



EXODUS

IN AWE OF GOD



FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE :: BY JUSTIN HUTTS



EXODUS

IN AWE OF GOD

FAMILY WORSHIP GUIDE

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OVERVIEW OF EXODUS

God shows up in mighty and miraculous ways throughout history. Exodus shows God in all his wonder.

Israel had been in Egypt for 400 years. They were slaves in a foreign land. They were waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham—waiting for the Promised Land. There was one big problem. Pharaoh. The god-complex ruler of Egypt made it his mission to stand between Israel and their God. That wouldn't last long. He was no match for the Creator-God.

God would use Pharaoh's decree to murder every Israelite son. One Hebrew couple defied this decree. When they could no longer hide their baby boy, the mother placed their son in a basket and into the Nile, trusting God's will for his life. In God's plan, Pharaoh's daughter found the basket, caught in the reeds beside the river. She adopted the baby into her family and named him Moses.

Moses grew up in the palace walls, but he was never really an Egyptian. When he saw the oppression of his people he took action. This led Moses on a wild journey that would lead the people of Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.

Along the way, both Moses and Israel would witness the wonders of God. Moses was first introduced to God through a burning bush. Then God would lead his people out of Egypt following 10 plagues, by a pillar of cloud and fire, through splitting the Red Sea, and by providing manna from heaven and water from a rock. No generation in human history saw God work like this before or since.

The story of Exodus is also our story. Like Israel, we are God's people. He draws us out of our sin (our Egypt), and draws us into His presence (into relationship with Him). Come let us behold God and be in awe of him together.

filled with awe and wonder,

J. Thomas Hults



OUTLINE OF EXODUS

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God Prepares (Exodus 1:1 — 13:16)

As Numerous as the Stars

EXODUS 1:1-7

The Hebrews are in a hopeless situation. They have nothing. They are slaves. They have no power, no prestige, only a promise God made hundreds of year before. They are in need of rescuing. They aren't alone. They are in desperate need of God showing his power and grace. **God hasn't abandoned them. He remembers his promise.**

Exodus begins with a blast from the past. The author takes us to an event that took place about seventy years before, when Jacob came to Egypt (v.1; cf. Genesis 46). By providing this link with the past, it serve to remind us that Exodus is a story that is going somewhere.

Why Jacob? Jacob was the father of twelve sons who would become the twelve tribes of Israel (vs.2-5a). Israel was the name God gave Jacob in Genesis 35:10, and it was the name which was to be identified particularly with the people and the land of God's covenant blessing.

One of Jacob's sons was Joseph. Joseph was his father's favored son. His brothers despised him and sold him off as a slave to Egypt. From that time the story of Israel and his descendants continues in Egypt (vs.5b-6).¹ As generations passed the people of Israel grow in number, God preserved them, and they filled the land like the stars filled the sky (v.7).²

All of these events shows God's marvelous plan. How he orchestrates history, nations, generations, even suffering as a part of his purposes and plans. As Joseph said to his brothers later on, 'God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God' (Gen. 45:7-8).

💬 Read at least one of these Psalms 78, 80-81, 105-106, 114, and 135-136. What do these psalms tell us about the God of the Book of Exodus?

¹ cf. Gen. 46:3; Deut. 26:5; Acts 7:17

² cf. Gen. 22:17; 26:4; Ex. 32:13; Deut. 1:10; 10:22; 28:62; Neh. 9:23; Heb. 11:12



- In Acts 7:1-18, Stephen stands before the Sanhedrin and delivers a sermon which summarizes the history of the nation of Israel. What is the short history of Israel? What do you learn about the Egyptian captivity? And about the hope Israel held onto?

- What is the hardest season you have ever had to endure? Why is waiting through trial and hardship is particularly difficult? Read 2 Peter 3:8-9. How does this text relate to Israel's situation in the opening lines of Exodus? How is it relevant to your current circumstances? What trial is currently keeping you in waiting? Is it sinful to want our times of trial to be short? Why or why not?

- Read Genesis 1:28. How does this verse relate to Exodus 1:1-7? What does it indicate about the faithfulness of God?

- During the 400 years of waiting in Egypt, what do you think the Israelites thought regarding God's promise of the land of Canaan? Regarding God's character?

- What attribute of God did you see in this week's passage that particularly struck you? How should it change the way you pray, think, speak or act this week?



- A covenant commits people to one another. How often does the idea of a covenant appear in Exodus? How does the theme of the covenant in Exodus reveal to us the extent of God's commitment to his people, and of them to him?



Darkness

EXODUS 1:8-22

Have you experienced days when the darkness doesn't seem to want to lift? Days when the you wonder when the light shine again? Days when the all the news media seems dreary, sad or horrific?

When Joseph came to Egypt, he went from being a slave to second-in-command under Pharaoh, the most powerful man of the most power nation of his time. Joseph went from prison to a position of power. However, in a matter of generations the people of Israel would become slaves again. These were dark days.

The Hebrews grew from one family to a multitude. Though they had no weapons their sheer size intimidated the Egyptians. In order to maintain the Hebrews, the Egyptians made the Hebrews slaves and they served as free labor for Ramses building projects. These were dark days for the Hebrews, but it would only get darker.

Ramses not only conspired to strengthen his legacy, but he also conspired to weaken the Hebrews legacy. His plan was for population control. Genocide. First, he told the Hebrew midwives to kill any son born to them, but this backfire because the midwives feared God more than Pharaoh. When questioned by the Pharaoh, they responded by saying the Hebrew woman were strong and gave birth before they could arrive to help.

Pharaoh was relentless and demented. He did not give up. Next, he ordered a decree in Egypt that all the sons of the Hebrews should be captured and thrown into the Nile River. These were some of the darkest and fearful days for God's people.

Since then God's people have continued to experience dark days. **God is not absent or on vacation during dark days, but he is present and active.** We can have the same courage and fear of God like the midwives even in the darkest of days. Trusting that God is with us and working his good and perfect plan.

💬 What is the hardest or darkest thing you've ever been though? How did you see God work through that hardship or darkness?

💬 What do you learn about the time when the Hebrews were living in Egypt? What would it have been like to be a Hebrew during the days of Ramses?



- What was Pharaoh's plan for population control? What purposes would this serve from his perspective? What does it reveal about how he valued human life?

- How do the midwives fear of God encourage you, particularly knowing the situation they are in? How was their fear rightly-placed? In what area of your life, right now, do you need to imitate their fear of God?

- Who are what are you most likely to fear more than God? What is the key to fearing God more than that 'who' or 'what'?

- How is obedience difficult in good times, but even more difficult in dark times? How does God respond to evil in the world? How does God bring light to darkness?



Pulled Out

EXODUS 2:1-10

Are there ever days when you wish you could just be pulled out of the mess, chaos, hardship, or suffering? I remember my great-grandfather talking about going through the Great Depression as a boy. He ate rations while his parents works for minimal pay.

The days for Israel did not get easier. In fact, they got harder. Pharaoh ordered the execution of all the baby boys of the Hebrews by drowning them in the Nile. It was a horrific day in history as babies were ripped from the arms of mothers and fathers.

One mother, like any mother would want, protected her baby. When she could not protect him any longer or quiet his cries, she prepared for him a basket. It was an act of faith. Her baby was helpless against the world and the enormous Nile.

What we see in this story is the sovereign hand of God. The baby floated in the basket down river. The basket stopped in the reeds near Pharaoh's daughters bathing spot. Pharaoh's daughter took compassion on the crying baby even with the knowledge he was a Hebrew. The baby's mother actually got to care for the baby under the protection of Pharaoh's house. The daughter gave the boy the name Moses because he was pulled out of the Nile.

What we see in this story is that God is the savior. The baby lives because of God. The boy survives because of God. The boy grows up in the Pharaoh's house because of God.

What we see in our story is that God is sovereign and Savior too. Like Moses we are helpless, unable to swim, drowning in sin, needing mercy and compassion, but God's hand swoops in and saves us from death.³ He does it through his Son, Jesus Christ. He pulls us out.

💬 How is God like a refuge? How do you see the sovereignty of God on display in this story? (see Acts 7:17-22) How does God used Pharaoh to actually provide a savior for the Hebrews?

³ cf. 2 Sam. 22:17; Ps. 18:16



- What would be going through your mind as a mother or father in this situation? How does this story bring hope in a really dark situation? Why is it important that we know this scene in Moses story? How have you seen God work similarly in your own story?

- How do Moses and Jesus stories compare? (see Matthew 2:1-18) How is this narrative a wonderful picture of salvation (and baptism) and the work that Christ did for us?

- How, like Moses, are you utterly hopeless to save yourself? How has God pulled you out of the river? How should this story change the way you regard people or situations that seem beyond hope?

- What do you need to be rescued from right now? If you haven't already would you allow God to pull you out of sin into salvation? If you have been pulled out, share your rescue story.



The Fugitive

EXODUS 2:11-22

Moses went from a homeless infant afloat in the Nile to a powerful, prestigious underling in the Pharaoh's palace to being a fugitive in the wilderness. After being pulled out of the Nile Moses grew up with the cream of the crop. Egypt was the most powerful empire in the world on the forefront of science and education. And Moses would have had the best tutors, perks, and favors of Pharaoh's family.

Anyone in his shoes would become comfortable with that lifestyle. However, as Moses got older he observed the oppression of the Hebrew people. He had compassion on them. He himself had Hebrew blood and he knew it.

One day Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. He became angry. He decided to take justice into his own hands and he killed the taskmaster. He tried to cover up his dirty deed and thought no one was looking, but when trying to resolve a domestic situation between two Hebrews, Moses learned that his situation had been found out. When Pharaoh found out he sought to kill Moses. Moses was again without a home in Pharaoh's palace or among the Hebrews, therefore he fled as a fugitive to Midian.

In Midian, Moses began a new life. He settled, married, and had a son. He named his son *Gershom*, which meant *sojourner*. It was a fitting name for Moses who left behind Egypt and all that his life represented there.⁴

💬 What do you learn about Moses from this scene of his life? What do you learn about his character? How does he look back on his childhood and look ahead to his mission?

💬 What does the scene about Moses murdering the Egyptian reveal about what Moses believed about himself? What should have he done? How does he waver between trusting God and trying to be God? How have you found yourself wavering too?

⁴ Acts 7:23-29; [Heb. 11:13, 14]



- Why is fleeing from our sin a bad idea? How does it damage our relationship with God and others? Why is confessing and owning sin important?

- Have you ever been ashamed or afraid after doing something wrong? What consequences did you have to face afterward?

- How does God often draw near to his people in the wilderness? How have you met God in the wilderness? What does the scene in Midian reveal about Moses view of the future?

- How are we like fugitives before we know Christ? How does Christ rescue us and give us a new standing before him? How are you like sojourners in a strange land?



God Sees and Knows

EXODUS 2:23-25

One of the most difficult parts of being human is that we cannot see what is ahead of us. We cannot know the future. We cannot see what will happen one year from now, one month, one day, or even one minute. Our mind and sight is limited. We can only look back and see and know up to the present.

As Israel looked back more than 400 years they saw how they had become slaves in Egypt. Their oppression by the hand of each Pharaoh had become worse and worse. In response they groaned. Words could not express their anguish. They longed for help from God who seemed distant. They cry out to God and he heard their cry.

What we learn from these three verses is that **life is filled with immense pain and struggle**. One can wonder if God is absent or uncaring to allow it to be this way and question whether God sees and knows what is happening. Interestingly, this is the first time we hear from God in the Exodus story. He has been there all along. He has been working in history and geography working out his sovereign plan. God sees and knows the hardship of his people.

