

The Lamb of God

*Seeing Jesus in Exodus, Leviticus,
Numbers, and Deuteronomy*

Leader's Guide

(for use with both the book only or
the book combined with video study)

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The Lamb of God: Seeing Jesus in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy Leader's Guide

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Based on the book *The Lamb of God: Seeing Jesus in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy (A 10-Week Bible Study)*, first printing 2012

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An Introduction to *The Lamb of God* for Leaders

The Lamb of God: Seeing Jesus in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy is an in-depth study of four of the books of the Bible written by Moses, with the goal of understanding them in the way that Jesus himself taught the disciples to read and understand the Old Testament: with him at the center. This guide will equip you to plan and lead a study of *The Lamb of God* using either the book alone or the book along with the video series. Teaching experience or gifting is not required to lead this study—just a willingness to organize, oversee, and facilitate a meaningful discussion time, as well as personal enthusiasm for knowing Christ more deeply through the study of his Word.

Determining Your Schedule for Studying *The Lamb of God*

This study has been put together in a way that offers flexibility in how you use it and flexibility in how you schedule your time for working through it. Everything that is needed by participants is provided in the book. Each week's lesson includes:

- ∞ Personal Bible Study
- ∞ Teaching Chapter (with a "Looking Forward" addendum at the end of each chapter)
- ∞ Discussion Guide

It is divided into ten weeks of study. But you may want to carefully consider dividing the material in a way that would extend the study over twenty weeks, giving your participants more time to think through and talk through the truths presented. Expanding the study may also be beneficial when you have only one hour or less to meet together each week and also want to incorporate

time for worship, prayer, or personal sharing into your small group time. Following are outlines for how the study would work for different schedules.

A 10-Week Book Study—Participants would need to have books in advance of the first week you meet, with instructions to read the chapter in Week 1, "A Prophet like Me," before they arrive the first week. There is no Personal Bible Study portion of the lesson for Week 1. When you get together that first week, you can spend some time getting to know each other, communicating about the format you will use, and discussing the chapter you've all read, using the Discussion Guide for Week 1. From then on, participants will be asked to come to the group time having completed the Personal Bible Study section and having read the Teaching Chapter of that week's lesson (unless your group's style will be to read the chapter aloud as a group, which some groups elect to do). You may want to suggest to participants that they put a star beside questions in the Personal Bible Study that they want to be sure to bring up in the discussion and underline key passages in the chapter that are meaningful or that raise questions for them that they'd like to discuss. During your time together each week you will discuss the big ideas of the lesson using the Discussion Guide, bringing in content from the Personal Bible Study and Teaching Chapter as you see fit.

Sample Weekly Schedule for a 1-Hour Study:

- 7:00 Welcome, get settled, announcements, maybe singing
- 7:10 Open discussion using the "Getting Started" question found in the Discussion Guide, working your

way through the Discussion Guide questions, bringing in comments and questions from the Personal Bible Study and Teaching Chapter as desired.

7:50 Take prayer requests and pray.

7:59 Close

An 11- or 12-Week Book Study—You may prefer to meet the first week and distribute the books at that point, using that first week solely to get to know each other and get organized. Assign the group to read the chapter in Week 1 for discussion the following week and then proceed as outlined in the ten-week book study. If you want to extend the study to twelve weeks, you might set a week following the last lesson to come back together, asking each member to plan to share the truths and take-aways from the study that have been most meaningful, or perhaps to talk through any lingering questions from the study.

A 20-Week Book Study—There is a great deal of material here and you may want to take your time with it, giving more time to discuss its foundational truths and allowing it to sink in. To expand the study over twenty weeks, you would break each week into two parts. You would spend one week on the Personal Bible Study section—either doing it on your own and discussing your answers when you meet, or actually working through the questions together when you meet (which would lessen the amount of time required outside of the group time and perhaps diminish barriers to participation for those who struggle with working through the questions on their own). Then, you would ask group members to read the Teaching Chapter on their own before the next meeting and use the Discussion Guide to discuss the big ideas of the lesson the following week. If you meet once for Week 1 (since there is no Personal Bible Study section for the first week), and meet for a final week to share big-picture truths taken away from the study, it will add up to twenty weeks.

Sample Weekly Schedule for a 1-Hour Study

Week A (Personal Bible Study):

7:00 Welcome, get settled, announcements, maybe singing

7:10 Work your way through the questions in the Personal Bible Study, looking up the answers together and allowing various members to share what they are putting down.

7:50 Take prayer requests and pray.

7:59 Close

Week B (Teaching Chapter):

7:00 Welcome, get settled, announcements, maybe singing

7:10 Open discussion using the “Getting Started” question found in the Discussion Guide, working your way through the Discussion Guide questions, bringing in comments and quotes from Teaching Chapter and reading the “Looking Forward” section together.

7:50 Take prayer requests and pray.

7:59 Close

A 10-Week Book Study Using the Video—

If you’re using the book in combination with the video series, group members will be asked to complete the Personal Bible Study section of each week’s lesson in the book before they come. On the videos, Nancy presents virtually the same content as the Teaching Chapters minus the “Looking Forward” addendum found at the end of each chapter. So if you are using the video series, participants have the option to:

1. Read the chapter in advance as a preview of what will be presented on the video.
2. Just listen to Nancy teach the content of the chapter on the video and read only the “Looking Forward” section as part of the group discussion time or on their own.
3. Go back and read the chapter after watching the video, if needed or desired, to seal in or clarify what was presented in the video.

When group members miss a particular week, you may want to encourage them to go to the website, www.SeeingJesusintheOldTestament.com,

where they can download the video they missed, or they can simply read the chapter in the book.

It is a good idea to encourage participants to take notes during the video even though the content of the video is in the book. For each video presentation, reproducible note-taking pages that you may copy for your group members are included at the end of this Leader's Guide. Note-taking during the video is a good idea because something transpires when we process words and ideas through a pen or pencil onto paper, which aids us in processing and retaining the words and ideas. But those taking notes may also rest easy if they miss something significant, because the complete content is also in the book.

*Sample Schedule for 2-Hour Study
Incorporating the Video*

- 9:00 Welcome, get settled, announcements, maybe singing
- 9:10 Watch video teaching session
- 9:50 Respond to video with various women praying as they feel led in response to what they've heard (not general prayers, but responding to what was presented). Because the lessons end each week in some poignant ways, it will be helpful to be able to be quiet and also respond to what was presented before rushing off to hallway conversation and small group discussion.
- 10:00 Break to go to small groups
- 10:05 Welcome, connecting and checking in with each other time
- 10:10 Start discussion using the Discussion Guide and bringing in Personal Bible Study questions group members want to discuss as well as points made in the video.
- 10:50 Take prayer requests and pray. (Be sure that the prayer time is not only about personal needs but also praying through the truths presented in the passage you're studying. This will likely need to be modeled by the leader and/or assigned to one of the people praying.)
- 10:59 Close

Making the Most of the Personal Bible Study

The question is often asked, "How long should it take to complete the Personal Bible Study questions?" The answer is that there is no set time frame. We all approach this differently. Some participants love to luxuriate, think through, look up, and write out. Others have the approach of simply looking for the answers and making short notations rather than writing long answers to questions. So how should you answer the question, "How much time should it take?" I suggest you say that it takes as much time as they choose to invest in it. Certainly some weeks they may have more time than others, and we all know that we get more out of a study when we put more into it. The depth of thinking through the lesson is not necessarily reflected in the length of answers written on the page or the time spent according to the clock. What is most important is not how much time it takes, but planning a time to work through the Personal Bible Study and keeping that appointment. In fact, in the first week, you might ask each group member to share with the group when she intends to work on the Personal Bible Study in the coming week. This will help everyone to think about their schedules and set a time. One person's strategy may serve to be helpful to someone else who has not been successful in the past in carving out time for personal study. You might ask those who have done similar studies if they prefer to do it in one sitting or to break it up over several days. Also suggest they consider using Sunday, a day set aside for God, to study God's Word.

Included in the following pages of this Leader's Guide is a copy of each week's Personal Bible Study that includes possible answers to the questions. This is provided for you as the leader to assist you in dealing with difficult questions, but it should not be provided to group members. I also encourage you to avoid having this Leader's Guide open as you complete the Personal

Bible Study yourself and work just as your group members are working. We all know that it is a challenge to resist looking for the answers to a crossword puzzle in the back of the book while we're working on it. And likewise, as the leader, it may be a challenge for you to resist working through the questions with this resource at your fingertips. After completing the Personal Bible Study yourself, you may want to look over the suggested answers in this Leader's Guide and add notes to your own answers as desired in preparation for the group discussion rather than having this guide in hand during your group time, which cannot help but imply that these are the "right" answers. You will find what I hope will be some helpful suggestions for encouraging your group members in regard to completing the Personal Bible Study in the "Dealing with Common Challenges" section of this Leader's Guide.

Incorporating the "Looking Forward" Section

I grew up in church and have spent most of my life in the evangelical culture with lots of sound Bible teaching for which I am so grateful. But for most of my life I have had a very limited, and less than fully biblical, understanding of heaven and eternity. I thought of heaven primarily as being a place away from here where our spirits go after we die to be with God forever. Honestly, I think I never really thought through what the difference would be in that existence when what we repeatedly read about in the New Testament in terms of the resurrection of the body (1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4) comes about at the return of Christ.

Additionally, I always thought of God's purposes of redemption being really only about people. I did not have an understanding of God's intentions to redeem all of creation, including this earth, making it the place where we will live forever in our resurrected bodies with Christ. But this is clearly the future hope that

all of the Bible is directed toward. The purposes of God are not merely about Christians going to heaven when we die, but about his intentions to restore all things, about heaven coming down to earth, and living forever with God in its perfection and beauty as Adam and Eve once did in the garden—except even better.

I assume there are a lot of people who have had a similar experience and limited understanding, and that is why I have made the consummation a part of every chapter in this study. To truly understand what God is doing in the smaller bits of Scripture we study, we have to have a sense of the big picture of the purposes of God. We must see every aspect of Scripture in context of the Bible's larger story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. To reorient how we've understood heaven and eternity, we've got to see it not just in a handful of passages that we think of as telling us about the return of Christ and "end times," but rather throughout the whole of Scripture and in fact every part of Scripture. When we see it from all of the various angles as we work our way through Scripture, it completes the picture and solidifies our grasp on what is revealed about what is yet to come. That is one reason I've included it in the "Looking Forward" section of each chapter. But another reason I have done so is because this is the essence of our Christian hope. Growing in our grasp of future realities in Christ helps us to face present difficulties with confidence in Christ.

If this understanding of what is ahead for us as believers is new to you as it was to me only a few years ago or if you feel you need a firmer grasp on it, here are some resources that you might find helpful:

The Restoration of All Things (A Gospel Coalition Booklet)
by Sam Storms (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011)

Heaven by Randy Alcorn (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2004)

How should you incorporate the “Looking Forward” section in your group time? The “best” way is going to be whatever works best for your group. You may do it differently on different weeks. It may be more of a time issue than anything else. And it may depend on if your group is reading the chapters in the book or watching the video presentation of the Teaching Chapter. The video presentation is the content of the Teaching Chapter minus the “Looking Forward.” So if you are using the video, you may be more inclined to want to include reading and/or discussing the “Looking Forward” section in your discussion time, perhaps working it in with the final question in the Discussion Guide each week, which is always about how the particular passage being studied fits in with the larger story of the Bible. Or, since every person attending the video study will have a copy of the book, you might simply suggest that participants read that section of the chapter on their own sometime after watching the video before they go on to the next lesson. In this way they can really think it through and take it in, bringing together all that they learned in that week’s lesson.

Using the Discussion Guide

Oftentimes in Bible studies in which we’re given a series of questions to work through on our own, our group discussions consist primarily of sharing the answers we found to the questions. But this study is different. While each week you will want to ask participants if they have any lingering questions from the Personal Bible Study section or aspects about it they would like to talk about, the Discussion Guide for *The Lamb of God* is designed to facilitate a discussion about the broader themes from the passages being studied. In this way we will be seeking not just more information but to develop deeper understanding.

As the leader, you should make it your goal to draw out the members of your group, creating

an environment that is safe for personal struggle, difficult questions, discovery, and even ambiguity. Because the discussion questions don’t always lend themselves to simple answers but provide for more interaction with the themes and challenges of the passages being studied, you may want to spend some time working your way through the questions in the Discussion Guide prior to the group time to anticipate where the discussion will be headed. You will find each week’s Discussion Guide in the pages that follow along with a few notes from me. Since these questions are designed to bring out various perspectives, there are not “suggested answers” as I provide in the Personal Bible Study. However, where appropriate, I’ve made notes about issues that might come up in the discussion or goals for particular questions where clarity might be helpful.

You can use the Discussion Guide as a script to lead you through the discussion time. Or you can use it simply as a resource, picking and choosing the questions you think will be most effective with your group. You may also want to plan each week to invite participants to share something that was significant or meaningful to them from the Personal Bible Study, determining ahead of time at what point in the discussion you will invite those comments. On some weeks, you will find that a question is already included in the Discussion Guide, connecting back to the Personal Bible Study that week.

Each week the discussion begins with a question called “Getting the Discussion Going,” which is designed to make people comfortable with talking and sharing personally from their lives. If someone does not have enough confidence in their understanding of the Bible to want to talk much on the more biblical questions, this is a question you may want to use to invite that person’s participation. If discussion comes to your group quite easily, or if you’ve just watched the video presentation of the teaching and sense

the group is ready to dive directly into the heart of the lesson, you may want to skip this question. Admittedly, many of them are very lightweight, but they are offered for the purpose of giving those who may be hesitant to talk about the biblical material an opportunity to talk in the group setting. Feel free to skip it, if you'd like, and instead head directly to the heart of the matter.

Depending on the amount of time you have, you may want to work through each of the "Getting to the Heart of It" questions, or you may want to select only a few of these questions to save time for the final two key questions.

While the bulk of the discussion questions center around the biblical storyline and the theology presented in the passage at hand, each week there is also a "Getting Personal" question. This is where you will want to be especially sensitive to encourage a number of people to answer and not allow the discussion to simply follow the flow of the initial comments. Be sure to go back to the original question at some point, asking other participants to share their thoughts and experiences that may be different from those shared first.

The Discussion Guide presents a final question each week that will help participants to grow in their grasp of the larger story of the Bible and see how the passage at hand fits into that larger story. If your experience is like mine, this is the part of Bible study that has been lacking for most of my life. Often in studies we have jumped

quickly to personal application to the life of faith, and we haven't stepped back to develop our understanding of the implications of the particular passage we are studying in light of the larger story of God's redemption of all things through Christ. But as we develop our understanding of how God has worked and is working to bring about his plans, we find that it actually helps us to understand and apply parts of Scripture that otherwise would be difficult to grasp.

If you want to develop more of your own understanding of the larger story of the Bible, you may want to supplement your study with one of the following books that I have found helpful:

According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible by Graeme Goldsworthy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991)

Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry by Michael Lawrence (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010)

Far as the Curse Is Found: The Covenant Story of Redemption by Michael D. Williams (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005)

God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible by Vaughan Roberts (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002)

The God Who Is There: Finding Your Place in God's Story by D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010)

The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative by Christopher J. H. Wright (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006)

Ideas and Resources for Discussion Group Facilitators

Thank you for your willingness to lead a group through this study of these four important books in the Old Testament. I always find that when I lead, I learn far more than I do when I'm just a member of the group because I know I must invest more effort to truly "own" the material. I hope that the extra investment in your study of these books of the Bible will be a blessing to you as you seek to effectively lead your group.

Leading Your Discussion Group Well

What is your goal or role as a discussion leader? I suggest you make it your goal to guide your group through a time of open and authentic discussion of the biblical truths presented in the Personal Bible Study and Teaching Chapter or video, seeking to clarify challenging concepts, solidify the group's grasp of the truths presented, and apply those truths to real life. Sometimes we have anxiety about leading or are reluctant to lead because we know we don't have all the answers, and we're afraid someone will come up with a question we can't answer or will take the discussion in a direction we can't handle. Don't allow yourself to be intimidated by the false expectation that if you step up to facilitate the discussion you must have all of the "right" answers. Too many times in our discussions of the Bible, someone in the group (and often-times it is the leader) feels he or she must sum up every part of the discussion with the "right" answer. But as you lead your group, I encourage you to avoid the compulsion to come quickly to the "right" answer to every question. Don't be afraid to let some questions hang for a while or to allow members to struggle with the issues

involved in the series of questions. Keep asking for the input of other participants. Also, there's nothing wrong with admitting, as the leader, that you don't know something or don't fully understand something and need to do some more study on it or want to invite someone on the pastoral staff to help answer the question. Determine to lead your group as a fellow learner and not as an expert who knows all. Expect God to use his Word not only in the lives of your group members but in your life as well!

