Women’s Bible Study

January 17, 2023

Exodus 19-40

REVIEW:

Pentateuch Overview:

* Purpose:

-Written by Moses as they prepare to enter the land of promise after the exodus in order to orient them to one God who created all things as compared to the nations’ many competing gods. He writes to show God’s intention in creation for relationship with Him and to reveal His character, ethical standards, and promise.

* Key Verses: Genesis 12:1-3-The call and blessing of Abraham. The fulfilment of these promises constitutes the storyline of the Pentateuch.
* Review Biblical themes we have discussed so far.
* Tonight: Exodus 19-40: The Law and the Tabernacle

Summary of Genesis 1-11:

The Creator and author of the story is introduced. He creates all things by the power of His word. Everything He makes is good in its design, intention, and purpose. He uniquely creates man to bear His image, have dominion under His rule, and spread His glory across the earth. But His creation doubts both His word and His character and they reject His rule. Yet, the Creator is gracious and provides a substitutionary death on their behalf before they are cast out of the garden and lose access to the tree of life. Man continues in his rebellion with the first child in Adam’s likeness murdering his brother. Yet the Creator is generous and comes to Cain providing protection. But all the Creator said would happen does and death reigns in dominion over man. The sin of man is magnified so much that judgement must come but the Creator is grieved for His creation. In His judgment, He provides a way of salvation for Noah. The Creator knows man’s heart so He makes a covenant to never strike all the earth again. He rebuilds creation giving the command to again bring His glory to the earth. But rather than obey their Creator and fulfill their purpose, mankind joins together in rebellion against Him in an attempt to build their own kingdom and make their own name. The Creator does what they refuse to do and disperses them so they cannot remain united in rebellion. The Creator’s ordered creation has moved to disorder and chaos because of man’s sin and His creation is separated from Him and from each other. Yet God will continue in his covenant faithfulness to His creation….Genesis 12-50.

Summary of Genesis 12-50:

While mankind’s sin and rebellion resulted in chaos, disorder, and separation from their Creator and each other, God acted to bring about restoration in His calling out of Abraham and His promise to make his family into a nation that will be a blessing and bring restoration to all the nations. He is patient with Abraham as he learns what it means to trust God to the point where he is willing to sacrifice the promised son because he knows God will keep His word. Jacob, even more than Abraham wrestles to try to take matters into his own hands before recognizing everything is in God’s control, not his. Finally, in Joseph, we see a picture of what the promised offspring will be like, and we are reminded that God has been working to bring about His redemption story by His covenant faithfulness throughout the mess that humanity continues to make. The promise of God in Genesis 3:15 is traced throughout the book (and the rest of the Bible) from Adam, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Judah. Man is evil, but God is good and faithful to His word.

Last month: Exodus

* Sections:

-Exodus 1-18: The Exodus from Egypt: Israel’s Redemption

-Exodus 19-24: A Nation is formed: Mosaic Covenant

-Exodus 25-40: The Tabernacle-God dwells with His people again.

* Key Passages:

-Exodus 12: The Passover

-Exodus 19: Israel at Mt. Sinai

* Key Verse: Exodus 29:46

*And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.*

Conclusion of Exodus 1-18:

After 430 years since the close of Genesis, Exodus opens with the covenant people of God enslaved in Egypt. In a ruthless attempt to do away with them, Pharaoh orders all baby boys killed but we learn of some who fear the Lord more than Pharaoh. God hears the cries of His people and remembers His covenant so into this context, Moses is born and by God’s providence, he ends up being raised in Pharaoh’s household. After Moses flees to Midian, the Lord reveals Himself to Moses in the burning bush by His covenant name, Yahweh-the self-existent, promise keeping God. He sends Moses back to Pharaoh to tell Pharaoh to let His firstborn, Israel, go. Pharaoh refuses and Yahweh uses 10 plagues to show that He is more powerful than the gods of Egypt, including Pharaoh. In a night of watching, Yahweh redeems Israel out of slavery by the death of the Passover Lamb and leads them out through the waters of the Red Sea, defeating Pharaoh’s army completely. He has made Himself known by His covenant name, Yahweh, as He has rescued and redeemed them by His steadfast love. His promise to make them a nation has come to fruition, and He is leading them to the land He has promised under His chosen leader. Yet, there is a foreshadowing in how this people will respond as they begin to complain about how the Lord is leading them within a few days of leaving Egypt. God is going to bring them to Mt. Sinai to meet with Him and to set forth the manner in which they are to operate as His people.

