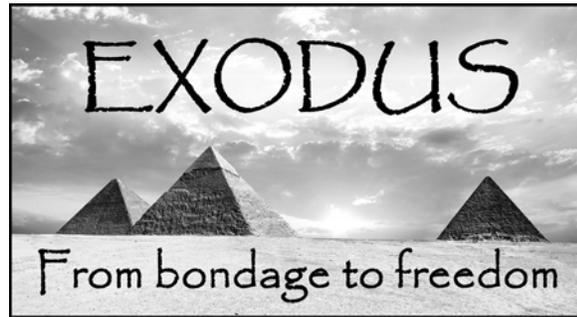


STUDY GUIDE

Week 3: Exodus 19-20
**Sinai: Receiving our
New Identity**

October 2, 2016



Before you begin this study, ask the Holy Spirit to show you what God is saying in these scriptures.

Day 1: Exodus 19: 1-8

1. As Exodus 19 opens, where were the Israelites located? How long did the Israelites travel from Egypt to Mount Sinai? Where did they camp? Where is the Desert of Sinai, and where is Mount Sinai? Why is Mount Sinai called "God's holy mountain"? (consult the map in the historical background)
2. As the Israelites traveled to the Sinai Desert, how had God provided for their daily needs? (see Exodus 16-17) What does this tell us about God?
3. Moses goes up the mountain to meet with God. What does God promise to Israel? What condition is given (vs 3-6)? How is this similar to how God fulfilled His promise to Abraham (Genesis 15 and 17)?
4. How did the Israelites respond to what Moses said to them (vs 7-9)?

Digging deeper

- What is the significance of Mount Sinai? (see also Hebrews 12: 18-21)
- What is the concept of God's chosen people, and how has this idea of God's chosen been demonstrated or claimed in history, including modern day Israel?

Day 2: Exodus 19: 9-15

1. In Exodus 3:2 God appeared to Moses in flames of fire. How does God appear to Moses now (vs 9)? How is God going to appear to the Israelites (vs 11) Why? What words are used to describe God's appearance? How does this compare with other passages describing God's appearance to other people in scripture, such as Abraham (Genesis 18 and 22)
2. How was Moses to prepare Israel for their meeting with God (vs 10, 14-15)? How do we prepare for God's appearance? How does or should our view of God shape the way we prepare to meet God, both individually and corporately?

3. Why were the Israelites not to touch the mountain? What would happen if they did (vs 12-13)? Why was this warning so harsh?
4. Note the emphasis on the 3rd day and the 3rd month (Exodus 19: 1, 11, and 16; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 5:3; Exodus 8:27). Also note that Jesus public ministry on earth was 3 years long, he died at 33 years of age, and he was in the tomb for 3 days. Three is the number of wholeness and completeness.

Digging deeper

- How was God's dialog with Moses similar to or different from God's dialogue with other people? (Genesis 32, I Kings 19, I Samuel 3, Daniel 3, Isaiah 6, Matthew 17)

Day 3: Exodus 19: 16-25

1. God's descent to the mountain was loud and dramatic. The people trembled and the mountain trembled. What words are used to describe God's appearance in verses 16-18, compared with God's appearance described in verse 9? Can you recall a time when you had a dramatic encounter with God? How long did it last? What impact did it have on you?
2. What is the significance of thunder, lightning, fire, and smoke? Where else in the Bible do we see these words describing God's appearing? What do these words reveal about God's character?
3. What did God warn Moses about how the Israelites should act (vs 20-24)? What would happen if they did not act this way? What instructions do we have for how we should not act, and what consequences are described if we do not follow these instructions?
4. How do we seek to demonstrate reverence when we interact with God? What does the Lord require of us in meeting with God (Hebrews 12)?
5. What did it mean that Israel could become a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, and God's treasured possession? Why did God choose Israel? How does this relate to the concept of a "royal priesthood" mentioned in I Peter 2:9? Do you have trouble seeing yourself as a treasured possession of God? As holy? As part of God's priesthood?
6. Just as Moses served as an intermediary between God and the Israelites, who serves as the intermediary between God and us (Romans 8: 26-27; Hebrews 9:15)?

