



**“The People’s Faith” (Hebrews 11:29-30) NY’s Communion Weekend 2013**  
Danny Hodges – NT3546

Intro: While the rest of the list in this hall of faith is of individuals, here God reminds us of two tremendous stories of Him working through “a people.” It is perhaps the two greatest stories in the Bible of corporate faith and what God was able to accomplish as result of such a united response. The Red Sea crossing was after their deliverance through The Passover and represents their baptism (see I Cor.10:1-4). With that said, we must note something very important about these two events, and that is that there is a space of almost 40 years between them. They did not enter The Land of Promise until after Moses died, and Joshua became their leader. After crossing the Jordan, their first victory was Jericho (summarize). So here’s the question – Why did it take some forty years before entering The Promised Land? Answer – because corporate faith has many challenges. Before going any further, one more question – What is “The Promised Land?” It is the place of blessing, of abundance. And in our text it is the place of blessing and abundance for “a people.” But don’t forget that after they came into the Land of Promise there were still battles to be fought, a real enemy to contend with. And if they did not continue in what they had learned over that forty year wilderness wandering, they would lose the blessing and abundance they had experienced. So, what are some of the key things God did during those years in the desert that ultimately brought them to a place of abundant blessing?

**ANNUAL OBSERVANCE OF PASSOVER/FEAST OF UNLEAVEND BREAD**

- This was to keep their lives free from the idolatry and impurity of Egypt. Remember that Passover and The Feast of Unleavened Bread are inseparably linked. Once the blood had been applied for your deliverance, the next very natural thing was to cleanse any leaven (sin) from your life. They must keep themselves from idolatry, resist the appetites of Egypt, and develop a heavenly diet. The purity of their worship experience depended on it! First and foremost, God had called them out of Egypt in order that they might worship Him. That’s what Moses repeatedly said to Pharaoh, “Let my people go, that they may worship me...” (Ex.4:23; 7:16; 8:1; 9:1, 13; 10:3). Their worship was to be centered around The Tabernacle, which had not even been constructed yet. This was one of the things God would accomplish on their journey. When God delivered the people of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, he gave them great possessions. Read Exodus 12:35-36. His purpose was not to make them rich, but to supply them with the means of providing for the work of the tabernacle.

## OFFERINGS FOR THE WORK OF THE TABERNACLE

- See Exodus 35:4-9, 20-22, 29; 36:3-7. There's a story of a preacher that stood before his congregation and said, "God has provided everything we need for the work he has called us to. The only problem is, it's in your wallet."
- I honestly believe that if every church member of every local church would honor the Lord with the firstfruits of their finances, no pastor would ever be tempted to pressure the people to give. I believe each local church would have more than enough for the work God has called them to do.
- Prov.3:9/the tithe; Luke 16:11, 13; Luke 25:26-27.
- Note: One of the greatest testimonies this church has is the things we are able to accomplish through our corporate offerings to the Lord, despite the fact that we have for years now not passed an offering plate. Give summary and update of special needs offerings (Last week was \$17,329.84). As great as the testimony of our corporate giving is, there's no doubt that some of us have not gotten in on this tremendous blessing. Can you imagine if all of us honored the Lord with our wealth beginning in 2013, how much more we could do?

## A WILLINGNESS TO BE NUMBERED (Num.1:1-2)

- So that nobody was simply "a number." The tabernacle was always to be the center of their corporate experience, and in order for no one to just become a number in the congregation, God had them "numbered." Read Num.1:1-2, 5a, 16. Other passages tell us that this the leadership design would allow for everyone to be known and cared for personally (See Ex.18:21, 25; Deut. 1:15).
- For camping assignments (Num.2:3a, 5a, 7a, etc.); Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Levi on the NORTH; Merari was the Levite tribe next to the tabernacle; Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin on the WEST; Gershon was the Levite tribe next to the tabernacle; Reuben, Simeon, Gad were on the SOUTH; Judah, Issachar, Zebulun on the EAST; Aaron and Moses were next to the tabernacle; Israel has been on this Exodus journey for more than a year, and had assembled just about any way they had pleased. But now, preparing to enter into the Promised Land meant they must take the next step: organization. Note: at the center of everyone's "assignment" was the tabernacle. Since the tabernacle was symbolically the presence of God with them, this meant all order in Israel was centered around God Himself.
- For marching assignments; Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Aaron, Moses, Kohath, The Ark, Gershon, Merari, Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin, Dan, Ashur, Naphtali; See Num.9:18-23.

## A FOLLOW THE LEADER FAITH

- One of the aspects of "a people's faith" that allows God to do great things through is their attitude toward leadership. They have a follow the leader faith. This is not a thoughtless,

Jim Jones kind of faith. And it is not a faith that agrees on every little point of doctrine, etc. But it is a faith that follows, and because of this, a whole group of people can be used by God to accomplish incredible, impossible things...

- See Joshua 1:16; 3:2-7, 14; 6:2-5, 10-15.

#### UNITY DESPITE DIVERSITY (Num.2:2-3a, 10a, 18, 31, then go back to v.17, God at the center)

- Each tribe was unique, and in some ways different from the other tribes, but God was to be at the center of them all.
- Diversity among us as a church; Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Pentecostal, home-schoolers, private Christian-schoolers, public-schoolers, country, rock, classical, hymns...
- Illus: The Hartsville Red Foxes; Rainbow rednecks, Ruth's Drive In, etc. While each group was unique, and sometimes ended up pitted against one another, when it came time to play a rival football, baseball, or basketball team, The Hartsville Red Foxes became ONE!

#### PURGING OVER A 40 YEAR PERIOD

- At Jericho, they had been purged of the faithless influence of 10 leaders who were among the 12 spies sent to explore The Land of Promise (Num.13:1-15; 13:32-14:4). I personally believe this is one of the reasons God commanded the Israelites to remain silent at Jericho. All it would take was one person saying something like, "Aren't we just going around in circles day after day?" or "Why seven times on the last day?" or "Why am I in the back every day?" or "Are you guys crazy? We can't defeat this city. Have you looked how high those walls are?"
  - When Joshua sent in spies, he sent only two, and he didn't tell anyone he was sending them! Joshua 2:1 Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies... "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho."
- I Cor.10:5-10 summarizes the sin Israel committed during the wilderness wandering; Ex.32:1-8, an idol of **gold**; Num.22-25, sexual immorality; Num.21:4-9, repeated rebellion; grumbling (lots of references).

#### THE N.T. PROMISED LAND

- Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; read Psalm 133.
- The challenges the early church faced; see Acts 6:1-7 (growing pains, people neglected, potential division); 11:1-3 (legalism); 15:1-2a (doctrinal error); 15:36-39a (leadership disputes); I Cor.1:10-13; 3:1-4 (division over leader preferences).

## CONCLUSION

- God reminds us in His Word about the possibilities of a people united in a common cause or endeavor. He even speaks of the possibilities of unbelievers who can do great things when they come together in unity. Gen.11: 6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.
- Ephesians 4:16; Will you commit to "the least" you can do – honor the Lord with the firstfruits of all He gives you in 2013? Would you allow yourself to be numbered? Would you have a follow the leader faith? Would you do your part in maintaining the unity of the fellowship, despite our great diversity? Would you not grumble and complain (Phil.2:14)? Would you allow the Lord to purge you of any sin hindering your relationship with Him/worship of Him?