

Question 6

- a) For all these years God had provided for their needs. The manna now ceases at this moment for it is no longer required. They are home; no longer wanderers!
- b) It is no coincidence that it stops the day after they once more observe the Passover. (n.b. The unleavened bread was part of the Passover and had to be eaten for seven days Exodus 12:15).
- c) The fruit of the land is a foretaste of blessing to come. The spies had not been wrong 39 years earlier in Numbers 13!

GROUP LEADERS NOTES – STUDY 14

Question 1

- a) The Lord is preparing the way for the Israelites to take the land.
- b) It was not the people of Israel that impressed them but what they had heard about the God of Israel; drying up the River Jordan.
- c) In other words it was not fear of the Israelites but the fear of God.
- d) Remember that we have seen this already in Rahab's words to the spies back in **Joshua 2:8-11**.
- e) Of course that had happened 40 years previously. Now there was a far more recent reason to fear.

Question 2

- a) *"It was an outward and physical sign of an inward and spiritual reality"* (Roger Ellsworth).
- b) Circumcision was a covenant sign and was the mark of God's possession on His people; physically setting them apart from the other nations around them.
- c) It represented circumcision of the heart (see **Jeremiah 4:3-4** where God wants Israel to return to Him). In promising His fruitfulness, God required holiness. Circumcision represented the need for cleansing.
- d) The generation that had last observed this covenant sign had now died. It was important that this new group of Israelites realise that they needed to commit their hearts to the Lord.

- e) The answer to why circumcision had not been observed during the years of wandering is best answered from **verse 6**.
- f) Here we see that those 40 years had been a time of unbelief and disobedience (remember that they could have covered the distance to Canaan in a matter of weeks).
- g) Examples of this rebellion are their complaints about lack of food and water; and the unbelief when the spies brought back their report about Canaan in Numbers 14.
- h) By once more being circumcised, they were affirming their allegiance to the covenant God (see **Genesis 17:7-8**).

Question 3

- a) We can see the answer to this by referring back to two examples of Israel's time in the wilderness:
- b) The first one goes back to when the people of Israel rebelled against God at Sinai and set up the Golden Calf. There was every expectation that God had led them into the wilderness to destroy them; and Moses appeals to this when asking God to withhold His judgement on His wayward people (see **Exodus 32:12**).
- c) The second example come after the people refuse to enter the Promised Land following the spies' investigation in **Numbers 14:11-16**.
- d) God had proved His faithfulness and this is reflected in the calling of this place 'Gilgal'.

Question 4

- a) It commemorated God's deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt.
- b) They were saved from the death of their firstborn as the angel of death passed through the land and destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians.
- c) It was the blood of the lamb that was sacrificed in their place that meant God's judgement passed over them.

Question 5

- a) They had not observed the Passover for 39 years (note that in Numbers 9:1-5 they observed the first anniversary).
- b) This omission is not necessarily about neglect. God had specified in Exodus 12:25 that they were to observe the Passover "*when you come to the land that the Lord will give you...*"
- c) On the other hand it is clear from Exodus 12:48 that "*no uncircumcised person shall eat of it*". None of those males entering Canaan (except Joshua and Caleb) had been circumcised.
- d) As they observe the Passover again, it demonstrates that the grace of God that had rescued them before, would be sufficient for them as they set out to conquer the land of Canaan.
- e) It would energise them.