



Jan. 29th - Feb. 4th

WEEK 5 TO BECOME A HOLY NATION | EXODUS 19-40

As we said last week, the Exodus story is the foundational story of the Jewish people and the entire Old Testament; therefore, of Christianity and the New Testament as well. But the Exodus story isn't just about escape and liberation from slavery and oppression. The second half of the story is about what Israel was delivered for. This part of the Exodus paradigm is just as foundational to Jewish, and later Christian thought, as their initial salvation from slavery. The Scriptures never separate salvation from and salvation for...they always go hand-in-hand.

It is with this in mind that we ought to interpret the events at Mt. Sinai beginning in Exodus 19. Here the narrative storyline comes to a screeching halt. We've covered nearly 700 years since God called Abram in Genesis 12 and now the next 3.5 books - the remainder of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy - are entirely devoted to just a brief 40 year period in the wilderness. This part of the story constitutes a crucial period of preparation. Before God leads Israel into the Promised Land, He has to train them to become the holy nation He established and saved them to be.

He begins at Mt. Sinai by giving the Israelites lots of instructions. In total, they receive over 600+ commands and guidelines that are recorded for them and future generations. These are referred to as Torah, which is a Hebrew word for guidance or instruction, and is more generally known as "the law."

To recap our journey so far; essentially, the prologue of Genesis 1-11 sets up a problem - The world is broken and needs fixing. But how will that happen? The rest of Genesis tells the story of God creating a family, called Israel, who will participate in a great restoration project. When He rescues them from hundreds of years of slavery, he does it with the specific idea of getting that good work going. How will He do it? With His precious Torah, the best set of social and moral guidelines the world has ever seen. By living according to these blueprints, Israel will accomplish what they were saved for - to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation God will use to restore the world.

Group Resources

Read: Exodus 19:1-6; 20:1-17; Ch. 21 - 23; 24:4-8; 25:8-9; 25:22; 29:40-46; 31:1-11; Ch. 32 - 34; 40:34-35

Video: [The Exodus - Part 2](#)

Sermon: Rescue from the Wrath of God | The Deliverer Behind the Deliverer

Proposed Group Agenda (2 hrs)

Fellowship/Connection Time (30 min.)

Welcome & Opening Prayer (5 min.)

Warm Up (10 min.)

Video (15 min.)

Dig In (45 min.)

Grow (10 min.)

Closing Prayer (5 min.)

Hermeneutic Tool

Pay attention to the pace of Scripture, especially in narrative texts. When the pace slows down, as it does in the middle of Exodus, that likely indicates something noteworthy or very important is happening.



* The individual reading plan for this week covers Exodus 35 - Leviticus 18 and Psalms 29-35.



Warm Up

Mutual Invitation and Connection

Select one of the questions from the list below. Using the discussion technique of mutual invitation, share a short (one or two sentence) response to the question you have chosen. The leader or a designated person should go first. After that, he or she then chooses another person across the room to share. Once that person has spoken, they invite another to share and so on. If a person is selected and they don't want to speak, they can simply say "pass" and proceed to invite someone else to share. Continue this until everyone has been invited. Select a second question if time permits.

- 1.) What part(s) of this week's readings were rich and life-giving, and what part(s) were tedious or frustratingly strange?
- 2.) Have you thought about salvation in terms of what we're saved for, or have you mostly thought about it in terms of what we're saved from?
- 3.) Before the Jesus 365 study began, did you have any idea what the intricate set of commands in the second half of Exodus and the book of Leviticus were about?
- 4.) How would you summarize what is happening during the Israelite's time in the wilderness and the overall point of the second half of Exodus?

Dig In

Q. What main themes and ideas did you notice in Exodus chapters 19 - 40 as you read? Can you point to any particular passages where you found them? (Note to Leaders: All the major themes and ideas are listed on the pages that follow.)

Q. Read Genesis 12:1-3 and Exodus 19:16 closely. How are the themes of these two passages similar? What is God's ultimate goal in choosing one person/group out of many? How is Israel's obedience to the Torah part of God's purpose for reaching the nations?

Key Theme	After rescuing Israel from slavery, God initiates a covenant relationship with Israel for the sake of the nations. This is a crucial moment in the development of the entire biblical storyline.
1	

A God calls Israel to become a “kingdom of priests” who will mediate between God and all the nations.



B This is a development of the promise of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. God will bring His blessing to all nations through Israel's covenant obedience and priestly role.

C God calls Israel to become a “kingdom of priests” who will mediate between God and all the nations.

EXODUS 19:6 “IF YOU OBEY ME FULLY AND KEEP MY COVENANT”

Q. Skim through the commands of the covenant in Exodus 20 - 23 and notice how much focus is dedicated to issues surrounding justice in family, business, and community relationships. What character traits of God are reflected in these laws?

*Note: Some laws assume an ancient cultural context and may seem bizarre to us now, but they made perfect sense during that period of time.

Key
Theme

2

God begins to give Israel the Torah, which makes clear the terms of the covenant which Israel is expected to keep.

(TORAH) Instruction, Teaching

It begins with the Ten Commandments

EXODUS 20:1-7

...and is followed by a block of laws that will shape Israel's social, economic, and worship life together.

EXODUS 21-23

Living by these laws will make Israel a nation of justice and generosity that reflects God's own character.

SEE DEUTERONOMY 4:5-8 FOR AN EXPLANATION OF HOW ISRAEL'S OBEDIENCE IS RELATED TO THEIR MISSION TO THE NATIONS.



Q. God makes a covenant with Israel and they agree to obey Him as His covenant people. He responds by restoring His holy presence. How do they respond?

