

February 5-11

Week 6

This week we will move further into Act 2, scene 2 in the story of Scripture, and we will begin scene 3. Here again we find vitally important foundational elements for the rest of the Bible.

Be attentive to the characteristics that marked Moses as a leader, for he would come to be greatly venerated by Jews during the time of Jesus.

Read about the establishment of the Passover, grasping the purpose of this special celebration and meditating on the fact that Jesus would become our Passover Lamb.

This week's readings will also include the Ten Commandments and other laws that were to govern God's people as they moved into the land of Canaan.

Notice the emphasis on the Lord's presence among his people, for this will be a major theme in much of the remainder of Exodus. God was the main hero in this story, moving the events to his desired ends. Yet we also see clearly the consequences of human actions as people interacted with a holy God.

Finally, remember that the concept of covenant is central to the Old Testament stories, and vitally important covenant moments are found in the readings for this week.

Day 1

Read Exodus 5-9

Act 2 - Scene 2 - Reading 3

Several times in this passage Moses told God why he was ill-equipped to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Notice Moses's excuses.

What excuses are you most likely to give when you are asked to do something for God's cause in the world?

Watch for the importance of identity in these chapters. The genealogy of chapter 6 established the identity of Moses and Aaron as the leaders of the people. Circle their names, found in the center of this genealogy. Verses like Exodus 6:2 also emphasize God's identity.

Notice various kinds of tension in the story today. For example, there is the promise of freedom for an enslaved people. There is a power encounter, a display of God's power overwhelming worldly powers as God began to send the plagues. Each plague in some way attacked the gods of Egypt.

What do you learn about God from Exodus 5–9?

How might God address the tension in your personal story today?

Day 2

Read Exodus 10-13

Act 2 - Scene 2 - Reading 4

The plagues continue and climax in the chapters for today.

In what way is God the hero of this story?

In what ways do you see a heightening of tension, an escalation of the action as you move through these chapters?

A moment of crisis was coming that would cause a major shift in the story. Can you identify that crisis? It was the death of the firstborn, which led to the exodus itself, perhaps the most celebrated event of Jewish history. The Jewish people celebrate Passover every year.

What is the significance of the name Passover, according to Exodus 12?

Praise God for Jesus, who is the Passover Lamb for those who believe.

Day 3

Read Exodus 14-18

Act 2 - Scene 2 - Reading 5

It is interesting that God's deliverance of his people was followed by a series of crises, several of them brought about by the people themselves as they grumbled against God. Notice the pattern of crisis, then answer, then celebration in this section.

Here we see the Shekinah glory of God for the first time (see Exodus 16:10), God's glory manifesting his presence among his people. God wants to be present among his people, even when they grumble!

Exodus 16 explains at least two reasons why God gave the Israelites manna:

1. So that they would have food to eat
2. To see whether they would carefully follow God's instructions

Meditate today on how the provisions God has given you can be a context for discipleship, teaching you to follow the ways of God carefully.

Also learn from the negative example of the Israelites. How might you be tempted to grumble about your circumstances today?

Scene 3

The Sinai Covenant and Law: God Embraces and Instructs His People

This scene carries us from Mount Sinai until the Israelites were ready to enter their land.

For any nation to succeed, three ingredients are essential: people, laws, and land. The laws for Israel are God's own revelation, and it takes most of four Bible books to contain them: the remainder of Exodus, and most of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy..

There are several types of laws contained these four books. They are intermingled, not categorized. They can be broadly identified as including...

1. Ten Commandments: Universal and timeless principles of LIFE written by the finger of God on stone. These 10 commands stand apart as unique from all the other laws God gives.
2. Civil Laws: Concerning property, social and civic responsibilities, liability, inheritance and other governing principles.
3. Criminal Laws: Dealing with murder, theft, kidnapping, criminal negligence, etc.
4. Moral Laws: Marriage, family, divorce and sexual relationships.
5. Health Laws: Hygiene, diet, and disease control.
6. Ceremonial Laws: Instructions concerning the sacrifices and atonement for sin, the priesthood and the building and ritual of the Sanctuary.