We also learn powerful and hope-filled truths about God. First, **God hears**. God is not deaf. He does not ignore the cries or groans of his people. His ears are tender and compassionate. Second, **God remembers**.⁵ When God makes a promise he keeps it. He never forgets. Third, **God sees**.⁶ He sees everything always. He not only sees moment by moment, but he sees all history at once. Finally, **God knows**. He is aware of all that happens and doesn't miss a thing.

Each of these truths would have been a comfort to the people of Israel and a reminder that they are in his hand. They should be a source of comfort and hope to each of us.

💬 How do you see God at work in history and geography so far in the book of Exodus?
How has God been visible although he hasn't been mentioned by name until now?

⁵ cf. Genesis 15:14; 46:4; Psalm 105:8, 42; 106:45

⁶ cf. 3:7; 4:31; Luke 1:25



- What is the importance of mentioning God's covenant with Israel? What was his covenant? (see Genesis 17:1-6)
- How is Israel's God different than the god of the Egyptians?
- How would these three verses been a comfort to Israel in Egypt? How are they a comfort to you today?
- Why is it important to meditate on these four truths about God in times of peace and pain? How have you see these attributes of God at work in your life this week?



God Speaks

EXODUS 3

It started like any ordinary day. Moses was caring for his father-in-law's sheep that were grazing in the wilderness near the mountains. Moses had likely done this hundreds of times. Yet this day would turn out to be an extraordinary day.

As Moses came to mount Horeb he saw a burning bush that wasn't being consumed by the fire. It startled Moses as it would startle anyone. It was not something one sees everyday or ever. Moses took a double take.

Moses looked on with amazement and he heard the bush speak and call out his name. It wasn't the bush that spoke for the voice identified itself. The voice was the voice of God. God spoke. God spoke audibly and clearly. It was undeniably God.

God spoke into history. God identified himself as the God of Moses ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (vs.6,15-16). This is how God identified himself throughout history. He was the God of promise. A personal God who was intimately involved with the affairs of his people. Immediately with those words God made an impression on Moses.⁷ He was afraid of God's holiness. He was wowed by God's presence.

God spoke with compassion. God reassured Moses that he saw the suffering of the people of Israel in Egypt (vs.7-12, 16).⁸ He also reassures Moses that he will be with him (v.12).⁹ There was great comfort in those words. God is a God of comfort.

God spoke with authority. God's authority is established on his existence. He is (vs. 14-15).¹⁰ He is the God of creation, history and salvation. In this moment, God stepped into history to work out his redemptive plan.

God spoke with promise. God promised to deliver Israel from Egypt through Moses (vs.17-22). God was empowering Moses his servant for an unbelievable task. Only God could accomplish such a feat. Moses realized he was small, even compared to Pharaoh (v.10), but God would accomplish what he promises.

Anytime God speaks it is extraordinary. We get a glimpse into a personal encounter and conversation with God. It is a conversation we are invited into. Like Moses, when God speaks he desires our obedience and reverence.

⁷ cf. Acts 7:30-34

⁸ cf. 2:23-25; Nehemiah 9:9; Psalm 106:44

⁹ cf. 4:12, 15; Deuteronomy 31:8, 23; Joshua 1:5

¹⁰ cf. 6:3; Psalm 68:4; John 8:58; Hebrews 13:8; Revelation 1:4; 4:8



- Put yourself in Moses sandals. What would it have been like to be Moses in this scene? What would it be like to hear God's voice?

- How does God speak to us today? What clear commands has God given you to obey? How does Moses encourage you to act immediately?

- What purpose does this scene play in the life of Moses? How does it help him to look back at what has already happened and to look forward to what is to come?

- What do you think of Moses response to God in 3:10? Should he have said anything different? What does his response reveal?

- Why is hesitation a normal response, even when God is clear about what we are to do and how we are to do it?

- How would you summarize in one sentence what God is saying to Moses in this story?



God Can

EXODUS 4

Have you ever been in a situation where a task given to you was way above your ability, so you thought? You doubted your abilities and said to yourself, “I can’t do this. I am not schooled or skilled at this. I don’t have enough experience.” Yet there was someone who knew you were able, but you need the right help and encouragement.

Moses was in this situation. God had asked Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him to let the Israelites go. Moses filled with doubt and fear. The task was way above his abilities, so he thought. He didn’t think he was adequate to speak on behalf of God for his speech impediments would get in the way.

God assured Moses that he would do just fine because **God can do the work through him**. God showed Moses three powerful signs. The signs were proof to Moses that God could do what God was asking Moses to do. All Moses would have to do was trust and obey.

After all that God said and did Moses still doubts himself and what God is asking of him.¹¹ He’d rather God send someone else. This angered God. And that was enough to motivate Moses to go back to Egypt with his brother Aaron.¹²

Nothing is too hard for God. He can use your weaknesses for his glory and purposes. **God isn’t looking for skilled men, he is looking for obedient men.** God made man’s mouth and he can take a man who thinks he mumbles and stutters and speak wonders through him. God can and will.

💬 Can you relate to any of the doubts or objections that Moses shares with God? Is there any task you’ve been asked to do that you think is hard for you but easier for others?

💬 What did Moses think was necessary to serve God? What did God express was necessary?

¹¹ This would be Moses’ fifth objection in a span of only 14 verses.

¹² Along the way Moses will obey God in a private matter before he goes public, circumcising his sons. Integrity is important to God.



- Does God's anger with Moses surprise you? Why was it important for Moses to see this side of God in this moment?

- What makes God angry?¹³ How is God's anger different from man's anger? How can we keep from sinning in our anger?

- Was it helpful that God gives to Moses all the details about Pharaoh's response and God's response to Pharaoh?

- How have you seen God use your weaknesses for his purpose and glory?

- Do you have an Aaron in your life—someone who stands with you and supports you? What does this demonstrate to you about serving family or God?

¹³ Consider Psalm 145:8; James 1:19-20



Rejected

EXODUS 5

There is an old adage that says, “It gets harder before it gets better.” This is what it would become for Moses and the people of Israel. The moment that Moses came to Pharaoh and asked for the release of the Israelites. Pharaoh looked at Moses and laughed. He punished Moses inconvenient demand by breaking the backs of his Israelite slaves. It went from bad to worse.

The truth that is hard to swallow is that **Moses was acting out of obedience to God and the result was rejection and deeper pain for an already oppressed people.** Rather than lightening the burdens of the Israelites their burdens increased.

It didn’t end there. The moment Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh’s presence with their heads hung in disbelief the Israelite foremen met them and complained, “Could you have made things any worse for us? They Egypt are going to kill us with all this work!”

It was a really low moment for Moses. He felt defeated, rejected, and betrayed. It seemed like evil is gaining the upper hand. Likely Moses was ready to throw in the towel.

Thankfully this is only chapter 5 and we know the end of the story, but we must not skip past this chapter as it is important in the process of what God is doing in his people and his servant Moses. Pharaoh may have undermined Moses initial request and it looked like God’s plan had backfired, but Pharaoh had really underestimated Moses’ God. Pharaoh would have the last laugh. God was using Pharaoh as his pawn in his marvelous plan to release his people from slavery. He would use his humble and broken servant Moses. The road wouldn’t be a quick and easy, but God would get his way.

💬 After reading through Exodus chapter 5, how would you describe its mood?

💬 What do you think Moses was expecting when he went to Pharaoh the first time? What was and wasn’t surprising about the outcome?¹⁴

¹⁴ see ch. 4:21

What do you think Moses was feeling at the end of his conversation with Pharaoh and the Israelite foremen? (5:22-23) What do you feel as you read Moses' response to God?

🗣️ Have you ever felt like giving up because you felt like God had given up on you? How can you trust God when you feel like throwing in the towel?

🗣️ How does this story show that just because you obey God will immediately bless (or make your path easy) because of your obedience? Why is God's way not always easy? Why is God's way not always free of doubt or discouragement?

🗣️ How prone are you to discouragement when obedience to God doesn't give you the immediate rewards you expected? Have you ever expected something from God only to get the opposite? What is a better motive for obedience than a quick reward?¹⁵

¹⁵ cf. Colossians 3:23-24



Broken

EXODUS 6:1-13

Throughout history many of God's people have experienced discouragement, depression, even despair. It is common human emotion. As God's people we may bathe ourselves in the promises of God's presence and faithfulness, yet still wrestle with the realities that come with living in a fallen and broken world

In today's narrative, **God's people live in the tension between God's promise and the reality of what they are experiencing.** Moses had received marvelous promises from God that included the release of God's people from slavery. God would do it with his strong and mighty hand.

However, the Israelites lived in the very real reality that they have been slaves in Egypt for 400 years. Not only that, their work load had just increased. Their working conditions are harsh. Their spirits are broken. They were stuck in a discouraging place without a way to get out. The promises of God had little affect on them because they had not seen anything change but for the worse in generations.

Maybe you have felt like the Israelites. There has been a time when the agony of the moment made it seem like you were stuck. Or you have been in a place where the promises of God or the good news seemed unbelievable. Discouragement and despair got the best of you and shrouded your belief.

Although the Israelite community felt like trusting God was old-fashioned and worthless, Moses and Aaron still obeyed God. They went against the flow. They persisted. They believed God was who he said he was and would do what he said he would do. It seemed impossible and against all odds, but that's exactly what God does—the impossible.

💬 What promises does God make to Moses? What does God say about himself? Why do you think God begins and ends his message with "I am the LORD"?

💬 How did the Israelites respond to these promises? Why did they have little affect on their belief?



- Have you ever been in a place where God's promises or good news seemed unbelievable? When was a time when the pain of the moment made it seem like you were stuck?

- What kind of relationship is God desiring to have with Israel? Did God know that Israel would be such a difficult partner in the relationship? Why does he continue to pursue them?

- Are there any parallels between Moses and Jesus in this story?¹⁶

- God is the God of the impossible. What is something you'd like to see God do that in your might seems impossible? Would you ask God for it? How is your own salvation an impossible thing that God made possible through Jesus? Who would you like the Lord to save if possible? How can the Lord use you in their life?

¹⁶ Connect the themes of rejection, discouragement, and obedience.



Ancestors

EXODUS 6:14-30

No one comes from a perfect family. Each family has messes, baggage or embarrassing histories. Whatever the situation, whether we like it or not, our family is our family.

We can get caught up in the belief that we are the way we are because of our family or ancestors. While that can have great influence, it's not the only influence. C.S. Lewis said, "What I call my 'self' now is hardly a person at all. It's mainly a meeting place for various natural forces, desires, and fears, etcetera, some of which come from my ancestors, and some from my education, some perhaps from devils. The self you were really intended to be is something that lives not from nature but from God."

The genealogy of Moses and Aaron should bring us some comfort. It may seem weird or rather redneck that Moses and Aaron's mom is also their aunt, but in places around the world this is more common than in the West. Then there is a list of names listed of people we would know unless they were written here. They are people God wants us to know. They are significant in that they are people that shaped two of the most important men in Jewish history.

Moses himself had insecurities and fears towards what God called him to. Although he grew up in the Pharaoh's house and had the choicest education and upbringing, his roots were still Hebrew. God was leading Moses in a new direction. His family and ancestors would be affected by his obedience and faith in God.

