

The Journey is Easier when You Travel Light

From Exodus 14-17; 01 14 18

Hikers say The Appalachian Trail, which runs from Georgia to Maine ultimately teaches a person the cost of excess weight. One only needs what will keep him safe healthy and help him finish the hike.

Last week we addressed the idea of how Moses prepared Israel to change from 40 years as a nomadic, wandering in the Sinai Peninsula, to a nation builder, developing a whole new religious, moral, ethical social and spiritual code. The concern of Moses was they not take any vestige of Egypt into the Promised Land.

This message is the second in this series.

We said, Israel would have to be a learner nation, learning from others, their own experiences and from God. The single most critical lesson would be to learn what God was really like. **Good lessons properly learned do not add weight to the journey of life; they make it lighter.** Good lessons allow us to leave gadgets behind.

- I. The first lesson was between (Ex. 3,4) was to clear in the mind of Moses who God was and that he was calling Moses. Moses drew on that lesson the rest of his life.
 - A. The burning bush, Moses; God had seen Israel and her oppression; the questions of Moses, "Who am I?" and "Who are you?"
 - B. The revelation of God became the foundation of the faith of Israel; their God depended on no one for His existence.

- II. After the celebration by the Red Sea, Moses led Israel 3 days into the wilderness: no water, and finally, water, but bitter; they could not drink it. Waters of Marah
 - A. First result is grumbling: "What shall we drink?" Following God but no good water!!
 - B. Notice this is early in the journey; already disappointment.
 1. Disappointment often produces bitterness
 2. One is disrespected – bitterness
 3. One is offended – bitterness
 4. One loses a friend or family member, or a young mother is made a widow, or worse, husband leaves for another – bitterness. Water that one cannot drink.
 5. One loses a job without justification – bitterness
 - C. Moses cried out to God; God showed him what to do; the water was made sweet!
 - D. God accompanied with a promise: I am the Lord your healer; if you will pay attention to me, I will not put the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians. He healed water to say He could heal anything! Jehovah Ropha

- III. One more lesson: God had assured of water, (rock), food (manna) and health, (Jehovah Ropha). The only other issue was a succession of enemies that would be forever tormenting them.
 - A. The attack of the Amalekites at Rephidim (the place of water from the rock that would follow them.) Exodus 17:8-13, also described in Numbers 24:20 and Deut. 25:17-19.

B. The battle plan, strategy and tactics: Moses to Joshua, "Choose men for us, and go out and fight Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand."

1. Fight with your hand-picked men. Put a young man, Joshua, in charge.
2. Pick the place; visibility is important. Leadership visibility is always important.
3. I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.
4. As Moses, with Aaron and Ur, strode to the top of the hill, the people saw him; no doubt encouraged! But far more; God was working.
 - a) When he lifted up his hands, they were winning; when he got tired and dropped them, the battle turned against them!
 - b) Aaron and Ur slipped a stone under him to set on, and they lifted his hands. Until the battle was one.
5. Moses built an altar and called it, "The Lord my banner," Jehovah nissi
6. The lesson Israel needed, was more than health, water and food; they needed to know that when the banner of the Lord was lifted, there was victory. (Many commentators say that Moses was commemorating the victory, not the method. I believe he was seeing God in the picture.) As long as we hold up the banner, there is victory. Satan's effort is to wear believers down, isolate them, cause them to think it is by might or power that we fight. Two critical lessons:
 - a) It's not by might, nor by power...
 - b) Don't try to fight it alone. We need others.