

EXODUS 16-24

The Story of Redemption

Thoughts and Comments

EXODUS 16

Trust and Rest

One awesome way God shows his faithfulness to his people is by providing them with manna in the wilderness. Sustenance literally fell from the sky for them.

They were told to gather only what they needed. Any extra would rot. God wanted them to trust them every day. It's our nature to want to 'save up' or prepare for the worst, which is sometimes wise, but in this context to save up was to directly distrust the God who just miraculously led them out of Egypt.



Isn't it crazy to think that after all they had experienced some of them still wondered if God would do what he said he would? That they still weren't sure if he would provide?

"You shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them nor do as they do... You shall serve the Lord your God..."
Exodus 23: 24-25

favorite verse

We do this too. We take matters into our own hands when we don't believe God will 'do what we want.' But he is faithful and we can trust him.

Another notable thing about the manna is that God provided extra on the day before Sabbath so that they wouldn't do work on that day. Part of God's plan for us is rest.

Rest must be important.

Sidenote: They ate this manna for 40 years. So not only did this practice give them opportunities for trust, and rest, but it also instilled endurance and perseverance.

EXODUS 17

The Lord is my Banner

Jehovah Nissi is the name of God that means 'The Lord is my Banner.'

Moses used this name after the battle the Israelites fought against the Amalekites. The battle where whenever Moses raised his arms, the Israelites prevailed but the opposite occurred if they lowered. Aaron and Hur helped raise his arms.

They knew the Lord fought for them that day.

Banners are used for many things. They can connote victory or submission. They are identifiers. They are used for celebration.

The Lord is my banner means that we surrender under his authority and we have victory in him. We are more than conquerors. He fights for us and he will always win. We are his children, He is our identifier as we are in the family of God.

We celebrate and praise him for all he has done. We honor and remember Him in a visible way!



EXODUS 16-17

Bread of Life and Living Water

I love how the devotional pointed out the connection of the manna in the wilderness and God providing the Israelites with water with the person of Jesus who is the Bread of Life and the Living Water.

"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (Jn 6:35)

We also see this at the Last Supper when Jesus breaks the bread with his disciples and says, 'Eat this in remembrance of me.' (*cont'd*)

(cont'd)

Bread and water are necessary for us to live. We can't do without. They are the staples of survival. And nothing on earth can satisfy our thirst and hunger. We have to continue to eat and drink every day.

But our eternal life is sustained by the Bread of Life and Living Water that is eternal and found in the person of Christ. He is our life, our sustenance, our survival. When we eat and drink on earth, we remember Christ's sacrifice and sufficiency, his provision for us to live with him.



EXODUS 20

Ten Words to Live By

Books have been written about the ten commandments. And one I would highly recommend is Jen Wilkin's book called *Ten Words to Live By*. (I reviewed it [HERE](#))

She fleshes them out to help us understand all of what the Bible says about them and how they build off of each other, not just the simplistic 'no's' that we connect to them.

She says, "The Ten Commandments deal with matters of heavenly submission, earthly submission, and mutual submission—in that order... There are good works to be done by the people of God, not out of dread to earn his favor, but out of delight because we already have it."

The first four talk about our relationship to God and how we worship him. 5-10 Wilkin summarizes in statements beginning with 'honor': honor elders, honor life, honor marriage, honor property, honor reputation, and honor in the heart.

These are not just rules and regulations to keep us *from* sin, but they are a guidebook *to* honoring God and honoring others. It helps us love, respect and worship. Flip it into a positive.

I think you'll find that her book brings these ten 'words' into a new light and creates awe and excitement about the amazing gift God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai and to us in Scripture!

"Ten Words to put to death our sin. Ten Words to herald abundant life. Ten Words to steady and strengthen us on the narrow path that leads us home."

EXODUS 21

Slaves?

Slavery is a hot topic when it comes to the Bible. After all, Christians wrongly used it to defend chattel slavery in the American South.

What does the Bible really teach about slavery? Why would God put laws in place for slaves?

One main difference between slavery in the Bible and what was done in America is that slavery in Bible times was not race-based but economic. People could sell themselves into slavery to pay off debts and they could buy themselves out.

As we read later in Leviticus, God ordains the year of Jubilee to allow for slaves to be set free. Also, the eventual abolition of modern slavery came from the Bible where we get our foundation for all human rights and equality.