You may never be in the logs of history for your accomplishments or faith. Maybe you will live an ordinary existence. Yet **God uses average people**. It may be your ordinary faith that influences your children, grandchildren or ancestors that come after you. **The way you trust God and obey his promises will lead your family in a Godward direction.**

💬 What do you know about your family tree? Are there branches of your tree that you'd rather have cut off or unknown from the public eye? Do you have any famous ancestors?

💬 How have you seen God move through your family tree or ancestors? How are you like or unlike your parents, family, or ancestors?



- What is the importance of Mose and Aaron's family tree here? When you consider the the fact that Aaron was the older brother of Moses and when you reflect on Moses birth story, how does it make you feel towards their parents, their bravery, their current standing as men and leaders?

- Why would Moses and the burning bush moment be repeated at the end of the genealogy? What was Moses' response to God?

- What has God called you to do that causes you to fear or be insecure? What are the lies that feed those feelings? How does knowing God answer those fears and bolster your confidence?

- When you remind yourself that you are a child of God, how can that change your perspective on how you live your life?

- What would you like your family legacy to be? What would you want to be known by to your ancestors?



Wonders

EXODUS 7:1-13

Houdini. Copperfield. Penn & Teller. Angel. These are the names of some of the world's best magicians in recent history. Throughout history has always been magicians that have wowed people with their illusions and today we will see some that happened in ancient Egypt.

God used two ordinary old men for his purposes. It is interesting that Moses included his age into the story. The reason for this is to show that they weren't young whipper-snappers relying on their natural youthfulness to accomplish God's purposes. It was solely God working his purpose through them.

God used wonders through Moses and Aaron to wow the masses. When Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh they performed many signs and wonders. God did it to prove himself before Pharaoh, Egypt and the Israelites. Despite all the signs and wonders, Pharaoh wasn't be impressed, rather his heart was hardened.

In the first wonder, Aaron threw his staff to the ground and it transformed into a serpent. Pharaoh, not wanting to be outsmarted, summoned his magicians who were able to copy the wonder, but while he gloated Aaron's serpent ate the magician's serpents.

Win for God, Israel, and Moses and Aaron. Loss for Pharaoh and his hard heart.

God made Moses like God. It is not that Moses was God or replaced God. It was that Moses would represent God and speak as his servant before Pharaoh. Pharaoh's heart hardened, but God would awaken the Egyptians to know who God was. They would see that the God's servant Moses was equipped for the task and that God would deliver the Israelites.

Wonders like the ones we see in Exodus are utterly jaw dropping. However, it must be noted that not everyone who sees wonders are amazed or believe. In fact, some disbelieve and ignore their source. Wonders are all around us everywhere but some will choose to explain them away rather than giving credit to the Creator who made them.

💬 Why are magic tricks, illusions and the supernatural so appealing to people? What is the difference between God's wonders and ordinary magic? Why does God have power over natural laws?



- How did God make Moses like God to Pharaoh? How did Moses represent God? How are you a representative of God to people around you?

- God explains to Moses what will happen while they perform the wonders before Pharaoh and how Pharaoh will respond. Is it helpful to know this in advance? How is it helpful to know that everyone won't believe God, even as you share these truths with them?

- What was the root of Pharaoh's hard heart? What sins or problems cause a callous or indifferent heart?

- What is God expecting the Egyptians to realize as these wonders are performed? How is God chiseling at their ideas of God?

- Did everyone believe the signs and wonders? When Jesus was alive how were the responses of the Pharisees similar to Pharaoh's? Why does God perform miracles? How do miracles show God's mercy?



- Does the inclusion of Moses and Aaron's ages surprise you? What assumptions do we make about age and serving God? How does this story help or challenge that assumption?
- Do you have faith in what God has done or what he has said? What would you believe about God if he would only prove it to you? What wonders around you show the hand of God?



Disaster

EXODUS 7:14 - 11:10

Natural disasters happen everyday. We hear about hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, wildfires, tsunamis, floods, and droughts all causing havoc on the world. There is no place on earth that is immune to fate of the forces of nature.

In the Exodus story, we see the catastrophic unfolding of ten rapid-fire disasters that paralyze the Egyptian empire.¹⁷ God-ordains the disasters systematically to escalate from what begins as severe discomfort (7:14-8:19), becomes damage (8:20-9:12) and national dread (9:13-10:27), which ends in death (11:1-10).¹⁸

God gives two reasons for the disasters upon the Egyptians. First, **it is God's plan to deliver his people.**¹⁹ Israel has been in bondage in Egypt. God has promised Moses and Israel that he will deliver them with a mighty hand. That time had come. The disasters were a visual reminder that God was God and there was no other.²⁰

Although the Hebrews were protected from most of the disasters they were not untouched by the first three. There are times when the judgment for sin singes those around them and this is what happen to the Israelites, since they were living in close quarters to the Egyptian households as their slaves

Second, **it is God's purpose that the world would know he is the One True God.**²¹ The disaster were essentially cosmic battle between Pharaoh and God. From the beginning Pharaoh questioned, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey Him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go." (5:2). It was a taunt in a battle that Pharaoh nor the gods of Egypt would win.

Later God shared that the disasters were a judgment upon "the gods of Egyptians." (12:12) God indeed embarrassed and crushed the Egyptian gods, but in the process he hardened Pharaoh's heart. Even though Pharaoh had a god-complex he couldn't keep the cosmic order. Only God could do that.

¹⁷ Since the plagues each occurred in a short period of time it is unlikely to explain them naturally. God may have sent a series of "natural" disasters (the sort of disasters to which Egypt was geographically prone) but so heightened them—and sent them in such rapid succession—that they constituted miracles.

¹⁸ "Thus says the LORD" 7:8, 14; 8:1, 16, 20; 9:1, 8, 13; 10:1, 21; 11:1. It is the LORD who is makes the command in 7 of 10 plagues.

¹⁹ "Let My people go" 5:1; 7:16; 8:1, 20-21; 9:1, 13; 10:3-4.

²⁰ Exodus 10:1-2; 11:7; 14:31; Deuteronomy 4:32-35, Psalms 135:5-10.

²¹ cf. 6:7; 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 16, 29; 10:2; 14:4, 18)



The disasters help the Egypt, Israel and the world to know that God is God alone. He is a jealous God and doesn't allow for competing gods or people to take his glory. God would bring the greatest empire on earth and its ruler to ruins.

God warns over and over of the consequences of sin and God-substitutes. This story is preserved in biblical history so that the same mistake would not be repeated. That you would learn not to substitute God with lesser gods to satisfy your soul.

- Why did God send the plagues? How do the plagues show God's love and care for his people and at the same time his love for his own name?
- Which of the first nine plagues would have been the hardest, grossest, of scariest for you to endure?
- How can discomfort draws you to God or repel you from God? Does God seem mean to send the plagues?
- How would the plagues have impacted Egypt's economy and psyche? By the third plague Egypt's magicians could not duplicate the plagues anymore, why? What did they conclude? (8:18-19)
- What do you learn about Pharaoh's resolve in his gods or self? How does this contribute to his stubbornness?



- What do you notice about Pharaoh's response to each plague in succession? What does it show about his belief in Israel's God? How did God show his power over Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods?

- How was the Egyptian's response different than Pharaoh's? How is pride so controlling? How have you seen pride have that kind of control in your life?

- Have you ever ignored God's warning and sinned anyway? What was the consequence or outcome? How does repentance change the outcome?

- What are some God-substitutes you love so much that they can compete with your love for God? How have you bargained with God like Pharaoh did?

- How has Moses confidence in God grown? (7:1; 11:8) How have hard times grown your confidence in God?



God Preserves & Saves (Exodus 12-17)

Passover

EXODUS 12:1-32

If you have been to Washington DC then you know you cannot cross a street without seeing a Memorial. They are everywhere. National monuments mark events such as wars or important events in our nations history. Even our calendar is marked by these events in which you are meant to celebrate and remember the significant moments in the nations past.

The Passover was a significant event in Jewish history. As the tenth and final plague the Passover was the most personal and gruesome of the plagues. Not a family in Egypt was left untouched or unaffected, even Pharaoh the king of Egypt lost his own firstborn son. God had warned Pharaoh that this day would come, but he did not listen nor let Israel go free. The Passover event was God's promise procuring Israel's release from slavery.²²

The Passover preparations were significant and symbolic. Before the Passover happened the Israelites were given a detailed list of instructions. They were to choose a spotless lamb, slaughter it, mark their doorposts with its blood, cook it and waste nothing. They were also to go to bed with their shoes on and belts fasten on in order to make haste out of the land of Egypt.

Remembering the Passover is not only significant for the Jew, but also for the Christian. All throughout the Passover are symbols pointing to Jesus, the Lamb of God. Jesus came to release people from the bondage and spiritual slavery. The exodus we are given through Jesus is the far greater getting out as he procured our eternal freedom. Just as Israel got out of Egypt, Jesus gets us out of slavery to sin. There was a cost to getting out; for Egypt it was the death of their firstborn sons and for us it was the death of Jesus, God's firstborn. There was no way of getting out on our own; for the Israelite they had no weapons or power and for us we are powerless to save ourselves. God had to flex his power and grace.

Just as the Jews were to be ready for their release the Christian is called to be prepared too. Jesus will come back again one day and we must be ready for his return. In the mean time, we are to live our lives in such a way that begs people to ask us, "Why do you live this way?" This happens when as you take time to celebrate and remember what Jesus did, is doing, and will do for you.

²² Ironically, the Passover also redeemed Israel's their loss of sons a generation earlier, cf. 1:22



- What are some significant events in our nations history? How do we remember these events?

- What symbols within the Passover event do you see fulfilled in Jesus Christ? (vs.43-51; cf. 1 Peter 1:19) Why did God have Israel sacrifice a spotless lamb? Why does Jesus spotless life make him the lamb who died for our sins?

- As you put yourself in the story, how do you react to God's judgement and the amount of deaths at God's hands? Why would God do act so gruesomely?

- Just as the Israelites were to be prepared for the Passover, how does Jesus tell you to be ready for his return?²³ How can you be prepared?

- What is the significance of memorials or remembrances? Do you have memorials or symbolic practices in your home that cause people to ask why you are doing this?

²³ Matthew 24:36-44



- How does communion in the church help us to remember Jesus and the Passover? Why is it important to remember what Jesus, did, is doing, and will do?

- What are some things you sacrifice for the sake of Jesus? How does your life point people to Jesus?

- How can your family be more self-sacrifice and serve one another? How can this be a picture of Jesus to others who observe you?



The Exit

EXODUS 12:33 - 14:31

Have you ever left some place you didn't really want to be? We've all felt uncomfortable or stuck in certain places. Maybe it was the DMV. After waiting hours to get your updated drivers license you leave with less in your pocket and all you got was a lousy photo that you're stuck with for the next six years.

The Israelites were stuck in Egypt for more than 400 years. All they knew for generations was the sweat of hard labor, cracks of whips, and table scraps. Finally, after a miracle of God they were set free. Free. Let that sit with you for a moment.

As excited as they would be to exit Egypt and get a free ticket out of there, they wouldn't be garden paradise the moment they step foot outside Pharaoh's presence. They were still a long way away from where they needed to be. Millions would be leaving the only home they'd ever knew to a land that God promised, but they'd never seen.²⁴ Yet **God would keep watch over them.**

God's deliverance would be forever memorialized. Since he so miraculously delivered his people from an impossible situation, God had Moses issue a Passover feast that would be passed down to every Jewish generation throughout their history. The Passover meal would not only be a celebration, but it would remembrance of their miraculous exit by God's mighty hand.

