

Hymns: 26 Trust and Obey 61 Standing on the Promises
Scripture: Psalm 19:7-14

Here's the results from a very creative poll done the beginning of the year by a group just down the road:

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Facing low approval ratings after a historically unproductive 112th session and a series of last-minute showdowns over fiscal matters, Congress is now less popular than [list edited]:

- *root canals,*
- *head lice,*
- *colonoscopies,*
- *traffic jams,*
- *cockroaches,*
- *Donald Trump,*
- *France,*
- *used-car salesmen*
- *and Brussel sprouts.*

By the way, since the time of that poll, not surprisingly, the popularity of Congress has not improved.

Proverbs 6 says:

[16] These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

*[17] A proud look, **a lying tongue**, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

[18] An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

*[19] A **false witness that speaketh lies**, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

That list fairly well sums up much of what sadly we have come to expect from our *distinguished* elected officials in Washington. It's important to note that the list in Proverbs 6 makes particular emphasis the principle that God hates lies. That's to be expected since Jesus called Satan the "father of lies" and Satan used a lie to bring about the fall of man.

Despite the fact that God is almighty, as we learned at an earlier meeting, there are things that God cannot do. The Bible says that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). In fact, God cannot do evil, or more generally, He cannot do anything against His nature. We can be sure that God is true. Unlike with our illustrious politicians, when God makes a **promise**, we can depend on it.

Review

We're working through our study of key Bible events. We covered the most significant event – the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You may recall last time, we looked into the very important topic of the

Jews going into the Promised Land. We learned that the Promised Land was granted with the oldest and surest deed that exists for any property. We also learned that it is bordered on the west by the Mediterranean Sea and on the east to include the Jordan River valley. To the north it stretches through Lebanon and reaches down as far south as the city of Elat entering the Red Sea.

We saw that the three disputed areas:

1. Golan Heights
2. West Bank
3. Gaza Strip

really are not arguable based on the Bible but are part of the Promised Land given to Israel by God. Last week we looked at the *land*. Our emphasis was on the *geography* of Israel. This week we want to focus on the *promise* as we turn again to Israel the Promised Land.

Moses

No discussion of Israel going to the Promised Land would be complete without considering Moses.

You remember Moses:

- Was a fair (goodly, beautiful) baby (Exodus 2:1)
- Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Hebrews 11:24)
- Stood up to the mighty Pharaoh demanding that he let God's people go
- Brought plagues upon Egypt to demonstrate God's power (Exodus 7-12)
- Parted the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21)
- Turned bitter water at Marah to sweet (Exodus 15:25)
- Brought a river of water from the rock in the desert (Exodus 17:6)
- Led the Israelites forty years in the wilderness
- Saw some of God's glory (Exodus 33:23)
- Had to cover his face to shield the people from its bright glow (Exodus 34:35)
- Gave the law to God's people (John 1:17)
- Wrote the Pentateuch -- the first five books of the Bible
- Was buried by God (Deuteronomy 34:6)
- Appeared on the the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3)

When we think of Moses, we often think of someone who climbed up mountains (over and over it seems):

1. Mount Sinai (getting the law from God)
2. Mount of Transfiguration (with Jesus and Elijah)
3. Mount Nebo (to view the Promised Land from afar)

We find Moses there at Mount Nebo in Deuteronomy chapter 34, the last chapter of the book and for that matter the closing words of the Pentateuch or the Torah (the Hebrew word for law):

Deuteronomy 34

[1] And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of

Pisgah, that is over against Jericho .

That is, east of the Jordan River Valley as the river empties into the Dead Sea

And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

[2] And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea,

[3] And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

*[4] And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I **sware***

That is, God made an **oath** or a **promise**.

unto Abraham,

unto Isaac, and

unto Jacob,

*saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, **but thou shalt not go over thither.***

Wow, this **faithful man of God**, one of the **greatest men in all of the Bible** was **shut out** from going into the Promised Land. Why?

[5] So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

[6] And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

This was certainly a **tender moment** to have the LORD Himself bury his beloved servant Moses – an honor afforded to no other man.

*[7] And Moses was **an hundred and twenty years old***

Okay Dick, there's some inspiration for you.

when he died: his eye was not dim,

Moses had no need for cataract surgery.

***nor** his natural force abated.*

Moses retained his vitality, mental, and physical strength – perhaps from all of that walking in the desert and up and down mountains (and of course by God's sustaining power).

By the way, switching to modern times, who is the oldest living person today, and how old is that person?

The one believed to be the oldest is a man named Carmelo Flores Laura who lives in the Andes mountains in Bolivia. He's 123 years old, walks without a cane, still can see, but admits his vision is growing dim. Would you like to know his secret to long life and fitness? This sheep and cattle herder says he walks a lot and spends a lot of time out with the animals. He says he doesn't eat noodles or rice, but instead sticks to barley.

Now, let's return to our scripture (skipping to verse 10):

*[10] And **there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses,***

Moses was indeed a very special man of God.