Digging deeper

- The role of priests in Israel and the development of the priesthood in Israel (Exodus 4, 28, 32)

Day 4: Exodus 20: 1-17

1. Exodus 20: 1-7 deal with the first 3 commandments. Verse 1 provides the foundation of the commandments, which is Israel's relationship with God. What three specific statements about their relationship with God are listed? As we apply these commandments to our own lives, how do we have our own idols? How do we misuse God's name?
2. Verse 8 says to keep the Sabbath holy. What is involved in this, according to verses 9-10? What is the basis for this commandment (vs 11)? As we apply this commandment to our own lives, how do we keep the Sabbath holy (see also Deuteronomy 5:12, Luke 4:14, Matthew 12:8, and Mark 2:27)? As a society, we have grown lax on this commandment. How can we keep the Sabbath holy while living in our current society?
3. The last 6 commandments deal with our relationships with other people. In Matthew 5: 17-48, Jesus gives his commentary on the law. What does he say about the importance of the law (Matthew 5: 17-20)? How does he give further detail to the meaning of the last 6 commandments in Exodus 20?
4. Read aloud Exodus 20: 1-17. How does the idea of God's law as an invitation to a "flourishing life" impact your reading of these verses? What kind of people was God designing Israel to be?
5. How did the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day misuse the law? How do Christians today misuse the law?

Digging deeper

- Are there different ways to view the law?
- What is the concept of the Sabbath?

Day 5: Exodus 20: 18-26

1. How did the Israelites react to God's dramatic presence (vs 18-19)? The word "fear" is also seen in Genesis 3:10, Exodus 19:6, Deuteronomy 5:5, and I Samuel 12:18. Describe a time in your life when you were afraid of God.
2. How did Moses explain the Israelites' fear (vs 20)? Why was their fear a good thing? Moses calls them to not be afraid but to fear God. (See Genesis 20:11 and Exodus 14:31, where fearing God included a reverential trust and a commitment to God's revealed will.)
3. What other instructions does God give to the Israelites through Moses concerning idols (vs 22-23)? When does something become an idol in your life? What should be done about it?

4. In verses 24-26, what instructions are given to the Israelites about building an altar to God? Why were they not to use dressed stones? Why were they not to have steps to the altar? Note that there were some altars with steps later in Israel's history (Exodus 28: 42-43; Leviticus 6: 10; Leviticus 16: 3-4; Ezekiel 44: 17-18.)
5. How do these instructions reveal how we are to worship God? Does the way we worship God matter? How do we show reverence and respect to God in our worship? Should a formal worship setting be handled differently than a casual worship setting?

Digging deeper

- What idols were in Egypt and in other countries at the time of the Exodus?

Day 6:

(If you have the book Leaving Egypt, read chapters 5 & 6. If you do not have the book, consider how you might respond to these questions based on your own experiences and understanding.)

1. In Chapters 5 & 6, DeGroat describes the journey from Egypt through the Sinai desert: "people left the only homes they'd ever know to enter a wilderness...Their relief to be free of Pharaoh's grasp turned very quickly to profound dissatisfaction. God had ignited their longing and intensified their hunger for a better life, but the Exodus did not bring the immediate gratification they longed for. Their joy in liberation was tempered by the reality of a long journey through a dry and weary land" (pp. 72-73). As you escaped from your own "Egypt," did you go through a time like this—a dry and weary land? What were you hungry for in your wilderness, and how did God meet your needs?
2. At Mount Sinai, Israel was given some boundaries for behavior in the Ten Commandments. DeGroat describes these laws as an invitation to "live and thrive as God's people" (p. 79) and as an "invitation to a flourishing life" (p. 81). He also writes, "Fresh out of Egypt, we all need some patience along with some clear direction" (p. 76). How do we see the Ten Commandments—as a set of restrictions, as a set of prescriptions, or as an opportunity to thrive and flourish? What role does obedience to the law play in your own life? In your salvation?
3. Consider the people DeGroat describes in Chapters 5 and 6 (Janie, Bill Zeller, DeGroat himself). For example, consider Janie, about whom DeGroat writes, "But the patterns of her past life kept intruding on her new path to freedom" (p. 77). Have you seen this in your own journey? Do you see anyone you can identify with? Do you see anyone you know in these descriptions?