God would create reminders for parents and their children. The Passover came at a cost of thousands of lives. A generation prior the Egyptian Pharaoh murdered all the firstborn male Jews, which led to Moses adoption into Pharaoh's house. Then God ordered the death of all firstborn male Egyptians not protected by the blood of the lamb, which included Pharaoh's son and his release of Hebrews. Now Moses ordered the consecration of all firstborn male men or beast to be given to God as an honorary sacrifice, but this time no blood would be shed.

God would lead his people. He did not lead them via a bypass or shortcut. He was going to lead them the long way. In God's way nothing happens quickly or painlessly, however, he would lead his people distinctly and faithfully. He led them by a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Wherever it would go, they would go. Wherever it stayed them would stay. It marked God's presences and provision. It was a visible display that he was leading them like a good Father.

They Israel only had to be willing to follow. That would be immediately be put to the test as they were brought a dead end at the Red Sea.

²⁴ Moses even took Joseph's bones with him, fulfilling a promise mentioned generations before. Genesis 50:25; Joshua 24:32; Hebrews 11:22; Acts 7:16



Pharaoh had a change of heart. He wanted revenge on the Hebrews and their God. With the most powerful army on earth Pharaoh led them to the heels of the Hebrew people at the Red Sea. The Hebrews panicked. It seemed that at the Red Sea the Hebrews lost all faith and doubted God's faithfulness. They threw out the window all that they had seen and experienced in Egypt. They were experiencing their first test whether God was really for them and with them.

In the end, **God relieves the doubts and fears of his people and shows them his mighty power.** God isn't about to let his people be squashed by an army or swim for their lives. He will lead them on a shortcut this one time through the Red Sea and onto safety. Remember, God was the watchman of his people. Not only did this confirm Moses as their leader, but it also confirmed that God would do as he promised.

Sometimes God has to bring us to the place where we are stuck and uncomfortable to realize how little we can help ourselves. Sometimes we can be in that place a long time, before we can marvel at the mighty hand of God. Just like Israel before us, it is good to remember all that God has done in our past, particularly in bringing us out of sin and spiritual slavery, lest we forget that he is for us and with us forevermore.

Imagine that you are a Hebrew and you are leaving Egypt for the first time in hundreds of years. What would be going through your mind? What appreciation or joy must they have been feeling?

How did God miraculously exit his people from Egypt? What amazes you about God in this story? How would you have responded to God after seeing this with your own eyes?

How have the memorial practices kept the story alive until today? How do the memorials of the Passover, consecration of the firstborn, and Feast of Unleavened Bread help us to remember back the Exodus story and point forward to the story of Christ?



- How do you see the faithfulness of God on display in these memorials? Why is it difficult for people to trust God, even when he has delivered them so miraculously?

- How does the the Israel's exit from Egypt relate to your own story of being miraculously delivered out of sin and spiritual slavery? Why is it good to remember or memorialize your own story?

- What is the purpose of Joseph's bones add to the story? What did Joseph know about the promised land despite never seeing it or attaining it? How does it aid the Bible's theme for believers being strangers in a strange land?

- Why don't miracles and God's marvelous ways erase all doubt? How do stories like this remind us of our own proneness to doubt? How does reminders of God's power help us to face our doubts?



Bitter/Sweet

EXODUS 15

Music is everywhere. Shop in a store, drive in a car, watch a sporting event or sitcom, or visit a church, and you will hear music. Humans are musical beings. Even though everyone may not like to make music everyone likes a style or genre of music.

Music is in the Bible. The Psalms are the most obvious song lyrics which were set to music. David was known to play music. Many of the prophets penned songs, even Moses wrote songs. What is even more interesting is the number are commands in the Bible to sing. Among commands such as “Thou shall not murder” or “thou shall not commit adultery” there are commands to “make a joyful noise unto the Lord.”

Doesn't that seem a bit strange? Why would God command singing? It reveals a lot about God. Not just that he is a music lover, but that he loves to express himself in song and joy and worship.

Messages set to music can often communicate more than mere words. Music touches and moves a part of the heart and soul that words by themselves cannot.

In Moses song, he reflects back on all that God is done—how God has helped protect his people and provide a way for them to cross the Red Sea. Moses can't help but belt it out in song. His soul has welled up within him a passionate melody of all that God has done and is. Moses describes God as a strong warrior, glorious king, and steadfast leader. He is sovereign, powerful, fearful, and great.

It may come as a shock that shortly after this song is sung the memory of the miraculous Red Sea crossing fades. The people begin wandering in the desert. They become thirsty. Their songs of joy turned to complaints to Moses that the water is bitter and undrinkable. Moses cried out to God.

Here God put his people to the test. They have a choice. They can either complain or trust God. They have already seen that God is with them providing and protecting, even in some enormous pickles. From here on out God is asking them to trust him, listen to him, and walk rightly. The consequences are as grim as the judgments they saw happen to the Egyptians.

In the end, God provided another miraculous solution that turned the bitter water sweet. God was incredibly patient with people. He heard their grumbling. He knew their forgetfulness and neediness. He was their help. Like a loving father, he worked with them and patiently prodded them along.



- As you read the song of Moses, can you imagine it set to music? A good song has memorable lyrics. What lyrics in this song grab you?
- Why do you think Moses and the people of Israel sang? What about the situation was sing-worthy?
- Do you have a favorite song about God? What makes it so special or memorable to you?
- Songs are meant to teach and touch the soul. What do you learn about God from the song? Which of these attributes of God do you celebrate in church today? Which do you rarely celebrate? Why is it important to celebrate all that is true about God?
- What do you learn about the Red Sea crossing from Moses song that you did not learn from Exodus 14?

🗣️ How did the tune change from sweet to bitter in this chapter? How can it take only a short time to go from sweet to bitter?²⁵

🗣️ How did the bitter water in the wilderness mimic Israel's hearts? What conditions did God make for Israel? How do these conditions reflect on the heart?

🗣️ How have you seen God turn a bitter situation into a sweet one?

🗣️ How has God been your help? Have you every too quickly forgotten God's provision and protection? What can you do to help yourself remember the God of the past in order to impact your present?

🗣️ Take a moment to write your own song to God for all that he has done and is?

²⁵ Note: The Israelites were only in the wilderness three days before they started grumbling.



Grumble or Gratitude

EXODUS 16-17

There may be a few things to grumble about, but there are more than a billion reason to be grateful. When we are hungry, tired, and uncertain the gravitational pull to grumble is greater. But when we are well-fed, energized, and secure the pull is towards gratitude. This pull was seen clearly in the people of Israel.

Only a few days after Israel was rescued from being crushed on the shore of the Red Sea, Israel stepped foot into the wilderness. They were hungry, the miracles they witnessed to get them there were already yesterdays news, and they were uncertain about what was next. Slavery in Egypt seemed safer and more pleasant than the wilderness. Therefore they grumbled to Moses.

God hears and provides. The sound of those grumbles made their way to God's ears. He didn't tune out his complaining children, but heard them like a loving Father and he met their needs. God made it rain bread. Six mornings a week the people could gather manna to bake and eat. On the sixth day he gave a double portion, which would last them through the Sabbath and allowed them to rest.

Manna was only a slice of God's provisions, he also provided quail, water and military assistance. When faced with the enemy king named Amalek, God provided strength if Moses' arms were held high. Moses couldn't do it alone. When he grew tired and weary, Aaron and Hur held up his arms so that the armies of Israel prevailed. Each man did his part and God partnered with them, but ultimately it was God name was on the victory banner.

God is generous. When God gives he gives his best. Manna wasn't just good to the taste, it would keep his people alive. Manna wasn't just a onetime gift, but God gave it every morning six days a week for forty years. This living bread would be memorialized throughout Israel's journey and history. In Exodus 16:33, the people of Israel were commanded to set aside a jar of manna as a symbolic reminder so that future generations would know of God's provision—that God fed his people.

Grumbling is ultimately against God. Although the people grumbled against Moses, God made it clear that their grumbling was really leveled at him. Grumbling doubts that God is generous and disbelieves he will provide. It is not the circumstances we grumble against, but our belief about God in those circumstances. Yet God still provided generously amidst grumbling. Get that!

Gratitude celebrates our true riches, but grumbling brings us to poverty. There are a billion reasons to be grateful for all the little ways God provides each day, but those few things we choose to grumble about will drain us of all joy. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "Gratitude changes the pangs of memory into a tranquil joy."



- Have you ever been really hungry? What was that experience like? What did it feel like in your body? How do you normally act or interact with others when you're hungry?

- Who are the enemies that the people of Israel are combatting? Think of both their enemies on the inside and outside. Which enemy is the most difficult to conquer? Why?

- How did God provide for his people and their needs? Why does he continue to provide for them even though they doubt and grumble? What does this teach you about God?

- How does a lack of a physical or spiritual need tempt us to grumble? How is gratitude a remedy for grumbling?



● How have you seen God provide for your physical and spiritual needs? How has he provided for you when the circumstances seemed hopeless? How does God partner with you to meet those needs? Or use you to meet the needs of others?

● Make a list of things you are grateful for this week. What symbol or manna jar could you creatively display to tell of God's provision to your children?



God Promises (Exodus 18-40)

Strength and Wisdom

EXODUS 18-19

Burnout is likely the farthest thing from the mind of a young person looking to take on the world full of new adventures. Yet with time expectations grow, responsibilities are added, pressure to succeed is high, and the cost great. And so is the probability of burnout.

Moses grew up in Pharaoh's house. He had the best teaching from the best pedigree of his day. On top of that, he was God's man called from the burning bush, called to stand up to Pharaoh, and called to lead the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. There was a lot to rejoice in. However, now in the wilderness with a mass of people Moses has a massive problem on his hands: *he was responsible for too much*. The nation looked to him and expected him to do it all and know it all. He was overwhelmed, depleted, and burned the torch from both ends, nearing burnout.

No man can do it all. Moses is in a situation where he can either *ask* for help or *accept* help. Jethro, his father-in-law, saw Moses burdened by micromanaging the needs of the people and gave him some timely advice, "What you're doing is not good. You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone." (18:17ff) Jethro then encouraged Moses to focus on his role before God as their leader, but delegate responsibilities to capable men to care for the burdens together.²⁶

Burnout is prevented when we ask for help or accept help from others. We need Jethro-like people to speak into our life. We are relational beings. When our work exceeds our relational gratification we will not succeed. We will burnout.

God brings order to chaos. Moses could have left this chaotic story out of his account of the Exodus, but he didn't. God had his intentions for Moses and Moses intentionally put it in for all to read for all time. Moses wanted everyone to know he wasn't a one man show. He had limitations as a leader. Moses was called to lead, but God was the Caller. Moses wasn't god. He was God's representative. There is a big difference.

Man is created with limitations. We are limited in strength and wisdom. The Creator on the other hand is without limitations. He is all-powerful and all-wise. If we work out of our limited strength and wisdom without help from God and others we will burnout.

²⁶ Ironically, Jethro was not a Jew and was a priest to a foreign god, but when he heard all that God did for Israel he acknowledged the God of Israel as the One True God and sacrificed to him.



God values obedience to his voice. God led his people to Mount Sinai and God said to Moses, “If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples.” (19:5-6a) Then Moses commanded the people to purify themselves, stay away from the mountain, and wait. They did as Moses said. A cloud covered the mountain, God came down to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up to meet God. It must have been a fearful moment for Moses to step foot into the holy the presence of God so dramatically.