Also be careful, as the leader, that you are a facilitator and not a dominator. Our goal as a facilitator is to encourage other people to talk and discuss, and sometimes, because we are so enthusiastic, we as leaders can tend to dominate the discussion. For some of us, it requires significant effort to limit our own input in the discussion so that others will be encouraged to talk.

While you do not want to dominate the group, you do want to lead effectively and efficiently. I assure you that you will have group members who will want you to lead with strength to create an environment that fosters meaningful discussion. As the leader, you set the tone for authenticity and openness. You set an example of giving short answers so that others can talk and of being a good, responsive listener. Being an effective leader also means that it is up to you to bring reluctant talkers into the conversation and to redirect the conversation when it has gone off-track. Few people want to be part of a group that is inflexible, restrictive, or rules oriented, but they do want to be part of a group that is organized and purposeful, in

which expectations are unapologetically communicated and stated guidelines are respected.

Using Your Time Effectively

As the leader, you have the responsibility for directing how to use the time for group discussion. While some participants may be very casual about how the time is used, others in your group are very aware of the time and become frustrated when they feel their valuable time is being wasted. There are several issues, I've found, that have a significant impact on using the time allotted for small-group discussion effectively:

Getting Started

So often we run out of time because we are slow to get started. We are waiting for latecomers, or chatting, or enjoying some food together and simply let valuable discussion time get away from us. All groups develop a culture, and members learn whether the group will really start on time or not, and they adjust their sense of urgency in regard to arrival time accordingly. Certainly you need to allow some time for participants to greet each other and to share their lives with each other, but you will want to determine how long that will last and give the group a firm start time for the discussion. If you set a culture of starting on time regardless of whether or not everyone in the group has arrived, and not allowing latecomers to interrupt your discussion when they arrive, you may find that group members become more punctual.

On the first day you meet, be sure to ask members to join the group and enter into the already-commenced discussion as unobtrusively as possible when they arrive after the discussion on the lesson has started. When we stop the discussion while everyone greets the late arriver, perhaps hearing the story of what caused the lateness, it can be challenging to get started again. You as the leader will need to

manage this area with a blend of appropriate firmness and grace.

Prayer Requests

Many times, we want our small-group discussion times to include a time of sharing prayer requests, which is a meaningful way of sharing our lives together and exercising our trust and relationship with God. But we also know that sometimes sharing requests can turn into telling long stories and lengthy discussions as other members offer advice or input. One way to handle this, if the use of time for prayer requests is a concern for your group, is to provide notecards for people to write down their requests and share them at the end or simply have members swap cards with someone else. Or you may simply want to determine a time to bring your discussion to a close that will allow for time at the end for sharing requests, praying together over those requests, and praying through the truths presented in the lesson.

Getting Stuck along the Way

So often we give too much time to earlier questions and simply don't have time to work our way through all that we want to cover. I strongly suggest you look over the Discussion Guide before your group time to determine how you will use the time. Mark the key questions you must get to. Make a note beside each question you want to be sure to include, indicating an estimate of how much time you want to give for discussing that question, and then watch the clock along the way to keep on track.

Keeping the Focus on God's Word

People come to a Bible study for many reasons, from many situations and struggles, and with varying levels of knowledge of and interest in the Bible. Sometimes our groups can easily slip from being a Bible study group into becoming more of a personal support group. Finding that right balance between biblical study and

personal support is a significant challenge for every small-group leader.

I've sometimes heard group leaders say that when a group member arrives with a significant struggle or sorrow, the leader feels she must set the study aside to listen and give input to that hurting person. Perhaps there are situations in which this is the best thing to do, but we must also remember that the Word of God speaks into every need and situation in our lives. It heals, it gives perspective, it instructs, convicts, restores, and renews. Be sure that you do not assume that the advice and input of group members has more power than your discussion of the truth of God's Word to help that hurting person.

Keep in mind that while some participants may come more for the fellowship and sharing of their lives with each other, many other participants are hungry to feast on biblical teaching and discussion of God's Word. If, over time, these participants find that the Word is often set aside or given short shrift, they may look for another forum in which to study God's Word with others.

Ending On Time

Because participants have plans after the study, people to meet, children to pick up from child-care, etc., it is important that you end on time so that participants will not be slipping out one-by-one, or be unable to focus on the discussion because of the distraction of needing to be somewhere else.

Dealing with Common Challenges

Sharing of Opinion without Regard to God's Word

It is only natural that group members will often begin their input in the discussion with the words, "Well, I think . . ." And in fact, you will notice that many questions are phrased in a "what do you think" manner. This is purposeful not only to get people thinking but to emphasize that there isn't necessarily a right

or wrong answer, and varying perspectives may be helpful. But we also want to cultivate a sense of the authority of Scripture in our discussions. Though it is not a welcome perspective in our culture, every opinion does not have an equal value or weight. The revealed truth of God's Word is what must carry the greatest weight in our discussions. While you don't want to embarrass someone in the group setting who states something that is clearly unscriptural, it may be a good idea to gently challenge a questionable opinion with something like, "That's interesting. I wonder how you would support that from Scripture?" Or you might want to find a time outside the group setting to discuss the issue, using biblical support to gently challenge error.

The Discussion Gets Lively but Off-Track

Sometimes one person answers, and then another person answers, and the discussion can quickly get away from the original question onto an interesting but perhaps not directly related issue. When this happens, it may be wise to state the obvious and then turn the focus back to the content at hand by saying something like, "We could certainly talk a long time about X, but we have so much important material to discuss in our lesson this week, let's get back to that." If you haven't gotten to some of the key truths involved in the question, go back and state the original question again, asking perhaps, "Did anyone see it differently or have another idea?"

Group Members Are Quiet and Slow to Respond

It is important as a leader to become comfortable with silence, especially at first. Sometimes people are just slow to get going in the discussion and don't want to appear to be a know-it-all or a dominator of the discussion time. Some people fear having the "wrong" answer or revealing their biblical illiteracy, especially if they are surrounded by people they perceive to have more

biblical knowledge than they do. One way to deal with an awkward silence is to make a joke about the silence without coming across as chiding your group. Humor is always a great way to diffuse discomfort. I have a friend who sometimes says, "I can wait you out!" Also, don't be afraid to call on people to answer questions. You probably don't want to do that with every question, but some people simply don't like to answer a question unless they're invited to do so. Often these people have very thoughtful answers that will benefit the group. You might want to turn to the reluctant participant and say, "What do you think about that, Joan?" or, "Is that how you see it, Katie?"

You will also want to develop the habit of affirming the answers and willingness of those who share in your group. Set the example of being a responsive and attentive listener by commenting on their input as insightful, something you've never thought of before, or as personally helpful to you. Make sure you are focusing on the person who is sharing rather than on how you will ask your next question. Resist the temptation to sum up or add to every answer given, though it may be helpful to restate some answers if you can help to clarify something that someone may be struggling to articulate. You can also help to generate genuine give-and-take by asking a follow-up to someone's statement or by asking that person to tell you more about what she has said.

One Person Dominates the Discussion

If you have someone who tends to answer every question or dominates the discussion, you might begin the next question with the statement, "I'd love to hear from someone who has not shared yet today; what do you think?" Or you might direct your next question specifically to another group member. Sometimes, when a participant is speaking too long, you do a service to the group and the discussion to

discreetly interrupt, perhaps saying something like, "What you're saying is helpful, and I'd love to hear someone else's thoughts," or summarize what they've said in a concise statement and use it as a transition to the next question. Another method is to interrupt with a question such as, "What verse or phrase helped you to see that?" Remember, the other group members want and need you to take charge in this situation to lead effectively. You might also want to pull that person aside at some point and tell her that you really want to create an atmosphere in the group in which everyone is sharing. Ask her if she would be willing to pick two or three of the questions that she really wants to share and to refrain from answering questions less important to her, so that others in the group might become more willing to take part in the discussion.

Participants Habitually Do Not Complete the Personal Bible Study

Everyone has weeks when their schedule or a sick child makes it difficult to complete the lesson. But when group members are habitually not completing the Personal Bible Study, it is a problem. If you are using the video study, the content of the lectures assumes participants have a great deal of familiarity with the passages as there is not enough time to read all of the applicable Scripture; therefore, participants will not be prepared for what is being presented without having completed the Personal Bible Study. If you are using only the book for your study, there will be little foundation for group discussion if the Personal Bible Study and Teaching Chapter have not been read prior to the group time. Be sure to emphasize the importance of completing the assignments. Do this at the beginning of your time together on the first week and again the second week you meet. Without being rigid or lacking in grace, you want to call participants to follow through on their commitment

to the study, rather than give them an easy out every time.

As humans we all need accountability, and sometimes in Bible study groups we are so afraid of offending or embarrassing participants that we do not fulfill our role as leaders by encouraging faithfulness, punctuality, and full participation. If someone repeatedly struggles to get the lessons done, you might:

- ≈ Suggest that rather than hoping to find some time during the week, she should make an appointment for a specific time on her calendar to complete the lesson during the week and then commit to keeping the appointment as she would for a lunch date with a friend or for a doctor's appointment. Maybe you can even ask if she would like you to check in with her to see if she kept her appointment prior to next week's meeting.
- ≈ Explore the possibility of her setting a time during the week to get together personally or by phone with another group member to work through the questions together. Or offer to do this with her.
- ≈ Consider expanding the study to twenty weeks so that the group does the Personal Bible Study together every other week.

Sometimes seeing things a little differently can be very productive in a group discussion. We learn from each other as we discover and discuss the differences or nuances in how we see things. There are many matters in this study that allow

for a breadth of perspectives, and there are some matters that challenge what may be dearly held perspectives. What is not welcome in the group is a repeatedly argumentative spirit or combative approach to what is being presented. If areas of disagreement come up that cannot be productively resolved in the group, you may want to say something like, "I appreciate your perspective on that. We need to move on in our discussion, but let's get together, just the two of us, or with Pastor _____, and talk this through some more. I'm sure we both can learn more about this."

Because we are humans dealing with other humans, we will likely have areas of disagreement, different experiences, and different preferences. But that never means that we cannot have unity as we seek to submit ourselves to God's Word. This and every other aspect is a matter of prayer as you prepare to lead your group. God always equips us to do what he calls us to do. Ask God to give you the wisdom to work through whatever may come up in your small group. Ask him for insight into the personalities of the people in your group and the backgrounds that have made them who they are and shaped their perspectives about the Scriptures. Ask God to fill your heart with a burden to love your group members as you lead them through this study of his Word.

Week 1

A Prophet like Me

Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. We are preparing to spend a lot of time over the coming weeks studying the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Why do you think these ancient books are worth studying?

Getting to the Heart of It

2. We started our study by looking at an interesting interchange between Jesus and the religious leaders of his day regarding the writings of Moses recorded in John 5. Moses was someone those leaders had great respect for. Why? What are some things we know about Moses?

Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. God said that he spoke to Moses clearly in a way he didn't with other prophets (Num. 12:5–8). Moses gave God's people the law, which was all-important in Jesus's day.

3. Our aim as we work our way through these books is to consider what Moses intended to communicate to his original audience, the children of Israel, as they prepared to enter into the Promised Land. We also want to see what the divine author intends for us to see in light of the fuller revelation of Christ. Considering the previews set forth in the introduction of how we will see Jesus in these Old Testament books (*The Lamb of God* pages 19–20), what are your thoughts or reactions?

4. We saw that Moses was a great deliverer, mediator, and prophet but that a greater deliverer, mediator, and prophet was needed. How was Jesus greater than Moses in each of these roles?

5. Moses had an incredible experience of the glory of God, which transformed him. The disciples also had an incredible experience of the glory of God when Jesus was transfigured. But what, according to John 17:1–5, was the greatest display of the glory of God in the life of Jesus? And how does seeing this glory impact us?

6. Read John 17:22–24, more of Jesus's prayer before his crucifixion. What does Jesus say in his prayer about eternity past and eternity future? How does this define our hope as believers?

Getting Personal

7. Moses said that when the prophet like him came, we should listen to him. And twice during the life of Jesus, God spoke from heaven identifying Jesus as his Son and commanding us to listen (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). The truth is that it can be challenging to tune out the voice of the world to be able to truly listen to Jesus. What do you think is going to be key for you to be able to truly listen and hear what God wants to say to you through this study of the writings of Moses over the coming weeks?

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

8. Let's think for a moment about what it means that Moses's life gave God's people a preview of the greater deliverer, mediator, and prophet to come and that Moses was inspired by the Holy Spirit to be able to write down all that was revealed to him. What does this tell us about history and the future—about who is in charge and how it will turn out? What does it impress upon us about the Bible?

Week 2

Slavery and a Savior Exodus 1-4

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Acts 7:1–20, which gives a synopsis of Israel’s history up to the time where we pick up the story in Exodus 1. Notice that Acts 7:17 refers to “the time of the promise.” What was the promise the people of Israel were holding onto, according to Acts 7:5–7?

They held onto the promise that God would give Abraham’s descendants the Promised Land, that they would be enslaved four hundred years, and that they would then come out to worship God in the land.

2. Read Exodus 1:1–7 and compare with Genesis 1:28; 9:1; and 35:10–11. How is God clearly at work bringing about his plans for fulfilling his promise to his people?

God instructed his people to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and the Israelites are being fruitful, multiplying, and filling the land.

3. For those Israelites who were holding onto the promises that God would bless them and give them the land of Canaan, how did their current circumstances as revealed in Exodus 1:8–14 seem to call that promise into question?

They are captives in another land, serving as slaves under Pharaoh who will do anything to keep them from leaving.

4. Read Exodus 1:15–22 and 2:1–10. To what would you attribute the multiplication of the Israelites under oppression, the courageous defiance of the Hebrew midwives, and the survival of the baby boy placed in a basket on the Nile?

Obviously God is providentially working out his plan through the normal course of human events. God caused

the Israelites to multiply, he caused Pharaoh’s plan for the midwives to murder babies to fail, he protected and preserved the baby in the basket, he providentially brought Pharaoh’s daughter to that spot in the river, and he moved her heart to adopt him.

5. Read Exodus 2:1–22 and Luke’s version of these events in Acts 7:20–29. What facts about Moses or insights into his character and actions does Luke provide in the following verses from Acts 7, which are not explicit in the Exodus 2 account?

v. 22: “Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.”

Moses was “mighty in his words and deeds.”

v. 23: “When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers.” This gives us his age and also makes it clear that he did not just happen to go out to them but was emotionally moved to do so. He saw them as his brothers, not just Hebrew slaves.

v. 25: He thought his Hebrew brothers would understand that he had arrived to deliver them, but they didn’t.

6. What was the result of Moses’s taking matters into his own hands, according to his own timing?

Failure. Having to flee for his life, he was no longer in the position to effectively lead or deliver Israel.

7. During the first forty years of Moses’s life in Egypt, and even through the forty years of his life in Midian, Israel was in bondage and captivity. But what is the new development, according to Exodus 2:23?

They cried out to God for help.

8. What is God's response, indicated by four verbs in Exodus 2:24–25?

- ☞ God heard their groaning.
- ☞ God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- ☞ God saw the people of Israel.
- ☞ God knew.

9. Is there any indication that the people of Israel had any awareness of God's response? What are the implications of this for us when we think that God has forgotten us or does not hear our cries or care about our suffering?

There is no indication that they knew the Lord heard them. They probably thought he was not there or was not listening. This shows us that when we think God does not hear or does not care, he has not forgotten his covenant commitment to us and may just be waiting for the right time to act.

10. Read Exodus 3:1–6. Though God may be silent, he is not absent, and in Exodus 3, God breaks his four-hundred-year silence by speaking to Moses from the burning bush. What were the first words Moses heard God say from the burning bush, and what difference do you think this made to Moses? Consider that Moses likely thought his rash actions back in Egypt had disqualified him from being the deliverer for his suffering people.

His name: "Moses, Moses." The God of the universe, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, knew him by name and called him by name. Moses was not disqualified, not forgotten, and had not forfeited being useful to God to deliver his people.