**The Exodus-A Picture of Salvation**

The story of the exodus becomes Israel’s salvation story: This is what Israel looked back to as their salvation story and evidence that Yahweh was a covenant keeping God. They therefore had a foundation from which to also look forward to the coming promised Offspring. How were they saved? By faith in the promises of God: Both in what He had done and what He had promised He would do. Our faith is the same-we look back to our deliverance as well but not from slavery to Pharaoh (physical) but deliverance from our slavery to sin and death. Our faith is in also in the promises of God: Both in what He has done in Christ as the cross and resurrection and what He has promised He will do, looking to the return of Christ and culmination of all things. The exodus story is a physical salvation story-from earthly bondage and slavery, the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai, physical circumcision, daily manna, the building of the tabernacle, the annual Passover meal to remember, etc. Yet these point to and give us a picture of a spiritual salvation-from sin and death, with the law of Christ now written on hearts, a circumcision of the heart, a daily provision for all our needs, and the spiritual dwelling of God within us. We too have a regular Passover meal (Communion) to remember. The exodus story is foundational to the faith of ancient Israel and becomes a tangible picture of a greater spiritual reality that it pointed to Christ.

GROUP STUDY:

Break into groups and work through study guide of Exodus 19-40.

Discuss together

TEACHING:

**Exodus 19-24: The Mosaic Law-Israel’s Constitution**

🡪Once the people of Israel arrive at Mt. Sinai, the Lord is going to forge them into one nation under His law (constitution of the nation). The laws include how they are to relate to Him, to one another, and to the surrounding nations. There are social laws, justice laws, etc. We are going to look at them in a high summary view and then discuss what we are to do with them today.

* Exodus 19 links the exodus from Egypt with the rest of the book.
* Three months after leaving Egypt, they come to Mt. Sinai. They are told to consecrate themselves for God is going to meet with them.
* Access to God’s presence was lost in Eden-God is restoring His presence (although in a lesser state) with His people. This is a major step towards getting back to Eden.
* They are told if they obey His laws, they will become a kingdom of priests. (Priesting over the nations-blessing of Abraham. Recall where the land of Israel was located) Keep in mind-1 Peter 2:5-we are a kingdom of priests.
* God makes a kind of peace treaty with His people. (Suzerain/Vassel covenant-If they will do certain things, He will do certain things)
* Question-does this covenant fit into the other covenants of Gen. 3:15; 12, 15, 49? Why or why not? (unconditional vs conditional)
* This covenant is going to measure the people’s faithfulness and obedience. It is going to show their belief or unbelief in the promises of God. Their salvation is still based on faith. Obeying the covenant becomes evidence of that faith.

🡪God’s promises are given by grace, we believe them by faith, and we evidence that faith by works (law).

* Limits are put on the mountain-they are not to touch it. (Keep in mind-Hebrews 12:20)
* Moses goes up the mountain and is given the law-summarized in the 10 commandments. These are the terms of the covenant and describe how they are going to relate to each other, worship, social justice, etc. They are to be different than the other nations.
* For 4 chapters, God gives the essence of the covenant:

-Ex 20:22-26: Idols and Altars

-Ex 21-2-11-Hebrew Servants

-Ex 21:12-35: Personal Injuries

-Ex 22:1-15: Protection of Property

-Ex 22:16-31: Social responsibility

-Ex 22:16-31: Laws of Justice and Mercy

-Ex 23:14-19: Annual Festivals

* Exodus 23:20-33: God promises again to give them the land, says He will drive out the inhabitants, and tells them not to make a covenant with the nations there.
* Exodus 24: The people agree to the covenant-“all the Lord has spoken we will do.” Moses writes down all the words of the Law. He reads it before the people, they offer sacrifices, and the blood of the covenant is thrown on them. Then Moses, Aaron and the elders go up the mountain and eat and drink in a meal (communion/fellowship) with the Lord.

🡪This should cause us to consider another covenant-the New Covenant.

