on their dangerous journey (Ps 23; 78:52)? How carefully has he guided you through difficult situations? Have you appreciated his guidance, care and protection any better than the Israelites did? How so? What circumstances might they and you point out to justify criticisms of God's timely care? Why did Yahweh still save them in spite of their rebellion right at the edge of the sea (Ps 106:8)? What is the difference between the fear of the Israelites before and after his deliverance? Has that been your experience too? Why?
3. Why were the Israelites instructed to backtrack and camp at a very specific spot? How long did it take for the miraculous parting of the sea to take place? How were the Israelites protected from the hostile Egyptian army in the meantime? What do you imagine it might have been like to experience this event (a) as an Israelite and (b) as an Egyptian soldier? How would your responses have resembled either of theirs? What parallels can you see between this exodus and events of divine judgment and salvation today? Can the same event bring both judgement and salvation? How so?
4. How would you analyze the very ancient folk song of 15:1-9 into appropriate stanzas and refrains, giving them suitable titles to characterize their contents? Where might Miriam's response (vv. 20f) fit into it? How does the song portray God's character and action in history? How are both of these the basis for hope and for plans for the future? What can this song and its expression in worship teach us about appropriate ways to worship Yahweh today?
5. Why might it be that no record of this great historical event has yet been discovered in Egypt? How well do nations and governments today record for posterity their setbacks and defeats? How well do even Christian groups and individuals? Does the biblical record of this event, or even the folk song celebrating it, claim that the Pharaoh himself actually died in the sea? What about Ps 136:15's celebration?

TRAIL II -- SECTION 8: Exodus 15:22-17:7.

1. How human were God's chosen people then? At what points can you identify with them? How human are God's chosen people today (Lk 20:16; Ga 3:28; 6:16; 1 Co 12:13; Cl 3:11; Ep 2:12-22; Ro 11:2, 11, 15, 23f, 26-29)? How easy is it for you to identify with them? Why?
2. How do both Moses and Yahweh cope with God's people? Why would anyone want to be a leader of such a people? What can Christian leaders of God's people today learn from this section about how to deal with complaints directed to them? Are our complaints really just about our human leaders' failures or also about God himself? Do we dare to express the latter? What attitudes lie behind this behaviour? How can we be assured that Yahweh is really there for us, his people, and that he will listen, care and act on our behalf?
3. What does Yahweh's promise of 15:26 (23:25) mean for you? Does it cover every disease? Is it applicable to God's people today? Why? How might it be conditional (16:28; 2 Ch 7:14)?
4. Why does God sometimes seem to allow some of his redeemed people to lack basic needs (Dt 8:2f; Mt 6:11,25-34)? Why is it "daily bread" that God provides (16:4; Mt 6:11)? How have you experienced Yahweh's daily provision? What has been your response? Should you long for and pray for longer-term provisions? Why?
5. How creative was the name "manna" considering that in 16:31 the Hebrew is "man" and in 16:15 "What is it?" is "man hu" in Hebrew? Why keep a memorial jar of the stuff? What material memorials do we Christians keep? Why?

TRAIL II -- SECTION 9: Exodus 17:8-18:27.

1. What can we learn about the relationship between prayer and physical action from the account of Israel's first real battle against an organized enemy? Which type of action do you find easier? Why? Which is more effective? Why?
2. How could the staff in Moses' hand truly be both his (4:2,17; 17:5) and also God's (4:20; 17:9) rather than either solely his or God's? What do Christians have that are both theirs and God's (Ro 6:8-13; 12:1; 1 Co 6:19)? How so? How significant is this for you?
3. What can we learn from the brief glimpse here into Moses' family life? What might a similar glimpse reveal about your family? Although Moses' wife and family had headed with him to Egypt (4:20-26), what are the clues as to why they weren't still with him throughout the actual exodus from Egypt and the trek to Mt Sinai (18:2-7)? Was Moses' father-in-law, Jethro/ Reuel, who was a priest of Midian (2:18; 3:1), a monotheist? A Yahwist? How might that be significant?
4. When did you last give someone a spiritual progress report? Was it as balanced and honest as that which Moses gave to Jethro? What conclusions might a listener legitimately draw from your account of God's recent activity in your life? What might they miss? How so?
5. What leadership model had Moses been following up to this point? Why did he adopt it? Why was his reason for staying with it inadequate? Yet how does Moses' original leadership model compare to what Christian congregations today usually require of their leaders? Who does Moses about 40 years later seem to credit with his now shared approach to leadership (Dt 1:9-18)? Why might that happen? Why shouldn't leaders of God's people try to do it all alone? How did the changes instituted here free up Moses to pursue his own unique calling more effectively (18:19f, 22)? What else did it facilitate? If Christians today also followed Jethro's advice, what might change in the pattern of leadership in your own congregation? What specific changes in leadership might free your clergy to focus on their unique callings (Ac 6:1-6; Ep 4:11f)? What might be the positive and negative consequences of a more inclusive leadership in your congregation? How could your congregation move towards that? Yet what qualifications should your congregation require of all of its leaders? Who should be equipping them (Ep 4:12)? Are they? Why?

1. How does the temporal sequence of events in 19:1-8 and 20:1-17 place the original giving of the Mosaic law within the context of both God's gracious salvation and also his people's positive response to his gracious offer of a continuing covenantal relationship with him? How might this indicate the perennially appropriate relationship between God's grace, and his people's faith/trust and subsequent obedience (Ep 2:8-10)? How much might we expect this three-fold gospel sequence to pervade the entire Bible's revelation of God's relationship with his people? How can you become more aware of its manifold expressions in the Bible and also in your Christian life?
2. What from Yahweh's point of view in 19:5f is Israel's special identity (Dt 7:6; 14:2; 26:16-19; Is 61:6; 1 P 2:5,9; Re 1:6; 5:10)? Is this identity absolute or conditional? How does it apply to everyone who trusts in God's grace, including Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles (Is 56:6)? Was Martin Luther correct in calling this "the priesthood of all believers"?
3. How is the encounter of the people with Yahweh described here? What do you think this description means? What does the people's response mean? How does Moses' response differ? How might you have responded? Why?
4. What two broad categories do the ten commandments fall into? What do these commandments mean to you? Why? What motivates you to seek to obey them? What might so motivate you to do so? Do you think many scholars are correct in claiming that these ten commandments summarize God's whole law as revealed to Moses?  
[To begin to verify their claim and your own answer, try the following basic exercise: (a) set up eleven blank sheets of paper with each of the first ten devoted to one of these ten commandments and the eleventh page for the other commandments that might not seem to fit into these ten categories, (b) then as your encounter the legal sections scattered throughout the rest of the Mosaic torah [instructions] on this trail, jot down on the appropriate page at least the reference to each of the much more detailed laws presented by Moses, and (c) then draw your own conclusions.]
5. In what senses are these ten commandments (a) categorical, (b) universal, (c) objective, (d) absolute? What do they reveal about Yahweh's character and concerns for his covenant people? Do they apply to Christians? Why? Do they apply to all humanity? Why? How are loving God and obeying God related (20:6)? How did Jesus apply this to his disciples (Jn 14:23f)? Why?