11. How did God protect Moses in Exodus 3:5, and what or whom is he protecting him from?

God tells Moses not to come close to the bush because Moses, a sinner, would be consumed by the holiness of God present in the bush. God protected Moses from God.

12. In Exodus 3:7–10 God makes five statements about what he has seen and heard and known. What are they?

1. (v. 7) "I have surely seen the affliction of my people"
2. (v. 7) I "have heard their cry"
3. (v. 7) "I know their sufferings"
4. (v. 9) "The cry of the people of Israel has come to me"
5. (v. 9) "I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them"

13. In these same verses (Ex. 3:7–10) God also outlines five points of his plan for Moses and the Hebrews. What are they?

1. (v. 8) "I have come down to deliver them"
2. (v. 8) I have come down to "bring them up out of that land"
3. (v. 8) I have come down to bring them "to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites"
4. (v. 10) "I will send you to Pharaoh"
5. (v. 10) "You may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt"

14. Moses came from an Egyptian background in which all Egyptian gods had names, so it seemed logical to him that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must therefore also have a name, which the Hebrews would want to know. But Moses sought to know not just God's name but also his essence and character. What is the name God revealed to Moses, and what do you think is significant about this name?

I AM WHO I AM. This name is inscrutable, and while God does make himself known to us, he is incomprehensible to us in his fullness. This name expresses God's self-existence, his immutability, his eternity, which is very different from the Egyptian gods and also very different from Moses.

15. In Exodus 3–4 Moses continues to ask God questions and express concern about his suitability for such a task. How does God address and respond to each of Moses’s concerns?¹

Moses’s Questions and Concerns	Yahweh’s Response
Who am I that I should go? (3:11)	3:12 <i>God promised to be with Moses, and the sign he will give is that they shall worship God at this same place in the future.</i>
What is your name, that I may tell the people who sent me? (3:13)	3:14–15 <i>God told Moses his name.</i>
How will the people believe that you have sent me? (4:1)	4:2–4, 6–7, 9 <i>God turned Moses’s rod into a serpent and back into a rod, made his hand leprous and then healed it, and told him he could turn water from the Nile into blood.</i>
I am not eloquent: I am slow of speech and of tongue. (4:10)	4:11 <i>God said that he is the one who made Moses’s mouth the way it is.</i>
Please send someone else. (4:13)	4:15–16 <i>God agreed to send Aaron with him, who will speak God’s words to Pharaoh and the Hebrew people for Moses.</i>

16. Moses was one of the many people in the Old Testament who was a type of Christ, meaning that there were aspects to who he was and what he did that pointed to who Christ would be and what he would do. Work your way through the chart below, looking up the New Testament references if needed, and write a corresponding statement that shows how Moses pointed to Christ in each of these different ways. An answer for the first one is provided as an example.

Moses	Jesus
Moses was born when his nation was under the dominion of a hostile power, Egypt, and a cruel leader, Pharaoh. (Ex. 1:8–14)	Matt. 2:1; Luke 24:21 <i>Jesus was born when his people, the Jews, were under the dominion of a hostile power, the Romans, and a cruel leader, Herod.</i>
Moses was born under threat of death, because Pharaoh had given orders that every Hebrew boy be cast into the Nile. (Ex. 1:22)	Matt. 2:16 <i>Jesus was born under threat of death because Herod gave orders that every Hebrew boy under the age of two be killed.</i>
Moses was given a name to match his destiny: “he who draws out of.” (Ex. 2:10)	Matt. 1:21 <i>Jesus was given a name to match his destiny because he would “save his people from their sins.”</i>
Moses spent his childhood in Egypt. (Ex. 2:10)	Matt. 2:13 <i>Jesus spent his childhood in Egypt.</i>
The Lord told Moses to return to Egypt saying, “All the men who were seeking your life are dead.” (Ex. 4:19)	Matt. 2:19–20 <i>An angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph telling him to go home to Israel, “for those who sought the child’s life are dead.”</i>

¹Adapted from the chart “Covenant Call and Dialogue,” *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 148.

Though Moses was legally the “son of Pharaoh’s daughter” (Heb. 11:24), he went down to the enslaved Hebrews, his brothers. (Ex. 2:11)	Heb. 2:11 <i>Though Christ was enthroned as the Son of God, he condescended to enter into human suffering on this earth and was “not ashamed to call them brothers.”</i>
Moses left the comforts of Pharaoh’s palace to become a servant of God’s people. (Heb. 11:24–26)	Phil. 2:6–7 <i>Jesus relinquished the riches and glory of the kingdom of heaven to become a servant of God’s people.</i>
The Hebrews rejected Moses’s salvation saying, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us?” (Ex. 2:14)	Luke 19:14; John 1:11 <i>The Hebrews rejected Jesus’s salvation saying, “We do not want this man to reign over us.”</i>
Before he embarked on his saving mission, Moses spent forty years in obscurity on the far side of the desert. (Ex. 3:1)	Luke 3:23; Matt. 4:1–2 <i>Before Jesus entered his public ministry, he was hidden away in despised Nazareth. And then he spent forty days in the wilderness.</i>
God sent Moses to emancipate his people from their bondage. (Ex. 3:10)	John 3:17 <i>God sent Jesus into the world in order that the world might be saved through him.</i>
Moses’s commission from God was confirmed by the power to work miracles, including power over the serpent and over leprosy. (Ex. 4:1–9)	Matt. 4:10–11; 8:3; 11:4–5 <i>Christ’s mission was authenticated by miraculous signs, including power over Satan and over leprosy.</i>

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Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Most of us have had our mental pictures of this story of Israel’s slavery in Egypt and the raising up of Moses as a deliverer shaped as much by Hollywood as the biblical account. As you’ve re-familiarized yourself this week with this story, what fresh images or scenes made an impression on you, stirring your imagination or emotions?

Getting to the Heart of It

2. As we study Exodus, we’re recognizing that this story is really the story of bondage to sin and deliverance through Christ. Let’s think more about sin as bondage. Is that how you see sin? In what ways is sin bondage, and how does Christ bring us out of this bondage? (You might read Titus 3:3–7 together to add to this discussion.)

3. If we were to translate Exodus 1:13–14 literally, it wouldn’t sound very good to our ears because it uses the same Hebrew word, *avad*, seven times. But it would get a message across to us. It would sound something like this: “So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel serve with service and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of serving in the field. In all their serving they ruthlessly made them serve as servants.” Later we read that God said to Moses, “When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain” (3:12), and we realize that God does not intend to end their service but to transfer it. What will the differences be between their service in Egypt and their service when they emerge from Egypt?

There will be differences in the one being served (Pharaoh vs. Yahweh), the nature of the serving work (making bricks vs. worship through love and obedience),

motivation for service (fear of punishment/enslavement vs. response to grace/sonship), and the experience of service (misery vs. joy).

4. We know that God always works for the good of those who are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28), so we know that God intended to use even this cruel time of slavery for good in his people's lives. What are some ways you can think of that God used their suffering in Egypt for good?

A few possibilities: The isolation in Egypt kept them from intermarriage so that they went from being a family of seventy people to a nation two million people strong, which they would need to be to inhabit the entire land God had promised to Abraham. Their bitter experience in Egypt served to make the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey desirable and more appreciated when they came to it. During the four hundred years of their slavery the wickedness of the Amorites increased so that it was just to evict them from the land. Their bitter suffering caused them to cry out to God. God was glorified and his name was made known in the defeat of Pharaoh and his armies. The Israelites came out of Egypt with skills and knowledge that would be used in settling the land of Canaan as well as great wealth that would be used in the building of the temple. They got to experience being delivered by Yahweh and seeing the salvation of the Lord at the Red Sea.

5. Put yourselves in the shoes of some of the people in this story. What drives you, and what is your life like? Let's quickly throw out one-word or one-sentence answers for each of these people and situations: Moses's parents, Pharaoh's daughter, Moses living in Pharaoh's house knowing he's a Hebrew, Hebrew slaves who know Moses is Hebrew, Moses as a shepherd over the sheep of his father-in-law.

6. What lasting impact do you think the experience at the burning bush had on Moses?

7. Look back over your list on pages 41–42 of the Personal Bible Study where you saw many ways that Moses points to Christ in just these first four chapters of Exodus. What thoughts do

seeing these connections leave you with? What do these connections tell you about this story, about the Bible, or about Moses?

This story has a much greater meaning beyond just the historical deliverance of one people group but is a picture of what Christ is doing and will do for his people. It reveals that the Bible is a book inspired by a sovereign God who has the power to bring about the fulfillment of his word. It reveals that Moses was a type of Christ, a shadow of one to come who would be far greater.

Getting Personal

8. We've seen in this story that real freedom is not just freedom from slavery to sin, but freedom to worship, freedom to take upon ourselves the yoke of Christ. Would several of you be willing to share briefly how you have experienced one or both of these things—freedom from bondage to a sin and/or freedom to worship God by taking on the yoke of Christ?

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

9. Throughout this study, we will be seeking to grasp how the passage we're studying fits into the bigger story of God's plan for redemption. While the book of Genesis shows the plight of the human race, its need for salvation, and the call of Abraham to begin the process of divine rescue, what do these first four chapters of Exodus tell us about how God is going to accomplish the redemption of sinners and the nature of that redemption?

God hears our cries and comes down to help. He will send a mediator to confront the evil that has his people enslaved, and there is never a question of whether or not they will be set free.

Week 3

Plagues and Passover Exodus 5-12

Personal Bible Study

To seek to grasp what the writer of Exodus (Moses) intends for us to grasp from this portion of Exodus, we will focus in on a number of repeated words and phrases in chapters 5 through 12.

“I am the LORD”

1. Read Exodus 6:1–13 and notice the repeated phrase, “I am the LORD.” What reasons can you think of that God might emphasize and re-emphasize that he is the Lord, or Jehovah?

After four hundred years as slaves, many have likely forgotten the Lord and have adopted the gods of Egypt.

Moses was likely unimpressive, and it was important for them to know that the Lord would be the one accomplishing the deliverance.

He is the same Lord who had made a covenant with their ancestors, and he is keeping his covenant with them.

2. Along with emphasizing who he is, the Lord reveals what he will do. What seven or eight things does he indicate in verses 6–8 that he will do for his people?

v. 6 — “I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians”

v. 6 — “I will deliver you from slavery”

v. 6 — “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment”

v. 7 — “I will take you to be my people”

v. 7 — “I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God”

v. 8 — “I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob”

v. 8 — “I will give [the land] to you for a possession”

Firstborn Son

Back in Exodus 4:22–23, God told Moses:

Then you shall say to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, ‘Let my son go that he may serve me.’ If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.”

By calling Israel “my firstborn son,” God is saying that the Israelites are the people who represent the future, the destiny of his family. Everything rested on the firstborn son in this ancient culture. By “firstborn,” Israel was given a status in relationship to God that was supreme and familial. It is Israel’s status as God’s firstborn son that explains why God had a quarrel with Pharaoh. While to Pharaoh the Israelites were lowly slaves, to God they were beloved sons.

3. Throughout the Old Testament, as we trace the story of God’s firstborn son, the Israelites, we realize that while God is a father who desires a son to serve him, his son Israel always proved to be a disappointment. A greater firstborn son was needed. What do Matthew 2:15 and 3:17 reveal about the greater firstborn?

Jesus is the greater firstborn who came out of Egypt and is pleasing to his father rather than disappointing.

4. If we are tempted to think God was harsh for bringing down judgment on the firstborn of Egypt, how does understanding that Jesus was God’s firstborn make a difference?

God did not require of them anything he did not also require of himself. His judgment will also come down on his own beloved firstborn son, Christ.

Hardness of Heart

We tend to think of someone who is hard-hearted as cold and cruel. But in the Scriptures, the heart speaks of the mind, will, and intentions. And the word *harden* means “to stiffen.” So to harden your heart can mean to stiffen your resolve. Harden can also mean to make heavy or weighed down so that it cannot be moved. So when we read that Pharaoh hardened his heart or that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, we understand that Pharaoh stiffened his resolve to defy God and determined that he would not change his position in regard to the Hebrews.

In Exodus 7–11 we read numerous times that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. But behind that choice is the sovereign will of God, who softens or hardens human hearts as he pleases. We struggle with the idea that God could harden Pharaoh’s heart and yet hold him responsible for that hard-heartedness. We can’t understand how it can be true that God can be in control of everything, hardening Pharaoh’s heart, while Pharaoh’s hard heart can still be his own fault. But just because we can’t understand it does not make it any less true.

5. Read through Exodus 7–11, marking each occurrence of the phrase “hardened his heart” or “heart was hardened.” Why do you think Pharaoh’s hardness of heart is mentioned eighteen times throughout these chapters? What do you think Moses, and ultimately God, intends for us to take away from this repetition?

It is important for us to see that Pharaoh continued over and over to refuse and defy God’s word. In this we see both his defiance that deserved judgment as well as God’s patience giving Pharaoh the opportunity to repent and obey.

It is also important for us to see that God is working out his plans to deliver his people and put his glory on display for the world to see in the process. The outcome is never in question, even though Pharaoh is repeatedly defying God’s word. In fact, Pharaoh, in his sinful rebellion, is being used by God to accomplish God’s purposes.

We should take away a sense of the danger of continuing to refuse to obey God’s Word when it is presented to us, recognizing that the more we say no, the harder our hearts can become against God.

“Let my people go that they may serve me.”

Perhaps because we’ve been influenced by the Charlton Heston version of this biblical story, we often think Moses’s declaration to Pharaoh was simply, “Let my people go!” But that condensed version clearly does not express what God tells Moses to say to Pharaoh at least seven times in these chapters (Ex. 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3, 7).

6. What is it that God wants, and why is it important that we understand the two-part nature of this command?

To serve God is not to get to work for him but to freely worship him. Wholehearted, whole-life worship is the service to which we are called. The service or worship of God is the goal and purpose of the freedom God provided to Israel. We are not liberated just to be free but rather, we are liberated to serve God whose service is perfect freedom.

“So that you may know that I am the LORD”

In Exodus 5:1–2 we read:

Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”

7. Pharaoh does not know Yahweh, but eventually he will know him through his judgments. The phrase “so that you may know that I am the LORD” or something similar is repeated numerous times in Exodus 7–10. In the chart below, make a note of (1) whom the Lord intends to have know him, (2) what he intends for them to know about him, and (3) how they will know.

	Who will know:	What they will know:	How they will know:
7:5	<i>Egyptians</i>	<i>“That I am the LORD”</i>	<i>Moses will stretch out his hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel.</i>
7:17	<i>Pharaoh</i>	<i>“That I am the LORD”</i>	<i>Moses will strike the water in the Nile with his staff, and the water will turn into blood.</i>
8:10	<i>Pharaoh</i>	<i>“That there is no one like the LORD”</i>	<i>The frog plague will end when Moses pleads with God.</i>
8:22	<i>Pharaoh</i>	<i>“That you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth”</i>	<i>Goshen will have no swarms of flies while Egypt does.</i>
9:14	<i>Pharaoh</i>	<i>“That there is none like me in all the earth”</i>	<i>Plagues on Pharaoh, his servants, and his people</i>
9:16	<i>Pharaoh</i>	<i>“To show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth”</i>	<i>Plagues on Pharaoh, his servants, and his people—specifically the hail plague</i>
9:29	<i>Pharaoh</i>	<i>“That the earth is the LORD’s”</i>	<i>Moses will stretch out his hands to the Lord, and the thunder and hail will cease.</i>
10:2	<i>Descendants of Israel</i>	<i>“That I am the LORD”</i>	<i>“How I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them”</i>

When we read Exodus 7–12, we must realize that we are not only reading the history of Israel in Egypt but also discovering a pattern that we will see throughout the rest of Scripture: that God brings salvation through judgment.

We also see that through the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, God is preparing his people to recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of all that this sacrificed lamb pointed to. In fact, while there are many symbols and shadows throughout the Old Testament that point to the person and work of Christ, perhaps no other is as clear and profound as this picture in Exodus 12.

8. Read Exodus 12 and then work your way through the New Testament passages indicated, writing a corresponding statement that indicates how Christ is a fulfillment of each aspect of Passover.

