

KGW7 to Feb. 19

February 13 Su Reading 44 — Leviticus 16:1-34 — The Day of Atonement

¹ The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the LORD and died, ² and the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. ³ But in this way Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. ⁴ He shall put on the holy linen coat and shall have the linen undergarment on his body, and he shall tie the linen sash around his waist, and wear the linen turban; these are the holy garments. He shall bathe his body in water and then put them on. ⁵ And he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

⁶ "Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. ⁷ Then he shall take the two goats and set them before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁸ And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel.^[fn] ⁹ And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the LORD and use it as a sin offering, ¹⁰ but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

¹¹ "Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself. ¹² And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil ¹³ and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die. ¹⁴ And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

¹⁵ "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. ¹⁶ Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. ¹⁷ No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the Holy Place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel. ¹⁸ Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. ¹⁹ And he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it and consecrate it from the uncleannesses of the people of Israel.

²⁰ "And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat. ²¹ And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. ²² The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.

²³ "Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and shall take off the linen garments that he put on when he went into the Holy Place and shall leave them there. ²⁴ And he shall bathe his body in water in a holy place and put on his garments and come out and offer his burnt offering and the

burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people. ²⁵ *And the fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar.* ²⁶ *And he who lets the goat go to Azazel shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.* ²⁷ *And the bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. Their skin and their flesh and their dung shall be burned up with fire.* ²⁸ *And he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.*

²⁹ *"And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict yourselves^[fn] and shall do no work, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you.* ³⁰ *For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins.* ³¹ *It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you, and you shall afflict yourselves; it is a statute forever.* ³² *And the priest who is anointed and consecrated as priest in his father's place shall make atonement, wearing the holy linen garments.* ³³ *He shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly.* ³⁴ *And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins." And Aaron^[fn] did as the LORD commanded Moses.*

ESV Footnotes

(16:8) The meaning of *Azazel* is uncertain; possibly the name of a place or a demon, traditionally a scapegoat; also verses 10, 26

(16:29) Or *shall fast*; also verse 31

(16:34) Hebrew *he*

For Cleansing — Sixteen times in this chapter, the word “atonement” is used. To atone means to make amends or repair a wrong; in this context, it means to remove the guilt of man (www.carm.org). After the death of Aaron’s oldest sons, God gave him very detailed instructions about how to perform the cleansing ceremonies on the annual Day of Atonement. At the end of the chapter, God clearly stated the purpose of this special day: “*For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you*” (v. 30). Cleansing was its purpose. It provided a thorough cleansing but not a permanent one. The permanent cleansing act would come about 1,500 years later when Jesus died on the cross. “*But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here ... he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption*” (Heb. 9:11-12 NIV). It is no longer necessary for a scapegoat to annually carry away the sins of the people because Jesus is “*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1:29).

Nothing can for sin atone: nothing but the blood of Jesus. Naught of good that I have done: nothing but the blood of Jesus.

— Robert Lowry (1876)

Nothing but the Blood - YouTube

Meditation: One of the two goats chosen by lot was called “Azazel” (v. 8) in some translations like the ESV, but “*the scapegoat*” in other versions. Azazel is a Hebrew word that seems to be a combination of two words for “goat” and “going away,” thus “goat that goes away.” Some interpreters believe that it might be the name of a being, perhaps an evil one, because it is contrasted with the name of Yahweh (v. 8). Others feel that it might refer to the name of a place, which the ESV follows, saying that the goat was to “*be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel*” (v. 10).