1. What do you make of the regulations about altars in 20:24-26? Do they have any relevance today to Christians? How so?
2. How do the laws of ch. 21 differ in form from those of ch. 20? What are the practical implications of the difference(s)?
3. How might the laws of 21:2-11 and 22:20f mitigate some of the greatest evils of the institution of slavery that pervaded the Ancient Near Eastern economies? What meaning can such laws have for us today now that slavery has been abolished generally? Are there any analogies to modern employer-employee relationships. How so?
4. What kinds of transgression call for the death penalty here and in 22:2f, 18-20; 31:15? What characteristics distinguish these crimes from those that do not carry the death penalty? Why have capital punishment at all (Gn 9:6)? What alternatives might accomplish the same and even other purposes?
5. In ch 20-21 what are the ways in which men and women are to be treated exactly the same? In what respects are they to be treated differently? How appropriate are these exceptions? How fair/ just is that?
6. What implication might be drawn from 21:22-25 about the value of a human fetus and about abortion generally? What do you think about that?

1. What do the laws of 21:33-22:15 and 23:4f reveal about Yahweh's concerns about human property? What factors mitigate the general penalties? How would you describe what applications might be appropriate today in your culture? Could 22:2f be taken legitimately (a) to justify the killing of thieves, (b) or to imply that a person's property is as sacred as his own person, or even (c) that it is more valuable than the life of a thief? How so? Does your concern for others extend to include their possessions, even those that you may have borrowed from them? Do these laws suggest ways in which your behaviour should change? Where?
2. Why do you think that sexual and spiritual irregularities are listed together in 22:18-20? What legal form/structure do these laws take? What might that imply about their force and application? What other laws here have a similar form? Would they also have similar force and application? How so?
3. How do many of the laws here relate to the claims Yahweh makes about his own character (e.g., 22:27; 23:7) and to his special concerns (e.g., 22:22f; 23:11f)? What might this indicate about the basic foundation for laws among God's people? How is your love for God connected with your concern for other people's basic needs (1 Jn 3:17; 4:20)? Who of all people are given special consideration here? Why? Who else might you want to include (Mt 25:35-45; Ja 1:27)? What criteria would you use to identify them?
4. How closely was Israel's worship life and economic life meant to be related (23:12, 14-17)? How does your economic life relate to your worship and to the church year?
5. What puzzles you about any of the laws here? Why? Where might you find some answers to your queries?

1. What spiritual promises and demands for Christians run parallel to those of 23:20-33 for Israelites? How are God's promises and demands connected for them and you?
2. What analogies can you see between God's strategy for dealing with the pagan occupants of Canaan and with his approach to changing the evil patterns and influences in your life (Dt 7:22f; Ph 1:6)? Why is this way often better than the instant solutions we might often prefer?
3. Why was it so important for Israel that Moses keep a written record of major events (17:14) and divine instructions (24:4, 7; 34:27)? How important is it for individuals and congregations to do the same today? What tends to happen if you don't? What of all of this did Yahweh himself write? What might that indicate?
4. How are the written and spoken words of God connected with sacramental acts in the ratification of the Mosaic covenant (He 9:22)?
5. What different degrees of intimacy with Yahweh do the three distinct groups of Israelites involved in the ratification of the Mosaic covenant experience? Why are there such differences of intimacy and experience? Would you like to have a more intimate relationship with God than you have so far experienced? Why? How might that be made possible?

TRAIL II -- SECTION 14: Exodus 25:1-31:17.

1. As you skim read through these chapters describing the plans for the construction of Yahweh's mobile sanctuary, draw yourself a rough ground plan for the tabernacle and a sketch of its main furnishings. Why is strict adherence to detail so important (25:9, 40; He 8:5)? How is Yahweh's character represented in the structure, layout and furnishings? Would similar details apply to church buildings? How does Yahweh dwell with his people today?
2. What is the relationship between beauty and function in the design of the sanctuary and its furnishings? Why is beauty so important to God? Do we give it enough place in our lives and worship? How so?
3. What was the range of materials needed to make these items? Who were involved in their design, manufacture and funding? What gifts do you have to contribute to enrich the worship of your congregation? Why do you think it is that an artist is the first person in the Bible that Yahweh himself says is filled with God's Spirit (31:2f; 35:31)? Why, therefore, don't so many Christians today take the gift of creating beauty as seriously as God seems to do here? Do such Christians seem to lack the mind of their Maker? Why?
4. What role should elaborate vestments and ceremonies play in Christian worship (19:6; 1 P 2:4f)? Why is beauty so important here too?
5. What ultimately consecrated the sanctuary; its altar and its priests? In 29:43-46, how is the sanctuary related to Israel's rescue from Egypt? What sanctuary is for you similarly related to your rescue (salvation) by God's mercy through Jesus' sacrifice (Ro 12:1f)?

1. How can Aaron's compromise be explained? Was it in any way excusable? Can you identify with Aaron as he gives his account of what happened? How valid are his arguments? Was Aaron in any way reprimanded or punished for what he did or didn't do? Why?
2. How did Yahweh's and Moses' anger differ (32:10, 19)? How did their subsequent actions differ? Why?
3. What was the Israelites great sin here (32:21, 30f)? Which basic commandment was broken? What can we learn here about punishment for such a great sin? Did the Israelites repent? What is the book that both Moses and Yahweh speak of here (32:32; Ps 69:28; Dn 12:1; Mal 3:16f; Rv 3:5; 20:12, 15; 21:27)? How important is it to be included? What might be the significance of God's removing some names which had been included? Why do you think people get their name to be written in this book in the first place? How is this book contrasted with other record books about human beings that God keeps and consults in his final judgment (Rv 20:12)?
4. In what sense did Yahweh repent or change his mind here (32:12, 14; 34:6f; Jr 18:5-11; 2 P 3:9)? Why (Ps 106:45)? What were Moses' arguments in favour of divine forgiveness? Why were they so persuasive? In what sense did Yahweh not change his mind (32:33-35)? Do you think that he really forgives Israel? Why?
5. What characterized Moses' unique regular relationship with Yahweh (33:11)? What according to Moses distinguished him and Israel from all the other peoples of the earth (33:12-16)? How can Christians know God's presence is with us even though we may not be Israelites or their descendants (Jn 7:38f; 14:16f; Ro 8:16; 1 Jn 3:24; 4:13)?

