

What to Look for in This Week's Readings

By John R. Gibson

As we continue to urge making the reading of Scripture a regular part of our lives, I want to again look ahead and suggest some things to look for in this week's passages.

This week we are scheduled to read Exodus 16-31 and we will move from the first great theme of Exodus to the second predominant theme of the book. The first eighteen chapters emphasize the mighty hand of God and His power is on display throughout. While the mighty hand of God is also present in the remainder of the book, at chapter nineteen the emphasis shifts to focus on the covenant the Lord made with Israel.

Exodus 16-18 and the Mighty Hand of God

We noted last week that by "strength of hand the LORD brought" Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 13:3). That mighty hand continues to be on display in at least the following points:

- 1) Six days a week the Lord showed His power by providing Israel with manna. Pay attention to how He taught them to trust in His power and love through food which could not be kept overnight, except on the sixth day of the week.
- 2) A wilderness without water is no problem for the Almighty as He supplied their need with water from a rock.
- 3) Though the details of how are not provided, it is clear that the Lord's help was crucial in the battle with the Amalekites. (Remember the battle with the Amalekites when our reading takes us to 1 Sam. 15.)
- 4) The mighty hand of God will on occasion be displayed through the people He brings or allows into our lives and that is the case in Ex. 18 when Jethro provides Moses with sound advice.
- 5) Though the book transitions to the covenant in ch. 19, don't miss the power of God on display in the appearance of Mt. Sinai.

May our readings in Exodus help our faith and trust in Him to grow stronger.

Exodus 19-31 and the Covenant with Israel

In this section the escaped slaves are called to be God's holy nation as they enter into a covenant with the Lord. Though the detailed laws and requirements of this covenant are different from the new covenant of today (see Hebrews 8, 9), there are a number of great principles that remain the same.

- 1) 19:5 makes it clear that God's blessings on the covenant people require them to be obedient to Him.
- 2) Stand in awe of Him. Read Heb. 12:18-29 in conjunction with the Lord's appearance on Mt. Sinai.
- 3) We will be reading the Ten Commandments, along with a number of other laws given to Israel. Because the old covenant is made by the same God of the new, many of these will also be taught in the New Testament, but there are differences.

- 4) The covenant was ordained and accepted by blood in Ex. 24.
- 5) The essence of the covenant relationship was that the Lord wanted to dwell among them (29:43-46), but the dwelling place required following God's pattern (25:8-9). If we would have God to dwell among us today (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16—7:1), we too must walk according to His pattern.

The New Life in Christ. Ephesians 4-6

- 1) Unity is expected, but requires both effort and the correct standard.
- 2) All are expected to do their part in building others up.
- 3) The old ways must be cast aside and we must put on the new man.
- 4) Guard your words.
- 5) Eliminate bitterness and replace it with forgiveness.
- 6) Avoid unlawful sexual activity and all forms of moral uncleanness.
- 7) Redeem the time!
- 8) Husbands—love your wives sacrificially.
- 9) Wives—respectfully be submissive to your husbands.
- 10) Children—obey your parents.
- 11) Parents—teach and guide your children in the ways of the Lord.
- 12) Be strong in the Lord as you rely on Him and put on His armor.

More Like Christ in Philippians 1-2

- 1) Give thanks for others.
- 2) See the good that can result from difficulties in our lives.
- 3) Be humble and serve the way Jesus did.
- 4) Don't be a complainer.
- 5) Seek to be more like Timothy and Epaphroditus in serving God and others.
- 6) Appreciate those who are like Timothy and Epaphroditus.