

# OUR POWERFUL GOD

AND

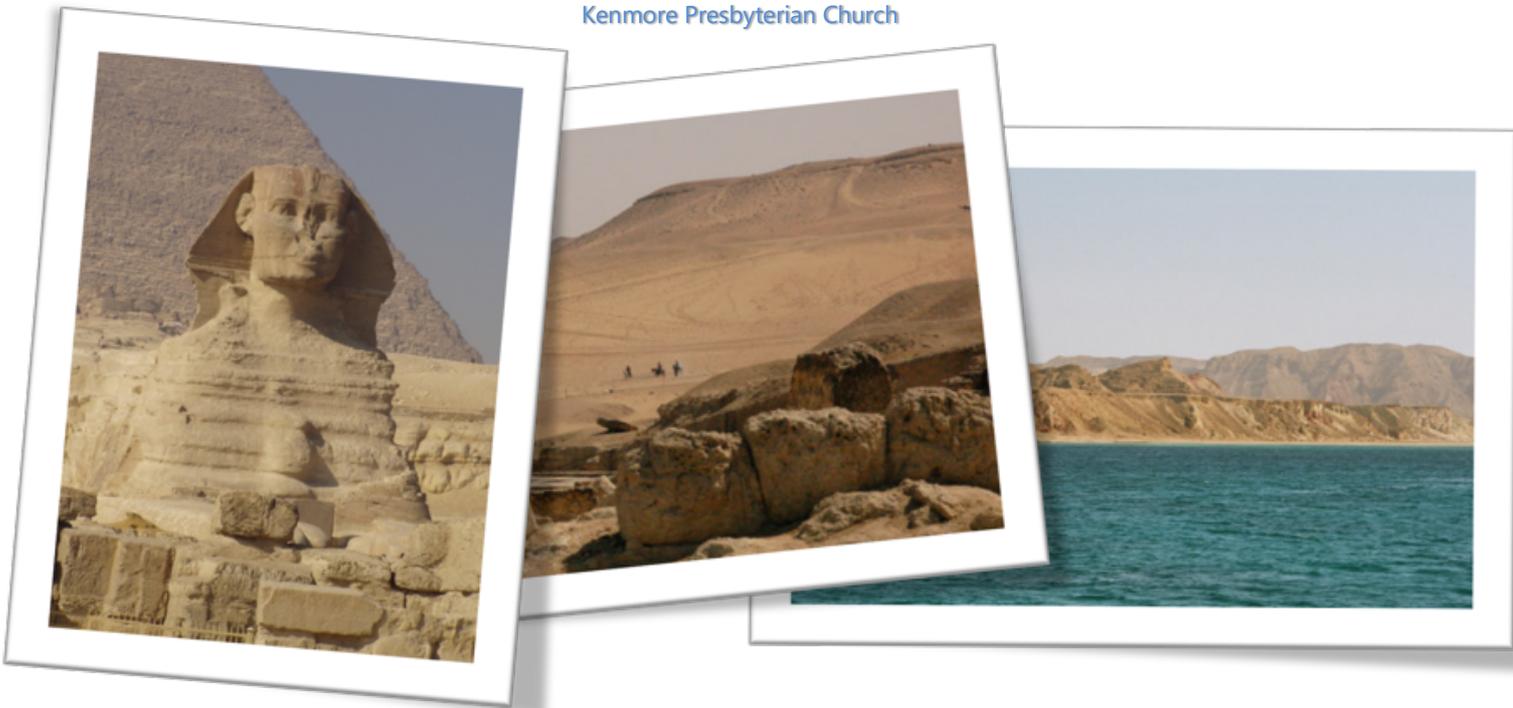
# HIS PLANS FOR HIS PEOPLE

## Seven studies in Exodus

<sup>6</sup> 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. <sup>7</sup> I will take you as **my own people**, and **I will be your God**. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.

Exodus 6:6-7 NIV

Kenmore Presbyterian Church



Exodus contains some of the most famous events from the history of Israel. For example, there's baby Moses floating down the river, the plagues God sent on Egypt as Moses demanded that Pharaoh let his people go, and the ten commandments given at Mount Sinai. We will build on our familiarity with these events as we work together to deepen our understanding. Hopefully by the end of this term we will each have a greater appreciation of **who God is, and what it means to be his people**.

### OUR POWERFUL GOD, AND HIS PLAN TO MAKE PEOPLE HIS OWN

We are looking at the second volume in a five-part series – the Pentateuch (Genesis – Deuteronomy). The Pentateuch sets the foundation for reading the rest of the Old Testament. Exodus is central to understanding not only the Pentateuch and the Old Testament, but also the New Testament and the gospel of Jesus. The events recorded in Exodus help define for us who God is, and who his people are. They show us God's character, his justice, his mercy and his faithfulness. And they show us what is required of God's people, and the sinfulness of our hearts.

**There are three main themes** in Exodus: Redemption, the Commandments, and the Tabernacle. After the events surrounding the **redemption** from Egypt, a large part of the book is given over to laying down 'rules' for how God requires his saved people to live. In particular we read about the **ten commandments**, and the **Tabernacle** – a place where God will dwell amongst his people.

