

Old Testament Lesson # 15
Look to God and Live
(Numbers 11-14; 21:1-9)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background)

I. **The significance of the Book of Numbers is shown in its name.** It begins by numbering all those of the House of Israel journeying to their Promised Land. It ends with just a few inheriting it. **Most have been cut off from the number** who inherit.

- A. What is the Real Promised Land? (It is actually Eternal Life. See Alma 37:38-45).
- B. So this book actually prophesies who will inherit Eternal Life --- and how!

II. The Book of Numbers recounts the reasons *why* many failed in the past.

- A. Those reasons were prophetic of **why many would fail to enter into the Real Promised Land when Christ first came.**
- B. It shows descendants of Israel would inherit in the last Days, if **we have** faith.
- C. Consider the diagram below. Note how the scriptural pattern given in Numbers [A. far left] actually has a parallel to what occurs when Jesus came (B. Upper Center). Then note how patterns in both A and B **point to what will occur in ours --- the last days (C. lower right).**

B. Christ came to deliver the True Promised Land

- 1. Only Jesus Himself and a few of Israel had faith to inherit Eternal Life. (Joshua is the English form of the Hebrew Yeshua; Jesus is its Greek form).
- 2. Most of Israel did not have faith that Jesus could bring them in.
- 3. **Prophets (Paul) verified Latter-day Israel would receive it (Romans 11:25-26).** _ \

A. Israel Seeks their Promised a Land _/

- 1. Joshua & Caleb alone receive it
- 2. Most of Israel hadn't faith to receive it
- 3. **Their future descendants would receive it.**

C. Israel's Descendants now offered Promised Land

- 1. We are the Latter-day Israelites receiving it.
- 2. We are promised if we have faith we can inherit.
- 3. Our faith must include faith in the Celestial Kingdom.

III. The scriptures give other details of *why* ancient Israel failed to inherit. (The events given below pertaining to ancient Israel are in black; their parallel in the time of Christ, in red. Parallels to our day are in blue).

A. In spite of all Jehovah's previous deliverances, as Israelites looked upon the Promised Land, their faith failed. They could not believe God would deliver it to them.

- 1. **In spite of all the miracles Jesus performed, even raising one from the dead, when the people saw Jesus seemingly weak against the Romans, their faith faltered.**
- 2. In our day most who fail to accept the Lord's Restored Gospel do so because they do not have the faith to accept His promises of the Celestial Kingdom. They feel "to become like God" is too unreachable.

B. The Israelites grew tired of spiritual food [manna], and wanted flesh (Ch. 11).

- 1. **The Israelites rejected the Savior's "spiritual" deliverance, from sin and bondage,**

and wanted a deliverance of the “flesh” --- freedom from Rome.

2. Worship of the things of the flesh prevail in our day. Too many feel spiritual blessings are not satisfying enough and long instead for instant gratification.

C. Eventually, even Moses was denied entering the Promised Land (Numbers 20:12).

1. The scriptures say it was because he did not have faith to **just ask**, for had he done so, the rock would have **given** its living water. Instead, he *struck* it (Numb. 20:8, 12).

2. **This was prophecy it would not be the *Mosaic Law* [a strict law of harsh judgment] which would take Israel into the Promised Land. It would be Jesus, the Rock, (who was beaten), who would give “Living Water” to those who asked Him with sincere desire.**

The ultimate deliverance into the Promised Land would be done by Joshua [Which name is the same as Jesus. See next lesson].

3. It is through Jesus Christ that we also inherit the Celestial Kingdom. Our works do not save us. But as True Followers of Him, we do His works “to help save others.”

IV. Understanding the prophecies in Israel’s Failure is particularly pertinent to Us.

A. Representatives of ten tribes brought a report the Promised Land was too difficult to obtain. Therefore they did not receive it at that time

1. Only Joshua and his associate Caleb had faith to enter (Numb.14:7-9).

2. **At Christ’s time, because ten of the tribes had been faithless, they were cut off already, taken into Assyria, and except those visited by Him after His resurrection, did not inherit.**

Only the Savior Himself and those few Israelites who came into His Church at the Meridian of time entered into their “Rest.” Most of Israel was cut off because they rejected Christ as their Messiah.

B. Therefore ancient Israel was condemned to wander for a lengthy period.

1. But the Lord promised their posterity would eventually inherit. “... ye shall not come into the land... But your little ones [descendants] them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised (Numbers 14:30-34).

2. **This prophecy was fulfilled in the Meridian of Time when most of Israel did not accept Christ as having the power to redeem them. It was mostly Gentiles who inherited God’s Rest. (Which is prophesied in other places).**

3. But we in the Latter-days are the descendants of whom these prophecies speak. If we have faith we can enter into Eternal Life, the True Promised Land (3 Ne. 20:13, 18).

V. We should understand this means we must have faith to inherit the Full blessings of Eternal Life, meaning the Celestial Kingdom.

A. Having **sufficient Faith** is still the major problem of today.

B. Most people in the world believe in some kind of God.

- A lesser amount believe in the God of Israel.
- An even lesser amount believe in Jesus the Christ.
- Far fewer believe in the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which means inheritance in the Celestial Kingdom and all its promises.
- Even fewer have the faith to live what they believe.
- **No wonder the Lord said, “O ye of little faith.”**

C. And in these scriptures, through the incidence of the fiery serpents and how healing was obtained, we learn that we must “Look to God and Live.”

D. Having **the faith that we can reach the highest degree of glory and become like our Father in Heaven is the final trial of Faith. But it is the essence of Eternal Life.**

1. There is much scriptural evidence that the Lord meant for man to become like Him. This is a very important and frequent part of the Gospel. See “Man, Potential to Become like Heavenly Father,” *The Topical Guide*, p. 307,
2. While some feel *personally* incapable or unworthy for various reasons, we should recognize the promises given in the scriptures and from the prophets. Remember that **the Lord does not desire *any to fail*. He has given all He could give and will continue to give all He can to help us achieve this great goal, though it will not come all at once, but likely through a long period of time.** (See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be Ye Therefore Perfect – Eventually” (Oct. Conf. 2017).
3. The most difficult part of believing we can become like God is that He is perfect. Yet, He has **commanded us to be perfect**, like Him.
4. The truth is the Lord says these words just after He has asked us to forgive, to love our enemies. It is then that He says, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).
 - a. Part of the problem is that we have obtained our concept of “perfection” from the world, and not from the Word of God. The Lord **said becoming perfect is when we can love our enemies** (Matthew 5:43-48). **Even the weakest among us can do that.**
 - b. For the Lord will help us to reach such love!