February 14 M Reading 45 — Leviticus 18:1-5 — God, the Ultimate Lawgiver

¹ *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,* ² *"Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, I am the LORD your God.* ³ *You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall*

not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. ⁴ *You shall follow my rules^[fn] and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the LORD your God.* ⁵ *You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.*

ESV Footnote

(18:4) Or *my just decrees*; also verse 5

My Rules ... My Statutes — We are prone to be affected by the secular culture around us; Israel was, too. During their 430 years in Egypt, they absorbed some of that pagan philosophy and practice; it would get even worse when they encountered the religious influence of Canaan. God warned them and established and emphasized His own laws to counteract that tendency. Twice, He called them “*my rules*” and “*my statutes*.” They are the ultimate standard for right living. When we buy a complicated kitchen appliance, we should read the instructions written by the manufacturer. God is our maker and His Word is our rulebook. The idea in this passage’s concluding comment is repeated several times in the OT and NT: “...*if a person does them, he shall live by them.*” To “*live*,” here, is a promise of more than physical life; it refers to all that is benefited when we are walking with God. Do you sometimes question a statement you read in the Bible because it just doesn’t seem right? There is a good chance that it is because the world’s thinking has influenced you. We really “*live*” when we choose to obey.

February 15 Tu Reading 46 — Numbers 11:1-35 — Lessons of Judgment

In our search for information about God, we jump into the middle of the book of Numbers for our reading today, skipping over large sections of laws and information about the tribes of Israel. As the people had complained earlier about their lack of food and water (Ex. 15:24, 16:13) and their desire to return to Egypt, so they do again.

¹ *And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes, and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp.* ² *Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire died down.* ³ *So the name of that place was called Taberah,^[fn] because the fire of the LORD burned among them.*

⁴ *Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh that we had meat to eat!"* ⁵ *We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic.* ⁶ *But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."*

⁷ *Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium.* ⁸ *The people went about and gathered it and ground it in handmills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil.* ⁹ *When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it.*

¹⁰ *Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased.* ¹¹ *Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me?"* ¹² *Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,' to the land that you swore to give their fathers?"* ¹³ *Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.'* ¹⁴ *I am not able to carry all this people alone;*

the burden is too heavy for me. ¹⁵ If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness."

¹⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. ¹⁷ And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. ¹⁸ And say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For it was better for us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. ¹⁹ You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, ²⁰ but a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before him, saying, "Why did we come out of Egypt?"'" ²¹ But Moses said, "The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!'" ²² Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?" ²³ And the LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not."

²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

²⁶ Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." ²⁹ But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" ³⁰ And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

³¹ Then a wind from the LORD sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits^[fn] above the ground. ³² And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers.^[fn] And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. ³³ While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck down the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ Therefore the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah,^[fn] because there they buried the people who had the craving. ³⁵ From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth.

ESV Footnotes

(11:3) *Taberah* means *burning*

(11:31) A *cubit* was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters

(11:32) A *homer* was about 6 bushels or 220 liters

(11:34) *Kibroth-hattaavah* means *graves of craving*

Impossible Solutions — The people complained and Moses was frustrated. Even when God had promised to provide meat for the people, Moses had a hard time believing it was possible. God's response was classic: "Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will

come true for you or not" (v. 23). God keeps His promises and there is nothing impossible with Him. Moses should have remembered the "impossible" situation a year earlier when Israel was trapped between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea; God did the "impossible" then. Are your problems ever that big? Is God the same now as He was then? Who would have imagined that God would rescue Israel by parting the waters of the Red Sea? Who would have imagined that God would have dropped food from the sky in the form of manna and quail? When we have what seems to be an insurmountable problem, we shouldn't even try to imagine how God might solve it; we should just trust Him that it will be accomplished somehow.

Nothing is impossible when you put your trust in God.
Nothing is impossible when you're trusting in His words.
Harken to the voice of God to thee,
"Is there anything too hard for Me?"
Then put your trust in God alone,
And rest upon His words,
For everything, O everything, yes everything
Is possible with God.

— Eugene L. Clark (1975)

Nothing is Impossible - YouTube

Meditation: We also see examples in this passage of the judgment of the just God. Because the people were complaining against Moses and God, "*his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them*" (v. 1). When the people were weeping in complaint, "*the anger of the LORD blazed hotly*" (v. 10). Then, after God had supplied the quail, "*the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck down the people with a very great plague*" (v. 33). Why was God so angry with them? It was not only because of their complaints about their present conditions but also because they thought that living in Egypt's slavery was better than what God was providing for them in the wilderness. They said, "*...it was better for us in Egypt*" because they had "*rejected the LORD*" (v. 10). When we look back longingly at our previous life of bondage to the sins of the flesh, we are thinking like the freed Israelites. The past bondage is *not* better than our present condition. It might be difficult now, but we are free.