The Passover lamb of Exodus	Christ, our Passover lamb
The Lord gave instructions for selecting a Passover lamb. (Exodus 12)	1 Cor. 5:7 <i>Jesus was our Passover lamb.</i>
The Passover lamb was sacrificed for the sin of one household. (v. 3)	John 1:29 <i>Jesus was the lamb who was sacrificed for the sin of the world.</i>

The Passover sacrifice had to be a lamb free from all defects. (v. 5)	1 Pet. 1:18–19; 2:22 <i>Jesus was “a lamb without blemish or spot.”</i>
The paschal lamb died on the fourteenth day in the month of Nisan. (v. 6)	John 13:1; 18:28 <i>Jesus was crucified right at the time of the Passover feast.</i>
The paschal lamb was killed at twilight. (v. 6)	Matt. 27:46 <i>Jesus took his last breath, at the ninth hour, which would have been at twilight.</i>
The Israelites had to ingest the whole lamb as their nourishment. (vv. 4, 8–10)	John 6:35, 53–56 <i>Jesus, the bread of life, said that we must eat his flesh and drink his blood to have eternal life.</i>
The Israelites would be spared from death when the destroyer passed over, not because they were guiltless but because they were under the blood. (vv. 12–13)	Rom. 3:24–25; 5:9 <i>Believers are spared from eternal death, not because we are guiltless but because we are under the blood of Christ.</i>
No bones in the paschal lamb were to be broken. (12:46)	John 19:36 <i>None of Christ’s bones were broken on the cross.</i>
Israel was delivered out of slavery in Egypt. (v. 51)	Heb. 2:14–15 <i>We are delivered from the fear of death by Christ’s death.</i>

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Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Think through the first nine plagues that Egypt endured. Which one do you think would be most miserable or horrifying, and why?

Getting to the Heart of It

2. In the Personal Bible Study and then in the Teaching Chapter the emphasis is on God’s intention to make himself known through the plagues and the Passover. What are some of the things about God that are made known?

His power to save, his name (identity and character), his love and commitment to his people, his faithfulness to his promise, his righteousness in judgment, his sovereignty over kingdoms of the earth, his gracious provision, his lack of partiality

3. Many people have a hard time with Old Testament stories in which they think God appears

vengeful and unyielding. Do you think that is the case in his dealings with Egypt? Does this God seem different to you from the God who became flesh in Jesus Christ? Why or why not?

A key conclusion to come to in this question is that God did not compromise in his judgment in Christ. The same God who came down in judgment to kill the firstborn of the Egyptians came down in judgment at the cross in the death of his own firstborn.

4. While it is hard for us to understand as well as to accept, the Bible makes clear that Pharaoh hardened his heart and also that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. What are the implications in this for us in regard to how we respond when we hear God’s Word?

It is always our responsibility to guard our hearts from becoming hard. God is sovereign and we are responsible.

5. Imagine that you were an Israelite who had grown up as a slave in Egypt and had little know-

ledge of God. What do you think your thoughts might be about Moses's instructions to slay the lamb and sprinkle the blood? And what do you think your thoughts would have been the next morning after the destroyer came through Egypt?

6. Looking back at your chart of statements about the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that correspond to the Passover lamb (*The Lamb of God*, pp. 69–70), which are particularly meaningful or significant to you?

7. Many people like the idea of a God who saves but are uncomfortable with a God who judges. Yet the reality is that God saves through judgment. What do you think the phrase “salvation through judgment” means, and where are some places you see this pattern in Scripture?

When God saves his people, he delivers them by bringing judgment on their enemies. Salvation through judgment is the pattern of each major redemptive event in the Bible—the fall, the flood, the exodus, Israel's exile from the land, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the return of Christ.

Getting Personal

8. The sign that the Israelites were putting their faith in the blood of the Lamb was physically visible on the doorposts of their houses. What sign is there in your life that the blood of Christ has been applied to you? Is it internal and invisible or external and obvious?

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

9. Throughout this study, we are seeking to grasp how the passage we're studying fits into the bigger story of God's plan for redemption. Apart from Christ, the Passover sacrifice and covering of blood simply wouldn't make any sense. And apart from the story of the lamb sacrificed for Passover, the death of the Lamb of God as our substitute wouldn't really make any sense. How do you see God's sovereign control of history in the details of these two events?

All of the details of what the Passover lamb needed to be point to the perfections of Christ. All of the details of the timing of the offering of the Passover lamb are repeated in Christ's crucifixion. All that was accomplished through the Passover lamb was more fully and broadly accomplished through the death of Christ.

Week 4

Salvation and Provision Exodus 13–17

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Exodus 13:17–22. Imagine that you are one of these slaves who had barely heard of the Lord and now you are in the wilderness being led by a pillar of cloud and fire. What do you think you might understand about God from this?

He is in charge of this journey. He is caring for us on this journey. His personal presence is with us on this journey. He is a great God who makes himself heard, seen, and known.

2. What has God provided as a light to give us guidance and direction?

His written Word

3. What did Moses take with him when he left Egypt (13:19), and why was that significant? (See Gen. 15:13–16 and Gen. 50:24–26.)

The bones of Joseph. God had told Abraham that his descendants would be slaves for four hundred years and then come out. Joseph believed that promise and must have died knowing that his people would be in Egypt four hundred years, but he was confident that God's word would be accomplished and they would leave to go back to Canaan. So he gave strict instructions that his bones go with them. This showed his confidence in and cherishing of God's promises.

4. Read Exodus 14:1–14. How do God's intentions in these events, Pharaoh's reactions to Israel's leaving Egypt, and Israel's reaction to Pharaoh's pursuit of them continue the pattern we saw throughout the plagues?

God continues to display his own glory and causes the Egyptians to know him.

Pharaoh hardens his heart, changes his mind, continues to defy God, and desires to keep the Israelites as slaves.

The Israelites fear, complain, and "misremember" their misery in Egypt as well as their desire for freedom.

5. What, according to Exodus 14:13–14, is God's part and the Israelites' part in the victory over the Egyptians that they will experience at the Red Sea?

God's part: He will fight for you.

Israel's part: Fear not, stand firm, be silent, and go forward.

6. Read Exodus 14:15–29. Write down three or four facts from this description of the events of that crossing that are significant.

Standing firm meant going forward, led by their mediator Moses.

The pillar of cloud became a shield of defense.

God used the natural force of the east wind to accomplish a supernatural miracle.

Whereas the Israelites had been in a panic the day before, now the Egyptians were in a panic.

7. Last week our theme was salvation through judgment. How do you see that continuing theme in this passage?

The Israelites were saved from the Egyptians through the judgment that came down on the Egyptians when the Red Sea waters drowned them.

8. Read Exodus 15:1–18. A short time before this, Moses didn't know this God's name. But this song reflects a deepening knowledge of God and his saving acts. What significant aspects of God's person and power are celebrated in song in the following verses?

v. 2—This is very personal language: my strength, my song, my salvation. They had experienced his redemption

in leaving Egypt; now they have experienced his salvation by the defeat of their enemy, the Egyptians.

v. 6–7—God is powerful and defeats his enemies.

v. 11—God is not like any of the other gods they knew from Egypt. What he does for his people is distinctively different from the ways other gods treat people.

v. 13—“Steadfast love”—this is covenant language. He is the God who has bound himself to his people in covenant love.

v. 17—God has plans for his people, and he will take them into the land he promised and establish them there.

v. 18—God will forever rule over his creation. No power can usurp him.

9. Read Exodus 15:22–27. This scene is a true picture of grace. While the people ungratefully grumble against Moses, God responds by providing their needs and also revealing more about himself. What is it?

He will speak to them and give them instructions, and he expects obedience to his word. Obedience will result in the blessing instead of the plagues Egypt experienced for disobedience.

God revealed a new name, “the LORD, your healer.” Healing is not just something he does but who he is.

10. Read or skim Exodus 16. What is God’s part and the Israelites’ part in the provision of manna in the wilderness?

God’s part: He will send down the manna six days a week with enough for the seventh day.

Israel’s part: Gather and eat

11. Read John 6:1–13, 22–59. What further purpose can we see in Israel’s history for the provision of manna, which comes to light in this passage?

Their understanding of how God fed his people with manna would help them to better understand what was being offered to them in Jesus. He was provided by God to nourish and sustain them. He has to be “eaten” or believed for that nourishment to affect a person’s life. Specifically it was eating his flesh—or taking in his

sacrificial, substitutionary death—that would bring life. His death would be what would give them life.

12. Compare Exodus 16:4 with Deuteronomy 8:3. What does this reveal about God’s purpose for feeding his people with manna for forty years?

God wanted to test them and thereby train them to obey his word. He wanted to develop their dependence on him. He wanted them to feel hunger and experience that he could satiate their hunger, but only as they obeyed him.

13. Read Exodus 17:1–7. We are beginning to see a repeated pattern here. What is it?

The people have a need. Rather than ask God for what they need, they grumbled and complained to Moses, which is ultimately complaining against God. Moses took their complaint to God, and God responded not in expected judgment but in grace, providing for their need.

14. What is God’s part and the Israelites’ part in the provision of water from the rock?

God’s part: He stands on/identifies with the rock being struck.

Moses’s part: Strike the rock with the rod.

Israel’s part: Drink

15. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–6. Paul is training us how to read the Old Testament and see Jesus in it. He equates the people’s identification with and joining themselves to Moses, as evidenced by crossing the Red Sea, with being baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:27). What insight does he give us into the scene recorded in Exodus 17?

Christ was the Rock that was struck by Moses from which water gushed. The pre-incarnate Christ was present with the children of Israel providing for their needs. This scene also provides a picture of how Christ will supply their greatest spiritual need when he is struck with the justice of God on the cross.

Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Try to imagine what this journey of two million people, just released from a lifetime of slavery, must have been like. What do you think they might have been thinking about, enjoying, fearing, or anticipating as they left Egypt?

Getting to the Heart of It

2. Through the pillar of cloud, God led the Israelites away from the expected route into a place where they were hemmed in on three sides, with the Egyptians bearing down on them. Why do you think he did that?

They would see and experience the salvation of the Lord accomplished miraculously and singularly by him. Perhaps this would train them to trust him. It also became what Yahweh was known by—he was the God who brought his people through the Red Sea. He brought great glory to himself by it.

3. The Israelites are told to “fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today” (Ex. 14:13). Yet they had to respond in faith made evident by identifying themselves with Moses and stepping onto the dry ground of the Red Sea. What is the difference between their accomplishing their own salvation and responding in faith to God’s salvation?

While they had to respond in faith to God’s instruction, they did not contribute to the water being held back or released to cover Pharaoh’s army. It was all God’s work.

4. What is the difference for us between responding to salvation offered in Christ and accomplishing our own salvation? (You might bring Acts 16:30–31 and Ephesians 2:8–9 into this discussion.)

5. It may seem simple, but certainly it is essential to grasp fully: what does it mean to believe in Jesus?

Belief begins with agreeing with the truth about Jesus and accepting that truth for yourself, entrusting your whole self to Christ. It is to depend wholly and exclusively upon who Christ is and what Christ has done to accomplish

your salvation, rather than on what you have done or what you can contribute. In John 1:12, John equates believing in Jesus with receiving him. In John 6:35, Jesus himself says that believing in him is like coming to him to satisfy the hunger and thirst at the core of your being.

6. In the Personal Bible Study, you were asked to identify God’s part and Israel’s part in the crossing of the Red Sea, the provision of manna, and provision of water. What was Israel’s part in each, and how does this help us understand our part in experiencing salvation and provision in Christ?

7. Imagine you are Jesus on the road to Emmaus, working your way through the Old Testament and explaining to Cleopas and his companion how it is really all about you. What do you think Jesus might have said about the pillar of cloud that provided light and guidance, about Moses crossing the Red Sea, about the manna, and about the rock?

Getting Personal

8. In this story we’ve seen how passing through the Red Sea and emerging from it into new life is analogous to our passing through the waters of death and emerging into new life in the presence of God. Does this picture make you think differently about your own death or that of someone you love? In what way?

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

9. Throughout this study we are seeking to grasp how the passage we’re studying fits into the bigger story of God’s plan for redemption. In numerous places throughout the rest of the Old Testament, God repeatedly identifies himself as “the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery,” or something similar. When we step back and think about all the ways God could identify or introduce himself, why do you think this is what he often chose?

This was a defining event that demonstrated Yahweh’s covenant love and commitment to his people. It demonstrated God’s commitment to save, his ability to save, and his way of saving.

Week 5

The Giving of the Law Exodus 19–24

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Exodus 19:1–5. God is about to give Israel his law. What is the foundation he lays in these first verses for commanding obedience to his law?

God reminded them of what he has already done for them. He rescued them from the Egyptians by bringing down the plagues and collapsing the Red Sea upon the pursuing Egyptian army. He “bore [them] on eagles’ wings” (19:4) meaning that he carefully and tenderly led them, not just out of Egypt, but to himself. His grace has put a claim on them. God then introduced the requirement of a human response to His grace with the words “Now therefore . . .” (19:5).

2. According to Exodus 19:5–6, what is God’s purpose in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt and in giving them his law?

They are to be his treasured possession—valued, cherished, enjoyed—as they live in obedience to his commands and in enjoyment of his covenant benefits. And they are to be a kingdom of priests, set apart from the rest of humanity to him as his representatives in the world, mediating knowledge of salvation to the nations and offering appropriate worship and devotion to God.

3. Read Exodus 19:9–15. How is Israel supposed to prepare to meet with God?

In anticipation of meeting the Lord and entering into covenant with Him, they were to be “sanctified”—purified and consecrated. They were to wash their garments, which symbolized the washing away of their sins and presenting a pure life to God. They were to abstain from sexual relations, which symbolized their desire to be wholly dedicated to the Lord.

4. According to Exodus 19:16–18, how did God reveal himself to his people at Sinai?

God revealed himself in a frightening and awe-inspiring display of thunder, lightning, cloud, trumpet blast, and fire. The whole mountain trembled violently.

5. Many people think of God’s law as something opposed to grace. Yet the Ten Commandments are given on the foundation of God’s grace. How is grace expressed in Exodus 20:2?

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” This rescue from slavery was grace—undeserved favor given to his covenant people.

6. What is the appropriate response to God’s grace according to Exodus 20:2–17?

The proper response to being saved by grace is obedience to the Savior—single-hearted devotion to God that is lived out in conforming to his character.

7. How did Moses comfort the trembling Israelites in Exodus 20:18–20?

He assured them that God did not intend to destroy them but to develop their reverent fear for him that will lead them into obedience and blessing.

8. First, God gave his people the moral law, found in the Ten Commandments, written in stone with his own finger, which indicated that this law is eternal. Then God gave civil and ceremonial law, which Moses wrote on parchment, signaling that it was for a particular time in history. The Book of the Covenant (20:22–23:33) is a series of laws that flow from the basic principles enunciated in the Ten Commandments. These civil and ceremonial laws were attached as an appendix for the era in which God took Israel under his wing as his special nation. Read Exodus 20:22–26 along

with Exodus 23:10–19, which focus on Israel’s worship. Which of the Ten Commandments are expounded in these verses?

The first commandment, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3), the second commandment, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image” (Ex. 20:4), and the fourth commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8).

9. Exodus 21:1–23:9 contains basic guidelines for living in community as a just society while also calling the people to live as those who are set apart to the Lord. The civil law provided a series of legal precedents that illustrated basic legal principles drawn from the Ten Commandments. Skim this section and list several general categories or issues these ordinances address.

This section contains: laws about slaves, injuring another person, restitution for a life taken or harmed, or property stolen or damaged, and social justice issues such as money-lending, oppression, sexual ethics, and the treatment of foreigners, widows, and orphans.

10. Exodus 23:20–33 brings God’s law giving to a conclusion with an assurance of blessing. In Exodus 23:20–21 God promises to send an angel to guide the Israelites. But this angel seems to be more than an average angel. He seems to be distinct from God yet also has divine attributes. Perhaps this is the pre-incarnate Son of God, going before God’s people to protect them and bring them to the place God has given to them. What signs do you see in these verses that this angel may be the pre-incarnate Christ?

Like Jesus, this angel has the power to demand obedience and forgive sin. The LORD said, “My name is in him.” Jesus uniquely has God’s name in him. “In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (Col. 1:19). Like Jesus, this angel will go before God’s people to protect them and bring them to the place God has given to them. We are to pay careful attention to Jesus and obey his voice.

11. List several of the additional blessings God promises in Exodus 23:22–33.

I will guard you from your enemies and drive them out from before you.

I will cause you to enter the land and there enjoy my blessing.