When Moses came back down from the mountain he told the people all that God said. This became Moses’ new role and Israel’s responsibility. He met with God on behalf of the people. He told the people what God said and the people were to obey everything God told Moses. Sinai itself became a special place to Moses and the people of Israel. It is where God met with them and where God humbled their leader.

God will put you in places or surround you with people who will help lead you to God. In that special place and through these special people he will remind you of his strength and wisdom. Namely, that you can’t do it all alone, that God loves to bring order to your chaos, and that he treasures you. Listen. And you will burn bright rather than burnout.

☞ Recall a time in your life when you were on the edge of burn out. What were the circumstances in your life at that time? Did you ask for help or did you accept help? Why or why not?

☞ What roles and responsibilities do you have (at home, work, church, etc.)? How can those roles or responsibilities be too much for you or lead to burn out?

☞ Why is it good that one person not be responsible for everything? Why is it important to share responsibilities? How can you do better at those things you dislike or share those things you enjoy? (see Matthew 11:30; Colossians 3:23-24)



- What is the importance of Moses including the story of Jethro helping him into the Exodus story. What does it reveal to you about God? Or about Moses?

- God has a history of bringing order to chaos. How does God bring order out of chaos for Moses? How have you seen God bring order to chaos in your life?

- What is a covenant? What was God's covenant with Israel? (19:4-6) How would this covenant sound to former slaves?

- As you reflect on the requirements and stipulations for approaching Mount Sinai, what does God want Israel to understand about obedience and holiness?

- How can you approach God today? How has Jesus changed the way we can approach God? (see Hebrews 12:18-29) How has our approach remained the same? What role does awe of holiness and respect for God play in the way you approach God?



Do you have a special place like Sinai that you can meet with God and enjoy his presence? What do you remember about this place? How often do you go there?



Path to Life

EXODUS 20:1-21

The Ten Commandments are likely some of the most well-known rules in the world. People know them well. People are also well aware that they don't keep them well at all.

The Bible can get a bad rap for being a book with a lot of do's and don't's. The Ten Commandments are just a summation of the 633 commands in the Bible. So why so many rules? What's their purpose? And are they still applicable to me today?

In order to understand the Ten Commandments (or any of the commands) you must go back to the beginning. And I mean way back, like at beginning when God created the world. God designed his relationship with mankind. In the garden, God gave Adam and Eve one command—not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Why just one rule? It wasn't a test. It wasn't to be cruel. It wasn't to withhold something very good. It was to protect them. It was to guide them to the path of life. Eating from that one tree was disobedience. Disobedience meant death. God desired Adam and Eve to live life to the fullest, the best, and happiest.

Later when God gave the laws to Moses to give to the people of Israel, he was doing so to continue to protect and guide them. They had just been freed as slave in Egypt and now they were on their own in the wilderness. God was pointing them to the path to life. It was a very loving thing for God to give his people rules to live by. Although he knew they wouldn't be able to keep all the rules all the time, he would later send One who would keep and fulfill them all. God had all this in mind when he gave the law.

God gave the law as a moral compass, a roadmap of righteousness, a GPS of divine guidance. God's laws are concise, guiding and timely. God's laws are different than a Garmin that gets you to a destination quickly and without difficulty. Sometimes the path to life has hills and valleys, detours and recalculations, beautiful scenery and horrific incidents. However, God's laws are like loving guardrails to keep you on the best life-giving path.

The 10 Commandments can be summed up into two groupings—loving God and loving man. The first four commands govern how you love God and the next six govern how you love man. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)

God gives rules and commandments because he loves you and wants you to love him and others. Love is governing motivation under all the rules. This still applies today. And it is still the best path to a full and happy life.



- Why are rules and laws important? What would it be like if there were no laws in your country or rules for driving?
- How many of the 10 Commandments do you know by memory?
- Why is verse two so important? Why is it important that it comes before the very first commandment? How does it speak to all that happened before and will happen after?
- What characteristics about God do you learn from the law?
- As you read through the commandments do you notice any patterns? Is there a progression or grouping to the commandments?
- How does Deuteronomy 5:12-15 compare to Exodus 20:8-11? How does it expand your understanding of the Sabbath?

🗣️ How does Deuteronomy 5:4-5 and 5:24-29 compare to Exodus 20:18-21? How does it expand your understanding on why God gave the law?

🗣 According to Matthew 5:21-31, what purpose does the Ten Commandments have on our life today? How does Jesus call for deeper obedience?

As you consider the personal relationships that are mentioned in the Ten Commandments, which are the hardest for you to obey? What is God calling you to do in response?

Do you see the laws of God as a blessing from him? How do the laws protect and guide? How are they meant to bring life, not dread or drudgery?



Path of Love

EXODUS 20:21 - 24:11

Some of God's rules are wise and some are completely weird. We see both kinds of laws in the book of Exodus. For example, "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.." (Exodus 23:19) Or Exodus 21:17, a kid who curses their parents is to be put to death. And if you set your slave free after six years, but he decides to stay, then you shall bring him to the doorpost and bore a hole in his ear (Exodus 21:5).

There is good reason for these rules, but sometimes God doesn't give details why these rules are to be obeyed. He just says do it. Yet deep down God still gives meaning to it. Mostly, from God's law we learn about God.

God is pure. When God told the people not to eat a goat burger in milk or telling them not to mix wool and linen. He was teaching the Israelites to keep things separate. It was a visual illustration of God's own purity and holiness.

God gives promises. The Law shows God's love and care to Israel while they were in the wilderness. They had no home. No country. Only promises. Israel had been slaves for 400 years in Egypt. They were oppressed. Slavery was part of the economy of the day. The slave laws protected their lives. Showed dignity towards life. God promised freedom and a new start every six years. The new rules gave them a way out and a way to stay in a good situation too. These promises showed God's deep love and care for his people.

God is present. God dealer with his people and he wanted no rivals. He was serious when he said "Pay attention to all that I have said to you, and make no mention of the names of other gods, nor let it be heard on your lips." (Exodus 23:13) God is a jealous God and he didn't even want his people to even say the names of rival gods. Why when you have a precious God who is always present protecting, caring and loving.

God provides. It is good to go back and see how God has provided for this people. The law shows us how he builds in provision for them. For example, "You can't kill a burglar during the day." (Exodus 22: 2-3) The idea here is that killing a burglar at night was most likely an act of self-defense, but killing them during the day was a missed opportunity to identify and catch the thief. There was also the belief that nighttime break-ins implied a "murderous intent" and thus to "shed the blood of the burglar" was justified. In other words, everyone deserves a chance at life and a just hearing.

Overall, the law leads us down a path of love. God's love for his people. God's transcendence (majesty and authority) and his immanence (intimate involvement in the lives of his people) are both reflected in his commands. They teach us a lot about God and a lot about what he thinks about us.



- How do these laws show both God's transcendence and immanence?
- What wise and weird laws do you learn about from Exodus 20:22-24:11? Do you see any patterns in the laws mentioned? Who do they protect?
- How do these laws honor and celebrate God? How do they point to God's loving care for his people?
- How does Matthew 26:26-29 help you understand Exodus 24:9-11? How does it give you a hope for the future?
- There will be a day when you will get to see God face to face and enjoy a special feast. In your life, when have you experienced glimpses of this future hope? How can you intentionally create space in your life to experience such hope?



- Imagine what Exodus 24:6-8 would look, smell and feel like for all that blood to be thrown against the altar of God and upon yourself. How does this put your sin into perspective?

- How do these laws apply to Christians today? In other words, what timeless truths does it communicate regarding justice, community, stewardship of property and the value of human life?

- Aaron got to see Exodus 24 and then go back and be with the people while Moses went further up the mountain with Joshua. After hearing from the Lord directly and eating and drinking in God's presence, why do you think Aaron turned so quickly to other gods? What do you think it was like to eat and drink in the presence of the Lord on the mountain?



Pathway to God

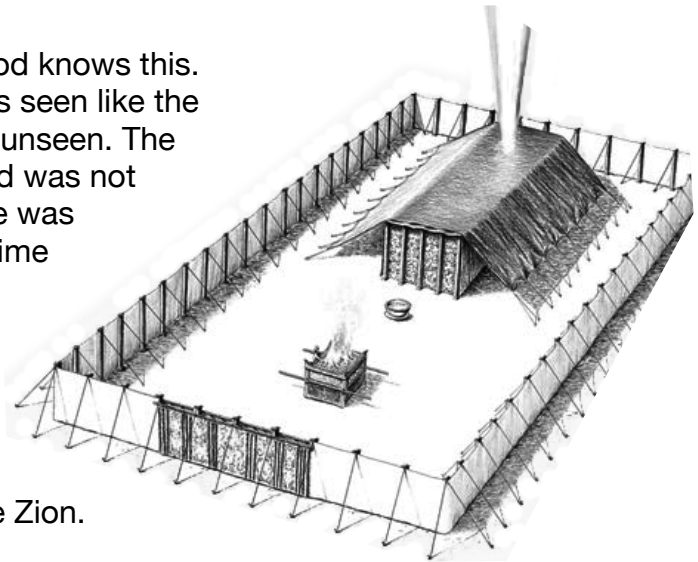
EXODUS 25:1 - 27:19

God is an architect. He not only designed the universe, the world and humans, but he also designed buildings and places of worship.

God's most famous building project was the tabernacle. The tabernacle was designed to house the presence of God. Moreover he designed it so that his people were reminded that he dwelled among them. While God cannot be contained to a building it was representative of his omnipresence.

It is easy to forget that God is present. God knows this. Since he cannot be seen something that is seen like the tabernacle helps remind us about what is unseen. The tabernacle was a visible reminder that God was not far away in a distant galaxy or heaven. He was present. Right here and now. In history, time and space.

God is a God who dwells among us. All throughout the Bible, he illustrates his presence beginning at creation in the garden, in the tabernacle, in Christ, in the church, in the Holy Spirit, and in future Zion.



Having the realization that God is present is both precious and powerful. It is precious because God is personal, relatable, and is close. It is powerful because he is accessible, active, and attentive to us in all circumstances.

When God designed the tabernacle he not only had the basic blue prints, he also designed the smallest details, measurements, materials, furniture, and utensils. Each item had purpose and use. They all pointed to the character of God and our need. God is intimately connected to the details of the building and design, but more so he is intimately connected to the people who would utilize the building.

God spared no expense for the tabernacle. It took gold, fine linen, precious wood. God wasn't frugal when it came to the materials he required. It was extravagant, which tells us a little about his attention to beauty.

The tabernacle was given by God to teach truth. Like a visual aid it taught his people about his character, comforting them, and assuring them of hope from their sin. Each piece of furniture showed the sinners need, showed God's provision, and pointed to the coming of Jesus.



The tabernacle was designed by God for God to dwell among his people. It represented his desire to be with them and it gave them a pathway to come to God. Ultimately, the tabernacle points to Jesus Christ who “tabernacled” among us (John

Tabernacle Furniture	Connection between God and Man
The Ark of the Covenant (25:10-22)	God <i>reigns</i> over sinners.
The Table for Bread (25:23-30)	God <i>fellowships</i> with sinners.
The Golden Lampstand (25:31-40)	God gives <i>light</i> to sinners.
The Tabernacle (26:1-37)	God <i>dwells</i> with sinners.
The Curtain (26:1-14)	God is <i>separate</i> from sinners.
The Bronze Altar (27:1-8)	God <i>saves</i> sinners.
The Incense (30:1-10)	God <i>hears</i> sinners.
The Laver (30:17-21)	God <i>cleanses</i> sinners.

