

For GC Discussion

- How should we view the law of God given in these chapters? What relevance does it have for us today?
- How can we relate to God's promise to go before His people into the land of Canaan?
- What is the place of God's covenant in our lives, and what does it mean for us?

Next Week: we will study the initial instructions on the construction of the Tabernacle.

Notes and Questions



Week 9: The Covenant Confirmed Exodus Chapters 22-24

This Weeks Summary

In our text this week God completes the giving of this first part of His law. He promises to go before His people into the land of Canaan, and the people respond to Him with every intention that they will trust and obey Him from this point on.

For Study:

The following verses all have to do with the idea of God's covenant traced through the Scriptures:

Psalm 105:1-45 is a great account of God's work for His people through the generations.

Adam & Eve:	Genesis 3:14-19
Noah:	Genesis 9:8-17
Abraham:	Genesis 12:1-7, 17:1-14, 22:15-18
Moses (again!):	Deuteronomy 11:1-32
David:	2 Samuel 7:8-16
Nehemiah:	Nehemiah 9-10
New Covenant:	Jeremiah 31:31-40 Luke 22:14-23 Hebrews 6:13-20, 8:7-13, 9:11-15

For Worship: Listen to '*Every Promise of Your Word*' by Stuart Townend. You can find it on YouTube, or on the Hill City Church blog on the website.

This week we saw the continuation of God's law being given to His people through Moses. Here are a few big ideas we can draw from the passage:

A Question of Justice

How can we summarise the long section spanning chapters 20-23 of Exodus? Is this a rule book that we must pay careful attention to for our lives now or is there something deeper than that? The truth is, as we read the law of God now, we no longer read a law that we must obey in its entirety - some of it is simply irrelevant to us in our culture, some has been fulfilled and is no longer necessary for us - rather it is an expression of the God who gave it to His people. It is an expression of what He is like, and surely one of the primary things we see held up in these laws is that He is a God of righteousness and justice. Therefore God's people, whatever the circumstances they found themselves in were to do that which was just and fair - never taking advantage of anyone, paying what they owed and generally treating people with the respect and dignity that ought to be theirs as people made in the image of God.

This is surely a standard that we too should live up to in our own contexts & culture - it won't look exactly like it did for the Israelites, but justice is what we're aiming for in all we do. However, this whole idea begs a bigger question for us - if God is totally just and fair then where is this justice in the world? It doesn't take long for us to look round at the world we live in and realise that we are surrounded by injustice. Whether it's in our own justice system where criminals get off scot-free because there's not enough evidence or in the more overtly corrupt regimes in the world where the poor are blatantly marginalised and mis-treated - injustice is everywhere, and it ought to be something that bothers us. You see what the law of God communicates to us is that as men and women made in the image of God we are made to crave justice - we often compromise our standards when it's us in danger of being punished, but to desire justice is a good and a Godly thing. To fight against injustice is also a good and Godly thing, but we will still always be left with this problem - until the end of time there will always be injustice in this world. When we come to realise this it shows us that to resolve the conflict inside us we must look away from our current circumstances and look to a time that is soon coming when God will set up His entirely righteous, just and fair kingdom, and our longing for justice will be entirely satisfied. What we must remember in the meantime is that where to win justice for the oppressed in this world is a good thing, to help them find a hope in a world where there will be no oppression is the greatest gift you could

ever hope to give.

Continued Remembrance

I find it fascinating which three main feasts are highlighted in our text this week. There are more feasts to come as God orders the worship of His people but these three relate exactly to the people's recent experiences. Firstly you have the passover feast - the time when God's people were to remember their escape from slavery - how He rescued them from the clutches of the Egyptians. How easy it is for us to forget where we've come from, but God wants His people to retain a healthy view of the past - a perspective that will serve them well in all the ups and downs of life, as constant temptations surround them and enemies try to defeat them. They are a people who have been rescued from slavery to an idolatrous system by a God who has shown Himself more powerful than any other so-called god. Not only that, but as they celebrate the feasts of both harvest and ingathering they remember that He is a God who not only rescued them but can also sustain them. In the wilderness, when there was no food and no water - no real hope of survival even, God brought water from rocks, and rained down food from heaven to show them that He has what it takes to sustain them through any difficulty and to provide exactly what they need at any given time.

An Unfulfilled Promise

If you know a little of what happens further on in the accounts of the people of Israel's travel towards the promised land there is a tinge of sadness about chapter 24. The people boldly proclaim that they will do all that God has told them to do - they will trust Him and obey Him in every circumstance, but that's just not what happens. Sadly the people fall at one of the very first hurdles of faith and won't even entertain moving towards the promised land when they discover the strength of the people they will face in battle. As we see the full picture of the storyline there's something about this chapter that reminds me of verses in 1 Corinthians that speak of the example these people are to us - Paul says to the church in Corinth 'let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall' (v12). There was clearly nothing wrong outwardly with the promises the people made to God in this chapter, but as the story plays out we see that there must have been something wrong internally. The people's hearts weren't really in the place of dependence on God that they thought they were and so when the test came they fell. When temptation called to them they were enticed away - may the Lord help us to recognise that same self-confidence in our own lives that rather than seeking to stand on our own, we might flee to Him for grace & strength.