1. How does this summit conference in 33:11-34:25 with Yahweh go beyond Moses' regular friendly face-to-face meetings with God in the tent of meeting outside the camp? What seems to be unique about this experience of God? What did Moses actually see revealed here (Nu 12:8; Dt 4:12)? Why do you think that Yahweh seems to be much more heard than seen here? Might this also be true of God's self-revelation in Jesus, his Son and Messiah (He 1:1-3; Jn 12:45; 14:6-10)? How gracious was that of God? What aspects of Yahweh's character are in focus throughout Moses' experience?
2. When Yahweh rewrites the covenantal commandments and declares his essential character (34:4-10, 270, how do grace, law and punishment fit together? Why do you think Yahweh's abundant loving-kindness [grace] and truth [faithfulness, reliability] are so closely linked here and also very frequently as a credo echoing throughout the Bible, especially in the Old Testament? How might this common creed have enabled faithful members of God's people to recognize Jesus of Nazareth's glory as that of the only-begotten of the Father (Jn 1:14, 17)? Why? How important should the same conjunction of grace and truth be for Christians today? Is it for you and your congregation? How so?
3. Why in 34:9 does Moses so closely link God's providence, pardon for sin and being God's people [possession, inheritance]? What does it mean to you to be God's inheritance/possession (19:5; 33:13; Dt 14:2; Eph 1:18)?
4. What priority is to be given to Yahweh in worship, work, rest and possessions (34:11-26)? What reasons are given? How is all this relevant to you?
5. In light of 20:8; 23:12; 31:12-17; 34:21 and 35:2, who should keep the Sabbath? Why? What would it mean to keep it as a day of rest in each of these contexts? What is the most appropriate way for you to keep the weekly Sabbath rest? Why is the Sabbath holy both to God and to his people (31:14)? How is it a perpetual sign and covenant [treaty] of Yahweh the sanctifier [the one who makes holy] (31:13)? What day is the Christian's Sabbath? How so?

TRAIL II -- SECTION 17: Exodus 35:4-40:38.

1. In 35:4-36:7 how many different types of contribution were needed to make the Sanctuary a reality? How similar in this respect is a local church's life and mission? What is your particular way of exercising Christian ministry/ service? How can it most usefully be employed in God's economy/ work? What might you be remembered for contributing to the realization of God's purposes in the various spheres of your life [home, church, local community, world]?
2. What differences can you discern between the giving here (35:20-29) and previously in 32:1-4 and 33:4-6? How important is it that each contributor be both able and willing to contribute? What motivates your contributing as a Christian to God's enterprise (2 Co 8:1-9)? Can you imagine your congregation's treasurer doing what Moses did in 36:6? Why? How did Moses' inclusive model of every-member-ministry make such an outcome possible? Could the same model help congregations to do the same today? How?
3. What do you make of the special mention made in 38:8 to the women serving as hosts at the doorway of the tabernacle (1 S 2:22) and to their particular contribution to the furnishings? How sacrificial might that particular type of contribution be to a woman, especially a refugee one with very few personal possessions (Lk 21:1-4)? What might be an equivalent female contribution to the local church today?
4. If Moses' ministry here was that of quality control (39:43), what then, was Bezalel's special ministry? How important is the gift and ministry of teaching for involving many others in God's service (35:34)? What roles do teachers play in Christian churches today? Is that all the New Testament envisions them doing (Eph 4:11f)? What teaching functions may we be missing today? Why? Who today should exercise the ministry of quality control? Why is that?
5. Why do you think so much detail about the manufacture of the sanctuary and its furnishings is given in this section? What does the regular refrain, "as Yahweh commanded Moses" suggest about the details of service to God then and now?
6. What does God's setting a logical temporal order for erecting and furnishing the sanctuary (40:17-33) suggest about how he wants his people to live and worship?

## INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS.

The third book of the Pentateuch [the five books of Moses] was referred to by Jesus in various ways — the "priest's law", "priest's book", "law of the offerings" — for Leviticus consists mainly of ritual law. Yet it is a book of great significance from many points of view. It provides us with the ritual background for all of the subsequent books of the Bible. It helps us to understand references to Jewish sacrificial offerings, ceremonial purifications and special institutions such as the sabbatical and jubilee years. Orthodox Jews today still find many binding regulations here, including their kosher food laws. It also shows how God combated sin in Israel through sacrifice and purification, and by promises and warnings. The principles of atonement and purification applied here provide many illustrations of the later atoning work of Jesus, the Messiah, on behalf of everyone (1 Jn 2:2). Both Jesus and 1st century Jewish rabbis agreed that 19:18 presented the second greatest commandment, summarizing the second half the Decalogue.

## ANALYSIS OF LEVITICUS.

- 1 — 16        The way of access to the holy God.
  - 1 —7        The offerings.
  - 8-10        The priesthood.
  - 11 —15     The laws of cleansing.
  - 16         The day of atonement.
- 17 — 27     The way of living for the holy God.
  - 17 -22     Ceremonial and social purity.
  - 23 — 25     The laws of Sabbaths, jubilees, etc.
  - 26         Blessings and curses and their conditions.
  - 27         Laws of redemption.

THE OFFERINGS IN LEVITICUS.

NAME	PURPOSE	KIND	NATURE	ACTIONS OF OFFERER	ACTIONS OF PRIEST
Holocaust/ Burnt off. 1:3-17 6:6-13	Atones for unwitting sin in general	Male without blemish from herd or flock	Complet ely burned	Bring off. Puts hand on head, slays, skins, cuts in pieces	Accepts off. Throws blood against altar, Places pieces on fire, washes entrails and legs
Sin off. 3:1-5:13 6:24-30	Atones for specific unwitting sin	Priest: bull. Congregation: young bull. Individual: female goat or sheep. Poor person: 2 birds. Very poor: flour.	Fat burned; remaind er eaten	Brings off. [Elders do so for the congregation]	Accepts off. Throws blood against alter. Burns fat, etc, eats meat. If own sin included: burns part outside camp
Guilt/ trespass off. 5:14- 6:7 7:1-10	Atones for unwitting sin requiring restitution	Like sin off. Like sin off. Restitution first Like sin off. & restitution	Like sin off.	Restitution first. Like sin off.	Like sin off.
Ceral off. 2:1-16 6:14-23	Secures or retains good will	Fine flour, cakes, wafers, or firstfruits with oil, salt, frankincense, but no leaven or honey. Usually with animal	Token burned	Brings off. Takes handful	Burns handful, eats rest with sons
Peace off. 3:1-17 7:11-21 7:28-36	Renders thanks to Yahweh, etc	Male or female from herd or flock without blemish	Fats burned Rest eaten	Brings off. Puts hand on head. Slays, skins, cuts in pieces. Eats some of remainder [same or next day]	Accepts off. Throws blood on altar. Burns fat. Eats some or remainder [same day]
Thank off. 7:12-15	For a blessing received	Same as peace off.	Same as peace off.	Same as peace off.	Same as peace off.
Vow off. 7:16	At end of a vow	Same as peace off.	Same as peace off.	Same as peace off.	Same as peace off.
Freewill off. 7:16	From a glad heart	Same as peace off.	Same as peace off.	Same as peace off.	Same as peace off.

TRAIL II -- SECTION 18: Leviticus 1:1-7:38.

Skim read through these chapters, using the preceding chart of sacrifices to keep track of the various kinds of offerings and sacrifices.