**The key event** in the book of Exodus is God saving the Israelites from slavery – hence the name given to the book! This exodus is like **the gospel of the Old Testament** - God acts graciously and powerfully to save sinful undeserving people. He acts this way out of faithfulness to his promises. Here is an outline of the book as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

- |   |
|---|
| 1. GOD'S ACTION: <b>Redemption</b> (CH. 1-14)   |
| 2. ISRAEL'S RESPONSE: <b>Praise</b> (15:1-21)   |
| 3. GOD'S ACTION: <b>Provision</b> (15:22-18:27)   |
| 4. ISRAEL'S OBLIGATION: <b>obedience</b> (CH. 19-31)<br>1. THE LAW (CH. 19-24)<br>2. THE TABERNACLE (CH. 25-31) |
| 5. ISRAEL'S ACTION: <b>disobedience</b> (CH. 32)  |
| 6. GOD'S ACTION: <b>wrath and grace</b> (CH. 32-40)   |



### An Exercise:

To get a feel for how significant the Exodus event is, read *some of* these passages and comment on how each reflects back on the Exodus events.

Exodus 20:1-2  
Psalm 66:5-7  
Psalm 77:10-12

Psalm 135:8-14  
Isaiah 51:9-11  
Hosea 11:1ff.

Luke 22:7-8, 15-20  
Revelation 21:1-4

<sup>1</sup> A reflection of an outline given by John Woodhouse *Old Testament 1* Moore College, 1998.

## Some tips for Reading Exodus

One of the most common mistakes Christians make when reading the Old Testament is to read ourselves into the story as *Israelites*. Yes, as Christians we *are* part of the *new* Israel, but the fact is, we are not the same as Israel pre-Christ. We believe the Old Testament points ahead to the coming of Jesus, and as we read the Old Testament, we do so from a New testament perspective. Instead of applying the Old testament directly to ourselves we first pass what we read through a filter. Here is an attempt to model how we ought to read the Old Testament.

1. What is the **story so far**: where are we up to in God's unfolding plan of salvation in Jesus?
2. What happens in **this part** of the story?
3. What do we learn about **God and the way he acts**?
4. How does this point ahead to **Jesus**?

Once you can answer these questions you are much more likely to come up with helpful application and implications for yourself, our church, and the world.

## OUR PLAN FOR COVERING THE BOOK OF EXODUS IN GROWTH GROUPS

You can relax, we are not going to cover all 40 chapters of Exodus in seven Bible studies! Here's how what we plan to cover.

Week	Growth Group Bible Study
1	<b>Overview and Setting the Scene</b> EXODUS 1:1-7, 40:34-38 & 6:2-8
2	<b>The Great Escape part 1</b> EXODUS 5-10
3	<b>The Great Escape part 2</b> EXODUS 11:1-13:16
4	<b>The Sinai Covenant: the Ten Commandments</b> EXODUS 20:1-21
5	<b>The Sinai Covenant: other rules</b> EXODUS 20:22-24:18
6	<b>The Sinai Covenant and the Tabernacle</b> EXODUS 25-31/35-40
7	<b>Old Covenant Lessons for New Covenant People</b> (PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER)

## What is Biblical Theology?

Systematic Theology essentially involves categorizing what the Bible teaches on any given topic. For example you may have a systematic theology of *the temple*. This would mean you compile a summary of what the Bible says about the temple. You may like to say that your Systematic Theology is biblical.

Biblical Theology is different. Biblical Theology assumes two things. Firstly, the unity of the Bible. That is, it assumes the Bible contains the story of *one* unfolding plan of salvation. Secondly, it assumes that Jesus is the *climax* of this unfolding plan. So, if you were to have a Biblical Theology of *the temple* that would mean you trace the progressive development of the idea of the temple through the pages of the bible and seek to determine where it fits in relation to Jesus.

By way of illustration, Systematic Theology has been likened to a visit to the botanic gardens, while Biblical Theology is more like a bush-walk. Both of them involve looking at plants, but Biblical Theology means looking at the plants in their original setting.

## GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS PEOPLE

As we look at Exodus we are exploring the second book in a five-part series – the Pentateuch. We are looking at the story of God forming the people of Israel into a nation and instructing them on living in a relationship with him. Let's dip our toes into the first few verses and as we begin to get a feel for the book as a whole. As we do so, we also need to reflect back on Genesis, the previous book, in order to get our bearings.



### Read Exodus 1:1-5

1. Jacob had his name changed to Israel (Genesis 32:28), In these verses we are looking at the names of Jacob's sons – the twelve tribes of Israel. Have a go at listing Jacob's sons under their mother's names. (you may need to look back at Genesis 46:8-25)

2. Now add the rest of the family tree back as far as Abraham.<sup>2</sup>



### Read Exodus 1:6-7

3. Why is Joseph's death significant for the Israelites in Egypt?  
(You may like to flick back over Genesis chapters 46-50 to jog your memory.)



