

The Long Road Ahead

Exodus (Deuteronomy, Leviticus, Numbers)

Detailed outline from the Sermon on October 7, 2007

The Call of Moses (Exodus 1-6)

Oppression and slavery – 400 plus years of exile in Egypt, and the worst imaginable treatment.

A rescuer is born. His birth story proves from the beginning that God has big things in mind.

He's groomed for leadership as a virtual son of the King. He suffers his own personal exile after killing a man who treats an Israelite harshly.

An unusual call: God appears and speaks from a burning bush. "You will lead my people out of slavery."

The usual reticence... "Who shall I say sent me? What if they don't believe me? And by the way, I'm not a great public speaker!" "Tell them 'I am who I am' sent you. And let me show you a few miracles you can do with your staff. By the way, your brother is a good public speaker. He'll be your communications director.

Deliverance and sustenance (Exodus 7-17)

The plagues:

1. The Plague of Blood
2. The Plague of Frogs
3. The Plague of Gnats
4. The Plague of Flies
5. The Plague on Livestock
6. The Plague of Boils
7. The Plague of Hail
8. The Plague of Locusts
9. The Plague of Darkness
10. The Plague on the Firstborn

The Passover – with the admonition to smear the blood of a sacrificed animal over the doors, the angel of death passes over the home of every Israelite, and their firstborn are spared.

The Sea – when Pharaoh finally lets the Israelite go free, he changes his mind and pursues. At the moment when the soldiers and their chariots might have overtaken Israel, God tells Moses to hold his staff out over the waters of the Red Sea; the seas part, the people cross to safety, and when Pharaoh's soldiers try to follow, they are swept away.

Bread from heaven (manna, water from the rocks, quail)

Commandments and Covenants (Exodus 19-24)

The Big Ten (Exodus 20)

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it Holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house, wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Others – the greatest (Deuteronomy 6:50) “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

The Covenant is confirmed (Exodus 24)

A Place to Worship

The Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25, 37) Humble and patient, but eventually give God cause to discipline in stark terms.

The Tabernacle (Exodus 26-31, 35-40)

The accoutrements (Exodus 25-30)

The Shekinah of God (Exodus 33, 40:17-38; Numbers 9:15-23)

The condensed presence of God; smoke by day, fire by night; settled around the tabernacle; going out before them.

*Absolutely critical to our New Testament understanding of the Holy Spirit.
(Tabernacle, Temple, Christian)

Rebellions and Regrets (Exodus 14:11, 16:3, 17:2)

Grumbling, early and often – why did we leave Egypt? Did you bring us out here to die? We ate better when we were slaves eating leftovers and animal slop! These moments frustrate Moses, who is so patient.

Golden calf (Exodus 32) – The people were faithless, impatient and probably irritated by the notion of a God who makes demands. The great thing about inanimate, fabricated gods is that we can construct our own religion and manufacture our own set of religious behaviors. This God of Abraham had some specific ideas, and this can be threatening to our autonomy.

Spies, lies and consequences (Numbers 13-14)

Spies are sent, finally, into the Promised Land. They come back with tall tales (literally), and urge the people not to take the land of God's promise.

The consequences are dire. An entire generation (including Moses) is denied access, and destined to wander an additional 40 years in the desert.

The Remnant

Caleb and Joshua (Deuteronomy 1:38; Numbers 13:30, 14:24, 14:38)
They believe. They try to urge obedience. They are allowed, with the young people, to enter the land after 40 years.

So many implications. The majority is not always right. The “reasonable” advice is not always the will of God. God will deny entire generations certain privileges and when they refuse to obey or cooperate, God consistently acknowledges and honors the remnant: the ones who honor and obey his wishes.

Joshua is the story of the entrance into Canaan and God's care and conquests on behalf of the remnant.

Some Gems from the Desert

Jethro's excellent advice (18:13-27)
Delegate! (Story of the pots and seeds)

Moses the advocate (Numbers 14)
Moses appeals to God on behalf of the people – a kind of precursor to Christ.
From the human perspective, God changed His mind, but did he really?

Caleb the believer (Numbers 13:30)
Throughout scripture, stories lift up the resilient believers who refuse to quake or quiver in the face of some hard thing. Imagine Caleb as a precursor to Christ,

who looked out over Jerusalem, knowing the giants before him. All of scripture is loaded with heroic figures who, if necessary, will even stand alone for God.

Things secret, things known (Deuteronomy 29:29)

An early introduction to the idea that we're responsible to God up to our level of knowledge and awareness.

On the one hand, revelation is a blessing. On the other hand, to whom much is given, much is expected, and ignorance can be bliss. We do not worship an inanimate God who asks nothing of us.

Packing for our long journey.

What is God grooming you for?

Make sure to put a clear sense of purpose in your backpack. Know why you are here, generally and specifically. Not everyone gets the benefit of a burning bush, but you were still born with a purpose, and God is grooming you for it.

Will you walk alone?

No. So pack as much trust in your backpack as possible. Practicing and mastering the art of actually trusting God is a core curriculum in the Christian life. This is not always passive trust. It is often stepping out while believing that God is in control.

Is anything out-of-bounds?

Yes. And the laws make clear the reality that we should curb certain behaviors that are destructive to critical relationships. Bring obedience on the journey and do not despise the notion. God is God and will not be trifled with.

How much does attitude matter?

A lot. Humility is the name of the game. Moses models it. We need it. God honors it. And that grumbling and complaining spirit never gets an ounce of positive press in scripture.

For the moment of truth?

We need faith. We get to know God and practice trusting him. We learn faith – the daily propensity to putting our lives and treasures into His hands and believing that God can, God will.

All along the way, SHEKINAH.

We ask for an immersion in the Spirit.

We learn to know His voice.

We learn to enjoy His coaxing, nudges, prompts, pokes, admonitions, corrections and all over influence.

He puts a shine on us; an unction; a special saltiness and light.

There is something about a spirit-filled, spirit-led person that is unlike anyone else. I know when I am that, and I know when I'm not. I do well to ask for this filling often and even wish that the experiences could be strung together into one long lifetime of overflowing love and joy and peace and...