1. What are the variety of offerings and the situations requiring them? What animals could be used and which parts were burnt or eaten? By whom? What happened to the rest of each offering? How does all of this relate to the respective roles played by the sinner and the priests? How was the grain offering prepared and when were specific additives used (2:11-13; 5:11; 7:13; 23:17)? Which sacrifices involved the complete burning of the carcass? What happened to the hide (7:8)? Why the exception in 4:11? What parts were always forbidden to be eaten (3:17; 6:30; 7:22-27; 17:10-14; Gn 9:4? Why (3:16; 17:11, 14)? Might prohibiting the eating of one of these parts help combat a society's obesity epidemic? When could the animal's fat be used (7:24)?
2. What makes an act a sin and what, therefore, are its consequences (5:17; Ps 51:4)? What kinds of sin are there here and who are involved in each? What sorts of sinning do not seem to be covered by any of these sacrifices (4:1, Nu 15:22-31; He 6:4ff; 10:26)? Why? What else besides sacrifices might be required by certain types of sinning (6:1-5; Lk 19:8f)? What gradations can you discern in the details of the sacrifices offered? What does this imply about the perpetrator's culpability and Yahweh's sense of justice? How does this relate to your own sense of justice?
3. What steps must be taken before an offering for sin may be made and forgiveness given (4: 2, 28; 5:5f)? How does this process compare to the way God forgives people today through Jesus Christ's sacrifice? What connections can you see between Holy Communion / Eucharist / The Lord's Supper for Christians and any of these sacrifices?
4. How do the sacrificial and offering regulations of chs. 4 and 5 show God's sensitivity to people's economic circumstances? How sensitive are we today as a society and as Christians to economic disparity? How could we change our practices to more closely approximate God's economic values?
5. What is God's provision for the priests and Levites through the sacrificial system? What does this imply for the care of those who serve/ minister in Christian churches (Dt 25:4; Mt 10:10; Lk 10:7; 1 Co 9:9, 14; 1 Ti 5:18)?
6. What sacrifices here are not directly related to sinning? What are they for then? Which of these sacrifices do you think was most common? How relevant would it be today to have religious rituals for the same purposes? Does your Christian community already do so? How so?

Skim read through these chapters to become generally familiar with their contents, then focus on the 3 or 4 question clusters that are most relevant to your own interests.

1. In chs. 8 and 9, what significance can you discern in:
  - a) the order of the rituals for sanctification [making holy] and ordination of priests;
  - b) the parts of the ceremony that the people witness;
  - c) how God shows his acceptance of the sacrificial worship (1 K 18:38);
  - d) the particular use of the blood of the lamb of ordination (Ro 6:13);
  - e) all of this for your own ordination into the priesthood of all believers by Christian Baptism (Ro 6:3-7; 1 Co 12:13), which often uses Aaron's Blessing (Nu 6:22-25)?
2. How does the summary of the theme of ch. 10:10f work out in all of the details described? What might 10:9 have to do with the strange/ unholy/ profane fire of 10:1? Can you imagine how hard it would be for the bereaved Aaron and his remaining two sons to cope with the particular special restrictions Moses imposed on them because of their priestly offices? How do Christians decide how to behave in such circumstances? What about Christian clergy?
3. In ch. 11, how is the distinction between holy and profane expanded to apply to all the people at the level of what they eat? Why do you think God might be concerned about this (11:44; 19:2; 20:8,26; 21:7)? What does it tell us about God's relationship to us and to the world we live in? How might health issues play a part in these particular regulations? How do people's beliefs today affect their food choices? Are these particular dietary laws here still relevant to Christians (Mk 7:14-23; Ac 10:9-16; 11:9; Ro 14:1-3, 14-17; Cl 2:16; He 9:10)? However, how does the same general positive command to God's holy people in 11:44; 19:1f and 20:7, 26 apply to Christians, (Ro 6:3-13, 19; 12:1f, 9-13; Ep 4:22-24; Cl 3:8-14; 1 P 1:14-16) and how might it be appropriately expressed in your life in your culture?
4. In ch. 13 and 14, what analogies can you see between the plague of leprosy [a contagious and malignant skin disease] and the plague of sin? What can we learn about dealing with the latter from how the Israelites were instructed to deal very carefully with the former? Why are Christians today often not very concerned about the infectious character of sin? What is the only effective remedy for sin 1 Jn 1:6-2:2?
5. In ch. 15, what evidence is there that the actual physiology of human sexuality or normal sexual relations within marriage are in themselves in any way sinful? Why, then, have some Christians so closely connected sex of any sort and sin? Does 15:25-27 help us understand why in a dense crowd Jesus asked: "Who touched my clothes?" (Mk 5:30)?

## ANNUAL JEWISH FESTIVALS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

	JEWISH MONTH	OUR MONTHS	DAYS	FESTIVALS	REFERENCES
1	Nisan	March – April	14 – 21	Passover [pesah] & Unleavened Bread [hag hammassot]	Ex 12:3-20; Lv 23:6; Dt 16:1-8
2	Iyyar	April – May			
3	Sivan	May - June	6	Pentecost: weeks, Firstfruits, Harvest, Ingathering "hag shabu'ot]	Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lv 23:16; Nu 28:26
4	Tamuz	June – July			
5	Ab	July – August			
6	Elul	August - September			
7	Tishra	September – October	1	Day of blowing of the trumpets [Rosh ha-shannah]	Lv 23:24 Nu 29:1
			16	Day of Atonement [Yom Kippur]	Lv 16:29-34; 23:27-32; Nu 29:7-11
			15 - 21	Feast of Tabernacles/ Booths [hag hassukkot]	Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lv 23:34 Nu 19:12-38; Dt 16:13
8	Marchesvan	October – November			
9	Chislev	November – December			
10	Tebeth	December – January			
11	Shebat	January – February			
12	Adar	February - March	13	Feast of Esther	
			14 - 15	Purim	Est 9