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<sup>2</sup> Don't forget to include *all* Abraham's sons – see Genesis 25:1-4 if you need some help.



### Read Exodus 1:8-14

4. How have things changed since Joseph died (v6) and his memory has begun to fade into Egyptian history?

## PREVIOUSLY, IN THE LAND OF CANAAN...

Now let's delve deeper back into Genesis in order to understand the significance of what is happening to Jacob's descendants.



### Read Genesis 12:1-9

5. What three key promises did God make to Abram (later to be called Abraham)?
6. Which of these promises look like they are being fulfilled back in Exodus 1:1-14?
7. What promise is most definitely *not* fulfilled?

## COMING-UP NEXT...

Now jump ahead to the end of the book of Exodus. Read Exodus 40:34-38.

8. How has Israel's situation changed by the end of the book?
9. Reflecting back on God's promises to Abraham, what might we be led to expect to happen next?
10. We've looked at the beginning and the end of Exodus. Based on what we have read, what would you say the book is about?

Ok, let's see how good your answer to the last question was... time to look at the answers. You can cut to the heart of what Exodus is about by reading Exodus 6:2-8.



### Read Exodus 6:2-8

11. Why does God act to save the Israelites from slavery in Egypt?
12. To what end does he want to save them?
13. The last two questions should have given you the answer to question 10. Did you miss anything in your answer to question 10?
14. Now look back over these seven verses (6:2-8) what can we learn about God's character?

## GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS PEOPLE

What we have in the book of Exodus is the story of God's faithfulness. In spite of the behaviour of sinful people, God remains faithful to his promises to Abraham. He continues to work to his plan of establishing His people in His place, under His rule.

While Exodus tells us about the end of a Israel's slavery, it also marks the beginning of a nation. At the end of the book we see God dwelling among his people, the people that he has chosen, and redeemed from slavery.

But Israel's troubles are far from over. Ultimately we know that these events point forward to another exodus. Another event where God saves his people – this time finally and for eternity. Jesus accomplishes another exodus, and we get a glimpse of the result in Revelation 21:2-3

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, **'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'**" (NIV)

## THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT

- Thank and praise God for who he is
- Thank God for sticking to his plans and fulfilling them in Jesus
- Pray for your Growth Group, and for the other groups that are meeting this term

# THE GREAT ESCAPE – PART 1

## PHARAOH VS YAHWEH

### EXODUS CHAPTERS 5-10<sup>3</sup>

In previous chapters we have seen how God has called a reluctant Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery to pharaoh in Egypt. At first, when Moses and his brother Aaron bring this news to the Israelites accompanied by some minor signs and wonders, the Israelites are enthusiastic and worship God. The plan however, does not proceed as smoothly as some of the Israelites might have hoped.



#### Read Exodus 5:1-9

1. What is Pharaoh's response to Moses' request?
2. What specific reason does he give for his response? (5v2)
3. Who seems to win round one of the standoff between Pharaoh and Yahweh?

Moses and the Israelites are discouraged after their first effort for freedom ends with more slavery not less. The Israelites aren't interested, and Moses is again looking for excuses to get out of his responsibility as deliverer



#### Read Exodus 6:28-7:7

4. How is God going to deal with Moses' fear of public speaking?
5. How is God going to deal with Pharaoh?
6. What is the reason for the way God is going to act towards Pharaoh? (7:5)
7. How does this compare with Pharaoh's earlier response? (5:2)

The stage is set for some major fire-works (7:3). The sign of the staff turning into a snake (7:8-13) seems to be a kind of foretaste for the large scale 'signs and wonders' that follow. These signs and wonders can be divided into three groups, which each emphasise something in particular about God.

To unpack the nine signs in chapters 7-10, divide into three groups and use the table below to compare the signs and wonders that God does in Egypt (each group should examine three signs)

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<sup>3</sup> This study is was originally from Andrew Richardson when he was at Clayfield Presbyterian Church, with minor modification. Used with permission of course.

	<b>Sign 1 Exodus 7:14-24</b>	<b>Sign 2 Exodus 8:1-15</b>	<b>Sign 3 Exodus 8:16-19</b>	Sign 4 Exodus 8:20-32	Sign 5 Exodus 9:1-7	Sign 6 Exodus 9:8-12	<b>Sign 7 Exodus 9:13-33</b>	<b>Sign 8 Exodus 10:1-20</b>	<b>Sign 9 Exodus 10:21-29</b>
<b>Where and when Moses is to confront Pharaoh?</b>									
<b>Any comment about characters apart from Pharaoh, Moses Aaron and God?</b>									
<b>Any comment made about the plague/sign itself?</b>									
<b>Any comments about the extent of the plague?</b>									
<b>Pharaoh's reaction to the sign?</b>									
<b>The conclusion?</b>									

**Now discuss these questions...**

8. What things stand out in the first triplet of signs and what does this reveal about God?
  
9. What things stand out in the second triplet of signs and what does this reveal about God?
  
10. What things stand out in the third triplet of signs and what does this reveal about God?
  
11. How does Pharaoh's attitude change (or not change) in the course of the signs, and how does he compare to others around him?
  
