

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

(These scriptures tell why most of ancient Israel failed to inherit the Promised Land. They also prophesy of how this would occur at the time of Christ. They tell that in the Latter-days **descendants of Israel will inherit it if they have faith to do it.**)

I. The real significance of the Book of Numbers is 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 along the way.

A. What is the Real Promised Land? (It is actually Eternal Life. See Alma 37:38-45).

II. The Book of Numbers recounts the reasons *why* many failed. Those reasons were prophetic of **why many would fail to enter into the Real Promised Land when Christ would come.** It also warns us how we might fail.

A. Consider the following diagram. 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 portions 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 didn't have faith Jesus could bring them in.
3. But descendants in Latter-days will 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. **Future descendants would receive it.**

C. Israel's Descendants offered Promised Land

1. We are the Latter-day Israelites seeking it.
2. **Too many who are baptized falter and fall away.**
3. We are promised that Faith will lead to inheritance. (Numbers 14:31).

III. The scriptures give many details of *why* ancient Israel failed to inherit. (The parallels pertaining to ancient Israel are in black; those in the time of Christ, in red. There are also parallels for our day).

A. In spite of the many miracles Jehovah performed to deliver the Israelites, as soon as they encountered a new trial, their faith faltered.

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. We too, in spite of seeing miracles in our lives in previous times, sometimes struggle with faith that He will help us when faced with a new trial.

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. Often we fail to appreciate the *spiritual* blessings the Lord is constantly pouring out upon us, and complain because all our physical needs are not instantly met. Thus we lose faith in God.

- 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, twice (Numb. 20:8,12).
 2. We know that Moses was a righteous man. This was prophecy that it would not be the *Mosaic Law* [a strict law of harsh judgment] which would take Israel into the Promised Land. Rather it would be Jesus, the Rock, who would give them "Living Water" if they simply asked with sincere desire and prayer.
The ultimate deliverance into the Promised Land would be accomplished by Joshua [Which name is the same as Jesus. See next lesson].

- D. 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 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.

- E. Therefore ancient Israel was condemned to wander for a lengthy period.
1. 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. It was mostly Gentiles who inherited at Christ's time, so 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).

IV. Having sufficient Faith is still the major problem of today.

- A. A great many 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. And even fewer have the faith to live what they believe. No wonder the Lord said, "O ye of little faith."
- B. Having 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 this truth 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 much time.

3. Probably 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. “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. Even the weakest among us can do that** (Matthew 5:43-48).
 - b. The Lord will help us to reach such love!

C. A powerful, true incident of how the Lord can save us is demonstrated in Brad Wilcox’ book, *The Continuous Atonement* in the chapter, “One Lone Branch.”

In this chapter he relates an amazingly miraculous story, which I personally feel the Lord gave for us all --- to bear witness of God’s great power to save.

Briefly, a young man fell over a very steep cliff while climbing with his father and other scouts on a mountain in Japan. He fell not once, but twice: the first time they heard him hit a ledge, then he fell again over a second cliff, among cascading rocks.

All were terrified, for the only result should have been certain death, both from the fall and from the falling rocks.

But to his father’s amazement, when with haste and danger to himself, he finally reached the bottom, he saw that his son had been saved. He had been **saved from the fall by being caught upon one lone branch which protruded out of the cliff.**

While suffering some temporary head injuries, [his parents were told if he lived he would likely be a vegetable], he fully recovered.

The Lord still shows He has the power to save us and take us into Eternal Life **if we have the Faith to believe Him!**