Skim read through these chapters

1. In chapter 16, why was the annual Day of Atonement so important? Have you ever been humbled because of your sins (16:29; 23:27-29)? Have your sins been banished? How (He 10:1; 1 Jn 1:7; 2:2)? What was the meaning of (a) the bull, (b) the two goats, (c) the blood, (d) the laying on of hands, (e) the confession, (f) the fire, (g) the water, (h) the incense and (i) the vestments?
2. What might have been the importance of the regulation in 17:3-9 in a general cultural environment where animals were butchered primarily in connection with sacrificial worship? How were New Testament Christians to deal with meat that had been offered to idols when it was slaughtered in a pagan religious context (Ac 15:20, 28f, Ro 14; 1 Co 8; 10:23-33)? What slight practical change was made to the regulations when the Israelites were about to disperse throughout the land of Canaan (Dt 12:13-15)? Why? When, for example, should Christian churches also seriously consider adjusting regulations in the same spirit of practical application of basic principles? Why was blood so important to sacrificial worship (17:10-14)? Why should it not be eaten? What should any of this mean for Christians today? What about Christians who are trying to relate positively to orthodox Jews or Jehovah Witnesses?
3. How do the laws of chapters 18-20 fit into the schematic framework of the ten commandments [Section 10 Question 4]? What were to be the primary motives governing the Israelites' distinctive behaviour (18:2-4, 6, 21, 30; 19:2-4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 25, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36f)? What motives should guide the behaviour of God's children today (Ro 6:13; 2 Co 5:15; Ep 4:32-5:2)? How should Christians stand out as holy/ devoted to Yahweh in our Canaanite-like culture today (Jn 13:34f; 15:12)?
4. What does the second greatest commandment (Mk 12:31) mean in its immediate context (19:18, 34)? How should that connotation colour how you apply that commandment as a Christian? How is the negative form of the law in 25:17 more limited? What does it mean in its immediate context (25:14)? What might this mean about the negative form that is relatively common in other religions? How much further does Jesus go in Jn 13:34f for his disciples, than either the negative or the positive forms of the law? What implication might this extension have for you as a Christian?
5. In light of 20:17, what might the Israelites have thought of the regularity of the very close kinship of their most revered patriarch, Abraham, and matriarch, Sarah (Gn 12)?
6. In ch. 21 & 22, what apparently small things have a great impact upon spiritual fitness for serving the holy God? Why (20:8, 26; 21:8, 23; 22:9, 16, 32)? To what extent is this also true in principle for the priestly service / ministry of every Christian believer? How are some of these regulations particularly relevant in our post-Christian culture? How are some of them puzzling to us? Why? Why did the regulations of 21:21 seem to bother Henry VIII of England so much? Was he correct? What might be a law with the same function as 19:9 (23:22) today?

Skim read these chapters.

1. With the help of the preceding chart on Annual Jewish Festivals, for the festivals in these chapters what are (a) their types (e.g., agricultural, national/historical, spiritual, etc.), (b) their impact on the normal routine of daily life and (c) their additional New Testament significance (Jn 12:24; Ac 2:1-4; 1 Co 5:7f; 15:23; Rv 7:9f)? How do they relate to the Christian church-year of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter Ascension, Pentecost?
2. In ch. 24, how is blasphemy (a) a breaking of the third commandment, (b) one of the crimes that Jesus was accused of (Mt 26:65), (c) considered one of the later Jewish reasons for not generally employing the divine name, "Yahweh" and (d) a reason for Christians to use "Yahweh" regularly? What should be a Christian's response today to blasphemy and cursing using any name of God or of his Messiah/ Christ, "Jesus" [Greek for Hebrew "Joshua" = "Yahweh saves"] (1 Co 12:3)?
3. In ch. 25, what social, economic and other effects would our strict observing of the Sabbath and the Jubilee Year in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have on society? What principles seem to lie behind these laws? How does God view (a) the Israelites' relationship to the land (25:2f; 2 Ch 36:2) and (b) the fair treatment of fellow Israelites, aliens, slaves and the poor (Am 2:6f; 5:10-12)? What reasons does God give? What is added by the right of redemption? Why is there a prohibition against charging interest to the poor (Ne 5:1-13)? In what ways might any or all of these principles challenge the prevailing economic practice and theory of today? What also might Yahweh's concern for the land itself as expressed in 25:23 and throughout the Old Testament, mean for our environmental concerns today, especially for his people?
4. In ch. 26, what parallels are there for Christians to these blessings (26:3-13) and curses (26:14-39)? What seem to be God's purpose(s) for punishment (26:14ff, 18, 21, 23f, 27:44f)? How might this influence a Christian view of punishment? When is redemption possible (2 Ch 7:14)? Why? How could it be available to the poor? How can a Christian view of punishment make room for redemption?
5. With respect to ch. 27, how important is it to establish fair valuations for redemption of people and property? How are such socio-economic values established in your society? Is that method extraordinarily trustworthy? What might be a better way?

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS

In the book of Numbers the story of the Israelite's journey from Egypt, interrupted at the foot of Mt Sinai (Ex 19:-Lv 27:34) for the giving of the law, is resumed. Throughout Numbers, the subsequent history is alternated with further laws. The book is a story of failure, for the people are brought rather quickly to the southern edge of the promised land, but because of unbelief and disobedience they are prevented from entering it. Forty years of wandering in the wilderness is passed over almost in silence, except for a few incidents. Finally a new generation arrives near the eastern entrance of the land just north of the Dead Sea. Their conquests on the eastern side of the Jordan River are recorded, and their future destiny is foretold in the mysterious prophecies of Balaam.

## ANALYSIS OF NUMBERS

- 1-4      Numbering and ordering of the tribes.
- 5-6      Various civil and religious laws.
- 7-8      Dedication of the sanctuary.
- 9        Observance of the Passover.
- 10-12   Journeys and complaints.
- 13-14   Spies sent into Canaan, but people refuse to invade.
- 15        Religious laws.
- 16-17   Rebellion of Korah.
- 18-19   Laws concerning Levites and purification.
- 20-21   Reapproach to the land and victory over the Amorites.
- 22-25   Prophecy of Balaam and subsequent sinning at Baal-Peor.
- 26        Renumbering of the tribes.
- 27-30   Various civil and religious laws.
- 31        Conquest of the Midianites.
- 32        Inheritances east of the Jordan River.
- 33-34   Statistics.
- 35-36   Various civil and religious laws.

1. How does the detailed numbering of chapters 1 and 2 reflect the fact that the Israelite's immediate future was to be characterized by both warfare and worship? What relationship is there to be between these two occupations for Christians (2 Co 10:3-6; Ep 6:10-19; 1 Ti 1:18; 6:12; 2 Ti 2:4; 4:7)?
2. How does the distribution of types of labour among the Levites (4:49) parallel the distribution of services/ministries in the church as Christ's Body (1 Co 12:7, 11f ; 1 P 4:10f) as well as reflect God's concern for order (Ro12:4-8; 1 Co 14:26,40)? How can this help you identify and evaluate your own role in the worship and mission of God's people today?
3. Why must the Levites take the place of the first-born Israelites (3:12f, 40-51; 8:15-20)? What is the Christian counterpart in the New Testament (Jn 1:12; 11:49-52; Ro 8:29; Ga 3:26; Cl 1:18; He 2:9-17; 1 Jn 3:2)?
4. Why are such detailed and explicit instructions given for the care and moving of the portable sanctuary? Are there areas of life for Christians where equally strict obedience is necessary? Where?
5. Why do you think specific colours and materials are so important when covering the ark and the other furnishings of the sanctuary whenever they are moved? How important should colours and materials be in Christian worship? Why?