12. Who is responsible for Pharaoh's hard heart (7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 9:12; 9:34; 10:20, 27 etc)?

### Think about it...

15. The signs God performs in Egypt are specifically given to let people know that Yahweh is God (7:5 etc). So what do we learn about God from the signs and the way they are performed?
16. What might we learn about the way God interacts with his enemies?
17. The signs and wonders we have read about are amazing. In the New Testament, Jesus again performs miracles. What does John say about Jesus' signs in John 20:30-31?
18. How does John's statement compare with Exodus 7:5? Discuss.

The signs and wonders God performed in Egypt echo through the rest of the Old Testament as sure signs that Yahweh *is* God – they were awesome displays of God's power and might. But none of these signs and wonders are as spectacular as Jesus becoming a man, living the perfect life, dying a criminals' death and coming to life again! Not only does this make it possible for us to be forgiven, but it means we can live forever in fellowship with our amazing and powerful God.

## THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT

- Thank and praise God for who he is
- Thank God for showing himself to us in Jesus
- Ask that we would have opportunities to explain to others how great God is
- Pray for KPC Kids, for the teachers, helpers and the children



# THE GREAT ESCAPE – PART 2

## THE PASSOVER

**EXODUS 11:1-13:16**

The tenth and last plague God sent on Egypt is not the proverbial *straw which broke the camel's back*. Far from it. The tenth plague is significantly *worse* than the previous nine. It is so completely unbearable that Israel are rushed out of Egypt in the middle of the night!

While this plague may be familiar to most, let's take our time to notice some of the details as we seek to appreciate how they all foreshadow Jesus dying in our place.



**Read Exodus 10:27-11:10**

1. How is this tenth plague set to be different to the previous nine? (11:1)
2. What is God going to make happen?

### TIME-OUT

Before we read about the plague itself, we are given a back-stage look at how God instructed Moses and Aaron to establish a regular memorial of these events. Notice the repetition as we are told what God instructed Moses and Aaron (12:1ff) and then what Moses and Aaron said to the elders of Israel (12:21ff).

### The LORD?

When we see *LORD* (that is *Lord* in small capitals) in English Bibles, we know that the original Hebrew would have four consonants – יהוה – equivalent to *YHWH*.

**The original had no vowels, but was probably pronounced 'Yahweh'.**

Out of fear of misusing the name of God there was a time when *YHWH* would be replaced with *Adonay* (that is *Lord*), or *Elohim* (that is *God*). Later it was replaced by *Jehovah* (that is *YHWH* with vowels taken from *Adonay* and with *Y* changed to *J*). It is now accepted that *Yahweh* is close to the original.



**Read Exodus 12:1-28.**

3. What two events are established as part of the Israelite calendar?
4. Have a go at filling in the Israelite’s calendar for the first month of their year. Mark in the key events and any steps in preparation for each. Make note of any items that are required.

1	2	3	4	5	6	6
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

5. If you were a father in an Israelite home, how might you explain to your children the significance of each thing you did in the first month of *every* year?

**TIME-IN**

Ok, we’ve seen how Israel were to constantly remember the Passover and God’s powerful act of saving them. Now let’s read what actually happened when the plague struck.



**Read Exodus 12:29-42**

6. Why did the Israelites leave in the middle of the night?
7. How did Israel plunder Egypt?
8. How does this compare with what God originally told Moses would happen? (Compare Exodus 3:20-22, 4:21-23, and 11:1)

**Redemption of First-born**

The death of the first-born in Egypt on that first Passover night lead to another practice in the nation of Israel. The first offspring of every womb whether human or animal was to be consecrated to God, or else redeemed by the sacrifice of a lamb.

This served as a constant reminder of the way God brought his people out of Egypt.

**Read Exodus 13:1-16 for the details.**

God saved his people from slavery in Egypt. He did it without them having to raise a finger. From this point on the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened bread, and the redemption of every first-born - stand as ongoing reminders of the most significant act of redemption in the history of the nation of Israel.

Let's jump ahead and see how Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples.



### Read Mark 14:12-26

9. What is significant about the day on which these events take place? (v12)
10. What does Jesus do and say during the Passover meal. How is this significant? (v22-25)
11. Elsewhere, the apostle Paul refers to Jesus as our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). What do you think Paul means by this?
12. How does the Old Testament Passover foreshadow, and help us understand, Jesus' death?
13. Is there anything Christians can learn from the manner in which the Old Testament Passover was to be celebrated?
14. The Jewish Passover celebrates the most significant act of redemption in the Israelite's history. Should Christians celebrate the Passover? Why / why not?

You may have noticed that although the Passover looks backwards in memory of God's act of redeeming the Israelites from Egypt, what Jesus does, when he shares the meal with his disciples, is look forward to the kingdom of God (Mark 14:25). Jesus identifies his broken body with the Passover, and Paul explicitly refers to Jesus as our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7). Understanding the events of the Exodus helps us appreciate the significance of Jesus death and resurrection. Jesus gave his blood so that death can pass-over God's people once again. Only this time, our redemption is final and complete. We have not been saved from slavery in Egypt, we have been saved from slavery to sin and death.

## THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT

- Thank and praise God for who he is
- Thank God for redeeming us through Jesus' blood



# THE SINAI COVENANT – THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

## EXODUS 20:1-21

We will do a brief refresher of the context in which the Ten Commandments were set before looking more closely at the commands themselves. We will then discuss the commands and their significance.

### Grace precedes the law

The most important thing to know about the Ten Commandments – is that grace precedes them. That is, God gives these commands to the nation of Israel *after* he has saved them, and not before. They are not redeemed from slavery because they kept God's requirements.

God saved His people, despite their unwillingness to obey him, because He was being faithful to his promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God chose to be *merciful* to this generation of Israelites.



### Read Exodus 19:1-6

1. What sort of relationship does God want to have with the Israelites?
2. What do you think it means for the Israelites to be holy?
3. a. What might it mean to be a 'kingdom of priests'?  
  
b. How does this compare with what we read in Genesis 12:3 and in 1 Peter 2:9-12?

God speaks of a covenant relationship with the Israelites. He will be their God, and they will be His people. He will care for them, and they are to obey Him. As we read on in Exodus we discover what we already anticipate – that Israel cannot keep their half of the bargain. They continually fail to obey. The amazing thing is that God will continue with his side! In fact, out of faithfulness to his covenant, God will create a new and better covenant. Jeremiah gives a glimpse of what it will be like.



### Read Jeremiah 31:31-34

4. What will be different under the new covenant?

OK, back to Exodus 19. Out of faithfulness to his promise to Abraham, God will use *this* nation to bring blessing to *all* nations. God wants them as his treasured position, set apart (holy) from the rest of his creation. The reason he has chosen them is because he wants to use them to show himself to the rest of the world. In other words they are to be the go-between, between God and the nations. They are to be God's representatives.

OK. Now that we've set the scene, let's look at the Ten Commandments.

### The Ten Commandments



**Read Exodus 20:1-21**

5. How does God 'preface' the commandments? Is this significant?
6. List the ten 'commandments' God gives in these verses?

<b>1</b>	
<b>2</b>	
<b>3</b>	
<b>4</b>	
<b>5</b>	
<b>6</b>	
<b>7</b>	
<b>8</b>	
<b>9</b>	
<b>10</b>	

### Think about it...

7. Why should the Israelites obey God? Are there any specific reasons given with each command? Is there an over-riding reason to obey?
8. a. Many would say that the first four commands concern our relationship with God, while the last six concern our relationship with others. What do you think?  
  
b. Does Matthew 22:32-40 affect your answer to the previous question?

## What does Jesus say about the Ten Commandments?

We've already seen (in Matthew 22) that Jesus is able to summaries all of God's commands in two commandments. Now let's have a look at what else he has to say.



### Read Matthew 5:16-20

9. What does it mean for Jesus to have fulfilled the Law and the prophets? (the Law includes the Ten Commandments)
  
10. We generally think of the Pharisees as the 'bad-guys' in the gospels. However, to their generation they were morally upright and righteous. If we read verses 19-20 as first century Jews, then what is Jesus saying in verse 20?

Jesus has not abolished the Law and the Prophets, rather he has fulfilled them. That means the Old Testament Law (including the Ten Commandments), is **not an end in itself**. Instead it points ahead to Jesus, the fulfilment. That in turn means Jesus has changed our relationship to the Old Testament Law.

We now live under a new covenant (remember Jeremiah 31:31-34). We are not bound by the rules and consequences of the old covenant. But we are still the recipients of God's grace and mercy and we are still to be a Kingdom of Priests. In what follows in Jesus' sermon on the mount, we start to see the implications of all this. Let's have a look at what Jesus says about one of the commandments – the command not to murder.



### Read Matthew 5:21-26

11. The original command was 'Do not Murder'. What might a legalist do with a command like this?
  
12. How does Jesus expand this command for maximum application?

Jesus gives an example of maximum application. Now let's have a look at an example of how a legalist will minimise.



### Read Mark 7:9-14

13. What do the Pharisees and teachers of the law do to God's command?
14. How does this approach to the commandments compare to Jesus'?

Jesus is not a minimalist. He is not legalistically trying to reduce obedience to the bare minimum. Instead he steps back and maximises the 'spirit of the law'. It is a completely refreshing approach to obedience. It is new covenant obedience.

### Some Conclusions

We have reviewed the context in which the Ten Commandments were given. We have looked at each of the ten commandments. We've talked about covenants and we've looked at the sermon on the mount. Now let's see how we go at discussing the significance of the Ten Commandments. While discussing this, please let everyone feel free to say what they think without being quick to judge. Try to understand each other's position, and be prepared to change your own.

15. Should Christians observe the Ten Commandments in the same way that Israel did?
16. Jesus has fulfilled the Law and the prophets. What difference does that make?
17. Are each of the ten commandments still relevant? Discuss.

