

Essential Scripture: Old Testament

Exodus: scripture passages Lessons and questions for Wednesday, October 16

Two central experiences: the exodus and the revelation at Mount Sinai

- Liberation from slavery: chapters 1-18
- A covenant community /people of God: chapters 19-40

Tonight:

- Slavery
- Moses and the burning bush
- Exodus
- Sinai

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Slavery: Exodus 1: 8-10

Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. 10Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land."

Moses delivered: Exodus 2: 1-10

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. 2The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. 3When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. 4His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

5The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. 6When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him."

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Moses and the burning bush: Exodus 3: 1-15

1Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. 3Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." 4When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

God hears and comes down

Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, 8and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

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Pharaoh resists - The Exodus

10 Plagues: chapter 7: 8 – 11:10

The LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. 2You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his land. 3But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and I will multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. 4When Pharaoh does not listen to you, I will lay my hand upon Egypt and bring my people the Israelites, company by company, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. 5The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out from among them."

Passover: chapter 12: 21-28

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, select lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover lamb. 22Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside the door of your house until morning. 23For the LORD will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over that door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down. 24You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children. 25When you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. 26And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this observance?' 27you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed down and worshiped.

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The Exodus

Departure: chapter 12: 29-51

At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. 30Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his officials and all the Egyptians; and there was a loud cry in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. 31Then he summoned Moses and Aaron in the night, and said, "Rise up, go away from my people, both you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD, as you said. 32Take your flocks and your herds, as you said, and be gone. And bring a blessing on me too!"

33The Egyptians urged the people to hasten their departure from the land, for they said, "We shall all be dead." 34So the people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls wrapped up in their cloaks on their shoulders.

Red Sea: chapter 14: 21-31

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. 22The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. 23The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. 24At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. 25He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

26Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." 27So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. 28The waters

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Wilderness (complaining/Manna): chapter 16:1-36

The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim; and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. 2The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. 15When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.

Sinai/ 10 Commandments: chapter 20, Verse 1: remembering leads to the commandments

Then God spoke all these words:

2I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; 3you shall have no other gods before me.

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Sinai/ 10 Commandments: chapter 20

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; 3you shall have no other gods before me.

4You shall not make for yourself an idol, ... for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, 6but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

8Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy...

12Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

13You shall not murder.

14You shall not commit adultery.

15You shall not steal.

16You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

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The ark, table and lampstand: chapter 25

They shall make an ark of acacia wood; it shall be two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. 11You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside you shall overlay it, and you shall make a molding of gold upon it all around. 12You shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side. 13You shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 14And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, by which to carry the ark. 15The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. 16You shall put into the ark the covenant that I shall give you.

17Then you shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its width.

Now, priests: chapter 28/29

Then bring near to you your brother Aaron, and his sons with him, from among the Israelites, to serve me as priests — Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.... Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them, so that they may serve me as priests. ...and the priesthood shall be theirs by a perpetual ordinance. You shall then ordain Aaron and his sons.

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Covenant broken: chapter 32

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, 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." 2Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." 3So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears, and brought them to Aaron. 4He took the gold from them, formed it in a mold, and cast an image of a calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" 5When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a festival to the LORD." 6They rose early the next day, and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel.

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Covenant saved, by remembering: chapter 32

The LORD said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; 8they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" 9The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. 10Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation."

11But Moses implored the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. 13Remember Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekkah, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" 14And the LORD changed God's mind about the disaster that God planned to bring on God's people.

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Covenant restored: chapters 33

The LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." 18Moses said, "Show me your glory, I pray." 19And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, 'The LORD'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. 20But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live." 21And the LORD continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; 22and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; 23then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."

- HeseD, steadfast love, mercy (chapter 24: 6-7)

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Covenant restored: chapters 34

The LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets, which you broke. 2Be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai and present yourself there to me, on the top of the mountain. 3No one shall come up with you, and do not let anyone be seen throughout all the mountain; and do not let flocks or herds graze in front of that mountain." 4So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the former ones; and he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tablets of stone. 5The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name, "The LORD."

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Chapter 34: Heseḏ (steadfast love)... mercy

6The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed,

"The LORD, the LORD,

a God merciful and gracious,

slow to anger,

and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

7keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation,

forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,

yet by no means clearing the guilty,

but visiting the iniquity of the parents

upon the children

and the children's children,

to the third and the fourth generation."

8And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. 9He said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O LORD, I pray, let the LORD go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance."

10 The Lord said: I hereby make a covenant.

Questions

1. **As we move from Genesis to Moses to the covenant or external law, what is changing with the relationship of God to God's people and God's people to God?**
2. **How does the exodus shape the identity of the people of Israel? How do stories of exodus continue to shape us?**
3. **God's mysterious presence and splendor are here for us to ponder? How has that sense of God changed? How is there a longing for it, still? Did you hear the longing for God's presence in chapter 33?**
4. **How do you reflect on the giving of the law, this covenant understanding?**
5. **What does it mean to be grounded in love, in identity as beloved of God, in the challenges of life?**



Weekly Conversations and Reflection

1. Why do you suppose these verses and chapters are essential?
2. How do these verses and chapters shape your understanding of God?
3. How do these verses and chapters help you understand your place in creation and your place among God's people?
4. How has this week's reading been a blessing to you?