1. Comparing 5:5-10 with Lv 6:1-7, how do sins against others involve one's relationship with God? How relevant should these instructions be to our Christian interpersonal relationships? What difference would it make for you to follow similar guidelines?
2. In light of the general Old Testament treatment of adultery (Ex 20:14; Lv 18:20; 20:10; Dt 5:18; 22:22-24; 2 S 11:1-12:25), what do you think of the procedure in 5:11-31 to deal with a husband's suspicion of his wife's adultery? How might this Hebrew procedure be somewhat less terrifying for the wife than the earlier Babylonian trial by ordeal of Hammurabi's law code (ca 1700 B.C.) wherein the wife threw herself into the river so that her husband could see if she would float or not? What better ways do we have today to deal with a spouse's "spirit of jealousy" because of a suspected adultery? Should the Christian community, like the Israelite one, be involved in such domestic affairs? Why? Should wives and husbands be treated equally here? Why? How?
3. Have you ever had a special reason to consecrate [Hebrew verb nazir = separate or consecrate] yourself to God for a particular time? What reason and time? Should this apply to men and women equally (Nu 6.2)? Should Christians ever do such a thing (Ac 18:18; 21:23-26; 1 Co 7:5)? How might the regulations for observing a Nazarite vow help you understand the importance of strictly keeping vows to God (Pr 20:25; Ec 5:1-7; Ac 5:1-5)?
4. Does anything puzzle you about any of these regulations? What? Why? What regulations would you recommend as better for accomplishing the same purposes? What were the underlying purposes? Why are your proposals better?
5. What specific or types of regulations, or even differences in regulations, might you have expected to find here, but didn't find? Why do you think that is?

1. In what contexts have you heard Christians using the Aaronic Blessing of 6:24-26? Why do some Christians see Trinitarian overtones in it? How does it compare with the explicitly Trinitarian benediction of St. Paul in 2 Co 13:14? Why are God's blessings so closely linked to his gracious character and personal name, Yahweh? How is this a very proper invoking of Yahweh's name (6:27) rather than a violation of the third of the ten commandments (Ex 20:7)? Should we Christians be invoking Yahweh's name more often, especially in blessings and praises [e.g., Hallelujah! = Praise Yah(weh)!]?
2. Was the uneven distribution of oxen in 7:1-9 fair? Why? Why would the sons of Kohath not likely complain about not getting any oxen to help them bear their special burdens (1 Ch 13:7-10)? What special vocational burdens does God call you to bear in his service? What Christian ministries/ services involve no special vocational burdens (Ro 12:6-8; 1 Co 14:26-33; 2 Co 11:28; Ja 3:1; 1 P 4:10f)? Why? What special aides do you need to fulfill your special Christian vocation/ calling? Why?
3. How could the long chapter 7 easily be condensed without loss of its content? How does vv. 84-88 indicate that the author was well aware of that? What, however, does the longer typical Hebrew formal litany-style and repetition accomplish here beyond passing on basic information? How is 7:89 a fitting brief climactic summary of a long twelve-day dedication ceremony? What is the normal conclusion of your congregation's worship pattern? How appropriate do you find it? How might it be enhanced for you?
4. What information about the long dedication process that you could have wished for that seems lacking in the account here? Why do you think the particular details that are provided here might have been of interest to the Israelites then and in later generations? What interests you most when reading the historical accounts of earlier celebrations of your family or your congregation? Why? What details do you wish had been recorded but weren't? Why? How can we leave better records for ourselves and later generations? Why is that important? Is it as important for our corporate decisions and evaluations as for our celebrations? How so?

1. How was the Levites' special character made clear to everyone? What was their special relationship to God, to the priests [sons of Aaron] and to the people? Who in the Christian church might be considered Christian Levites? How could their special roles and character be indicated (Ac 6:1-6; Ro 16:1)?
2. What light does 8:23-26 throw upon the nature of retirement for clergy? For laity? Can any Christian really retire completely from God's service/ ministry? Why? What sorts of ministries should retired Christians be permitted, even encouraged, to do? What should they not have to do? Why? How is all of that possible today in your congregations and communion?
3. How are extenuating circumstances to be taken into account in celebrating the Passover? How are abuses carefully guarded against? How can we Christians be as flexible yet firm in our church regulations?
4. How might the regulations for aliens (9:14) help us Christians plan for our congregation's adherents and visitors as well as for its members? Why is it important to do so?
5. What pattern of leadership is suggested by Moses' way of dealing with these practical problems? What could Christian leaders today learn from Moses example here? How important might that be for you and for your Christian congregation?

1. Have you ever longed for as clear divine guidance as the Israelites had in 9:15-23? When? Why? Can we Christians claim just as clear divine guidance without just as obvious signs? Why? How obedient are you to the will of God that you already know? What general divine guidance for Christian living do you now have? Why do you think Moses turned to Hobab, his brother-in-law, for practical guidance, in spite of his regular affirmations of Yahweh's continuing guidance and protection (10:34-36)? Could the two types of guidance be connected? How so?
2. Can church bells or chimes perform the same general functions that trumpets and horns did for Israel from Moses time on (10:10; Ps 81:3-5)? Why?
3. Do the complaints in Christian congregations come from adherents rather than from members (11:4)? Can you identify with their complaints about hardship? How? Would you like God to answer your complaints the way he did those of the Israelites (11:1-3, 18-20, 31-33)? Can you think of modern-day parallels? Do your own present complaints take into account your past hardships any more than did those of the Israelites? Are you like them also holding onto a "golden" past, even if it were a form of slavery too (11:5), rather than looking forward to the promised land (11:12)?
4. Do you think your church leaders might sometimes identify with Moses in his prayer (11:11-15)? When? Why? To what extent might your Christian leader's faith in God be as stretched as was Moses' (11:21f)? In what ways is God's approach to spiritual leadership the same today as it was then (11:16f)? How did Joshua misunderstand what was happening here (11:24-29)? Who do some people in churches today – laity as well as clergy – seem to have Joshua's aversion to shared/ inclusive ministry? Why? What does Moses teach us?
5. What elements in Moses' character helped him cope with unjust attacks upon himself and his family? To what extent is this an indispensable ingredient in all truly Christian leadership (Mt 11:29; 1 P 5:1-7)? How could we take this more seriously today?

1. What might Moses' change of name for his second-in-command from "Hoshea [Hebrew = salvation]" to "Joshua [Hebrew = Yahweh saves]" signify in Moses' mind? What does it mean to Christians that the Hebrew "Joshua" is translated in the Septuagint (LXX) Greek translation of the Old Testament [before 150 B.C.] and in the New Testament by "Jesous" which in English is translated "Jesus" (Mt 1:21)?
2. What accounts for the spies' conflicting reports on the land of Canaan and their recommendations for its conquest? When have you known only a small minority to be correct about God's way of proceeding in a situation? How could you and your congregation recognize and follow God's way when it conflicts with the perceptions of the vast majority of God's own people? How can this be done in churches that are committed to majority rule? How can such churches be reformed/ redirected by God from time to time?
3. What can we learn about Yahweh's character from the situation in chapter 14? How is this relevant to us Christians, our prayers and our obedience? In what sense did Yahweh change his mind here? Can your God change his mind? How so?
4. Why does Moses quote Yahweh's own words from the renewal of the covenant (Ex 34:6f; Nu 14:18) as his appeal to God to change his mind? Why do these words of Yahweh echo throughout the Old Testament as Israel's credo? Should they be the Christian's credo too (Jn 1:14, 17; 3:16)?
5. How did the people's response (14:39-45), (a) in spite of the spies' majority recommendation (13:31-33), (b) God's new directions (14:25), (c) God's judgement (14:36) and Moses' warning (14:41-43), confirm Yahweh's view of how sincere their apparent repentance (14:39; Dt 1:41) really was? How do you respond to a forgiveness that takes you at your word even if you don't really mean it (14:20, 28, 31)? What might God or others remember that you have said but now regret saying?