Before finishing up, come back to the big picture again. Remember God's plan to make a kingdom of priests. Re-read 1 Peter 2:9-12 then pray together.

### THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT

- Praise God for his faithfulness to every promise he has made
- Thank God that Jesus fulfils all the Old Testament
- Pray that we would be living as a Kingdom of Priests



# THE SINAI COVENANT - OTHER RULES



## EXODUS 22-24

1. Look back over the last study – why does God give rules and commands to the Israelites?

When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush he told him to go back and bring the Israelites out of Egypt and to Mount Sinai (compare Exodus 3:12). After ten plagues, crossing the Sea of Reeds,<sup>4</sup> and travelling for three whinging months – the nation of Israel arrived at the mountain (compare Exodus 19:1). It will be two years before they pack-up camp and move on (compare Exodus 40:17, Numbers 1:1, 10:11-13). During these two years camped around Mount Sinai, Moses becomes the middle-man between God and the Israelites. For much of that time Moses treks up and down the mountain with and without accompaniment, before setting up a Tent of Meeting (19:3, 7-8, 14, 20, 25; 20:21; 24:3, 9, 12; 32:7ff; 34:1... 33:7ff)<sup>5</sup>. Through all this time Moses takes messages to and from God.

**There are a LOT of instructions, rules, and regulations that God gives to the people, through Moses.** Apart from the Ten Commandments<sup>6</sup> there are two chunks of rules in Exodus. One lot in Exodus 21-23 which we will look at in this study, and another in Exodus 25-31. But it does not stop there. God gave many more instructions to his people - the detailed rules in Leviticus were also given during the time camped around Mount Sinai (Leviticus 27:34).

What we are looking at now is just a small part of what is referred to as the Old Testament Law, or the Old Covenant. Remember that was how God introduced his instructions;

*“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of the nations you will be my treasured possession...”* Exodus 19:5 (NIV).

We are going to take time to read all these commands and instructions – to get a feel for what God required of his people under this covenant. We'll read chunks, and you will need to keep moving fairly steadily if you are to get through the rest of this study.



### Read Exodus 20:22-21:11

2. We do not buy and sell servants. Do you think God's instructions to US would be different?



<sup>4</sup> Or the Red Sea in the New International Version.

<sup>5</sup> Have a look at the verses, to get a feel for it!

<sup>6</sup> Or 'ten words'.



**Read Exodus 21:12-36**

3. Why is it necessary to go into such detail? Wouldn't it be sufficient to say, "obey Exodus 21:1-17"?

**Read Exodus 22:1-23:9**

4. How might obedience to these rules make the Israelites God's holy people? (compare 22:31)
5. Is it possible to summarise all the instructions you have read, so far, into a simple sentence or principle?
6. Do you think Galatians 5:14 answers question 5?

**Read Exodus 23:10-19<sup>7</sup>**

7. The Sabbath is for rest, not worship. Discuss. (compare Exodus 20:8-11, 31:12-18, Deuteronomy 5:12-15, Hebrews 4:1-13).

We've seen a load of instructions on how the Israelites are to live. Instructions that apply to every-day life. Moses is to deliver all these regulations to the people. But there is a bit more to read first.



**Read Exodus 23:20-33**

8. What will happen if the people obey?
9. What do they particularly need to watch out for? (e.g. 23:24, 32-33).

Back in Exodus 19:5 we saw that God is entering into a covenant relationship with the Israelites. In the verses we are about to read we will see this covenant affirmed and formalised.



**Read Exodus 24:1-8**

10. What does Moses write down and read back to the people?
11. How do God and the people confirm their covenant?

Hopefully all that reading has help us have a better appreciation of just part of the Old Covenant. It is serious stuff – and it impacts on every-day life. However, we saw in the last study that Israel fails to

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<sup>7</sup> OK, this question is a conversation starter... don't get too carried away!



keep their side of the deal. And God, in faithfulness to his promises and to his side of the covenant – creates a *new* covenant. Let's come ahead to the New Testament and see how things have changed. We could spend ages discussing the apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians, but instead we are going to focus our attention on two short passages.



### **Read Galatians 3:1-14**

12. What will we achieve if we try to live under the Old Covenant rules and regulations? What is the alternative?
  
13. Last week we saw that Jesus has *fulfilled* the Old Testament law. So the Law is not an end in itself, rather it points forward to Jesus. Now that Jesus has fulfilled the Law, he has changed our relationship to it. How do these verses help us understand the way our relationship to the Law has changed?



### **Now jump ahead and Read Galatians 5:13-26**

14. What is different about living as a Christian, compared to living as an Old Testament Israelite?
  
15. What is the same?
  
16. How does this part of Galatians compare with what we saw in the sermon on the mount, in the last study?

## **THINK ABOUT IT**

Hopefully we are together getting a feel for both the Old Covenant and the New. Talk about the following, before praying together.