1:14) and his Spirit who still does.

💬 What's the most impressive thing you've ever built or crafted?

💬 Why do you think God was so intimately connected with the smallest details and measurements of the tabernacle? Why would God record all the details rather than summarizing the details?

💬 Read Genesis 3:8 and 3:22-24 and Exodus 25:17-22. How does the tabernacle give a picture of Eden?



- How is the theme of God's presence pictured throughout the Bible? Which image resonates with you? Why do you need reminders of God's presence? Where does God dwell now?²⁷

- What was God's intention and purpose for the tabernacle? How do you see echoes of God's grand purpose in Genesis 17:7-8 and Exodus 6:7 and 29:45-46?

- The Israelites had a lot of practical needs while in the wilderness—they needed for food, water and safety. Why would God design such an extravagant, laborious building project?

- One of the items in the tabernacle was the ark of the covenant (aka: mercy seat). Why was it called the mercy seat? What is mercy? Why was mercy from God and for one another so important?

- The ark of the covenant was where God met with Moses. Where does you gather during the week to meet with God? How can that be a time of mercy seeking and mercy sharing?

²⁷ cf. Genesis 3:8; Exodus 40:34; Chronicles 7:1-3; Matthew 3:16-17; Colossians 1:19; Romans 8:9; Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3



- Read 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19. How does the language of these verses connection you to the tabernacle? How should it change the way you live? How is this reality better than what the Hebrews had in the tabernacle?
- Read Ephesians 2:19-22 and Revelation 21:1-4. Although God is with you now, how does the future dwelling parallel with Eden? How should the hope of dwelling with God in eternity make a difference to you now?



Path into God's Presence

EXODUS 27:20 - 29:46

God is into fashion and design. Did you know that? He first made Adam and Eve coverings made out of animal skins (Genesis 3:21). He even designed for priest special outfits for priests to wear while they worshiped. Isn't that interesting?

The outfits God designed for the priests were elaborate and expensive. More importantly Exodus 28:2 says they were "sacred garments" to be worn with "dignity and honor."

While such garments may seem odd today, God used them to set his spiritual leaders apart from all his people. Each piece of the priestly garments held significance related to their work and it was a visual aid to the Israelites priestly work before God.

There were certain distinguishing marks of the outfit that were especially symbolic. The breast piece of twelve stones was a focal part of the high priest's outfit. It symbolized that the high priest represented the twelve tribes of Israel before God (Exodus 28:29). It was called the "breast piece of decision" because the *Urim and Thummim* within the breast piece were used to determine God's will in various matters.

The high priest was required to have gold bells attached to the hem of his garment, so that "the sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the Lord and when he comes out, so that he will not die" (Exodus 28:35). While the bells were heard, others would know that the priest was still alive and that he had been accepted by God.

The turban worn on the priest's head had a gold plate placed at the forehead. Inscribed on it were the words "Holy to the Lord." God was serious that it should be worn and "will be on Aaron's forehead continually so that [the children of Israel] will be acceptable to the Lord" (Exodus 28:38). This reminder of consecration, placed so conspicuously, symbolized the importance of approaching God in holiness.

Following the initial design, God consecrated their clothes. Even before they were worn or used God said





what he would like the man who wore them to be like. This was the ideal priest he had in mind. It was planned that the clothes came before the man. No man was worthy of the clothes or the job that came with it.

There would be one man who would wear the clothes and fulfill the role perfectly. Jesus the Great High Priest was the perfect idea man (Hebrews 4:14). All the garments worn by the priests pointed to Jesus and were symbolic of his atoning work for our sin. Jesus would be the final work and the high high priest. No other atonement was necessary. No other priest would be needed.

💬 What is the most elaborate or expensive outfit you have ever worn? Why did you wear it?

💬 What aspects of the priests' preparation and consecration to service stick out to you? Why do you think God designed such a detailed ordination process? What does the priests outfit teach you about God?

💬 Imagine you are about to become a priest. You witnessed the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea. God visited you and your people at Mount Sinai in a frightful display. How would you view your new job?

💬 Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10 and 7:23-28. How does this compare and contrast to what you read in Exodus 28-29?



- God declared all Israel to be “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6), but he still appointed a formal priesthood. How do you see this idea being carried out in the New Testament Church?

- What are some unhealthy ways we can view our church leaders? How does knowing that Christ is our eternal and sinless High Priest help us to regard church leaders in healthy ways?

- Can you think of other people in the Bible whom God anointed for the work they were to do? (cf. 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:1ff, 1 Kings 1:39, Luke 4:18) How might God want you to serve others with that same purpose?

- The Day of Atonement was the biggest holiday of the year for Israel. It was the day when one lamb was sacrificed for the atonement of the people's sin. What might that holiday be pointing toward? (Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 16)



- Read the following pairs of scriptures below. How did God guide his people in Exodus, as well as point to the perfect High Priest in Jesus.

Exodus 28:6-14 and Hebrews 9:28.

Exodus 28:15-30 and John 17:9-10.

Exodus 28:31-35 and John 19:2, 23.

Exodus 28:36-39 and Hebrews 7:26.

- Read Hebrews 10:19-22. Why do Christians today get to approach God with confidence, when in Exodus only the high priest could do it and only once a year? What difference does Christ's blood make?

- What would you say to someone who asks, "How good do I have to be to talk to God and expect Him to listen?" What does it mean to you that you are called a priest? How can this help you remember your dependence on God each day?



Smells, Baths and Sabbaths

EXODUS 30-31

In college I worked at JC Penney in the suits department. This was a decent paying job and I was able to build up a nice collection of suits myself. The suits department was located next to the fragrances department. Before my shift I would wander over and squirt a sample of expensive cologne on my suit.

Why are we drawn to sweet and aromatic smells? Each person has their favorite smell. What is yours? Is it flowers, freshly washed clothes, perfume, baked cookies, or grilled meat?

We are drawn to smells because God is. He not only like smells, but he designed a basin for washing and he designed a rhythm for rest and worship. How we worship is very important to God. Notice how God cares for our mind and body through the design of the temple.

God likes sweet and sacred smells. When designing the temple God designed a special altar just for incense. He also gave recipes for the types of oil and incense to be used to anoint the altar, utensils, and the priests. The recipes were not to be sold for profit, made for personal use, or shared with anyone but a priest. It was solely for worship. Talk about 'essential' oils!

God likes cleanliness. It is not that cleanliness is next to godliness. That's not in the Bible. The bronze basin was more than a glorified hand washing station, it was a symbol of cleansing—a special bath for the priests. As they cleansed their hands, feet and head it was a picture of what they wanted God to do to the parts that no man could see, but only God could see.

God also likes rest. He said it. In fact, he said that above all the sabbath is to be kept. If not the consequence is death (cf. 35:1-3). That may sound a little harsh or steep—miss church and be killed. God knows that if we don't rest that we kill ourselves through our work. God knows that we tend towards work, work, and more work. He knows that we seek to be god of our time and pride ourselves on doing our work our way.

The roots of sabbath trace back to creation. God worked six days and then rested on the seventh day. It wasn't because he was tired and needed a Saturday afternoon nap. It was because the humans he created would. Rest is a way to strengthen our work. God set a rhythm of working out of our rest, not resting from our work.

Taking a day off of work is an act of faith in God to provide. It is also trusting God that he is wise and knows what our mind and body need to be restored for the week ahead.



- Do you have a favorite smell? What comes to mind when you smell this?

- Why do you think God was so specific about the scent recipes for the altar? How does the temple attract senses other than smell? What is the importance of senses in worship? How can the senses be distracted in worship?

- In your own words, describe the ingredients and purpose of the special oil God commands to be assembled? Why would it include salt? (30:35) Where else do you see salt in the Bible?

- Read 2 Corinthians 2:15-16. How are these verses true of your life? How does your life give off an aroma that identifies you as a follower of Christ?

- What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? (cf. 31:3) How did God equip the arts of the temple?



- What do you think the washing at the basin was a shadow of? (See Psalm 51:1-7; Ephesians 5:25-27; John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Timothy 2:19b-22) In what way is the washing of the bronze basin still being practiced by believers through all generations? How do you, personally seek to be cleansed of unrighteousness on a regular basis?

- What was God's purpose for the Sabbath? (cf. 31:12-18) How does Hebrews 4:9-10 add to the spiritual purpose of the Sabbath? Why does God take the Sabbath so seriously?

- What kind of works are believers to rest from? How is resting from work different than working out of rest? Why isn't the Sabbath doing nothing? How does God offer true rest? How has God refreshed you through rest?

- How can you honor the Sabbath each week?



Fast Track to Forgetfulness

EXODUS 32

Most of my friends in Chad, Africa don't know how to read. This doesn't mean they aren't smart. They have incredible memories. In fact, many of them have better memories than people who can read. Literate people write things down in journals or lists because they tend to forget. However, an oral mind can keep a list or retain the details of a story. If I gave my friend a verbal list of fifty items to get from the market he'd remember most of it. Or I can tell them a story once and they can remember most of the details perfectly.

Whether you can read or not we all gravitate towards forgetfulness. This is one reason why God created the Sabbath. It causes us to pause and remember. We are forgetful people.

The people of Israel were no exception. They took the fast track to forgetfulness, "When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

The first mistake was that **they forgot they already had a God**. They didn't need to "make" one. God had delivered them from Egypt. He had parted the Red Sea. He fed them delicious bread each day. He led them through the wilderness by a pillar. God was already present. He didn't leave when Moses left. They had forgotten.

They forgot that God crushed those gods in Egypt. The plagues were God's way of doing battle with the Egyptian gods, but it wasn't much of a fight. God blew them away like straw in the wind.

God remembers his promise. God commanded Moses to go down the mountain and warn the people of his jealous anger. Thank God for Moses because he really had the people's backs. He called on God's covenant with his people from Abraham until now. God remembered and withheld the full extent of his anger.

When Moses came down the mountain he saw the people dancing and singing around the golden calf. In a moment of wrath, he broke the stone tablets, crushed the idol, mixed it into water, and commanded the people to drink it. It was as if to say, "Drink your own poison."

Remember who's side you are on. Moses called the people to choose whether they were on God's side or not. Those who choose not God fell to the sword.



Remember God forgives and restores. Moses returned to the mountain to meet with God and ask for God to atone for the people's sin. The consequence for some was a fast track punishment. Ultimately, God forgave and restored his people.

A reason why the stories of the Exodus are repeated so often through out the Bible was to help God's people remember what God has done both to bless and curse. It is a reminder for us that God is slow to anger and abounds in love.

💬 What is the most valuable thing you own? What makes it valuable to you?

💬 Is there anything that surprise or startles you in this chapter? How can you relate to Moses, the people, and Aaron in this chapter?

💬 What did the people believe that led them to make a god? (vs.1-6) Who makes it? How did they make it?

💬 What is idolatry? What are some modern day idols? (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:1-14) How can we destroy them?



💬 What was God's response to the idol? (vs.7-10) What made him the most angry?

💬 How does Moses and his prayer remind you of Jesus? (vs.11-13) What can you learn from Moses' prayer about praying for those who reject God around you?

💬 How did Aaron try to cover up the sin? (v.24) Does this remind you of anyone else in the Bible? How did it go for you when you have tried to cover up something wrong?

💬 What in your life rivals God?

💬 How do you see God's grace and love on display in this chapter? How have you seen it in your life?