February 16 W Reading 47 — Numbers 12:1-16 — How God Speaks

¹ *Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman.* ² *And they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it.* ³ *Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.* ⁴ *And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting." And the three of them came out.* ⁵ *And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward.* ⁶ *And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream.* ⁷ *Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house.* ⁸ *With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"* ⁹ *And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.*

¹⁰ *When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous,^[fn] like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous.* ¹¹ *And Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, do not punish us^[fn] because we have done foolishly and have sinned.* ¹² *Let her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother's womb."* ¹³ *And Moses cried to the LORD, "O God, please heal her—please."* ¹⁴ *But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again."* ¹⁵ *So Miriam was shut outside the camp seven*

days, and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again. ¹⁶ After that the people set out from Hazeroth, and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

ESV Footnotes

(12:10) *Leprosy* was a term for several skin diseases; see Leviticus 13

(12:11) Hebrew *do not lay sin upon us*

Take that! — Not only were the people of Israel complaining about Moses but so were his jealous and prideful brother and sister: "*Has the LORD ... not spoken through us also?*" (v. 2). Aaron was the high priest and Miriam was a prophetess (Ex. 15:20), so they already had privileged positions, but it was not enough for them. Moses did have a higher position than they did; God spoke to him face to face in detail. It was as if God said to his siblings, "You want a face-to-face message from Me? Okay, here...": "*Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting*" (v. 4). That was very direct and authoritative. They probably knew at that point that they had gone too far in their criticism of Moses. At the tent of meeting, God proceeded to explain how He speaks to different servants. To "mere" prophets, He spoke indirectly through visions and dreams (v. 6), but to Moses, He not only spoke directly, clearly, and extensively (v. 8), but He also showed Himself in a human-like form (v. 9). The exclamation point of this lesson was Miriam's leprosy.

February 17 Th Reading 48 — Numbers 14:1-45 — A Forty-Year Sentence

We are skipping over chapter 13, where God told Moses to send a spy from each tribe into the land of Canaan for 40 days. Only Joshua and Caleb gave a good report but the other 10 convinced the people that they should not try to enter the land.

¹ Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. ² And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴ And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. ⁶ And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes ⁷ and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them." ¹⁰ Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel.

¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? ¹² I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

¹³ But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, ¹⁴ and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people. For you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵ Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say,

¹⁶ 'It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.'¹⁷ And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, ¹⁸ 'The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.'¹⁹ Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now."

²⁰ Then the LORD said, "I have pardoned, according to your word. ²¹ But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD, ²² none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, ²³ shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it. ²⁴ But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it. ²⁵ Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea."

²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ²⁷ "How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. ²⁸ Say to them, 'As I live, declares the LORD, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: ²⁹ your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, ³⁰ not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. ³¹ But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have rejected. ³² But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. ³³ And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. ³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, a year for each day, you shall bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.'³⁵ I, the LORD, have spoken. Surely this will I do to all this wicked congregation who are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die."

³⁶ And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing up a bad report about the land— ³⁷ the men who brought up a bad report of the land--died by plague before the LORD. ³⁸ Of those men who went to spy out the land, only Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive.

³⁹ When Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, the people mourned greatly. ⁴⁰ And they rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, "Here we are. We will go up to the place that the LORD has promised, for we have sinned."⁴¹ But Moses said, "Why now are you transgressing the command of the LORD, when that will not succeed? ⁴² Do not go up, for the LORD is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies. ⁴³ For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you, and you shall fall by the sword. Because you have turned back from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."⁴⁴ But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed out of the camp. ⁴⁵ Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.