All of the promises can be summarized as part of the Lord’s great promise: I will be your God and you shall be my people.

12. In Exodus 24:1 Moses and Aaron, Aaron’s two sons, and seventy elders of Israel (as representatives of the whole nation) were invited to ascend the mountain and meet with God. Read Exodus 24:2–8 and describe what Moses had to do to make it possible for him and the other representatives to enter into the presence of God.

Moses wrote down all the ordinances of the covenant. He took the blood of sacrificed animals and sprinkled half of it on the altar. After the people reaffirmed that they would obey all that the Lord had spoken, Moses sprinkled the other half of the blood on the people and called it the “blood of the covenant.” The blood symbolized the Lord and the people pledging themselves in commitment to one another on penalty of death.

13. Near the end of the book of Hebrews, the writer draws upon the passage we are studying, Exodus 19–24, and contrasts what it was like for the people to approach God at Mount Sinai with what it is like for believers to approach God through Jesus. He frames this as the difference between coming to Mount Sinai and coming to Mount Zion. Read Hebrews 12:18–29. Work your way through the following verses, writing a corresponding statement that reflects the similarities and differences between what the Israelites experienced at Sinai and what we experience as believers who approach God through Jesus Christ.

Mount Sinai	Mount Zion
God's people were warned to stay away from and to not touch the mountain of God, or they would die. (Ex. 19:12, 13, 23)	Heb. 4:16; 10:22 <i>God's people are invited to draw near with confidence that they will be accepted and live.</i>
Israel, God's firstborn, assembled in the desert to experience God's presence. (Ex. 4:22, 19:17)	Heb. 12:23 <i>Believers, God's firstborn, assemble in heaven to enjoy God's presence.</i>
The Lord descended in fire and smoke, revealing the glory of God. (Ex. 19:18)	John 1:14; Heb. 1:2 <i>The Lord descended in flesh and spoke, revealing the glory of God.</i>
When God came down to give his law, the whole mountain trembled. (Ex. 19:18)	Matt. 27:51 <i>When God's judgment for lawbreaking came down on Christ at Calvary, the earth shook and rocks split.</i>
Moses went up into the presence of God to be the mediator of the old covenant. (Ex. 19:20)	Heb. 12:24 <i>Jesus came down from the presence of God to be the mediator of the new covenant.</i>
The blood of the old covenant was the blood of a sacrificed animal, which spoke of judgment on the disobedient. (Ex. 24:5–8)	Matt. 26: 27–28; Heb. 12:24 <i>The blood of the new covenant is the blood of Christ, which speaks of forgiveness toward the disobedient.</i>
Moses, Aaron, Aaron's sons, and seventy elders beheld God and ate and drank. (Ex. 24:9–11)	Rev. 3:20 <i>Christ promises to come in and eat with any and all who will open the door to him.</i>
In the old covenant, the law was written on tablets of stone by the finger of God. (Ex. 24:12)	Heb. 10:14–16 <i>In the new covenant God's law is put on believers' hearts and written on their minds by God.</i>

Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Try to imagine what it must have looked like, sounded like, and felt like, to stand at the foot of Mount Sinai when God came down on the mountain in cloud, fire, and thunder and the entire mountain trembled. Can you think of any movie scenes or personal experiences that might resemble the sight, sound, or feel of it?

Getting to the Heart of It

2. God descended in overwhelming power and demanded that the people take three days to consecrate themselves in preparation for seeing God. Look together at Exodus 19:10–15 to note how they were supposed to prepare themselves. If you were an Israelite, what message would you have understood from this three-day preparation and repeated warnings to not touch the mountain?

This was going to be a significant experience that one needed to be stilled to anticipate and prepare for. This God is a dangerous God and cannot be approached casually, presumptuously, or rashly. They needed to reflect on their own sinfulness in contrast to this holy God, and they needed to put their whole focus on him.

3. Remembering that Exodus is telling us not only the story of the salvation of Israel from slavery in Egypt but also the story of our salvation from sin, what can we learn from this order of events: the people were saved and were made God's treasured possession, and then they were given the law?

We are not saved by keeping the law. Keeping the law is a response of grateful sinners to God's gift of grace in salvation.

4. How is God's law an expression of the grace of God?

It reveals to us the nature of God, which we would not know if he did not choose to reveal it. It reveals to us the nature of our offense toward God so that we can confess our sin and turn from it. It reveals to us God's clear

commands so that we don't have to wonder if we are pursuing what pleases him. The law also shows us how to live well in the world, in a way that will bring us the most joy and satisfaction.

5. Many people think that Christianity is living by a bunch of rules. Is it? If not, what role do the Ten Commandments have in the life of a believer?

The Ten Commandments are a list of rules for God's people to live by, but they are given to us in the context of enjoying a relationship with God. And they are given to us as a way of discovering how to please the God who has saved us. The Ten Commandments reveal clearly to us what God expects of those who are in covenant relationship with him.

6. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. . . . For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:17, 20). In what ways did Jesus fulfill the Ten Commandments? And how can a person's righteousness exceed the meticulous law keeping of the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus's day?

Jesus fulfilled the Ten Commandments not only by keeping each of them perfectly, but by embodying the righteousness they call for. We exceed the law keeping of the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus's day when we obey from the heart out of love for Christ and a desire to please him rather than out of an attempt to earn our salvation and a desire to impress others.

7. How would you explain to someone why the ceremonial law (laws about the tabernacle, sacrifices, feasts, and festivals) and the civil law (legal precedents for Israel as a nation) are no longer binding on believers?

The ceremonial law was fulfilled by Christ in his death and resurrection and so no longer needs to be observed. The civil law was for Israel as a nation. It is no longer binding because now God's people are made up of people from every nation.

Getting Personal

8. Both the Old and the New Testaments affirm that our “God is a consuming fire” (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29). Is this how you’ve pictured God? Do you find yourself afraid of standing before this consuming fire one day or at rest about it? Why?

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

9. Throughout this study, we are seeking to grasp how the passage we’re studying fits into the bigger story of God’s plan for redemption. How does God’s revelation about himself through his

giving of the law point us toward and prepare us to embrace Christ?

The law points us toward Christ in many ways, but, perhaps, primarily in that it reveals our need for Christ to impute to us his righteousness and for the Spirit to empower us for obedience. When we look at the law we realize our inability to keep it and therefore our need for a substitute to bear the punishment we deserve and a source for the righteousness we cannot produce.

Week 6

The Tabernacle Exodus 25–40

Personal Bible Study

The tabernacle is the most important building in the history of the world. While Moses devoted two chapters in Genesis to the creation of the heavens and the earth, fifty chapters in the Bible are given to explaining the tabernacle's pattern, construction, and service. It is the only building ever constructed with the specific purpose of communicating how sinful people can have a relationship with a holy God. It is also, perhaps, the most comprehensive revelation of God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ in the entire Old Testament.

1. Read Exodus 25:1–9. What does the Lord instruct his people to make for him and why?

The Lord instructed the Israelites to build a tabernacle or sanctuary for him so that he could live among them.

2. Read Exodus 25:10–22, which describes the one piece of furniture that will be in the Most Holy Place. What does this passage reveal regarding:

What it will be overlaid with: Pure gold

What it will contain: The "testimony" or stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written

What will be on top of it: The mercy seat or atonement cover with hammered-gold cherubim will be at either end.

What will happen there: God will meet with his people from above the mercy seat and will speak with them.

3. Read Exodus 25:23–40 and Exodus 30:1–10, which give instructions for the construction of three pieces of furniture to go in the Holy Place. What were they, and what was their function?

The table would hold the bread of the Presence.

The lampstand designed to look like a flowering almond tree with seven branches provided light in the Holy Place.

The altar served as the place where the priest would burn incense every morning and night.

4. Read through Exodus 26, which contains the instructions for constructing the curtains, frames, bars, and coverings of the tabernacle. The entire tent was 45 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 15 feet high. Think through or perhaps measure out various rooms in your home or church or some other building. What space are you familiar with that would be roughly the same size as the tabernacle?

5. Read Exodus 27:1–8 and Exodus 30:17–21, which describe two pieces of furniture that were to be made to go in the courtyard surrounding the tabernacle. What were they, and what was their function?

The bronze altar on which priests would offer sacrifices stood in the courtyard.

The bronze basin used by the priests for ceremonial cleansing before offering sacrifices or entering the tabernacle was also in the courtyard.

6. God's intention and purpose for the tabernacle echoes God's grand purpose, which was stated to Abraham (Gen. 17:7–8) and also earlier in Exodus (6:7). It will be repeated again and again throughout the Bible. What is it, according to Exodus 29:45–46?

"I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God" or as generally proclaimed throughout Scripture, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

7. There was a time when God dwelt with his people in the garden of Eden. And if we look carefully, we can see that God has built reminders of Eden into his design for the tabernacle. Read through the following descriptions of Eden in the first column, and write a corresponding statement about the tabernacle from the verses given in the second column.

Eden	Tabernacle
There was bdellium and onyx stones. (Gen. 2:12)	Ex. 25:3, 7 <i>Gold and onyx stones were used in the design of the tabernacle.</i>
Two cherubim guarded the entrance. (Gen. 3:24)	Ex. 25:17–22 <i>Two gold cherubim were placed on the mercy seat as if guarding the throne of God.</i>
A tree of life stood. (Gen. 2:9)	Ex. 25:31–33 <i>In the tabernacle stood a lampstand that was designed to look like a blossoming tree.</i>
God dwelt there with his people. (Gen. 3:8)	Ex. 29:45–46 <i>God descended into the tabernacle to dwell with his people.</i>
The seventh day was set aside for rest and made holy. (Gen. 2:1–3)	Ex. 31:12–18 <i>Keeping the Sabbath holy was an integral part of all that the tabernacle signified.</i>
Human rebellion spoiled its beauty and perfection. (Genesis 3)	Ex. 32:1–7 <i>Human rebellion erupted even before Moses could come down the mountain with the plans for the tabernacle and therefore highlighted the need for sinners to receive forgiveness for sin.</i>

8. John 1:14 reads: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” The word used there, “dwelt,” is the same word that is used for “tabernacle.” John was making the point that just as God’s presence descended into the tiny room of the tabernacle long ago so that he could live with his people, God’s presence had now descended in human flesh to live with his people. Read the following statements about various aspects of the tabernacle, and write a statement about Jesus in the second column that describes how Jesus fulfilled that aspect of the tabernacle.

Aspects of the Tabernacle	The Person and Work of Christ
The Ten Commandments inside the ark of the covenant represented God’s perfect character and law.	Matt. 5:17; 2 Cor. 5:21 <i>Christ was perfectly righteous and fulfilled the law of God in our place.</i>
The ark of the covenant represented the throne of God.	Luke 1:32; Heb. 4:16 <i>Jesus is the King of heaven and has made it possible for God’s throne to be a throne of grace.</i>
The mercy seat represented the mercy of God.	Rom. 3:25; 1 John 4:10 <i>Jesus was the propitiation—the one who made atonement for our sin.</i>
The curtain in the tabernacle barred access to all except the priest.	Matt. 27:51; Heb. 10:19–20 <i>When Jesus’s flesh was torn on the cross, he opened up the way to access the throne of God.</i>

The incense burned on the altar of incense represented the prayers of the priests on the people's behalf.	Heb. 7:25 <i>Jesus continues to intercede, to pray for us, before the throne of God.</i>
The bread of Presence represented God's commitment to feed and provide for his people.	John 6:32–33, 52–58 <i>Jesus is the true bread and living bread that came down from heaven. We find life in his atoning death.</i>
The lampstand, fashioned after a tree, provided light that leads to life.	John 1:4–5; 3:19–21 <i>Jesus is the true light that leads to life, and in him is no darkness.</i>
The washing in the bronze basin represented the washing away of uncleanness to enter God's presence.	1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5 <i>Jesus washed away our sins with his blood.</i>
Sacrifices were offered on the brazen altar to atone for sin.	Heb. 9:12–14; 10:11–12 <i>Jesus offered himself once for all by means of his own blood as a sacrifice for sin.</i>

9. Read Hebrews 8:1–7. The writer says that our high priest, the risen and ascended Jesus, now ministers in “the true tent” of which the tabernacle erected by Moses was merely a “copy and shadow.” What does this tell us about what was being pictured in the design and furniture and activity of the tabernacle? Consider the colors and designs of the curtain.

The tabernacle was a “copy” of the heavenly dwelling of God and so the colors of blue and purple represented God's divinity and royalty. The cherubim surrounded his throne as they do in heaven. The tabernacle was a “shadow” of something real and substantive—heaven itself.

10. We have seen that God has always intended to dwell with his people, and we know that one day we will see him face-to-face. According to the following verses, where has God chosen to dwell?

Genesis 3:8—the garden of Eden

Exodus 40:34—the tabernacle

2 Chronicles 7:1–3—the temple

Matthew 3:16–17—Jesus, at his baptism

Colossians 1:19—in Jesus

11. According to the following verses, where does God choose to dwell now?

Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16—in the believer by his Spirit

Ephesians 2:22—in his church

12. According to the following verses, where does God intend to dwell?

2 Peter 3:13—in the new heavens and new earth

Revelation 21:3—with man

Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Have you ever bought a piece of furniture or a playset that came in a box and required you to put it together, carefully following the instructions and diagrams? That gives us a bit of a sense of what Moses and the people of Israel were doing as they followed God's careful, detailed instructions for building the tabernacle. Try to put yourself in the sandals of the typical Israelite on the work crew. What kinds of things do you think might have gone through your mind as you studied the plans, collected materials, and crafted the structure and furniture?

Getting to the Heart of It

2. Why do you think God gave, and Moses recorded, such detailed instructions about the design and building of the tent in which he would dwell?

It was not an end in itself but was to serve as a model or shadow of Christ, so its detail had to conform to the person and work of Christ.

3. As you read about the various pieces of furniture in the Most Holy Place, the Holy Place, and the courtyard of the tabernacle and saw how they each pointed to the person and work of Christ, what was most interesting or meaningful to you?

4. How does a greater understanding of the tabernacle help us better understand the significance of what the writer of Hebrews wrote when he said, "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16)?

We recognize what good and revolutionary news this was to Jewish people of the day who had never been able to enter into the Holy of Holies to interact with God. Now they could draw near.

5. How does the background of the tabernacle also make the following verses more meaningful? "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19–22).

Every phrase of this is a reflection of a temple, a contrast with the way the people of God approached God through the tabernacle or temple.

6. In what way would you say that the tabernacle "preached the gospel" to the Israelites, and how did it answer the basic question of how a sinful person can approach a holy God?

It revealed that God could be approached by a mediator on the basis of the blood of an acceptable sacrifice that would cover the transgressions against God's law.

7. If we're honest, many of us would have to admit that our hearts do not long for this dwelling place with God. Our hearts are content with and set on this earthly life. Why do you think that is, and what do you think we can do to nurture our longing for our future home with God?

There are certain elements that Scripture prescribes for gathering as the church for worship including: preaching (2 Tim. 4:2), sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Table (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:17–34), prayer (1 Tim. 2:1), reading Scripture (1 Tim. 4:13), financial giving (2 Cor. 8–9), and singing and music (Col. 3:16).

Getting Personal

8. In the Personal Bible Study questions, we looked at where God has chosen to dwell in the past and where he dwells now—in believers and in his church. Considering how important cleansing and purity was in the tabernacle that God designed, what thoughts does that give to you about God's Spirit dwelling within you?

This may be perceived as a sensitive question to answer in the group, depending upon the level of intimacy and vulnerable in your group. The goal of the question is to lead participants to voice the importance of holy living for all those who are indwelt by God's Spirit. This does not mean perfect living, but it does require ongoing confession and repentance.

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

9. Throughout this study, we are seeking to grasp how the passage we're studying fits into the bigger story of God's plan for redemption and helps us to understand how God is working

out that plan. What does the fact that the tabernacle both hearkened back to Eden and provided a copy and shadow of heavenly things tell us about what we can expect in our eternal future?

We can expect that God really does want to dwell with us and live among us as he did with Adam and Eve in Eden and as he will in the new heaven and new earth.

Week 7

The Priesthood Exodus 28–29

Personal Bible Study

In Exodus 28 and 29, we find the instructions God gave to Moses about the establishment of the priesthood, those set apart to serve him in his tabernacle. Specifically in these two chapters we find out who will serve him as priests, the clothing the priests are to wear for this service, the content of their service, and the ceremony by which the priests will be commissioned for their service.