-Luke 22:20-“Covenant in My Blood”

-Luke 22:14: Meal-Last Supper

-Hebrews 8: Law now written on our hearts

* Moses sends Aaron and others down the mountain, he and Joshua (assistant) go up where Moses meets with God for 40 days/nights.

What was the purpose of the Law?

* What do we mean by the Law? Exodus 19-24-the primary purpose was to forge 2.5 million people into one nation with national identity, culture, and values. It was to reveal the character of God and that He is the One true God. It was to show Israel how to live in fellowship with Yahweh. Lastly, it was redemptive-it was meant to show Israel how they fell short. (But that was not its primary purpose in Exodus)
* We often think of law like rules to follow or face punishment (jail). However, ancient Israel thought of the law as good (Psalm 119). Deuteronomy 4:8: “What other nation has rules so righteous as all this law?” The Torah was lifegiving instruction.
* The law was never intended to earn merit with God and God knew they would not have sinless perfection. That’s why He established the sacrificial system to atone for their sin when they didn’t keep the covenant.
* The specific laws on food and separation were to keep them separate from the nations and protect them from a culture of death.
* Their adherence to the law was a thermometer that measured their faith-it was never the means by which they were saved or brought into the covenant with God.

What is the role of the O.T. law in the life of the believer today?

* If the purpose of the law was to forge them into one nation-the nation of Israel…The specific Mosaic covenant between God and Israel does not apply to us. (Constitution of Canada doesn’t apply to us)
* Does that mean we are without law? Certainly not! We are under the law of Christ. (New constitution for a new covenant) See:

-Galatians 5-6

-1 Cor 9:19-23

-Matthew 22:34-40

-Romans 7:4-6

-Matthew 28:18-20

🡪We can learn about the character and nature of God in the Mosaic covenant but that was always a temporary covenant. When Christ came, He was the perfect representative Israel and lived the law perfectly. When He died, we were crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20) so now we live by faith as Christ lives in us. We are “in Christ” and we are led by His Spirit who teaches us His commands, guides our decisions, and writes His law on our hearts. There is both freedom and slavery in Christ. We are free from the law (Christ fulfilled it) but we are under the law of Christ and His commands because we are servants/slaves/in bondage to Christ. Ephesians 2-God has prepared good works that we ought to walk in them and those good works are evidence of our faith (James). It’s not rules vs freedom to do whatever we want-it’s rules vs the power to do them by His Spirit.

🡪The law of Christ embraces the ethical values of the OT Law, but it doesn’t call for the same enforcement. The church is not a nation.

🡪Are any of the OT Laws valid? Where they are repeated and reinforced by the NT authors, they become part of the commands of Christ (10 commandments).

* Questions?

BREAK

**Exodus 25-40: The Tabernacle-God’s presence with His people**

* Exodus 25-31=7 chapters on the blueprint/pattern of how the tabernacle was to be built. Why does the text draw out both the pattern and the building for so long? Hebrews 8:5: The earthly tabernacle is a copy/shadow of a heavenly tabernacle.
* It is also a reflection of Eden-a place where God dwelt with man. Every piece of the tabernacle is symbolic echoing back to the garden. It was a like a portable Eden. (Consider: Lampstand-tree of life; Bread-Communion/fellowship/provision of God; Water of Basin-Rivers of Eden; Fire-flaming sword of the Cherubim/Cherubim guarding way to Eden and Cherubim guarding the ark of the covenant/Pictures of Cherubim and trees woven into curtains; Entrance to the sanctuary from the east both in Eden and tabernacle; Law-in the presence of God in the tabernacle, Knowledge is with God (Tree of Knowledge); Gold and onyx stone of Eden-Gold and stones decorate the tabernacle and priestly garments; Outside of Eden and the Camp of Israel-cut off from life, realm of death)

🡪All of this Eden imagery communicates that when they are in the tent, they are in the presence of God. But it’s imperfect-there is still separation. There is a need for a priest to represent the people before God and for God to communicate through. After the fall, this was how God was going to dwell among sinful people (more on the sacrificial system in Leviticus). But it is a shadow of a final restoration to come.