TRAIL II -- SECTION 28: Numbers 15:1-16:50.

1. How might the words of 15:1-12 encourage the people after the immediately preceding events and judgements? How have you experienced such divine encouragements in spite of your disobedience? What does this tell you about Yahweh's basic character (Ex 34:6f; Nu 14:18) and will (Jr 18:1-11; 1 Ti 2:4; 2P 3:9; Rv 2:21)?
2. What is God's and Moses' consistent treatment of aliens (9:14; 12:1; 15:14-16, 26, 29), in spite of the discrimination by native Israelites (12:1f)? What does this indicate about the true ground for membership in God's covenant people then and now (Jn 1:12f)? Where do most of your congregation's new faithful members come from (Ex 12:38; Nu 11:4; Is 56:6)? Why?
3. Why is such a difference made between inadvertent (15:22-29) and deliberate sinning (15:30-36)? What implications should this have (a) for church discipline, (b) for individual repentance and even (c) for corporate repentance? What has defiance to do with blaspheming Yahweh (15:30)? What means do you employ to remind yourself of God's instructions for living as his holy child (15:37-41)?
4. How can you reconstruct the complex revolts of chapter 16, sorting out which groups were involved, whom they were rebelling against and why? To what extent was each revolt justified or unjustified (2 Co 10:18; He 5:4)? How appropriate do you think the diverse judgements of God were? How is the leadership challenge here quite different than those of Nu 11 and 12? How can those differences be kept firmly in view? What lessons can Christian congregations today learn (a) about respecting the duly chosen leaders of God's people (1 Ti 5:17-21) and (b) about how they are to be chosen (14:4; Ac 6:1-6; Tt 1:5)?
5. Does respecting the leaders that God has chosen mean that there is only one type of leader of God's people (Ep 4:11f)? Does it mean that God Himself does not support "the priesthood of all believers" among his people (Ex 19:6; Is 61:6; 66:21; 1 P 2:5, 9; Rv 1:6; 5:10) or every-member-ministry within the Body of Christ (1 Co 12:5-11; Ro 12:4-8; Ep 4:11-16; 1 P 4:10f)? How are these related (Is 61:6)?
6. What roles did Moses and Aaron play here in preserving God's people from the full severity of God's wrath? Is that ministry for God's people still needed today? Why? Who should exercise it? Why?

1. Remembering the issues of Korah's rebellion of the previous chapter, why was such a miraculous confirmation of Aaron's special priestly leadership necessary? Why was Aaron's blossoming and fruit-bearing rod kept permanently? What perpetual reminders do congregations need today to continue to respect the special roles, responsibilities and accountability of God's chosen leaders (18: 1; 1 Co 4:3f; 1 Ti 1:6f; Ja 3:1; Rv 2:20)?
2. How could your Christian service/ ministry be transformed by viewing it as a gift of God to others through you (3:9f; 18:6f)? To what extent does the division of ministry here, prefigure that of the variety of ministries of love of others in and through the church as the Body of Christ (Ro 12:3-9; 1 Co 12:7; 14:1; Ep 4:11-13, 16; 1 P 4:10f)?
3. What can we learn from 18:8-19 about how the servants/ ministers of God's people are to be cared for financially (Mt 10:10; 1 Co 9:4-14; 1 Ti 5:17f)? How is this support both "holy" for them and "most holy" for the people (18:8-10, 32)? Why might this provision be called "an everlasting covenant of salt" (18:19; Lv 2:13; 2 Ch 13:5)?
4. Could 18:20 and Dt 10:9 be taken as justification for providing Christian clergy with church-owned accommodation rather than a housing allowance to cover the operating costs for accommodation that they themselves own? Should clergy to be exempt from tithing (18:25-32)? How so?
5. How might He 9:12-15's interpretation of chapter 19 help modern Jews understand what to them and many others is one of the most mysterious sections of the Mosaic laws of purification? What does this section mean to you as a Christian (1 Jn 1:7-2:2)?

1. How do Moses' and Aaron's attitudes to God and to his people compare in 20:1-13 and Ex 17:1-7? Why were there such serious consequences for both Aaron (20:24; 33:38) and Moses (Nu 27:13f; Dt 1:27; 3:24f; 4:24; Ps 106:32f) this time? What warning is there for lesser leaders, if even such a great but humble leader as Moses (12:3) can be provoked to wrath (Ps 106:32f)? Have you ever witnessed or experienced this temptation? When? Why?
2. How might Jesus have developed further the analogy that he drew in Jn 3:14f with Nu 21:8f? What does what he said mean to you?
3. Why do the Israelites treat Edom's opposition to their transit (20:14-21; Dt 2:4-8) differently than that of the Amorite kingdoms (21:1-35; Dt 3:1-7)? How do you respond when your apparently reasonable requests are unilaterally denied by others without apparently adequate reasons or negotiations? Why? How much did this refusal change the Israelites' travel route north?
4. Do we Christians face adversity any better than did the Israelites here? How did the Israelites' more circuitous route to the east help teach them through discipline to trust and obey Yahweh (Dt 2:1-3; 8:2-5)? What might their experience teach you about God's ways of working with his own people (Mt 5:11f; Ro 5:3-5; Ph 4:11-13; Ja 1:2, 12; He 12:1-13)?
5. What do biblical references to no longer extant extra-canonical documents like the "Book of the Wars of Yahweh" (21:14) imply about the types of sources available then to the author of Numbers and some other biblical books? What seems to have been the character of this particular source (21:14-18, 27-30)? What other types of sources do you think the author of Numbers might have had?

Read this entire section through first in order to grasp the whole story. Consult a map.

1. Who was Balaam and why did Balak, king of Moab, want so badly for him to come immediately to Moab?
2. What seems to be implied by the fact that throughout the Old Testament people like Melchizedek (Gn 14:18), Jethro/ Reuel, (Ex 18:12), Balaam, etc., who were clearly not Hebrews or Israelites, are presented as also revering and serving Israel's God, even sometimes calling him "Yahweh" (22:8, 13, 18f; 23:3, 5, 12, 16, 26; 24:13)?
3. Why do you think that Balaam went to Moab in spite of Yahweh's clear initial prohibition (22:12), his own refusal (22:13) and his knowledge of God's will (22:12; 23:8, 20; 24:1)? Have you ever behaved in a similar way? Why (Ro 7:14-24)?
4. How do you imagine Balaam's long journey by donkey on the international King's Highway (20:17) from Aram [where Abram's relatives had settled near the upper Euphrates River] to Moab just east of the Dead Sea]? Do you ever talk to animals? When? Why? Have they ever seemed to talk to you? Have you ever lost an argument with one? Would you, like Balaam, have blamed the donkey? How much can we, and do we, blame animals? Why?
5. Have you ever expected God to perform a miracle just to get you out of the consequences of your own bad decisions (Mt 4:5-7)? What do you do when you become aware of your mistakes? How can you learn from your spiritual mistakes? What did even Balaam do (22:34, 38)? Should you do less?