Certain of the Civil and Criminal laws appear to have a specific application which is limited to the time when Israel was a theocratic nation under God as their King. The underlying principles are timeless, but the application of penalties falls under the responsibility of government and courts, not individuals. Many governments down through history have adopted aspects of these laws, while defining their own penalties which may or may not match those given by God in Scripture.

The Moral and Health laws are timeless principles for the good of human flourishing physically and socially. But again, penalties for breaking these laws are the responsibility of the duly established government and courts, not the

domain of individuals.

The Ceremonial Laws and the Sanctuary reveal the plan of salvation (by grace through faith alone) prior to the Cross. Those sacrifices and rituals which point forward to the coming of Messiah, naturally become obsolete once the “once for all” sacrifice of Jesus took place. The Ceremonial Laws look forward to the coming of Messiah, while the New Testament shows how those Ceremonial Laws were fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, turning the promises of God into an eternal and unchangeable reality.

Reading through these laws can at times seem tedious and challenging. Certain laws appear so inseparable from cultural and social customs which differ greatly from our modern context, that they are exceedingly difficult to understand their meaning, intent or value. Some seem so bazaar that we are tempted to ignore or dismiss them. But if God said it, it is important. So our challenge is to try to understand what God is really up to in each and every law He has given.

Ask for the Holy Spirit to help you sort through these laws and reveal to you the Divine principles of LOVE that are necessarily behind any law given by a God of absolute LOVE. Every time God says “Do this,” He is saying, “Life works this way.” Every time God says, “Don’t do that,” He is saying, “Life does not work that way.” Anything God says or commands pertains to how to best experience LIFE and LOVE.

Day 4

Read Exodus 19-21

Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 1

Much of the account in this passage drove home to the Israelites the holiness of God. Just after the Ten Commandments were given (see Exodus 20:1-17), Moses explained why God appeared in these terrible ways.

Identify forces in your culture that fight against a clear-eyed view of the holiness, the awesomeness of God.

Day 5

Read Exodus 22-24

Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 2

Remember that when we read the stories and the laws of the Old Testament, covenant, a meaningful relationship with God is at the heart of what is going on. Exodus 22–23 gives various laws for how the people were to live for God under the covenant they were making with him, and chapter 24 presents the covenant ceremony. Both the laws and the ceremony show us what God values. Watch for those things as you read.

Identify ways your values today should reflect these values of God.

Day 6

Read Exodus 25-28

Act 2 - Scene 3 - Reading 3

One great theme of the Bible is God's desire to be with his people. We know God is everywhere (see Psalm 139:7-12), but he desires to be actively involved in the lives of people. The passage today begins with the building of the tabernacle. Notice the places in Exodus 25 that indicate God's desire to be present among his people.

Do you desire to actively experience God's presence with you today?

Notice the great care and cost that were involved in building the tabernacle and in preparing the priests to worship. Since every detail in the tabernacle points forward to the coming of Messiah and reveals the Plan of Salvation, those details must be very specific. What happens in the tabernacle shows is what is to happen in the heart of every believer, both before and after the reality of the coming of Messiah Jesus Christ. Our hearts are the true tabernacle Jesus longs to dwell in. (see 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:5).

How can you and the members of your church carefully prepare for worship each day in your personal times with the Lord? Each week in your worship services?

What price are you willing to pay to have focused, meaningful time in meeting God face-to-face?

Day 7

Reading Summary for Week 6

“When I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Exodus 12:13). By this God declared the reality of substitutionary death, prefiguring the true Lamb of God’s death. These chapters have revealed the Lord as Redeemer. Because of his love and for his name’s sake, he saved his people. Further, he showed that he expected the redeemed to live according to the provisions of his covenant with them. Until Jesus’s crucifixion, the exodus was the greatest of God’s redemptive acts.

Prayer/Meditation

O God my Redeemer, thank you for showing the way you value human beings through the high price paid for Israel’s redemption from bondage. Let me remember the death of the Passover lambs as a picture of the Lord Jesus’ costly death for me. Help me never to be like the Pharaoh, who hardened his heart against you. Instead, let me be like Moses, who was “faithful as a servant in all God’s household” (Hebrews 3:5). For Jesus’s sake. Amen.