1. Read Exodus 28:1. What do we know about Aaron, who, with his sons, was appointed by God to serve as priest? (If you need some help, see Ex. 4:12–16; 7:1–7).

Aaron was Moses's older brother whom God appointed to be Moses's mouthpiece to the people of Israel and Pharaoh after Moses said he couldn't speak well. While Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God, Aaron helped the people make golden calf. When Moses returned, Aaron gave poor excuses and blamed the people. So we see grace at work in the appointment of this man to be Israel's high priest.

2. What three words do you find in Exodus 28:2 that define what should mark the high priest's clothing?

Holy, glory, beauty. God intends that the tabernacle worship reflect something of His own holiness, glory, and beauty.

3. List the garments to be made for the priest, detailed in Exodus 28:4.

Breastpiece, ephod, robe, coat, turban and sash

4. Compare Exodus 26:1 to Exodus 28:5. What do you think might be the significance of the similarity you see here?

The high priest's clothing will have the same colors, materials, and designs that decorated the interior of the Most Holy Place (which are reminiscent of Eden and also provide glimpses of heaven).

5. Read through Exodus 28:6–43, noting a detail or two regarding the color, materials, or design of each garment.

☞ ephod (vv. 6–14)

- gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarns and fine linen
- two onyx stones engraved with the names of twelve tribes set on the shoulders

☞ breastpiece (vv. 15–30)

- gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarns and fine linen
- four rows of three precious stones with the names of the tribes of Israel placed next to the priest's heart
- Urim and Thummim placed in pouch

☞ robe (vv. 31–35)

- all blue, pomegranates embroidered and gold bells sewn onto hem
- sound of the bells could be heard when the priest went into the Holy Place

☞ turban (vv. 36–39)

- made of fine linen and featured an engraved gold plate on the front that said "Holy to the LORD"

☞ coat (v. 39)

- checker work of fine linen

☞ sash (v. 39)

- embroidered with needlework

6. The garments for the other priests are far simpler than those of the high priest yet still set apart from ordinary clothing. What instruction does Exodus 28:40 provide for them?

Coats, sashes, and caps for glory and beauty

7. In Exodus 29 we move from the clothing of the priests to the consecration of the priests. Read verses 4–7 and describe three aspects of

the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood that you find there.

1. Washed with water
2. Dressed for holiness and beauty
3. Anointed for service

8. Exodus 29:10–34 describes six offerings involved in the priest's ordination. Most of these will be explained more fully next week, when we move into Leviticus. Read through these verses and note a brief detail or observation about each of the offerings.

Sin offering (vv.10–14) The priests place their hands on the head of the bull indicating a transference of his sins onto the animal. Unclean sections of the animal are taken outside the camp and burned.

Burnt offering (vv. 15–18) The first ram is completely consumed, symbolizing the priest's total devotion.

Ram of ordination (vv. 19–21) This lamb was slaughtered

and the blood applied to their ear lobes, thumbs, and big toes. All the exposed parts of the priest were cleansed by the blood.

Wave offering (vv. 22–24) Taking the cooked meat and bread, this offering was waved before the Lord showing that the sacrifice was given to God and then received back by the priest for his use.

Food offering (v.25) The food from the wave offering was then burned up on the altar.

Peace offerings (vv. 26–28, 31–34) The priests were given a portion of the ram of ordination to eat before the Lord representing the kind of peace the priests (and Israel) had with God through the atoning sacrifices as well as the taking of that atoning sacrifice to oneself.

9. In Exodus 29:38–43 God gives instructions regarding the daily duties of the priests for generations to come. What are they?

Every morning and evening a sacrifice will be offered. There will constantly be blood sacrifice taking place at the tabernacle.

10. Aaron, as the first high priest, revealed important aspects of what our Great High Priest, Jesus, would be and do. Every aspect of his clothing pointed to specific aspects of the ministry of Christ. Read the following statements about the clothing of the Old Testament priests and write a corresponding statement in the second column about the priestly ministry of Jesus.

The Old Testament Priest's Clothing	Jesus, Our Great High Priest
The priest carried the sins of the people on his shoulders as represented by the precious stones on the shoulder of his ephod engraved with their names. (Ex. 28:6–14)	Heb. 9:28 <i>Jesus bore the sins of many when he entered God's presence.</i>
The priest carried the concerns of the people of God near his heart as represented by the twelve precious stones on his breastpiece engraved with their names. (Ex. 28:15–30)	John 17:9–10 <i>Jesus prays for all those whom the Father has given to him, carrying them and their concerns close to his heart.</i>
The priest wore a royal robe in his role of chosen mediator for the people of God. (Ex. 28:31–35)	John 19:2, 23 <i>Jesus wore the robe of a priest as he served as God's chosen mediator for the people of God.</i>
The priest wore a turban, which, by its engraved gold plate, crowned his head with the proclamation "Holy to the LORD." (Ex. 28:36–39)	Heb. 7:26 <i>Jesus was holy to the Lord through and through.</i>

11. The consecration of the priest also pointed to specific aspects of the person and ministry of Christ. Read the statement about the Old Testament priests in the first column below and write a corresponding statement in the second column about the priestly ministry of Jesus.

The Old Testament Priest's Consecration	Jesus, Our Great High Priest
Priests were washed with water. (Ex. 29:4)	Matt. 3:13–15 <i>Jesus was washed with water at his baptism.</i>
Priests were anointed with oil. (Ex. 29:7)	Matt. 3:16–17 <i>Jesus was anointed by the Spirit himself.</i>
Priests offered sacrifices for their sin. (Ex. 29:10–21)	John 10:18 <i>Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for sin.</i>
Priests ate a meal of that which had been sacrificed. (Ex. 29:31–34)	1 Cor. 11:23–25 <i>Jesus invited his disciples to eat a meal representing his sacrifice saying, "This is my body."</i>

12. The writer of Hebrews especially draws upon his readers' understanding of and dependence upon the priesthood to help his readers see the superiority of the ministry of Jesus. Read the following statements about the Old Testament priests in the first column below and write a corresponding statement in the second column about the priestly ministry of Jesus from Hebrews.

The Old Testament Priesthood	Jesus, Our Great High Priest
The high priest passed through the curtains of the tabernacle to enter the earthly dwelling place of God. (Leviticus 16)	Heb. 4:14 <i>Jesus passed through the heavens to enter the heavenly dwelling place of God.</i>
The priests struggled with the same temptations as the people, and sinned. (Heb. 5:3)	Heb. 4:15 <i>Jesus struggled with the same temptations as the people and did not sin.</i>
The people were not invited to come anywhere near the throne room of God in the Most Holy Place and could have expected to die if they did. (Num. 4:20)	Heb. 4:16 <i>Through Christ we are invited to draw near to God's throne of grace and can expect to be welcomed and helped if we do.</i>
Priests were appointed by God. (Ex. 28:1)	Heb. 5:1–5 <i>Jesus was appointed to serve as High Priest by God.</i>
Priests in the order of Aaron were appointed on the basis of ancestry. (Heb. 7:14–17)	Heb. 7:16 <i>Jesus was appointed as priest on the basis of "the power of an indestructible life."</i>
Many priests interceded for the people for a limited number of years. All of these priests died. (Heb. 7:23)	Heb. 7:24–25 <i>Jesus was a singular priest who serves forever because he "always lives" to intercede.</i>
The priests repeatedly failed by falling into sinful idolatry and abuse of their privilege. (2 Chron. 36:14)	Heb. 7:26 <i>Jesus was holy, innocent, and unstained by sin.</i>
The priests offered daily animal sacrifices year after year. (Heb. 7:27)	Heb. 7:27 <i>Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice once for all.</i>

The priests served before God's throne that dwelled temporarily in a tent made by men, a copy and shadow of the realities of heaven. (Heb. 8:5)	Heb. 8:1–2 <i>Jesus serves before the throne of God in heaven, the substance of the shadows.</i>
The priests entered into a tent made by hands on the basis of the blood of an animal. (Ex. 39:42)	Heb. 9:11–14 <i>Jesus entered into the Holy Place of heaven on the basis of his own blood.</i>
The high priest entered the Holy Place every year with the blood of a sacrifice. (Heb. 9:25)	Heb. 9:25–26 <i>Jesus died as a sacrifice, once for all.</i>
The priest repeatedly offered the same sacrifices that could never take away sins. (Heb. 10:11)	Heb. 10:12–14 <i>Jesus offered for all time a single sacrifice that has "perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."</i>

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Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. When it is suggested to you that you need a priest, do you easily agree or do you find yourself challenging the suggestion? Why?

This may be a sensitive question in groups that include members who are in the Catholic Church, have come out of the Catholic Church, or have strong opinions regarding the Catholic Church. If you think it will not be a profitable discussion in your group, then simply leave this one out. The goal of the question is to bring out an understanding of the office and the purpose of priesthood in a general sense, and not to debate. It is also to draw out from those who have never had any sense or appreciation for today's priesthood that we all need a "priest" to mediate between us and God and that the perfect priest is Christ.

Getting to the Heart of It

2. Through your study this week, what have you come to see as reasons that God ordained the Old Testament priesthood?

The Old Testament priesthood served to set in place those who would teach the people the law of God, to give the people intercessors who would approach God with their concerns, to provide a mediator between God and God's people, and to picture and prepare his people for the priestly ministry of Jesus.

3. One thing we are learning, and will continue to see as we work our way through the writings of Moses, is that details that might seem tedious to us are actually quite significant. How is that the case in the detailed instructions God gave regarding the clothing for the priests and high priest?

Each aspect of the priest's clothing reveals an aspect of the priestly ministry of Christ.

4. Look back at Exodus 28:12, 29, and 38. What key concept was being communicated by the high priest's clothing, and why is this significant?

The priest bore the names of the tribes on his clothing communicating that he represented them, their concerns, and their guilt before God.

5. How does an understanding of the ordination of the priests as outlined in Exodus 29 help us to understand why Jesus was baptized, since we know he was not a sinner who needed to be cleansed?

Jesus was communicating that he was the perfect priest, the priest that all of the Aaronic priests were pointing toward. His being washed and anointed in baptism was a way of identifying himself with the consecrating washing and anointing of the priesthood.

6. Look back at question 12 in the Personal Bible Study, in which you compared aspects of the Old Testament priesthood to the priesthood of Jesus from Hebrews. Would several of you share an aspect of his superior priesthood that has particular meaning to you? In other words, what difference does it make that we are represented by Jesus, our Great High Priest, rather than by an Old Testament-era priest?

7. In two places in Hebrews, the “so what?” of having Jesus as our priest is emphasized, telling us that because he is our priest we can “with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (4:16), and we can “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (10:22). Certainly the Israelites knew what it was like to be unable to “draw near” to God in the temple. What do you think it means in very tangible terms to draw near to God? What do you think it means to do this with confidence?

We come before God in confession, prayer, worship, and celebration rather than staying at a distance from him. We can come with confidence because we know we will not be rejected or condemned because of our sin. We are

confident that the work of Christ has justified us and made us right before God. So we can be confident that he will hear our prayers and answer, that he will show us grace and mercy, and that he will pour out his promised blessings on us.

Getting Personal

8. Do you find it difficult or easy to believe that Jesus represents you before God and carries your needs and concerns close to his heart when he does? Do you think Christ can be trusted to intercede for you in the way you most need it?

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

9. Throughout this study, we are seeking to grasp how the passage we’re studying fits into the bigger story of God’s plan for redemption. What did you see in the “Looking Forward” section that helps you to see how our Great High Priest and we, as a kingdom of priests, will minister before God into eternity.

Week 8

Sacrifice and Sanctification Leviticus

Personal Bible Study

1. Leviticus 1–7 contains instructions God gave to Moses regarding five offerings or sacrifices to be offered at the tabernacle. Read or skim Leviticus 1–7, noting a detail or two that seems significant to you following the example provided.

Offerings	Observations
Burnt offering (Leviticus 1)	<i>Cattle, sheep, goats, or birds without blemish Offerer put his hands on animal Blood poured on altar sides Completely consumed by fire</i>
Grain offering (Leviticus 2)	<i>Fine flour, oil, frankincense, and salt Small portion burned and the rest for the priests Unleavened if baked</i>
Peace offering (Leviticus 3)	<i>Cattle, sheep, or goats without blemish Offerer put his hands on animal Blood poured on altar sides This was a meal shared by the Lord, priests, and the offerer and family.</i>
Sin offering (Lev. 4:1–5:13)	<i>For unintentional sin Cattle, sheep, goats, or birds without blemish Offerer put his hands on sacrifice Blood smeared on altars, sprinkled inside tent Burned outside the camp</i>
Guilt offering (Lev. 5:14–6:7)	<i>For a breach of faith and intentional sin Ram without blemish Blood poured on altar sides Priests ate a portion of sacrifice.</i>

We might, at first, wonder why we need to study the details of these sacrifices, since we know that Christ put an end to the sacrificial system by fulfilling it. But studying Leviticus helps us to see the breadth and fullness of what Christ did for us in offering himself as a sacrifice for sin. In fact, without Leviticus we would not understand what the New Testament means when it says that Christ was a sacrifice for sin.

2. Each of the sacrifices outlined in Leviticus 1–7 tells us something unique about the sacrifice of Christ. Look up the following New Testament passages and compose a statement about Christ that compares or contrasts the sacrifice prescribed in Leviticus with the sacrifice of Christ.

Offering	Fulfilled by Christ
Burnt offering (propitiation)	<p>1 Pet. 1:18–19 <i>Just as the burnt offering that atoned for our sin was a lamb without blemish, so was Jesus, our ransom, without blemish.</i></p> <p>Rom. 3:23–26 <i>While the burnt offering satisfied God’s anger toward some sin, the sacrifice of Jesus satisfied his wrath against all of our sin.</i></p>
Grain offering (dedication)	<p>John 6:48–51 <i>Just as the grain offering was given as a sacrifice, so Jesus, the bread of life, was offered as a sacrifice for the world.</i></p>
Peace offering (fellowship)	<p>Eph. 2:13–14 <i>Just as the blood of the peace offering signified peace and restored fellowship with God, so the blood of Christ has made peace with God and has brought us near to God.</i></p>
Sin offering (purification)	<p>Heb. 1:3 <i>Just as the sin offering provided purification for sins, so Jesus provided purification for sins.</i></p> <p>Heb. 13:11–12 <i>Just as the sin offering was offered outside the camp, so Jesus was crucified outside the city.</i></p>
Guilt offering (restitution)	<p>Isa. 53:10 <i>Just as the guilt offering made an offering for guilt, so Christ died as an offering for guilt.</i></p> <p>Phil. 3:9 <i>Just as the guilt offering paid the debt as well as offered restitution, so Jesus not only paid our debt for sin by his death but also transfers to us the merit of his righteous life.</i></p>

We might think that people in the Old Testament era were saved by offering animal sacrifices (which would be works) and that we are saved by faith in Christ. But it is important for us to remember that people in the Old Testament times were saved in the same way we are saved. Here is how Vern Poythress explains it in his book *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*:

As they looked ahead through the shadows, longing for something better, they took hold on the promises of God that He would send the Messiah. The promises were given not only verbally but symbolically, through the very organization of the tabernacle and its sacrifices. In pictorial form God was saying, as it were, “Look at My provisions for

you. This is how I will redeem you and bring you into My presence. But look again, and you will see that it is all an earthly symbol of something better. Don’t rely on it as if it were the end. Trust Me to save you fully when I fully accomplish My plans.” Israelites had genuine communion with God when they responded to what He was saying in the tabernacle. They trusted in the Messiah, without knowing all the details of how fulfillment would finally come. And so they were saved, and they received forgiveness, even before the Messiah came. The animal sacrifices in themselves did not bring forgiveness, but Christ did as He met with them through the symbolism of the sacrifices.²

²Vern S. Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1991), 11.

3. How are both Old Testament era saints and New Testament era saints saved, according to Romans 3:25–26?

All are made right with God when they put their faith in Jesus, the all-sufficient sacrifice. They were saved as they looked forward to Christ, the all-sufficient sacrifice and placed their faith in what his sacrifice accomplished just as we are saved as we look back at Christ, the all-sufficient sacrifice and place our faith in what it accomplished.