Quickly reread the whole Balaam story to refresh your memory.

1. What can be learned about Yahweh himself from this story?
2. What is the meaning of the statements in Balaam's oracles that indicate God's special care and purpose for the children of Jacob/ Israel (Dt 23:5)? What progression can you see from oracle to oracle in the revelation of God's purpose for his chose people? On what grounds do we Christians thank God for similar blessings (1 P 2:9f)?
3. What does Balaam's example teach about the responsibilities of being God's prophet / spokesperson? What does this mean to you as a steward of God's word (1 Co 4:1f; 1 P 4:10f)?
4. To what extent does Balaam lead king Balak on? Are you always completely truthful in dealing with people? To what extent is Balak's angry outburst quite justified (24:10f)? How would you feel and behave in his shoes? Why?
5. Why does Balaam get such bad press in the rest of the Bible (31:16; Dt 23:3-6; 2 P 2:15f; Jd 11-13; Rv 2:14)? What further questions does all this raise for you (24:25; 31:8)?

TRAIL II -- SECTION 33: Numbers 25:1-26:65.

1. What was involved in Balaam's second more indirect and subtle strategy to turn Yahweh against his people (31:15f; Rv 2:14)? Have you ever experienced similar subtle strategies of the evil one? To what extent did this type of temptation persist for Israel even for generations and for great leaders (31:1f, 7-18; 1 K 11:1-3; Ezra 9:1-10:44; Ne 13:23-27)? What besetting temptations do you have? How does God help you deal with them (1 Co 10:13)?
2. Why were idolatry and sexual immorality so interconnected for the Midianites, who along with many of the peoples of the area then worshiped fertility gods and goddesses? What warning might there be here about special dangers in the revival of nature-worshiping religions today? What, however, can we Christians learn from the failures of the Israelites during this whole period (1 Co 10:6-13)?
3. What parallels can you detect between Phinehas' and Jesus' motives and actions on behalf of God's people?
4. What does it mean about Yahweh to say frequently that he is a jealous God (e.g., Ex 20:3-5; 34:14; Dt 4:24: 5:9; 6:15; Js 24:19; Ek 8:3, 5; 36:41f, 39:25; Ps 78:58)?
5. According to the new tribal census here on the Plains of Moab, which of the tribes of Israel have increased and decreased in numbers during the 38 years since the first census in the wilderness of Sinai (1:20-47)? What might account for these changes? How were relative numbers to affect the tribal inheritances in Canaan (26:53-56; 33:54; 35:8)? How might the reports of very large numbers of potential warriors in both of these censuses be reconciled with other biblical data about the relative size and might of the people of Israel during this early period in comparison to the surrounding nations (Ex 23:29f; Dt 7:1,7; Ju 1:27-36)? What did that mean for the conquest of the land of Canaan?

Read chapters 27,30 and 36 and skim read chapters 28 and 29.

1. How does 27:1-11 compare with 36:1-18 with respect to the rights of women? How much further have we come today as Christians and as a society? Why (Ga 3:28f)?
2. Why was Moses not too surprised to hear that he would die before they entered the promised land (20:12,24)? What was his major concern as he faced imminent death? Why? What might your own concerns be? Why?
3. Based upon a cursory review of Hoshea's/ Joshua's life to date (Ex 17:9-14; 24:13-18; 32:1, 15-19; 33:7-11; Nu 11:26-29; 13:8, 16; 14:6-10, 30,38; 26:65; 32:10-12), what were his qualifications and experience to become Moses' successor as the senior leader of God's covenant people? What were the most important qualifications that Yahweh himself specifies? How is the future leadership of your church to be assured? Are similar qualifications to be required (Ac 6:3; 2 Ti 3:1-12; Tt 1:5-9)? Why? How frequently do churches today apply these leadership criteria during their search process? Why? What might happen if they are applied to existing elders of a congregation by the new minister. How so?
4. In chapters 28 and 29, what regular sacrifices were added to the special annual festivals already instituted [see the chart with the Introduction to Leviticus, Trail II Section 18]? Why were these new corporate worship occasions also important? Why is regular worship important for Christians too (Ac 2:46; 5:42; 20:7; 1 Co 16:2; He 10:23-25)? How regularly do you worship Yahweh with fellow believers? Why?
5. In 30:1f, how important to God is a person's word? Why? How does the pattern of authority/ responsibility between father and daughter or husband and wife change or modify this responsibility? How might this give more freedom to a woman (30:15)? How does Jesus expand responsibility for the words of his followers in Mt 5:33-37; 12:36f? In what other ways are Christians to be held responsible for their speech (Ja 3:2-12; 1 P 4:10f; Tt 2:7f, 1 Ti 5:13; 2 Ti 2:16, 23; Ph 2:14f; Ep 4:25, 29; 5:4)? What might you have to give account to God for in your speech? What can you do about that now (1 Jn 1:9)?

1. What can we Christians learn from chapter 31 and 33:51-56 about purging evil from our lives and congregations (Cl 3:5-10; 2 Ti 3:1-5; 1 Co 5:1-5)?
2. What sort of possible impacts might the request of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh have on the other tribes then and later (1 S 11; 1 K 22:3)? To what extent do your decisions take into account much more than your own welfare [Hebrew = "shalom"]? How much should and do your own and your family's economic choices involve commitments well beyond the interests of you and your own family? How might they affect God's people's welfare and mission? What about the interests of your friends, neighbours and enemies?
3. What, in your own words, is the great principle about sin and its consequences of 32:23b (Hb 2:4-20; 2 Co 9:6; Ga 6:7-10)? How have you witnessed that principle working out (a) in your own life, (b) in the lives of people you know and (c) in the lives of biblical characters?
4. What significant new details are included in passing in chapter 33's summary of the Israelites' long trek from Egypt to the Plains of Moab? Why might they be significant?
5. Is there any basis in the economic principle in 35:8 for proportional taxation systems today?
6. What can be learned from chapter 35 about God's view of the distinction between manslaughter and murder? What are the provisions for justice for manslayers? Why are they needed? How do the provisions here compare to those of your country today? Could your country learn anything from these ancient provisions? Why? Are similar sanctuaries/ refuges sometimes needed today for international refugees seeking due process of their claims for asylum on the basis of persecution back home? Should Christian congregations today provide such sanctuary, as some Christians have traditionally done in the past? What if such sanctuary is unpopular or even illegal in their society? What might be the consequences of doing so? For not doing so? Have you or your friends or their ancestors ever been immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers? What should be an implication of that?

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**Review your notes on the comprehensive question for Trail II, then write up your answer.**