

THE DEPARTURE FROM MOUNT SINAI

BIBLE TEXT : Numbers 10:1-13, 29-36

LESSON 91 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good" (Numbers 10:29).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Numbers 10:1-13 (KJV)

¹ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

² Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.

³ And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

⁴ And if they blow *but* with one *trumpet*, then the princes, *which are* heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.

⁵ When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward.

⁶ When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys.

⁷ But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm.

⁸ And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.

⁹ And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.

¹⁰ Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Israelites Organized at Sinai

For a year the great host of the Israelites had camped around Mount Sinai. From the top of the mountain, amid thunder, fire, and great smoke, God had spoken to the Children of Israel and given them His law. Moses had drawn near to God in the cloud, and had received the Ten Commandments on tables of stone. In the wilderness of Sinai the Tabernacle had been built according to the plan God had given to Moses in the mount, and fire from Heaven had burned the sacrifice upon the altar, showing that God had accepted their work. God had also given Moses many instructions, teaching the people how to live together in peace and happiness, both while in the wilderness and when they should enter Canaan. God had appointed feast days and celebrations that should be kept for many years ahead. Everything was organized, and now the time had come for the Children of Israel to start their journey to the Promised Land.

Led by the Pillar of Cloud

The pillar of cloud by day and fire by night had led the Children of Israel from the time they left Egypt. When the Tabernacle was completed, the cloud had come down from the mountain and rested over the Lord's House. It had remained at Sinai for a whole year while the Israelites awaited instructions to move. That was always to be their guide: when the cloud rested, the Children of Israel camped; and when it lifted and moved forward, they marched, whether it was by day or by night. Sometimes they would camp only a few days, sometimes a month, and sometimes even a year or longer. But they always camped so long as the cloud remained over the Tabernacle.

Moses was commanded by God to make two trumpets of silver which the priests would blow whenever they wanted the attention of the Israelites. Some calls would be for the heads of the tribes to come together to the Tabernacle to listen to Moses for instructions; others would be calls to war, or to march: When the marching began, each tribe could tell by the trumpet blast when it was their time to move.

Someone must always keep watch, even while the people slept, because sometimes the pillar of cloud might move in the nighttime, and the Children of Israel must follow immediately. The pillar was an indication of the will of God, and the people must know His will to do it. As soon as the cloud moved, the trumpets must arouse the people to go forward.

We must always be on the alert to be sure to know the will of God, and pay heed to the godly ministers who watch over us and "blow the trumpet" for us so we will not be caught napping and disobey God.

The March Begins

The Children of Israel were now organized and had their instructions for *life* in Canaan, and it was time for them to go into the Promised Land. The realization of the hopes seemed near, because Canaan was only an eleven-days' journey from Mount Sinai.

With what eager anticipation they must have started out!

the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God.

¹¹ And it came to pass on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony.

¹² And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.

¹³ And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Numbers 10:29-36 (KJV)

²⁹ And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.

³⁰ And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

³¹ And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.

³² And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

³³ And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.

³⁴ And the cloud of the LORD *was* upon them by day, when they went out of the camp.

Three million people with all their flocks and herds! Soon they would be in the land "flowing with milk and honey." Soon they would have homes of their own where they could live in comfort and safety. They would possess this good land that God had promised to Abraham for his descendants, and they would never need to be slaves again. All this God would have given them if they had not disobeyed Him.

With what enthusiasm a new convert starts out to serve God! He feels very confident that he can overcome everything, and will soon be enjoying the richest blessings God has promised. If he keeps his trust in Jesus he retains that confidence, and God does great things for him. But trials will come; and many times people will look at their troubles and get their eyes off Jesus, and they become very discouraged. The way grows hard, and they lose the eagerness with which they started to live for the Lord. Soon they grow weary in His service, and forget that He has promised to fight their battles for them. We should take warning from the examples given us by the Children of Israel. We can see the blessings they missed by disobeying God, so we should be careful that we please Him in all we do. Then we will enjoy the promises He has given to His children.

Each Tribe in Its Place

The trumpet had blown directing the tribe of Judah to begin the march. Under the standard of Judah marched the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun also, and they are sometimes included in Judah without being particularly named. These were the tribes that camped east of the Tabernacle, in front of its entrance.

By the time the people under the standard of Judah had moved forward, the Gershonites and the Merarites had taken down the Tabernacle and were ready to fall into line. Six covered wagons, each drawn by two oxen, carried the heavy parts of the Tabernacle.

When the trumpets blew again it was time for the Israelites who camped on the south side of the Tabernacle to take up the march. These were the tribes which moved under the standard of Reuben, and included Simeon and Gad. Then came the Kohathites, carrying the furnishings of the Tabernacle upon their shoulders. God said these things were too sacred to ride in wagons, and must be carried reverently by those Levites to whom they had been entrusted.

The next blowing of the trumpets set the camps on the west end of the Tabernacle on the march. The tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin moved under the standard of Ephraim. And behind them, under the standard of Dan, came the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, with the mixed multitude bringing up the rear.

"Come Thou with Us"

The family of Moses' wife lived near Sinai where the Israelites had spent the year, and when God's children prepared to move, Moses asked his brother-in-law if he would not come with them. God had promised so many good things to His people that Moses wanted to share it with his loved ones. The Land of Canaan was a much better land than this wilderness could ever be, and it was to be the possession of the Israelites. Would not Hobab come along and enjoy its hospitality?

We who serve God enjoy His blessings, and we know He has even greater things prepared for those who love Him. We long to tell others of God's great love in such a way that they, too, will want to serve Him. We cannot understand why many

³⁵ And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

³⁶ And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

people will not give up their sinful ways which bring so much trouble to them, in order to have the happiness that only the children of God can know. How happy we are when someone decides to come with us and enjoy the blessings Jesus gives us now on our journey to the Promised Land, and share with us in the heavenly inheritance when the Lord comes back to claim His own.

QUESTIONS

- 1 How long had the Israelites been at Mount Sinai?
- 2 Name some of the things that had happened here.
- 3 How did the Children of Israel know it was time to move?
- 4 Where were the Children of Israel going, and how far was it?
- 5 What did Moses say to his brother-in-law?