The writer of Hebrews affirms that it was God’s plan all along for the Old Testament sacrifices to point to the sacrifice of Christ and then fade away: “We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. . . . Where there is forgiveness of these, there

is no longer any offering for sin” (Heb. 10:10, 18). It isn’t that the animal sacrifices failed in their divinely appointed function. They were not plan A that didn’t work. They served their function, which was to serve as a symbol of the sacrifice God would accept; the sacrifices were not the reality of it. And once the reality came, there was absolutely no further need for the symbol.

But this does not mean that the sacrificial laws outlined in Leviticus no longer apply to God’s people. They still apply because God still demands an adequate sacrifice for our sins. But we observe those laws today not by offering animals according to the Mosaic system but rather by trusting Christ as our sufficient sacrifice.

4. Read through the biblical statements about the Levitical sacrifices in the left column below and write a statement in the right column that describes the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ.

Old Testament Animal Sacrifices	Sacrifice of Christ
Sacrifices could not perfect the conscience of the worshiper but dealt only with regulations. (Heb. 9:9–10)	Heb. 9:14 <i>The blood of Christ purifies our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.</i>
The high priests entered the holy places every year with the blood of a sacrificed animal. (Heb. 9:25)	Heb. 9:26 <i>Jesus “appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”</i>
The law was a shadow of good things to come. (Heb. 10:1)	Heb. 10:1 <i>Jesus is the substance of the shadows.</i>
Continual sacrifices could never make perfect those who draw near. (Heb. 10:1)	Heb. 10:14 <i>Jesus, by his single offering, “has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”</i>
The animal sacrifices reminded people of sin but couldn’t take away sin. (Heb. 10:3–4)	Heb. 10:17 <i>The sacrifice of Christ took away sin for good, providing for complete forgiveness.</i>

Leviticus 11–15 records purity laws defining what is clean and unclean. Clean does not equal sinless, and unclean does not equal sinful. For example, if someone had died and you were preparing the corpse for burial, that would make you unclean. It wasn’t wrong or sinful to touch the person’s body, but it did make

you ceremonially unclean. You would need to take certain measures to remedy your ceremonial uncleanness. Similarly, other things that we regard as good and right, such as sexual intercourse in marriage, menstruation, and childbirth, all made you unclean, but that did not mean that they were sin. “Uncleanness

indicated something that deviated from what is normal.”³

The purity laws can't be explained in terms of general wisdom for hygiene, sanitation, and gastronomic health. They focus attention on God's act of separating clean Israel from the unclean nations. They also serve to demonstrate the effects of sin on our bodies and the environment we live in. To make sense of Leviticus 11–15, we have to have firm in our minds the events of Genesis 3, which tell us how humanity and all of creation went from being perfectly good to thoroughly broken, from clean to unclean. We also need to remember that along

³Kevin DeYoung, “Burnt Offerings,” sermon, University Reformed Church, East Lansing, MI, February 15, 2009.

with the curse God pronounced that day in the garden came the promise of redemption and renewal—the seed of the woman would one day crush the head of the Serpent. That happened when Christ rose from the grave, conquering sin, death, and the Devil. And the day is coming when we will live in bodies and an environment that will be perfectly restored and even better than it once was in the garden. What is now imperfect and unclean will become perfectly clean. So, as we read the purification laws in Leviticus, rather than seeing them as random or even ridiculous, we can see that God is helping us to get a picture of the impact sin has had on us and the world we live in and his intentions to make all things new (Rev. 21:5).

5. Read or skim Leviticus 11–15, noting how the content is reflected in the middle column of the chart below. Then look up the reference in the third column and write down the biblical phrase from the passage that states how each aspect of our unclean world will be cleansed when Christ returns.

Clean at Eden	Declared Unclean in Leviticus	Cleansed at the Consummation
All of the animals in Eden ate green plants for food. (Gen. 1:30)	Leviticus 11: Primarily animals that are predators and feed on the death of another animal since the fall are unclean.	Isa. 11:6 <i>“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb”</i>
Childbearing, which should have brought only pleasure, was made painful by the curse. (Gen. 3:16)	Leviticus 12: The pain of childbirth since the fall, illustrated by the blood loss that accompanies it, made a woman unclean.	Rev. 21:4 <i>“Neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore”</i>
Adam and Eve went from abundant life and health to impending death. (Gen. 3:19)	Leviticus 13, 15: Chronic skin diseases and bodily discharges that demonstrate the systemic nature of death and dysfunction in our physical bodies caused by the fall make a person unclean.	Rev. 21:4 <i>“Death shall be no more”</i>
All that God had made was perfect, with no deformity or decay. (Gen. 1:31)	Leviticus 14: Mold and mildew in the home were indicators of the decaying nature of the world since the fall and therefore were unclean.	Rev. 21:27 <i>“Nothing unclean will ever enter it”</i> Rev. 22:3 <i>“No longer will there be anything accursed”</i>

Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. In Nancy's teaching she said that many people who intend to read through the Bible start to slow down or give up altogether when they get to Leviticus. Why do you think that is, and have you ever had that experience?

Getting to the Heart of It

2. Nancy mentioned three reasons that people are often uninterested in Leviticus: they see it as boring, bloody, and irrelevant to their lives. After spending time studying Leviticus, would you agree or disagree? Why?

3. Just like last week, when we studied the establishment of the priesthood, we see that details that might seem tedious to us are actually quite significant. How did your study of the five offerings add to your understanding of Christ's sacrifice of himself?

4. Some churches and church leaders suggest that some traditions and theological approaches put too much emphasis on the atonement of Christ and should instead put more emphasis on the teachings of Christ as found in the Sermon on the Mount. How would you use Leviticus to argue with this viewpoint?

For God to give such detailed instructions for these sacrifices and to require such strict adherence to the detail would indicate not only that sacrifice was important but that each sacrifice and each aspect of the sacrifice was intended to implant in the offerer an understanding of what God requires and what Christ would fulfill.

5. What would you say to someone who says the purity laws in Leviticus appear to be random or harsh?

6. Would you say that the sacrifices and purity laws of Leviticus were a blessing or a burden to the children of Israel? Why?

7. Holiness is the opposite of worldliness. What do you think it means to be worldly? What are some examples of worldliness?

Being "worldly" can be defined as partaking in the values, desires, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors that characterize unredeemed human cultures. The worldly person is one who is squeezed into the mold of the world's system or the world's way of thinking, in contrast to one whose whole worldview has been transformed by God (Rom. 12:2). Worldliness is not necessarily a matter of participating in questionable activities or adopting certain styles of dress or appearance, as some Christians in every generation have supposed. It is rather the acceptance of the values and assumptions of a society that has no place for God.

Getting Personal

8. God instructs his people in Leviticus to be holy, to be set apart from the people around them, and Peter reiterates that command in the New Testament (1 Pet. 1:14–16). Nancy challenged us to consider if we have come to the place where we truly want to be holy, set apart from the world around us to the Lord. Are there some practical ways you could pursue holiness in your life that you would be willing to share with the group?

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

9. Throughout this study, we are seeking to grasp how the passage we're studying fits into the bigger story of God's plan for redemption. How does God's designation of clean and unclean actually help us to see the big picture of the Bible from Eden all the way to the new heaven and the new earth?

The Israelites were to act out on a daily basis the reality that God does not intend to let the effects of the curse have their way forever in his world. What is unclean will be made clean by the sacrifice of Christ and will one day be made holy in his presence.

Week 9

In the Wilderness Numbers

Personal Bible Study

“Numbers” is not the original title of this book. It was given that name when it was translated into Greek, because the first few chapters describe a census taken at Sinai to establish the number of fighting men as they prepared to take the land. Chapter 26 records a second census taken forty years later to determine territories for the various tribes. The original title of this book in Hebrew is “In the Wilderness.” The book of Numbers tells the story of the forty years spent traveling in the harsh desert toward the eastern border of the land God had promised to give to his people. It tells of one generation that rebelled against God and died in the desert and the second generation that God would lead into the land.

1. Compare Exodus 19:1 with Numbers 10:11. How long did the Israelites spend at Sinai, and what did they do during that time (from your recollection of Exodus and Leviticus)?

They were there for about a year, receiving the law, constructing the tabernacle, and learning more about what it was going to mean to be God’s people.

2. Read Numbers 10:33–36. What divine assistance and assurance did the people of Israel receive on their journey to the Promised Land?

The ark of the covenant went before them to seek out where they would camp. The cloud was over them guiding them and giving them shade from the hot sun every day. The Lord answered Moses’s prayer that he would scatter his enemies (note that Israel’s enemies are God’s enemies) providing for them his own divine protection, and that he would dwell with them when they arrived where they were going.

3. Read Numbers 11:1–19 and 12:1–9. What three things did the Israelites complain about as they set off toward the Promised Land?

- ≈ Their misfortunes and hardship
- ≈ The food God provided to them, longing for the variety of foods and meats they enjoyed in Egypt (while conveniently forgetting about the misery of their lives there)
- ≈ Moses’s wife (racism) and his status as the one who speaks to the people for God

4. Read Numbers 13:1–33 along with Deuteronomy 1:20–22. What key phrase in Numbers 13:2 should have made clear to the scouts sent into Canaan that they weren’t on a mission to determine whether to take Canaan but were merely gathering information for moving in?

“the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel”

5. How would you summarize the report given by the majority of the spies?

They were intimidated by the strength and size of the people and the fortification of their cities and feared that the Israelites would be annihilated by them.

6. Read Numbers 14:21–23. What judgment did the Lord pronounce against those ten spies and why?

None of these leaders would see the land of Canaan because even though they had seen God’s miraculous power on their behalf, experienced God’s miraculous provision, and heard the word of God’s promise, they forgot about or diminished all of these things and allowed themselves to be intimidated by the Canaanites. This was treating the Lord with contempt by refusing to trust him to take care of them and by failing to fear him more than they feared the Canaanites.

7. Read Numbers 13:30 and 14:6–9. How would you summarize the minority report given by Caleb and Joshua, and what was their reasoning?

They encouraged the Israelites to move forward and take possession of the land, assuring them that they would succeed and urging them not to rebel against God nor fear the inhabitants of Canaan. Their confidence was based on knowing that the Lord blesses obedience.

8. Read and compare Numbers 14:1–3 with 14:26–35. What did the people say they would rather do than risk being killed by the Canaanites? And what happened to them because they wouldn't trust God to give them victory over the Canaanites?

They said they would rather die in the wilderness than contend with the present inhabitants for the Promised Land. Because of their disobedience, the Lord declared that he would subject the people to the very alternative they requested: they will die in the wilderness.

9. Read Numbers 21:1–3, which is about the second generation of Israelites, as all of the previous generation had died in the wilderness. What do you see in these verses that indicates they are different from the previous generation?

Instead of being afraid of the enemy that threatened them, they were confident that God would give them victory.

10. Read Numbers 21:4–9. What do you see in these verses that indicates that this second generation is also very much the same as the previous generation?

They are impatient and quick to doubt, to question God, and to speak against him and Moses. They grumble and complain about the food God has provided, fondly recalling Egypt while forgetting their sorrow there.

There are several key places in the New Testament that offer us insight into the Israelites' time in the wilderness and what we should learn from it. Let's look at a couple of them.

11. Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–5. What does this tell us about what is possible even for people who experience miracles from God?

It is possible to see and experience miracles from God and still be displeasing to God because you refuse to put your hopes in his promises, refuse to obey his instructions, and rebel against his plans for your life.

12. Read 1 Corinthians 10:6–13. Why did the events in the wilderness happen, and why were they recorded by Moses?

“These things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did” (v.6) and “were written down for our instruction” (v.11).

13. What “evil” things did Israel do, according to these verses?

Idolatry, sexual immorality, grumbling

14. What are we intended to learn from their example?

We've seen that having miraculous provision from God is not the same thing as trusting God; that idolatry, sexual immorality, and grumbling are evil and will not lead to life; that we cannot assume that because we belong to Christ that we are invulnerable to temptation. When we are tempted, it is not an excuse for sin because God always provides what is needed to endure the temptation without giving in to sin.

15. Read Hebrews 3:7–4:3. What was the problem with the Israelites in the wilderness, and what did it lead to?

They had hardened their hearts in rebellion and unbelief, and that led them away from God. They were hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (or by the way that sin lies to us about what is good, meaningful, satisfying, etc.). They were disobedient. The promises of God had no benefit to them (they did not inherit them) because they didn't respond to them in faith by moving forward into the land when God told them he was giving it to them.

16. According to Hebrews 3:14 and 4:3, what gives evidence in our lives that our relationship to Christ is authentic?

We “hold our original confidence firm to the end.” We persevere in believing God's promises even when tempted not to. We believe the promises of God in Christ and anticipate entering the rest of heaven.

17. According to Hebrews 4:6–7, what is the appropriate response to hearing the gospel?

Respond to it with soft-hearted embrace, not putting it off, but by obeying God's instructions to repent and believe.

Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. Tell us about the most rigorous or memorable road trip you've been on. What did you learn about yourself and your companions along the way?

Getting to the Heart of It

2. We don't tend to think about grumbling and complaining as a very big deal. Yet it seems clear in the book of Numbers that it is a sin God takes seriously. Why do you think that is?

3. Interestingly, the twelve scouts spent much of their time around Hebron (Num. 13:22). Can you remember anything about Hebron and what happened there in the lives of the patriarchs? (See Gen. 23:9; 25:8–10; 35:27–29.) Why should just standing in Hebron have encouraged them to move forward with taking Canaan?

This is where Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac were buried. They were the ones who had received the promise from God that he would give them the land of Canaan. They were buried there because of their confidence that God would prove true to his promise to give them the land.

4. While years spent in the desert was a judgment on Israel's unbelief, God also used the time in the wilderness to teach and train Israel for living in the land. What aspects of their life in the desert should have taught them significant things about God and life under his care?

The manna and water should have told them that God would provide for them. The law should have told them that God intended to have an ongoing relationship with them and expectations for them. The tabernacle in their midst should have taught them that God intended to be with them. The pillar of fire should have taught them that God would guide them.

5. Just as God provided the cure to his people in the desert, the bronze serpent on the pole, so God has provided a cure to us—Jesus lifted up on the cross. But the cure requires something of us. The

Israelites were told to look at the bronze serpent and live. What does the cure for sin require of us?

We must look to Christ on the cross in faith, believing that he has conquered sin for us and will bring us from death to life.

6. Matthew subtly contrasts Christ's obedience in the wilderness to Israel's disobedience in the wilderness. Why does it matter that Jesus obeyed in the wilderness? And does it matter if we obey in the wilderness?

Jesus came as the second Adam and the true Israel to live in perfect obedience in our place so that his perfect record of righteousness might be imputed to us in place of our record of sin when we are joined to him by faith. And when we are joined to him and indwelt by his Spirit, it works in us to want to please him. It conforms us to his image so that we have the desire and the ability to obey as we live in the wilderness of this world.

7. Nancy said that the promise of God should have been the most important thing to Israel and likewise it should be to us. What is the promise of God, and how do you think we can nurture our treasuring and trusting in this promise?

The central promise of the covenant is that God will be our God and we will be his people. We nurture our treasuring and trusting in this promise as we feed on his Word, seeking to understand it more clearly, and as we refuse to put our hopes in the false promises the world makes to us in regard to finding security, significance, and satisfaction.

Getting Personal

8. We read in 1 Corinthians 10 that the events in Numbers have been written down as an example for us to instruct us. As you observed Israel's unbelief, disobedience, ingratitude, and rebellion as well as their repentance and faith, in what way has it instructed you?

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

9. Remember that our study in Exodus began with a recognition that Israel's story of salvation

from slavery is really our story. And we are familiar with talking (and singing) about heaven in terms of crossing over the Jordan River into the land. How does what the Israelites experienced in between salvation and entering into the land picture our lives in between being called out of our old life of slavery to sin and entering into eternity in God's presence?

The lives we spend on this earth where we are called to follow God's guidance in his Word and rest in his provision as we feed on him is like the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. We are not home yet, so we don't plant deep roots here. God is at work in our lives during this wilderness time purifying and preparing us for our life in the Promised Land of heaven.

Week 10

Love and Obey Deuteronomy

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Deuteronomy 1:1–8. Verses 1 and 5 describe the content of the entire book of Deuteronomy. What is it, and what is the setting in which it was presented?

Deuteronomy is “the words that Moses spoke to all Israel” in which he explained God’s law to the Israelites as they camped on the border of the land of Canaan before going in to take possession of it.

2. Skim the rest of chapter 1 through chapter 3 and write two or three sentences that summarize the highlights of Moses’s recounting of Israel’s history in the wilderness.