*whom the LORD **knew face to face,***

This also was said of no one else. Notice the six uses of the word *all* in the following two verses:

*[11] In **all the signs and the wonders,** which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and*

*to **all** his servants, and*

*to **all** his land,*

*[12] And in **all** that mighty hand, and*

*in **all** the **great terror** which Moses shewed*

*in the sight of **all** Israel.*

Can anyone recall some of the signs and wonders that Moses did?

1. Rod to snake
2. Turned Egypt's water to blood
3. Frogs
4. Lice
5. Flies
6. Death to livestock
7. Boils
8. Hail
9. Locusts
10. Darkness
11. Death of firstborn

Many people are troubled by the fact that this great man of God was not allowed to lead his people into the Promised Land. Why? God said it was because he disobeyed Him in **striking** the rock when the Lord had told him to **speak** to the rock.

Now to understand this properly, we need to recall that in Exodus 17 God specifically **did** instruct Moses to **strike the rock**, and water came out. But there was a **second** incident where God gave Moses **different** instructions:

Numbers 20

[7] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

*[8] **Take the rod,** and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and **speak ye unto the rock before their eyes;** and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring*

*forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.
[9] And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.*

No problem yet.

[10] And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

Still no problem.

[11] And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice:

Moses disobeyed God.

*and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.
[12] And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron,*

Here comes the answer to the question, "Why?"

***Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel,
therefore***

Whenever we see the word *therefore* we ask the question, "What is this there for?" Here's the answer:

ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Okay, God gave the answer, but it *still* sounds like the punishment does not fit the crime. This is very harsh, especially considering that Moses had faithfully led Israel through the wilderness for forty years.

Could it be there's something else going on? Let's see what we can learn about this rock.

The best commentary on the Bible is? The Bible.

I Corinthians 10 speaks of the wilderness journey of Israel:

*[1] Moreover, brethren, I would **not** that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;*

The Israelites were directed by a fiery pillar at night and a cloud during the day. They passed through the Red Sea as God parted the waters and they fled from the Egyptian army.

[2] And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

That is, they were united together with Moses as their leader.

*[3] And did all eat the same **spiritual** meat;*

*[4] And did all drink the same **spiritual** drink: for **they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them:***

Now, we're getting somewhere. But what is this “spiritual Rock”? The Bible answers that.

*and that **Rock was Christ.***

*[5] But **with** many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.*

*[6] Now **these things were our examples,***

This is a key concept. The Bible uses **historical events** that it records to teach us. What can we learn from them?

*to the intent we should **not lust after evil things,** as they also lusted.*

*[7] **Neither be ye idolaters,** as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*

*[8] **Neither let us commit fornication,** as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.*

*[9] **Neither let us tempt Christ,** as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.*

*[10] **Neither murmur ye,** as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*

*[11] Now **all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition,** upon whom the ends of the world are come.*

Have any of you ever had a dog? I've had a few. We have a very smart dog now who is a little over a year old. Her name is Grace. You may recall meeting her. She's a medium-sized black dog that loves everyone and every dog. She's at home alone now in our apartment likely napping and always on her honor patiently awaiting our return. A good little dog like Grace is very receptive to training and learns quickly. But despite all of these positives, dogs still tend to do dog-like things:

Proverbs 26

[11] As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

I've witnessed that myself with multiple dogs. The point of the proverb **and of the previous passage** is of course **to use** these examples to learn from our own mistakes and the mistakes of others and not to repeat them – thereby avoiding their disastrous consequences.

God specifically recorded historical events as examples and in the case of the Rock, as an allegory. The rock that Moses was told to strike and later speak to represented Jesus Christ. He died **once** to give us eternal life. After His resurrection we are now to speak to Him to receive that life.

Matthew 26

*[67] Then did they spit in his face, and **buffeted him;** and others **smote him with the palms of their hands,***

*[68] Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that **smote** thee?*

Isaiah 53

*[4] Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him **stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.***

*[5] But he was **wounded for our transgressions,** he was **bruised for our iniquities:** the **chastisement** of our peace was upon him; and with **his stripes** we are healed.*

That explains why God wanted Moses to **first** strike the Rock. Jesus Christ our Rock and salvation was stricken and smitten for us.

Unfortunately, we're about out of time. We'll resume our excursion into the Promised Land and specifically into gaining more insight as to why Moses could not enter into it next time. But before we close, let's consider how we might apply what we have learned.

Application

Unlike our politicians in Washington, rather than re-write history, ignore it, or just make promises we cannot keep, we need to pay attention to the past and obey the sure word of our Lord. As we learned before, after Christ was smitten for our sins, he rose again. This most significant event in history is the great hope of the church. God “spared **not** his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Romans 8:32) that we might receive eternal life by His grace through faith in Him (Ephesians 2:8). What a great promise and a great promise-keeping God we have.

Benediction

*Now the God of peace,
that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the everlasting covenant,
Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ;
to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21)*