Forgiven But Punished — Fed up with Israel's rebellion, God proposed wiping them out and starting over again with only Moses (v. 12, cf. Ex. 32:10). After Moses' impassioned plea, God said, "I have pardoned, according to your word" (v. 20), but immediately announced the penalty that none of those 20 years old or older "shall see the land I swore to give to their fathers" (v. 23). What kind of

forgiveness is that?! They are still punished! (We see another example of this principle when David was forgiven regarding his sin with Bathsheba but God still applied the penalty of the death of their baby [2 Sam. 12:13-14]). So, in what way was rebellious Israel pardoned by God? At least, they were not all destroyed in order to start over with Moses' descendants and they also remained the people of God. Ironically, they got their stated wish: "... *would that we had died in this wilderness!*" (v. 2). There are consequences for sin, even forgiven sin. How many couples do you know whose lives were forever marred by marrying a non-believer in opposition to their parents and the Word of God? Lifelong consequences. Let these examples be reminders to us that our decisions toward sin may lead to lifelong disaster. The 10 unbelieving spies received their penalty immediately and "*died by plague before the LORD*" (v. 37) but the penalty for the remaining adults would be extended for 40 years.

February 18 F Reading 49 — Psalm 90:1-17 — Everlasting God

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.

- 1 *Lord, you have been our dwelling place^[fn]
in all generations.*
- 2 *Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*
- 3 *You return man to dust
and say, "Return, O children of man!"^[fn]*
- 4 *For a thousand years in your sight
are but as yesterday when it is past,
or as a watch in the night.*
- 5 *You sweep them away as with a flood;
they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning:*
- 6 *in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.*
- 7 *For we are brought to an end by your anger;
by your wrath we are dismayed.*
- 8 *You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your presence.*
- 9 *For all our days pass away under your wrath;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.*
- 10 *The years of our life are seventy,
or even by reason of strength eighty;
yet their span^[fn] is but toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.*
- 11 *Who considers the power of your anger,
and your wrath according to the fear of you?*
- 12 *So teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom.*
- 13 *Return, O LORD! How long?
Have pity on your servants!*

- 14 *Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.*
- 15 *Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
and for as many years as we have seen evil.*
- 16 *Let your work be shown to your servants,
and your glorious power to their children.*
- 17 *Let the favor^[fn] of the Lord our God be upon us,
and establish the work of our hands upon us;
yes, establish the work of our hands!*

ESV Footnotes

- (90:1) Some Hebrew manuscripts (compare Septuagint) *our refuge*
 (90:3) Or *of Adam*
 (90:10) Or *pride*
 (90:17) Or *beauty*

God is Eternal — This is the only psalm of Moses provided in the book of Psalms. It was written at some point during their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness after balking about entering the spied-out Promised Land. The overall theme is that of time, contrasting the eternal existence of God to the fleeting life of man. God has always existed: “...*from everlasting to everlasting you are God*” (v. 2). He existed before Creation because He was the creator of all things (“...*you had formed the earth*”—v. 2). Compared to the time-limited humans He created, “*a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past*” (v. 4). Mankind lives 70 or 80 years and “*they are soon gone*” (v. 10). It is difficult for us to wrap our minds around the concept of eternity because we are locked into time. God is not. Like watching a long parade from a helicopter, God sees the beginning and end at the same time. So, what can we gain during these limited years we have to live on this earth? Moses includes the answer in his psalm: “*So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom*” (v. 12). We should take advantage of the days we have in order to gain the wisdom God has available for us. Make your life count! Learn all you can about God and what He has for you!

Isaac Watts wrote a famous hymn based on Psalm 90. As you read or sing through it ([O God, Our Help in Ages Past - YouTube](#)), notice the references to what you have read today:

1 O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home;

4 A thousand ages in your sight
are like an evening gone,
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

2 Under the shadow of your throne
your saints have dwelt secure.
Sufficient is your arm alone,
and our defense is sure.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
soon bears us all away.
We fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

3 Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received its frame,
from everlasting you are God,
to endless years the same.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
Still be our guard while troubles last,
and our eternal home.

