**Smoky Mountain Bible Institute**

**History 115, 40 years in the wilderness**

Break out your maps and histories as we travel again in our time machine to examine history & geography through a biblical worldview. Let's go on a little trek through the wilderness, shall we?

We find ourselves at the base of Mount Sinai a couple of months after leaving Egypt in the spring of 1446 BC. Before we continue this chronological walk through the wilderness, let’s fast forward a little bit to 1445 BC. Sometime during that year, Moses sent 12 spies to check out the land flowing with milk and honey (Numbers 13). The spies were sent only to gather information not to provide commentary and opinion, but 10 of them, upon their return, told everyone how big and scary the people who lived in the land were, and the Israelites picked up on that fear. They forgot that God had delivered them from Egypt, sustained them in this wilderness for over a year, and guided them with his presence in the form of a miraculous pillar of cloud and fire. This led to God's pardon in Numbers 14, after Moses pleads on their behalf that God does not wipe them off the face of the earth and start over. God however does judge them for their infidelity to him by putting the nation on parole if you will. They are to live as nomads in the wilderness for 40 years, and as this seems to have taken place from 1446 BC to 1406 BC, God must have given them credit for time already served when he issued the sentence in 1445 BC.

There are very few datable events during this nomadic 40-year period because very little of the narrative gives dates or mentions datable information. Miracles abound during this period; miraculous bread (manna), miraculous meat (quail), miraculous clothing that does not wear out for 40 years, miraculous leadership in the form of a pillar of cloud and fire in which God dwells among his people, miraculous water pouring out of rocks, miraculous judgment in the form of the earth swallowing up rebels, miraculous judgment in the form of fiery snakes, and miraculous salvation in the form of a bronze serpent raised on a pole. These are some amazing events, but the best we can get from the narrative is that they took place during that 40-year period.

Let's go back to the base of Mount Sinai on 1 Sivan (May) of 1446 BC and look at the dates we do have for this period. A few days later on 3 Sivan, God speaks to Israel from Sinai, but they grow impatient during Moses’ stay on the mountain sometime in mid Av (July or August), and they cast and worship a golden calf. The next datable event is the erection of the tabernacle on 1 Nisan (March or April) of 1445 BC. For the next 12 days, offerings were made for the dedication of the altar, then on the 14th of Nisan the second Passover or first anniversary of Passover was celebrated. Then on 1 Ziv (April) of 1445, the census was taken. We then fast-forward some 39 years and they arrive at Kadesh in Nisan of 1407 BC, and Aaron dies on 1 Av (July or August) of the same year. In the beginning of the following year on 1 Shebat (January) 1446 BC, Moses gives his final address to the people of Israel and shortly after, dies atop Mount Nebo overlooking Jericho early in 1406 BC.

God let two people of that generation go into the promised land: Joshua and Caleb, because they were the two spies who trusted in God and supported entering and claiming the land God was giving to them. That is where we will pick up next month: the beginning of the 330 year period known as The Era of Joshua and the Judges.

Have a blessed summer,

Pastor Portier