17. In what ways might we be able to do a better job of 'living by the spirit'?
  
18. Are we more in danger of being too 'legalistic', or of being too 'free'? What do you think?

## **THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT**

Praise God for the amazing freedom that we have in Christ. Ask that we would use our freedom to serve God lovingly and whole-heartedly.

# THE SINAI COVENANT -

## THE TABERNACLE

### EXODUS 25-31/35-40

It would be wise to have your time of prayer before doing this study, because this is a different style of study. We'll start by looking at the Bible, then it is over to you to make a model Tabernacle. Hopefully the exercise will not only give us a better appreciation of what Jesus has achieved in his death and resurrection, but also give you some memories to hang those truths on.



#### Read Hebrews 9:1-10

1. What does the writer to the Hebrews say the Holy Spirit was showing us, and how?

#### Read Hebrews 9:11-15

2. Where is the 'greater and more perfect' tabernacle, and what has Jesus done in it?

#### Read Hebrews 9:16-28

3. What has Jesus achieved and what are we still waiting for?

With that New Testament perspective, let's come back and have a closer look at the 'copy' of the real tabernacle. If we can understand the copy, then we have a better chance of understanding the reality on which it is modelled. As we do this, you will notice how much of Exodus is given over to the construction of the Tabernacle. In Exodus 25-31 we hear God telling Moses how to construct it, how to furnish it, and how to dress the priests. Then, in Exodus 35-39 we have an account of the construction of the Tabernacle, its furnishings and the priestly garments. The repetition is intentional.

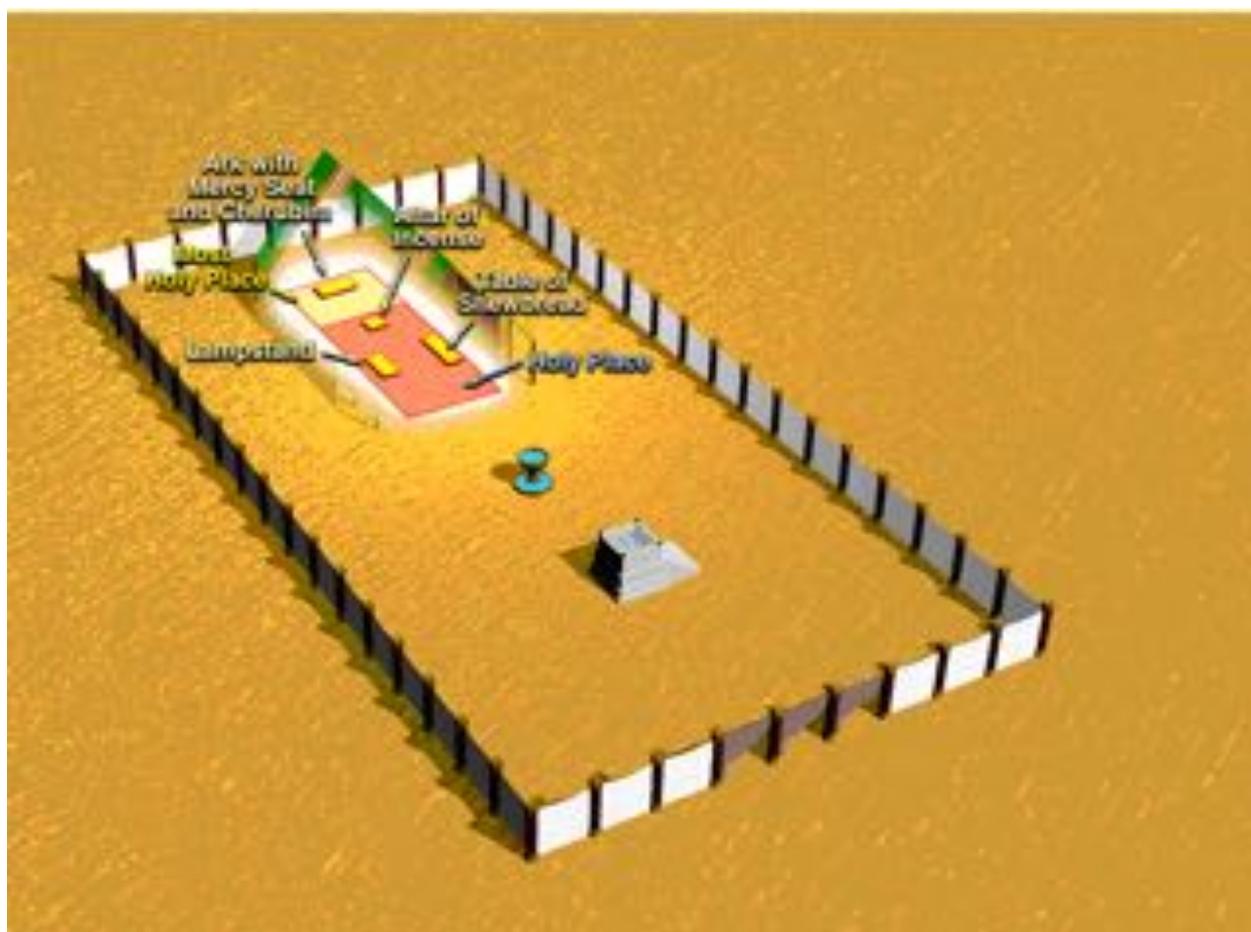
4. Using paper, card-board, felt tips (to draw the detailed bits), sticky-tape and anything else you can think of, have a go at building a tabernacle and furnishings. If you have time you may also be able to dress a priest or two. You will need to read Exodus if you are to make an accurate model.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> You may find it simplest to just work through Exodus 25-31, rather than coming back to 35-39.

## THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT

Re-read Hebrews 9:8-9, 23-26 and Thank God that Jesus has made it possible for us to be forgiven, and to approach God.



# OLD COVENANT LESSONS FOR NEW COVENANT PEOPLE

We have been studying Exodus for six weeks. Now is the time to pull everything together. Let's begin by sharing things we have noticed or been challenged by. As your ideas start to dry-up, then discuss these questions – but keep moving fairly quickly as there is a lot to cover in this last study.

1. If someone were to ask you what Exodus is about – what would you say?
2. Why did God bring the plagues on Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Exodus 7:4-5)? What do these signs and wonders show us about God?
3. Is there a passage or an idea that summarises the whole book?
4. How do the events in Exodus relate to God's promises to Abraham (in Genesis 12:1-3)?
5. What can we learn about God's character, by looking at Exodus?

Now let's pull a few more threads together before looking at what, New Covenant People, can learn from Old Covenant lessons in Exodus.



**Read Exodus 6:2-8 and 19:4-6**

6. Why does God act to save the Israelites from slavery in Egypt?
7. What is God's plan for his people?



The book of Exodus is the story of God's faithfulness. Despite the behaviour of sinful people, God remains faithful to his promises to Abraham. He continues to work to his plan of establishing His people in His place, under His rule.

While Exodus tells us about the end of a Israel's slavery, it also marks the beginning of a nation. At the end of the book we see God dwelling among his people, the people that he has chosen, and redeemed from slavery.

But Israel's troubles are far from over. Ultimately we know that these events point forward to another exodus. Another event where God saves his people – this time forever. Jesus accomplishes another exodus, and we get a glimpse of the result in Revelation 21:2-3;

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

**'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'**

Revelation 21:2-3 (NIV)

In the mean-time, while we wait for Jesus to return, we live as a kingdom of priests;

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

1 Peter 2:9-11 (NIV)

We are New Covenant people who are free to serve God wholeheartedly. We are not to be legalistic minimalists – instead we should ask God to work in us by His Spirit to write His law on our hearts so that we obey him to the maximum.

Now let's have a look at some specific ways we can learn from the lessons Israel learned.



#### **Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-14**

8. In what ways are Christians today similar to Israel in the desert?
9. How has the fulfilment of the ages come on us (v10)?
10. What specific 'sins' should we avoid repeating?
11. How do verses 6 and 11 particularly challenge you?

It is sobering to think God would use the fate of so many Israelites as an example. Sounds similar to what happened in the crossing of the Sea of Reeds, when Israel saw God's power in the death of many Egyptians (Exodus 14:31). There is a huge weight of responsibility on us, not to drift or wander. The writer to the Hebrews bears a similar warning. Let's look at three short passages in Hebrews.



#### **Read Hebrews 2:1-4**

12. The messages spoken by angels is the OT Law (cf Acts 7:53 and Deut 22:2). Why should we pay more careful attention to the gospel message?



#### **Read Hebrews 4:1-13**

13. Why was God's word to the Israelites 'of no value'? (v2, 6, 11)

14. Does that mean God's word was powerless? (cf v12-13)

15. Why should we listen to God? (v1, v6, v12-13)

What we have seen in 1 Corinthians and Hebrews is a weighty warning, however we are not alone.



### Read Hebrews 4:14-16

16. How can we still be confident we will not miss out on the 'rest' that God has planned for us?

There are still so many questions aren't there. For example - what happens to the Jews? There's one more passage for us to look at before we finish.



### Read Romans 10:1-15

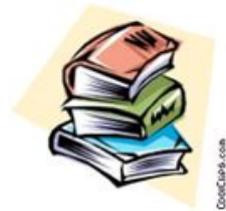
17. Is sincerity enough to make you right with God? (v2)

18. Are we saved by calling on God, or by keeping the law?

19. How do verses 14-15 encourage you to be more open in sharing the truth about Jesus?

20. What hope do Jews have?

21. Some would say that God has changed his plan. He gave the Law to Israel, and that failed to produce the desired result. So God went back to the drawing-board and started over – this time he sent Jesus. What would you say?



There are many Old Covenant lessons for New Covenant people. We have touched on some of them. Over the last six weeks hopefully we have grown in our understanding of what our Powerful God is like, and what it means for us to be His people. And hopefully we have also been reminded of how much there is to learn about God, and how little we can ever fully grasp.

## THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT

Thank God for the things you have learned and been reminded of as we have looked at Exodus.