* Exodus 32-34: While Moses delays, the people abandon the covenant and tell Aaron to create a god they can see and worship. God burns with anger-the text invites us into God’s grief and pain over their rebellion again. Moses implores God to remember His covenant. God remains faithful to His covenant and does not destroy the entire nation. He reveals to Moses who He is-Exodus 34:6-A God who is merciful and gracious abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness but who will judge and punish sin.
* The covenant is renewed, God commands them again to obey His law.
* Exodus 35-40: 6 chapters of the construction of the tabernacle. Again, great detail is given in how the tabernacle is now built.
* Exodus 40: The tabernacle is assembled and God’s glory and presence fill the tabernacle. While it is an imperfect sanctuary, it is the closest to Eden we have been since Genesis 3. The book ends however with Moses not being able to enter. The way is not open to all because of their sin. There is still a problem in their relationship. How is God going to reconcile that? Leviticus: The Sacrificial System and the Priesthood.

Thoughts on the Tabernacle:

* From Eden, God created a place where He could dwell with His creation but because of man’s sin, we have been removed from God’s presence. Man went on to create cities/dwelling places that operated on man’s terms without God (Babel, nations, kingdoms). But God continued to pursue His creation, calling out one family through whom He could make Himself known to the world. After rescuing them from physical slavery in Egypt, He forges them into one nation putting them under His law and instructing them to build a place where He can dwell with them.
* All of this is meant to point to a “more perfect tent” (Hebrews 9:11) and a city that is to come.

*For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10)*

*But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city (Hebrews 11:16)*

*As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious,****5****you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:4-5)*

*And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.****3****And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God (Revelation 21:2-3)*

*For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest****19****and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them.****20****For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.”****21****Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.”****22****But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,****23****and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,****24****and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel….Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,****29****for our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:18-24, 28-29)*

**Summary of Exodus 19-40:**

After rescuing the family of Abraham from physical slavery in Egypt, God brings them to Mt. Sinai where He forges them into one nation under His law. The people agree to obey the covenant and it is ratified with blood, a meal, and the writing of the law on stone tablets. God then gives details instruction on how He going to dwell in their midst in a “mini-Eden” called the tabernacle. Yet, we see that the people not only needed rescue from physical slavery but from their own hearts and their slavery to sin as they quickly turn from the covenant and make a god for themselves. But God chooses to remain steadfast to His covenant, revealing He is a God rich in mercy and steadfast love. The tabernacle is constructed, and God’s presence fills it. In the closest return to Eden, God dwells again with His people. Yet, there is still a problem. They cannot just enter the tabernacle and commune with God. They need a representative-a priesthood….

Application/Discussion:

1. Do you think is harder or easier to not be under the Mosaic Law? Why or why not?
2. Do we view the law/commands of Christ as good and life-giving or do we see His commands as burdensome and limiting?
3. Personal reflection: What commands of Christ do you need to submit to today?
4. How does thinking of the tabernacle as a picture of Eden point to God’s desire to dwell with His people? How will you think of the tabernacle differently or see it as a shadow of our hope for an eternal sanctuary with God?
5. Any other thoughts/takeaways?

**Closing thoughts:**

When we read about the law and the tabernacle, we need to see them for the shadow and picture that they are which point to Christ! As believers, under the New Covenant, we now have the law of Christ written on our hearts. We are “in Christ” and He has perfectly fulfilled the law on our behalf. We are led, not by a written code, but by His Spirit and are under the commands of Christ, our Savior. His presence is with us *always* in the indwelling Spirit. God actually dwells IN us! We are now the temple of God being built up into a spiritual house. We have not come to a mountain that cannot be touched, one of darkness and gloom, but we come to a heavenly mountain, Mt. Zion, and the city of God. While we sojourn in this world, we look to the eternal city that is to come where we will dwell with our God, unhindered by sin because of Christ. He will dwell with us, and He will be our God forever and ever! Therefore, let us offer Him acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.

Homework:

* Read Leviticus (Listening to it is great!)
* Work through the study guide as you read.
* Consider getting additional resources to help in your study time.
* Next Study: Tuesday, February 21
* Fellowship time: February 7-Movie: Making of the Bible by Tim Mackie
* Mother/Daughter Retreat-May 19-21-Speaking on Ruth! Only about 50 spots left.

Sources Used:

ESV Study Bible

Logos

Hill, Andrew E & John Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament.* Grand Rapids: 2009.

The Bible Project: The Torah Series

Cedarville University: Dr. Miller Old Testament Literature Course