¹ Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. ² And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. ³ They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" ⁴ When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, ⁵ and he said to Korah and all his company, "In the morning the LORD will show who is his,^[fn] and who is holy, and will bring him near to him. The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him. ⁶ Do this: take censers, Korah and all his company; ⁷ put fire in them and put incense on them before the LORD tomorrow, and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!" ⁸ And Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: ⁹ is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the LORD and to stand before the congregation to minister to them, ¹⁰ and that he has brought you near him, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also? ¹¹ Therefore it is against the LORD that you and all your company have gathered together. What is Aaron that you grumble against him?"

¹² And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and they said, "We will not come up. ¹³ Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you must also make yourself a prince over us? ¹⁴ Moreover, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up." ¹⁵ And Moses was very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, and I have not harmed one of them."

¹⁶ And Moses said to Korah, "Be present, you and all your company, before the LORD, you and they, and Aaron, tomorrow. ¹⁷ And let every one of you take his censer and put incense on it, and every one of you bring before the LORD his censer, 250 censers; you also, and Aaron, each his censer." ¹⁸ So every man took his censer and put fire in them and laid incense on them and stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. ¹⁹ Then Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

²⁰ And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ²¹ "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." ²² And they fell on their faces and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry with all the congregation?" ²³ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ "Say to the congregation, Get away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

²⁵ Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. ²⁶ And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins." ²⁷ So they got away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, together with their wives, their sons, and their little ones. ²⁸ And Moses said, "Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord. ²⁹ If these men die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the LORD has not sent me. ³⁰ But if the LORD creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD."

³¹ And as soon as he had finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart. ³² And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. ³³ So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. ³⁴ And all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, “Lest the earth swallow us up!” ³⁵ And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.

³⁶ [fn] Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁷ “Tell Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest to take up the censers out of the blaze. Then scatter the fire far and wide, for they have become holy. ³⁸ As for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar, for they offered them before the LORD, and they became holy. Thus they shall be a sign to the people of Israel.” ³⁹ So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned had offered, and they were hammered out as a covering for the altar, ⁴⁰ to be a reminder to the people of Israel, so that no outsider, who is not of the descendants of Aaron, should draw near to burn incense before the LORD, lest he become like Korah and his company—as the LORD said to him through Moses.

⁴¹ But on the next day all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, “You have killed the people of the LORD.” ⁴² And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting. And behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. ⁴³ And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, ⁴⁴ and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁴⁵ “Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.” And they fell on their faces. ⁴⁶ And Moses said to Aaron, “Take your censer, and put fire on it from off the altar and lay incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from the LORD; the plague has begun.” ⁴⁷ So Aaron took it as Moses said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, the plague had already begun among the people. And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. ⁴⁸ And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped. ⁴⁹ Now those who died in the plague were 14,700, besides those who died in the affair of Korah. ⁵⁰ And Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, when the plague was stopped.

ESV Footnotes

(16:5) Septuagint *The LORD knows those who are his*

(16:36) Ch 17:1 in Hebrew

Swift, Sure, and Public Judgment — The brashness of the people of Israel in this story is amazing. Korah was a Levite but wanted to be a priest (v. 10). Dathan and Abiram weren’t even Levites but wanted the same priestly privilege. In spite of the dramatic ways God had shown that He had picked Moses and Aaron to be leaders, the 250 rebellious chiefs said, “*you exalt yourselves*” (v. 3) and “*make yourself a prince over us*” (v. 13). God’s judgment on them was just as dramatic—the ground swallowing up the three rebellious families, fire from heaven burning up the 250 who used the censers, and the plague that killed 14,700 of the still-complaining congregation. Are you content with the gifts that God has given you? Are you submissive to those He has put over you in your church? God hates discontent. Paul said, “*I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content*” (Phil. 4:11), and the writer of Hebrews wrote, “*be content with what you have*” (Heb. 13:5). Moses had the 250 censers made into a covering for the altar to be a visible reminder to the people that God judges pride, jealousy, hypocrisy, and covetousness. Let this story be a reminder to us; we are to serve God with the gifts He has given us and where He has placed us. Submit and serve!