The people were at Kadesh-barnea where God told them to go in and take possession of the land, but they were too afraid of the inhabitants of the land and refused to enter. So God swore that none of that generation would enter into the land, and they spent forty years in the wilderness. They have just defeated a couple of kings on their way to Moab, where they will cross the Jordan River and finally take possession of Canaan without Moses.

3. An important word throughout the book of Deuteronomy is *remember*. Summarize in a short phrase from each of the following verses in Deuteronomy what Moses wants the Israelites to remember when they enter into the land:

4:11–14—how the Lord spoke to them, giving them the Ten Commandments from the burning fire of Mount Sinai

4:15–20—not to carve idols in the form of animals to worship or to worship the sun and moon

4:32–40—that there is no other God like the LORD who speaks to his people

5:1–21—the Ten Commandments

6:1–9—to love the Lord and make his commandments an integral part of life

6:20–25—that the Lord brought them out of Egypt and into the land and commanded them to fear and obey him for their good

7:1–11—to destroy the people living in the land and be holy to the Lord, distinct from all other peoples who do not love the Lord or follow his commands

8:1–20—that the Lord fed them in the wilderness so they would learn to depend on him and his promises and recognize his provision rather than think that they take care of themselves

9:4–6—It is not because the Israelites are righteous that God is giving them the land but because God is good.

4. Read Deuteronomy 10:12–13 and list what God requires of his people.

To fear the Lord, walk in all his ways, love him, serve him, and keep his commandments and statutes

5. What does Deuteronomy 10:14–22 reveal about God and how God’s people should respond to him?

This God, who made the whole world and all that is in it, “set his heart in love” (v. 15) on Israel. Their response to his love should be to love him in return, which will require that their stubborn refusal to love him in obedience be cut away. Because God loves the sojourner, so should they. This God has fulfilled his covenant promise to Abraham to make them as numerous as the stars of heaven, and they should respond to him in covenant love and obedience.

6. Mark Dever writes, “We can summarize the message of Deuteronomy with two very simple statements. First, God chooses his people. Second, God’s people must choose him.”¹

Make note of key phrases in the verses in Deuteronomy listed below that evidence this truth:

¹Mark Dever, *The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 155.

4:37—“He loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them.”

5:10—“Showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me”

6:5—“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

7:6—“The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”

7:7—“The LORD set his love on you.”

30:1—“All these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you”

7. Repeatedly in Deuteronomy the Israelites are told that they should respond to God’s love toward them in love. In fact, they are commanded to love the Lord, a command that Jesus sets forth as “the greatest commandment.” What do you think it means to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and how do you think it happens?

To deeply love someone we have to know them. So the more we invest in knowing God through his Word, the more we can love him. To love him in this way is wholehearted, whole-life, whole being. It is preferring him and desiring him over and above anything or anyone else. It is love in the sense of actions as well as affections.

8. In Deuteronomy 10:16, God commands the Israelites to do something that he says, in Deuteronomy 30:6, he will do. What is it, and what do you think it means?

“Circumcise your heart.” When Abraham was instructed to be circumcised, it was never intended to be merely a sign of national identity but was to reflect an inner reality of embracing the covenant from the heart. So this is not something new that God is calling for. He is telling them to remove the stubbornness in their hearts that keeps them from loving God wholeheartedly. But the Israelites prove incapable of doing this, and God promises that he will one day do it for them.

9. In Galatians 3:10–14, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 and Deuteronomy 21:23. Try to put what Paul is saying in these verses into your own words.

According to Deuteronomy, if a person does not obey all of God commands perfectly he is under God’s curse, and because no one can obey all of God’s commands, he deserves to experience the curse of God. But Christ has rescued us from experiencing the curse we deserve for all of our lawbreaking. To be “hanged on a tree” is the ultimate disgrace for a Jewish person because Deuteronomy presents it as the image of a person under a curse. This is what Jesus did in our stead, taking upon himself the curse we deserve so that we can inherit the blessings he deserves.



Discussion Guide

Getting the Discussion Going

1. From your experience as a parent, or as a child, what kinds of things do parents long for their children to remember when they leave home?

Getting to the Heart of It

2. When we come to Deuteronomy after reading Exodus, Numbers, and Leviticus, we might sense that it is repeating much of what we’ve read in the books that precede it, and, in actuality, it is.

Why do you think Moses repeated and recorded the content of this book for those who were preparing to enter the land, and how does it benefit us, as the people of God, to hear this repetition?

This was a whole new generation from those who had heard the law when it was first delivered at Mt. Sinai. And they were getting ready to apply it in a whole new situation and environment. We need to hear the repetition of the law because we forget. We hear so many other voices that we need for this voice to repeatedly override those voices. We need to keep coming back to the plumb line to see the standard our lives must be conformed to.

3. It is clear throughout Deuteronomy that loving God and obeying God are intertwined. That truth is also punctuated throughout the New Testament. How would you say that loving God and obeying God relate to each other? (Read together John 14:15–21 for Jesus’s words about this.)

4. When we read the Bible, many of us zero in on what we are supposed to do, and if that is all we see when we read it, we can become hopeless about our ability to do it all. But the more we study the Bible, the more we discover that the imperatives in the Bible (commands that tell us what we should do) are always based on indicatives (declarations of what God has done). That is clearly evident here in Deuteronomy. While there are many steep commands given to God’s people—love him, obey him, serve him, choose him, and circumcise your heart—these commands are all based on what God has done for them. What are some of the indicatives Moses declares in Deuteronomy that serve as a foundation for the imperatives? (For help see 4:20; 7:6; 10:20–22; 11:1–12; 26:16–19; 30:6.)

Here are some from the first few chapters: Deuteronomy 1:8, 10, 30, 39; 2:7, 25; 4:7, 20, 24, 29, 31, 33–39; 5:6; 6:4, 20–25

5. How would you explain to someone what it means to have a circumcised heart and how that happens?

To have a circumcised heart is to have the hardness and resistance toward God cut away so that you can love him wholeheartedly and obey him fully. God circumcised our hearts by a work of his Spirit through the new covenant as the Spirit cleanses us from the guilt of sin and frees us from slavery to sin to love the Lord with our whole hearts.

6. What would you say to someone who read the book of Deuteronomy and said, “Forget it. I can’t do this.” What hope in the gospel would you have to offer them?

This is why you need Jesus! This is why God sent Jesus! Jesus is the only person who has lived out God’s commands fully and faithfully. He came to live in perfect

obedience and to take the curse for our disobedience upon himself. As we are joined to him by faith, his righteous life is imputed to us.

7. Obviously God wants more than our dry duty of obedience but wants us to love him. In the Personal Bible Study you were asked what you think it means to love the Lord with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and how you think it happens. Would several of you share with us what you wrote?

Getting Personal

8. In the context of calling Israel to love the Lord, the Israelites were instructed to remember that they had been slaves, to remember their past disobedience, to remember the laws God had given and the promises he had made, and to remember how God chose them and set his love on them. How do you think it might help you to kindle love for Christ if you were to make time and space to nurture your remembrance of these same things?

Getting How It Fits into the Big Picture

9. Throughout this whole study we’ve been tracing the story of Israel’s being rescued from slavery, delivered through the death of an innocent lamb, and guided and provided for in the wilderness, and now preparing to cross over into the Promised Land, and we have seen in it a picture of our own salvation, justification, sanctification, and glorification. How has this study helped you to understand the need for Christ to come and the meaning of his life, death, and resurrection in a new way?

Note-Taking Pages for Duplication

The process of taking notes is, for many of us, less about having the notes to refer to later than it is about the increased concentration and the comprehension that comes to us as we hear something and process it through our pen onto paper. Certainly your study group members should each have a copy of the companion book, *The Lamb of God*, and all of the content from the videos is included in the book. Still, it may be

helpful for some members to take notes with an outline to help them track along with the teaching presentation on the video. Others may choose to take notes on their own blank page, and some may choose not to take notes at all. Following are reproducible note pages for each week, with the major headings as presented on the DVDs. You are free to make as many copies of these note-taking pages as needed for your group members.

Notes on Week 1: He Wrote about Me

Jesus said: “You search the Scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. . . . For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.” (John 5:39–40, 46)

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen. . . . And the LORD said to me, . . . ‘I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.’” (Deut. 18:15, 17–18)

Deliverer of an Enslaved People (Numbers 20)

Clearly Moses was a great deliverer. But what was needed was a greater deliverer—one who would not rebel against God but submit to him, one who would deliver God’s people not just out of their slavery but safely into the land God has promised, one who was not just a servant, but a Son—who, when he sets people free, they are free indeed.

Mediator for a Sinful People (Exodus 32)

As great as Moses was as a mediator, a better mediator was needed—a sinless substitute who would not only be willing to lay down his life for his friends but would also be worthy to atone for the sins of God’s people.

Prophet to a Stiff-Necked People

What was needed was a prophet who was no mere reflector of God's glory, but one who radiated God's glory from his own being, one who was in himself the radiance of the glory of God.

A Prophet like Me

Notes on Week 2: What's Your Story?

Cruel Bondage

Compassionate Brother

As we read this story of Moses's birth, deliverance, and rejection, it begins to dawn on us that this story reminds us of another story that will take place fifteen hundred years later. We remember that there will be another cruel dictator who will make a decree that all male infants should be killed. There will be another baby who will escape the death sentence while many other baby boys are killed. We remember that there will be another group of oppressed people longing for deliverance from those who rule over them, and one who will leave the royal splendor of his heavenly home to enter into their suffering. This deliverer will also be rejected by those he came to save and sentenced to death. But, unlike Moses who escaped the king's edict, this deliverer will be put to death. In fact, his death and resurrection will be exactly what is required to deliver his people from their cruel bondage to sin and death.

Burning Bush

This one, who served as mediator between holy God and sinful Moses in the flaming fire of the bush, was about to become mediator of a new covenant. He would not be protected from the flame as Moses was. Instead, when he became sin for us, the fire of God's wrath enveloped him.

The very real story of the suffering of God's people and the raising up of a savior sent by God, told in Exodus and celebrated throughout the rest of the Bible, is a living preview of the story of salvation accomplished through Jesus Christ. In this story, we see that our salvation is not about who we are or what we can accomplish but about who I AM is and what he has accomplished.

Notes on Week 3: If You Really Want to Know Me

If God had a photo album filled with pictures of his family history, what pictures would be in it? What pictures from his personal history would he point to and say, "If you really want to know me, you've got to see this"?

A Picture of Destruction and Death

A Stubborn Pharaoh

A Series of Plagues

A Self-Defined Person

A Scriptural Pattern

A Picture of Doorposts and Deliverance

An Impartial Sentence

A Perfect Sacrifice

A Precise Substitution

Our Source of Protection

The Sacrament Provided

At the cross of Christ, the picture of devastation and death and the picture of a doorpost and deliverance merged into one, a singular picture of grace and mercy. At the cross, the judgment of God came down in full force against God's own firstborn Son. The blood was spilt by our perfect substitute, providing protection for all who will come under it.

Notes on Week 4: Safely to the Other Side

Our Light

Our Salvation

In opening up the Red Sea to make a way through death for his people, God was showing how he would miraculously make a way through death for all those who come to him by faith through his Son, Jesus Christ.

True Bread

To eat the bread of life means that we must savor his sacrificial death as our life. Jesus offers himself to you and invites you to feed on his death as your life.

Living Water

Jesus experienced the desperate thirst that you and I deserve to experience forever. He experienced that thirst in our place so that we need never experience it but can enjoy a never-ending, always-refreshing stream of living water.

Notes on Week 5: Clouds on the Mountain

Sinai's Terrifying Presence

Sinai's Sin-Revealing Law

God's exercise of grace is not that he relaxes his demand for full obedience to his law. His grace is shown in opening our eyes to see our desperate need for one who obeyed God's commands fully in our stead.

The New Testament makes it clear that we are no longer "under law," but it does not declare an end to God's moral law as the standard for our lives. Jesus commands us to keep it, not as a way of getting right with God, but as a way of pleasing the God who has made us right with him.

Sinai's Promised Obedience

Sinai's Old-Covenant Blood

There is a way to come before this dangerous God without fear. You don't have to face God at Mount Sinai. You can go to a different mountain—Mount Zion.

But You Have Come to Mount Zion . . .

The difference is not in God himself; he is present and the same on both mountains—ablaze in holiness and abundant in mercy. The difference is in the mediator. To come to Mount Zion is to approach God as one who has been made right with him through the finished work of Christ. Because of Christ, we can approach God with nothing to fear and everything to gain.

You Don't Have to Be Afraid of Drawing Near

You Don't Have to Be Afraid of Falling Short

You Don't Have to Be Afraid of Sin's Power to Condemn You or Control You

You Don't Have to Be Afraid of Sin's Penalty

Notes for Week 6: At Home, at Last Together

God intended to implant within the hearts of his people a longing to live with him in his home as we once did in the garden.

This tabernacle was not an end in itself. It served to point toward a greater tabernacle and a greater way of dwelling with God that was to come.

The Pattern for God's Dwelling Place

The Ark of the Covenant

The Table for the Bread of the Presence

The Golden Lampstand

The Altar of Incense

The Curtain

God's Presence in His Dwelling Place

The Person in Whom God Was Pleased to Dwell

The Place Where God Will Dwell with His People

Notes for Week 7: Category and Context

In the tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrifices, God was providing a framework, a set of categories, that would help his people to understand the ministry of Jesus when he came. In every aspect of the priesthood—its calling, its clothing, its consecration, and its commission—we see shadows cast backward into Israel's history by our Great High Priest, Jesus himself.

We Need a Priest

The Priests' Calling

The Priest's Clothing

The Priest's Consecration

The Priests' Commission

The Priests' Corruption

The Priest We Need

Our Great High Priest Called

Our Great High Priest Clothed

Our Great High Priest Consecrated

Our Great High Priest Commissioned

Our Great High Priest Corrupted

Our Great High Priest Continues

Notes for Week 8: When I Grow Up, I Want to Be . . .

“Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.” (Lev. 19:2)

Provision of Sacrifice

None of the animals offered in these sacrifices could, in themselves, take away a person’s sin or truly pay the debt for sin. But by offering these sacrifices in faith, the people of the Old Testament demonstrated their faith in Christ, the superior, once-for-all sacrifice, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Principle of Substitution

Promise of Cleansing

Everything designated as unclean pointed out the effects of the curse of sin on this world.

Disparity of Conduct

Perfection in Holiness

Jesus Was God's Provision of a Sacrifice

Jesus Was the Pleasing Aroma in the Nostrils of His Father

Jesus Was Our Substitute

Jesus Alone Is Our Promise of Cleansing

Jesus Is Our Only Hope for Dealing with the Disparity of Our Conduct

Notes for Week 9: Road Trip

“I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession” (Gen. 17:8). This promise of an inheritance is what has brought them out into the wilderness. It was—or ought to have been—the most important thing in their lives.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:3–4). This promise of an inheritance ought to be the most important thing in life to us.

They Grumbled about God’s Provision

They Discounted God’s Power

They Questioned God’s Purpose

They Presumed upon God's Protection

They Were Impatient with God's Plan

They Were Faithless in the Wilderness

He Was Faithful in the Wilderness

Jesus Trusted in God's Provision

Jesus Refused to Presume upon God's Protection

Jesus Refused to Resent God for What His Plan Would Require

How Will You Walk through the Wilderness?

Notes for Week 10: Something Has to Happen in Your Heart

In Deuteronomy, Moses sets out, on the edge of this new life in the land, to remind the people of all they need to remember if they want to enjoy everything that God has promised.

Remember What You've Done

Remember What You Heard

Remember Who You Are

Remember the Lessons You Learned

Remember What Is Required

Remember What God Has Promised

Deuteronomy 30:1-8

Their hope is not based on something as flimsy as their ability to obey but on something as solid as God's promise.

Jeremiah 31:31-33

Ezekiel 36:24-27

God promised to do something in their hearts by his Spirit that would enable his people to keep his law—not because they had to but because they would want to.

“Do This in Remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19)

The good news of the gospel is that although you and I have not remembered all that we are to remember, although we have not loved the Lord exclusively, obediently, and passionately, although we have lived as though his promises are not precious to us, there is One who has done so in our stead. He is at work in us by his Spirit, cutting away all of our stubborn resistance toward God. He is causing something to happen in our hearts.