Idolatry

EXODUS 33-34

Have you ever done something wrong and your punishment was far less than it should have been? Have you ever felt the fallout from a wronged relationship? The Israelites had just committed treason against God. They made for themselves another god to worship. God did not let them off easy, but he didn't annihilate them either. Exodus 33-34 show us the aftermath of sin and what it means for our relationship with God.

Idolatry affects our relationship with God. After the golden calf incident God said to Moses, "I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people (like a golden calf)." (33:3) Although God spared his people he's not willing to dwell within their midst. This is huge and sad at the same time. The people responded, "When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments." (33:4)

Think about it, God is offering them his blessing to enter the Promised Land but without a relationship with him. It may seem good at first to have the freedom to live like you want without God, but as the Israelites quickly understand that a life without God is fraught with fear and is back to a life of bondage. It isn't good at all. Not having a relationship with God is lonely, lifeless, and unprotected.

If we choose to make our own god often God will let you live with that god. It won't take long before you want a trade-in because that god is never present, never speaks, never guides, and never protects. Without God we have nothing.

Idolatry is not unforgivable. Isn't that good? Just because you wrong God he won't turn his back from you forever. The bleakness of sin makes God sweeter. Moses says to God, "If Your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not in Your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and Your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" (33:15-16) And God responds, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." (33:17)

As a way of shaking hands Moses asks to see God's glory. God says he cannot see him fully and live, but God comes near and covers Moses' face until he passes by so Moses can get a glimpse of God's backside. It is a powerful picture of God's glory.

God then takes two new tablets and establishes his covenant with his people. In essence, God restores his relationship not because of anything they did, but because of who he is. As Moses came down the mountain this time his face shined with the glory of God. Moses reflected God to his people in both his mercy and glory.



God didn't just begin his relationship with his people by giving them a list of rules. Instead, he courted them. Since they departed from Egypt he showed them why they should trust him. He held their hand all the way through the wilderness. He didn't bail on them entirely when they betrayed God and broke the relationship. God reached back to them and restored it better than it was before.

For us who know Christ, the cross of Christ is also beautiful. It's a place where the love of God was shown as he poured out his wrath against sinful humans upon Jesus. And until we understand how ugly our sin is, we won't know how immeasurable the love and mercy God is towards us. How like Moses, Christ restores us to God, but only better and forever.

☞ Have you ever done something wrong and your punishment was far less than it should have been? Have you ever felt the fallout from a wronged relationship? How have you felt like Israel in the aftermath of the golden calf incident?

☞ What does Exodus 33:11 mean for your prayer life? What aspects of prayer do you learn from Exodus 33-34? (e.g. praise, thanksgiving, confession, requests)

☞ What impresses you about God and Moses' conversation? (33:12-23) What does Moses request? What does God agree to? What is God's motivation for the way he responds?

☞ What does God say about himself? (34:6-7) How is this consistent with what you know about him throughout Exodus? What else do you learn about God? (34:10-28)



● How does Exodus 34:29-35 help you understand Jesus better? Why is he better than Moses? (cf. Hebrews 1:1-3; 3:1-4:13)

● Who do you know that has radiated the glory of God through their life, words or actions?

● When people look at your life, who would they say you worship? Would it be evident that you are follower of Christ?



Generous God

EXODUS 35-36

Who is the most generous person you know? Some may consider mega-philanthropists like Bill Gates, Warren Buffet or ____ Bezos who have pledged huge portions of their wealth to serve the poor and needy around the world.

When God directed Israel to build a tabernacle he designed it with elaborate features covered with gold, silver, bronze, special fabrics and animal skins. The budget for such a project would have been hefty and would call for many contributions and craftsmen.

The tabernacle wasn't just a building project, it was to be a symbol of God's presence and promise among his people. **The tabernacle was a project bigger than them.** As Moses called all Israel together he said, "Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord's contribution." (35:5) Then in a marvelous movement the people gave willingly and generously, "And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the Lord's contribution" (35:21)

Woman brought their jewelry to be melted down to overlay the furniture and gems for the priests garments, shepherds brought sheep to be skinned for the tent covering, some brought fabric or yarn to be used for the curtains, others brought oil for lamps or fragrance for incense, everyone paused from their jobs and used their skills to contribute toward crafting the tabernacle. Building the tabernacle was a sacrifice felt from the pocket of every man and woman in Israel.

Where did this kind of united generosity come from? It came from a generous God. **When you reflect on how generous God is it fills your heart with gratitude and results in a generous spirit.** It is not about how much you give that makes you generous, but how you give. A humble and grateful spirit is priceless.

Years later when Jesus was in the Temple he watch people coming to give their offerings (Mark 12:41ff). Many rich came and gave a lot, but one woman came and gave two small coins worth less than a penny. Jesus turned to his followers and said that this woman was more generous than all the rich men. How could such a small gift be so generous in Jesus' eyes? She gave everything she had and giving everything is at the very heart of Jesus who himself gave up his life for the sake of humanity. Likely he is the most generous person ever to live and walk on this world.

💬 Who is the most generous person you know? What makes a person generous? Why should you aspire to be generous?



- What do you learn about generosity from God?

- What kind of supplies and talents were needed to build the tabernacle? Does anything surprise you or intrigue you about the project? What would have been your role if you were among the people?

- Consider the diverse skills needed to construct the tabernacle and the spirit in which they served (35:30-36:4). What applications or parallels are there to the Church? Are there Scriptures to support this?

- Where would have Israel gotten all these supplies for the tabernacle? Do you think that would have made it harder or easier for them to be more generous?

- Do you notice any repeated words or phrases in Exodus 35:4-29? What idea is Moses emphasizing?



● Consider your own attitude towards your possessions and skills. What do you learn from the generosity of Israel? What perspectives need to change to allow you to grow in generosity?

● The people of Israel gave far above what was needed. Why were they so generous?

● Reflect on the generosity of God. How does that stir your heart to be generous yourself?



Glorious God

EXODUS 37-39

Sometime ago a friend of mine had a local African craftsman build him a bookshelf. He explained to the craftsman the height and width, then he showed the man a picture showing what he'd like the bookshelf to look like. A few days later the craftsman called my friend to let him know that his bookshelf was finished. My friend went to pick it up and he noticed that the shelf was in the shape of a trapezoid. After scratching his head and said, "I thought the bookshelf would be rectangle." The craftsman smiled and said, "The bookshelf is exactly like I saw in your picture and just as you described it." Sure enough the picture was taken from an angle looking down at the shelf. My friend ended up taking the bookshelf and it now sits in his living room as a fun story piece.

When God designed the furniture for the tabernacle and the garments for the priests he was very specific about the dimensions, materials, and their function. It wasn't normal household furniture, but each piece was unique and had a story. **The furniture was a visual aid that pointed to something (or Someone) bigger than the furniture itself. It pointed to the glory of God and how his glory lives among his people:**

The Ark and Mercy Seat: God reigns over sinners. This is where God met with the high priest and offers him mercy and atonement.

The Table: God fellowships with sinners. This is where the priests would take and eat of the twelve loaves of bread from week to week.

The Lamp: God gives light to sinners. This was a symbol of the Spirit of God's presence and his power as the light of the world (cf. Revelation 1:12-20; 4:5; John 1:9).

The Altar of Incense: God hears sinners. This is where fragrances and prayers were offered to God every morning and evening (cf. Psalm 141:2; Revelation 8:3-4).

The Altar of Burnt Offering: God saves sinners. This is where sacrifices were made and blood was shed.

The Bronze Basin: God cleanses sinners. This is where priests would cleanse and purify themselves (cf. Hebrews 10:22).

The Courtyard: A sacred space for sinners. This is where all God's people were welcome to come to the courtyard to sacrifice.

The tabernacle is not only the place where God's presence dwelled its furniture pointed to God and his peoples need of God. It was a tangible way for sinful people to interact with a glorious God. The tabernacle wasn't meant to be a permanent solution to this problem. It was only a tent that represented what only the future



Messiah would fulfill through his life, death and resurrection. Jesus himself became the tabernacle who dwell among us (John 1:14).

💬 What piece of furniture in your house is your favorite and why?

💬 Which piece of furniture in the tabernacle intrigues you?

💬 How does the location of each piece of furniture relate to the materials used to build them? Or the special function designed for them?

💬 Only one piece of furniture in the tabernacle functions as a place to sit. Why would that be significant? (cf. Hebrews 8:1)

💬 What was special about the Ark and the Mercy Seat? Why could no one touch it? (cf. Exodus 25:22) What do you learn here about God's holiness and mercy?

💬 Why was water and blood common addition to many of the furniture items used in the tabernacle?



- Why were there no expense spared or half-hearted labor when it came to building the tabernacle? Where are you most tempted to skirt your responsibilities? (Colossians 1:24-29; 3:23-24)

- Consider the materials used to construct the curtains (38:16-18) with those used for the priestly garments (39:27-29). What is similar? How is this symbolic?

- How would the priest garments stood out among the rest of Israel? What does it mean to be clothed in righteousness? (cf. Isaiah 59:14-20; 61:10-11) How is Jesus our spiritual clothing? How does being clothed in his righteous help you look different than others?

- On the outside the tabernacle was plain and looked like a big tent, but the further you got inside the more elaborate and stunning it would have become. How is this a lot like Jesus? How is this like your own story of salvation?

- How does the tabernacle reflect the glory of God? How does it allow people to have access to God?

- How can you approach God with confidence today? How does Jesus make this possible?



Pulled In

EXODUS 40

The day had arrived. It was the Jewish New Year. The Tabernacle was to be erected and anointed for the first time. It was a memorable day. Every one in Israel had chipped in money, supplies and talents to build the tabernacle, not for themselves but as the dwelling place for their God.

Can you imagine the eagerness and excitement in their spirits? Can you imagine the procession as they placed the pieces of the tabernacle in their place? Can you imagine the smells as they fired up the altar and burned the incense? Can you imagine being there as you read through the text?

The people built the tabernacle as God had said. They put things in their places as God had said. They erected and anointed everything as God had said. Israel and Moses' obedience to God in the details were astounding.

After the tabernacle was erected and anointed a cloud came and covered the tabernacle. This must have been a fearful and awesome sight. The glory of God filled the tabernacle. The cloud represented God. Whenever the cloud moved the people moved. Whenever the cloud stayed the people stayed. From then on a visible reminder of the presence of God was among the people day and night.

The tabernacle wasn't just a tent it was where God dwelled with his people. A holy God lived with his people and would never leave them.

The tabernacle pulled in the people towards God. The people had been pulled in and pulled back to God. Notice how God redeemed Israel and their history. The gold from the golden calf idol has been refashioned for service to God. The priest who commissioned the golden calf has been consecrated for service to God. The people who chased after idols have witnessed the glory of God descend on His tabernacle. The tabernacle pointed to a greater redemption to come for a world in need of a Redeemer.

💬 Have you ever been a part of a dedication service? What makes these moments so special?

💬 Why were the tabernacle and the priests anointed before they were put into service?



- What phrase or words are repeated often between verses 16-33? Why is this significant?

- God commands a place to be created for him to dwell. He fills it with everything necessary for worship. He commissions it with priests to serve Him. He then descends to live in his sanctuary. What parallels do you see to Genesis 1? What parallels do you see to Revelation 21?

- How did God display his presence among the people? Why might he use a cloud? What might the cloud look like? (cf. Exodus 19:16-20)

- Just as Israel was guided by the cloud and fire how are you guided by God today? Where does he dwell today? (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16) What ways can you seek and be aware of his presence and guidance?

- How have you seen God redeem the your own history and the substance of your idolatry and consecrate you for service?