Why didn't God make it a commandment not to have slaves? I don't know, but the Bible indicates in many places what God's view towards people is.

In this chapter he says anyone involved with the slave trade should be put to death. That's a heavy penalty indicating God's feelings toward the practice.

Since sinful humans did sinful things and slavery was (and continued to be) a major part of life globally, God put laws in place to protect slaves from poor treatment. He also gave them rights

For a fuller look at slavery in the Bible, [THIS](#) is a good article to read.



EXODUS 21

Eye for an Eye

This is an often misunderstood verse. A lot of people use it to support retaliation or revenge.

But, as Pastor Doug Corlew says in his commentary on this passage, it was meant to be restrictive not prescriptive. The punishment must be appropriate for the crime. An eye for an eye but not MORE than an eye for an eye.



EXODUS 23

God's Judgment

God tells Moses that he will drive out the people in the land because their sin and paganism may ensnare the Israelites. (v33)

[We'll read more about the conquest of the Canaanites in Deuteronomy.]

Many people struggle with the Bible because of these passages where God instructs the Israelites to kill or destroy entire communities of people. Why would a loving God do that?

This is also no easy thing for us humans to understand because we tend to categorize people into good and bad people. And the way we classify people does not account for the full extent of our sin. God has told the people- Be holy for I am holy. The laws and rules for sacrifices remind us how the wages of sin is death. And ALL have sinned.

We forget that sin against an infinite and holy God is an infinite sin that requires judgement. Those who God destroys we see his justice, and any who he saves we see his grace. This is a hard truth. As far as the infants and children were concerned in Canaan, I do not know if God demonstrated grace in these circumstances. We will know when we get to heaven. But to look at the Canaanites as a whole, this was not an innocent group of people. Actually the Canaanites did some pretty evil things like child sacrifice (Lev 18:21)

P.C. Craigie observes:

"There are two reasons for this total destruction, only one of which is stated in this context. The unstated reason is that the Israelites were instruments of God's judgment; the conquest was not only the means by which God granted his people the promised land, but was also the means by which he executed his judgment on the Canaanites for their sinfulness (see 9:4). The second reason, which is stated, appears in v. 18: if the Canaanites survived, their unholy religion could turn Israel aside from serving the Lord." (cont'd)

(cont'd)

Even allowing one Canaanite to live could influence the Israelites in a big way. God is serious about sin because his holiness is a big deal. I mean we read in the New Testament that if our eye causes us to sin, cut it out! This was not to be taken literally necessarily but to remind us that it is dangerous to give evil a foothold in our lives.

The entire system that God gave the Israelites to live in, the social and personal ethics and constraints were incompatible with the pagan cultures. They could not coexist. For God's people to live in devotion to God required this distinction and separation.

So what does that mean for us today? Under the new covenant God's people are not distinguished by land or a political identity, but nevertheless, God requires our full loyalty and true worship. We cannot serve two masters. We cannot let our lives and beliefs be undermined by that which contradicts Scripture. To drive out the 'Canaans' in our lives may look like resistance or avoidance, and even some cutting out-- removal of items or practices in our homes that bring sin or idolatry.

Just as we tend to be naive about the gravity of our sin, we can also be naive to the influence of others' sin on our lives. We live in a world full of sin and opportunities to disobey God's commands. We can't cut everything out of our lives like the Israelites for obvious reasons but it is wise to remove temptations from our lives that can pull us away from God.

When we recognize the immense holiness of God and the consequences of sin, we can understand a little more why God would enact judgement on whole people's for His name and his glory. Even our view of what 'fair' means is tainted by our own sin.

Looking Ahead

I GUESS I LIED LAST EDITION. WE DIDN'T MAKE IT THROUGH EXODUS YET. BUT NEXT EDITION WILL FINISH UP EXODUS AND MAAAAYBE WE WILL REACH LEVITICUS. AS FOR READING, I JUST STARTED NUMBERS BUT AS YOU'LL FIND WHEN YOU READ IT, THERE'S NOT A WHOLE LOT TO DWELL ON THERE SO I'LL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO CATCH THESE EDITIONS UP QUICKLY!

[NOTE: IF YOU'RE BEHIND AND FEELING OVERWHELMED, FEEL FREE TO SKIP THE CHAPTERS YOU MISSED AND MOVE AHEAD TO STAY ON TRACK!]

Next up... Numbers 7

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