Q. What is the tabernacle meant to be a symbol of? Why do you think God would point all the way back to the garden?

Key
Theme

3

Israel agreed to the terms of the covenant, and so God promises to take up personal residence among His people in the tabernacle.

A

Moses sacrifices animals that represent the “blood of the covenant” and the people agree to obey God as His covenant people.

EXODUS 24:4-8

B

The tabernacle is the place where Yahweh will be present with His people and meet with them.

EXODUS 25:8; 25:22; 29:42-46

C

The design and imagery of the tabernacle is meant to recall the Garden of Eden, where God dwelt with humanity in perfect relationship: compare Eden in Genesis 2:8-14 with the tabernacle descriptions in Exodus 25-31.



Q. In the Golden Calf story what are the key factors that lead the people into idolatry? In Moses' intercessory prayer, what reasons does he offer as to why God should not abandon the covenant? How does the rest of the story present a balance between God's mercy and his justice?

Q. In Exodus 34:6-7 God presents to Moses a description of his character that is the most re-quoted line in the rest of the Old Testament (see it repeated in Psalms 103:8; 145:8; Jeremiah 32:18-19; Nehemiah 9:17; Daniel 9:4). How are these character traits demonstrated in God's actions in the Exodus, Sinai, and golden calf stories?

Key
Theme

4

Israel immediately rebels and disobeys the first two laws of the covenants as they make and worship the golden calf.

- A** The people of Israel forget God's redemption and offer their allegiance to an idol, and even compel their future high priest to make it. EXODUS 32
- B** God is angry and wants to abandon the covenant at first, but invites Moses to intercede on behalf of the people, which he successfully does. EXODUS 32:11-14
- C** God still brings severe justice on the idolaters, but does not abandon His partnership with the people as a whole because of His promises to Abraham. EXODUS 32:25-29, 32:13
- D** God ultimately forgives Israel and commits to guiding them to into the promised land. EXODUS 33-34



Q. Notice how abrupt the book concludes after Moses is unable to enter the tent. Notice also that the book of Leviticus begins with God speaking to Moses “from the tent” (Leviticus 2:1). Why is this unexpected? How is it connected to the golden calf story? What can be done about it?

Key
Theme

5

Moses oversees the construction of the tabernacle and sets everything up, only to face a final obstacle.



Moses has the tabernacle build “according to a plan” shown to him by God.



He employs a crew of divinely-inspired artisans to construct the tent and all its materials.

PROBLEM

At the end of the book, God’s presence comes to inhabit the tent, but Moses cannot enter the tabernacle.

EXODUS 40:34-35

This odd conclusion is highlighting that the covenant relationship is compromised in some way. How are Moses and the people going to be able to dwell in the presence of a holy God?

HINT: KEEP READING LEVITICUS



Where's Jesus?

Q. There are many connections between the Old Testament book of Exodus and Jesus. We highlighted a few in week #3 & #4. Can you remember what they are? If so, share them with the group. Now call to mind what you know of Jesus' ministry out of your personal exposure to the bible. What links, if any, were you able to make on your own?

Note to Leaders and Members: It's okay if you don't have any previous familiarity with the bible. Just sit back and listen in on the connections proposed by others (if any). People tend to read and enjoy the Scriptures from a devotional point-of-view. These lessons are designed to help us focus on the broader story lines and main themes of the bible; ideas many have not considered in the past.

GOD IN EXODUS
God came down (Exodus 3:7-8)
The Burning Bush (Exodus 3:3)
The name of God "I AM" (Exodus 3:14)
The Passover Lamb (Exodus 12:1-4)
Bread from Heaven (Exodus 16:4)
Water in the desert (Exodus 17:6)
Strike the rock (Exodus 17:6)
The Law of God (Exodus 20-21)
The Tabernacle (Exodus 36-39)
Finger of God giving the law (Exodus 31:18)

JESUS IN THE GOSPELS
The Incarnation (John 1:1-12)
The Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-3)
Jesus taking the name "I AM" (John 8:58)
Jesus the Lamb (1 Peter 1:18-19)
"I am the bread of life" (John 6:35; 48)
Jesus - Living Water (John 4:13-14; 7:37-39)
Jesus the rock (1 Corinthians 10:4)
Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:7)
Jesus the Tabernacle (John 1:14; Heb. 8:5)
Jesus the Lawgiver (John 7:37; 8:6)

Works Cited

Graphics:

"The First Set of the Ten Commandments" - Exodus." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 26 Jan, 2017.

"The Golden Calf - Exodus." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 26 Jan, 2017.

"Working on the Ark, the Table, and the Lamps - Exodus." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 26 Jan, 2017.

Credits:

Study synopsis, information and questions compiled from materials provided by Reality Church SF - Year of Biblical Literacy and The Bible Project.



Grow

These questions are designed to help you look at yourself, be aware and honest about who you are in light of your interaction with Scripture, and consider any appropriate actions.

Begin by reading Psalm 19 aloud as a prayer...

Q. Look at the words the psalmist uses to describe God's Torah: Perfect, refreshing, trustworthy, right, joy-bringing, radiant, firm, righteous, precious, sweet, and of great value. Have you thought of the Old Testament "Law" in this way?

Q. Do you have any adverse or negative feelings towards the Law? Why do you think that is?

Q. In light of the past few weeks, what would it look like for you to re-examine your faith in terms of God wanting to liberate you from slavery in order to become a part of a special, holy, people that live according to His good decrees? Do you long for good commands to live by like the Psalmist did? Or do you want freedom from rules or expectations along with freedom from sin and slavery?

Q. In Romans, Paul describes the essence of Christianity as "having been set free from sin and becoming slaves to righteousness" (Romans 6:18). Are you ready to become a slave to righteousness? Describe how these kinds of rules and expectations can be life giving.