- As you look back and think back over the Book of Exodus what stands out to you the most? What has impacted your life and walk with God the most?



APPENDIX A: IN AWE OF GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

Exodus was written so that you might know God. God want you to be filled with awe and wonder. He is the Living God. He draws you out of darkness and draws you into his light. Here are some attributes of God to observe as you read. Meditate and pray on these.

Almighty — Nothing is too hard for God.

Attentive — God hears and responds to the prayers of His children.

Compassionate — God sees, cares and acts when His children are in need.

Creator — God made everything.

Deliverer — God rescues His children.

Faithful — God always does what He says He will do.

Generous — God gives what is best.

Glorious — God shows His greatness and worth.

Good — God is what is best.

Holy — God is completely perfect and separate from sin.

Just — God is right to punish sin.

Loving — God does what is best.

Merciful — God does not give His children the punishment they deserve.

Provider — God meets the needs of His children.

Refuge — God is a place of safety and protection for His children.

Sovereign — God has the right, wisdom and power to do all that He pleases.

Unchanging — God never changes.

Wise — God knows what is best.

Worthy — Only God deserves all glory.

Overall, when you combine all those attributes you see that there is none like God. He is worthy of awe and worship. God is incomparable.

INCOMPARABLE — God has no equal or rival.



APPENDIX B: EXODUS LINKS WITH GENESIS

The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses. They are called the Torah. In the first book, Genesis, Moses catalogues the beginning when God created the universe and everything and called it 'good'. When God created man he said created them 'very good'. Adam and Eve walked in the garden with God, they had dominion over creation, and there was peace. That did not last long (see Genesis 3).

Sin entered the world. Everything changed. Man multiplied the earth and corrupted it. Yet God had a plan. He would carry out his plan to redeem mankind. He carried out judgement in the days of Noah, he promised a great nation through Abraham and his sons. When Abraham's great-grandson Joseph was taken captive to Egypt God and forgave his brothers for their evil plans was working out his good plan.

This brings us to Moses second book, Exodus. To understand Exodus, you must understand Genesis.²⁸ God promised to bring his people out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. God said to Abram,

“Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.” (Genesis 15:13-14)

The Book of Exodus is about God and what he does for his people. As with the rest of the Bible, Exodus is part of God's revelation of himself to us. Unless God reveals himself to us, we can never know what he is like. In each book God reveals more and more about himself and his plans for mankind

In both Genesis and Exodus, God reveals himself in two ways: by what he *says* and by what he *does*. In Exodus, we hear God speaking: he speaks *to* Moses, but he also speaks *through* Moses to his people. Moses, therefore, is cast in the role of a prophet and plays a secondary role, but God plays the primary role. Exodus is also about the God who reveals himself in his *actions*. We see God breaking into the history, in order to lead his people out of slavery and into the land of promise, which he first promised long before in the book of Genesis.

Exodus 1 acts as a bridge between the events of Genesis and the story of God's redemption in history. It is a reminder that the story is continuing: the promises of salvation from Genesis are now worked out in the events which follow in Exodus and beyond.

²⁸ There are also themes that continue from Genesis through Exodus: 1) “be fruitful and multiply” (Exodus 1:7, 10, 12, 20; 23:30); 2) God remembers (2:24; 6:5)

APPENDIX C: THE GEOGRAPHY & THEOLOGY OF EXODUS

The place where Israel is throughout Exodus often describes the movements of God too. When Israel is on the move, so does God. God is not just taking them from place to place, he is taking them is close to himself and most of it takes place in the desert.

TEXT

Exodus 1:1—13:16
Exodus 13:17—15:21
Exodus 15:22—17:16
Exodus 18:1—40:38

GEOGRAPHY

In Egypt
At the Red Sea
In the Wilderness
At Sinai

THEOLOGICAL DRIVE

God Prepares
God Saves
God Preserves & Tests
God's Covenant

ROUTE OF THE EXODUS OF THE ISRAELITES FROM EGYPT





APPENDIX D: THE NAME OF GOD IS YAHWEH

God wants to make himself known. Throughout the book of Exodus God makes his name clear to Pharaoh, his people, the Egyptians, and to us.

- 5:2 “**Who is Yahweh** that I should listen to his voice...? **I do not know Yahweh!**”
- 6:2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I AM YAHWEH”
- 6:6 “Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM YAHWEH, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.
- 6:7 ‘Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you **shall know** that I AM YAHWEH your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.
- 6:8 ‘I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and ØI will give it to you *for* a possession; I AM YAHWEH.’ ”
- 6:28-29 Now it came about on the day when the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, that the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “I AM YAHWEH; speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I speak to you.”
- 7:5 The Egyptians **shall know** that I AM YAHWEH, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt...
- 7:17 ‘Thus says the Lord, “By this you **shall know** that I AM YAHWEH: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood.
- 8:22 “But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of flies will be there, in order that **you may know** that I AM YAHWEH in the midst of the land.
- 12:12 ‘For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I AM YAHWEH.
- 14:4 “Thus I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians **will know** that I AM YAHWEH.” And they did so.



- 14:18 “Then the Egyptians **will know** that I AM YAHWEH, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen.”
- 15:26 And He said, “If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the Lord your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I AM YAHWEH your healer.”
- 16:12 “I have heard the grumblings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you **shall know** that I AM YAHWEH your God.’ ”
- 29:46 “They **shall know** that I AM YAHWEH their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I AM YAHWEH their God.
- 31:13 “But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for *this* is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you **may know** that I AM YAHWEH who sanctifies you.



APPENDIX E: HEAVINESS BETWEEN GOD AND PHARAOH

There is a significant dynamic that is going on in the text with the phrases “And Pharaoh’s heart was hardened” or “Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Reflect on the following material to understand the significance of “hardening the heart.”

Pharaoh makes the labor of the Israelites “heavy” (5:9)
Pharaoh’s heart becomes “heavy” toward the Israelite’s freedom (7:14)
Yahweh makes the swarms “heavy” toward Pharaoh (8:24)
Pharaoh makes his heart “heavy” again (8:32)
Yahweh makes the pestilence “heavy” (9:3)
Pharaoh makes his heart “heavy” again (9:7)
Yahweh makes the hail “heavy” (9:18,24)
Pharaoh makes his heart “heavy” again (9:34)
Finally, Yahweh says, “I will make his heart heavy” (10:1)

This is crucial to the theological issue, for it stamps the king as callous, evil-minded person who must bear full responsibility for his iniquitous acts freely and knowingly perpetrated. The pharaoh’s culpability is established beyond doubt.

By reinforcing the pharaoh’s stubbornness, thereby making him a prisoner of his own irrationality, God deprives the “god” of his freedom of action. The pharaoh can no longer control his own will and his so-called divinity is mocked.”



APPENDIX F: PARALLELS BETWEEN MOSES AND JESUS

There is no mistake that Jesus echoes much of the life of Moses in the book of Exodus. Consider some of the following parallels between Moses and Jesus:

- There is a record of their birth and miraculous preservation;
- There is very little recorded about them between the time of their birth and their public ministry;
- There is a record of their public call and commission;
- There is a record of their work in redemption and salvation.

What Moses was in the Old Testament, Jesus is in the New. Hebrews chapter 3 explicitly compares and contrasts them: both of them serve the Lord faithfully, Moses as God's servant and Jesus as God's son (Hebrews 3:5–6). Yet the reality is that Moses was a kind of foreshadowing of the Christ who was to come. Therefore, we are to 'consider Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house' (Hebrews 3:2).

The relation between Moses and Christ is further brought out in the Book of Revelation, where we are told that the saints in heaven

Sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,
saying,
'Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God Almighty!
Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!
Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come and worship you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed' (Rev. 15:3–4).

Therefore, as we go through the Book of Exodus, we will see the different ways in which Christ's work is brought before us. Just as he taught others to see the things that the Law of Moses said about him, so we will try to see them too.

Adapted from Iain D. Campbell, *Opening up Exodus*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 12–13.



APPENDIX G: The Gospel in Exodus

Good News to Captives

Exodus offers the greatest paradigmatic redemption event in the Bible prior to Christ's incarnation. As such, it is profoundly good news to captives, to those who labor in bondage to sin and misery. In addition, it shapes Christians' continued understanding of and hope for redemption. In the redemption gained through the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and continued ministry of Jesus, we have a new exodus, a fulfillment of what Exodus pictured for the people of God.

Exodus tells us that redemption begins with God remembering his covenant promises offered in Genesis: the promise of the death blow to our ancient Enemy through the offspring of the woman (Gen. 3:15); the promise to Abraham of an offspring through whom all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:1–3); and the promise that Abraham's offspring will be in captivity for a time, but will return to the Promised Land (Gen. 15:13–14). Exodus opens with God remembering his covenant with Abraham (Ex. 2:23–25) and coming down to redeem his people through his chosen mediator, Moses (Ex. 3–4). Through Moses, God goes forward to redeem his people “out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Ex. 20:2).

Central to this redemption is judgment and salvation: judgment on the gods of Egypt and especially on their representative, Pharaoh, through the plagues; salvation amid the death of the firstborn of Egypt, of both humans and beasts, through the substitutionary death of spotless lambs for Israel (Ex. 7–13). In the final contest between God and Pharaoh, God as the true King of the world crushes his enemy in the floods of the Red Sea and delivers his people through the waters of salvation. No wonder Moses' song ends, “The Lord will reign forever and ever” (Ex. 15:18).

Redemption to Come

Having redeemed his people, God then guides them through the wilderness and brings them to Mount Sinai to instruct them in his ways. That is always the order of the Bible: redemption, then response; grace, then law. However, the Mosaic covenant could not deliver people from their sins; it was not meant to do so—rather, it served to point beyond itself to One who would come to fulfill all the foreshadowings in the tabernacle and all the requirements of the law's “rules” (Ex. 21:1).

This Old Testament paradigm of redemption in Exodus, then, helps Christians see more clearly the ultimate redemption that God works out through Jesus, his Mediator between God and mankind (1 Tim. 2:5). In Jesus the Messiah, God acts because he remembers his covenant. His earliest promises to Adam and Eve and to Abraham find



their fulfillment in Jesus (Gal. 3:7–18). And so, in Jesus, God himself comes down to deliver his people (John 1:14–18). Jesus is the Lamb of God whose blood serves as the redemption-price to deliver his people from God’s wrath and the Enemy’s captivity (John 1:29; Rom. 3:24–26; 1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 1:7; 2:1–10). Those who trust in him are delivered from death itself—displayed in baptism—and brought to new life in Christ through his power (Rom. 6:1–11; 1 Cor. 10:1–4). That is why New Testament saints sing Moses’ song as well (Rev. 15:3): Jesus has thrown the Evil One into the sea of God’s wrath.

Moreover, as God’s redeemed people, we live our lives in the wilderness as we make our way to the Promised Land, looking for a permanent city built by God (Heb. 11:10–16; 13:14). As we go through this world, God’s Word and Spirit guide us as God’s people under the oversight of elders (cf. Exodus 18 with Acts 15; 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1). We know God’s presence. We are instructed in God’s ways: his law no longer condemns us, but serves as a guide for our lives as we pursue holiness (Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:16) as those already viewed as holy to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:11).

Thus, Exodus offers a paradigm for God’s redemption gained for us in Jesus Christ. As we read and meditate on this book, we are drawn into the drama of God’s working that helps us to see and delight in the work of Jesus, with the result that we love even more the One who first loved us.

This article is adapted from the [ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible](#).