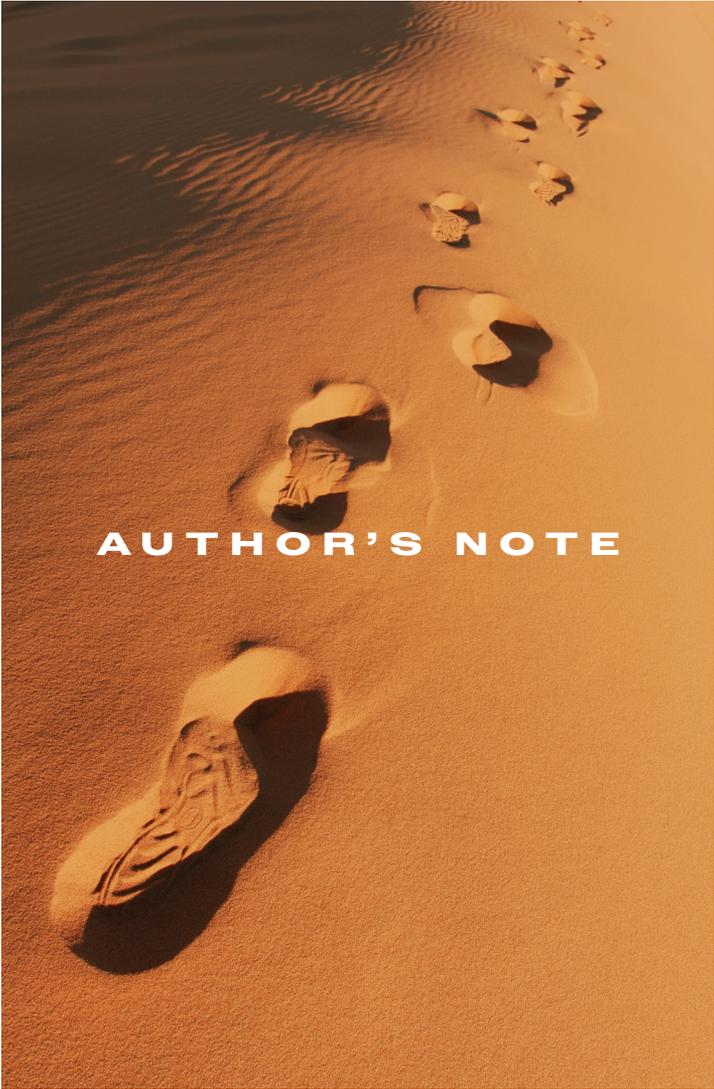


EXODUS

OUT OF SLAVERY AND INTO THE HOLY

A 24-DAY DEVOTIONAL

BRIAN FLEWELLING



AUTHOR'S NOTE

This set of devotionals began when I started meditating on the truth treasures I found in the book of Exodus. (By the way, there are many more treasures than the 24 captured in this series). For most of my writing, each devotional felt independent and disconnected from the others until I almost finished the entire series. That's when I began to feel a thread God was weaving through to tie them all together. So, I tried to add the thread later to bring coherence to the set. You may notice that tension in each devotional's cohesion and independence.

It can be difficult to gain coherence from the messy path of the scriptures. They chronicle history in real life and real time. As you know, life is not a straight line but a tortuous winding river. It takes us places we didn't think we'd go. And it takes time to make sense of where we've been. Yet, in a way that only God does, he narrates our history and predicts our future at the same time. Isn't his voice magnificent? If you want to hear me explicitly narrate the entire set of devotionals through the truth of that "thread," I've done so in the epilogue for the reader on page 49.

As always, I hope you enjoy these devotionals. Most of all, I hope they inspire a deeper love for the Lord and for the Word that captures his wonders. They are worth retelling again and again.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Flewelling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "B".



DAY 1

GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB

“Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.’ Then he said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’”

EXODUS 3:5-6

Perhaps you don’t even know what story you are in, dear reader—whose story you’re telling and for what purpose you’re telling it. Many people think they are in their own story. They got lost in the wilderness of their lives, so lost that they don’t even know when they’re on holy ground. They are living in their own designs, drifting along on their own hasty paths.

When God introduces himself to Moses, he first reminds Moses of his family history and the people he was born to. Holy ground always reveals that we are not the center of our story. God reminds us we are in his story, and his story is holy ground!

God is sticky like that. He keeps remembering things—in all their perfect detail—that we’ve let slip away. He keeps the story revolving around himself and not us. He stands watch over his Word and keeps tabs on his people, even when his people have forgotten their own path! Each of us only finds who and where we are when we find the God who is keeping our story.

Just like God reminded Moses to stay connected to his fathers, we need to stay connected to spiritual moms and dads who have been faithful to their relationship with God. Their testimonies remind us that God reveals himself across generations.

Joseph remembered his family story. His faith was so muscular that he commanded the Israelites to carry his bones back to their promised land, where God would make them a nation. Joseph knew where God was taking the Israelites even if the Israelites had forgotten.

Remember, it's not your story you are telling. It's far bigger than you. Actually, you are fortunate to be included in the story at all. You were chosen, see. It wasn't your choice. It was the choice of the One who found you lost and drifting. Then you had to choose the One who chose you. But that's a discussion for another time.

Where are you going? You know—in life? Where you are going depends on where God is going and whether you choose to follow the One who knows where you should be going. Remember, it's his story. And to know where he is going, we have to know where he has been. If you'd like to join me, we can take a little trip back in time to tell God's story. Then maybe you and I will better understand how we fit into it.

PRAY

Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths, guide me in your truth, and teach me.

I AM WHO I AM

“God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I Am’ has sent me to you...” The Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob’...this is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.”

EXODUS 3:14-15

Who is this God slipping in the doorway unexpectedly? He is like a hummingbird darting into your feeder. He has been gone for four hundred years, and now he springs into the picture. What’s with the timing? Maybe you’ve asked yourself this question: Where have you been all this time we’ve needed you? Why weren’t you here to defend us? These are difficult questions, but not for us to know the answers to at this moment. We simply must pounce on our opportunity to “seek the Lord while he may be found.”

Needless to say, God reintroduced himself to Moses in verse 6, *“I Am the God of your father,”* implying his continued faithfulness (present tense) to the relationship he started with Abraham four hundred years earlier. God then tells Moses, *“I have indeed seen the misery of my people (v.7)...have heard (v.7)...have seen (v.9).* Notice the prevailing past tense. Finally, in verse 12, he says, *“I will be with you,”* promising future fidelity. Present, past, and future are each expressed in God’s care for his people.

Moses is still worried. The “what ifs” plague his thoughts. Anxiety and self-doubt cripple his obedience. And what does God have to say about Moses’ fears? — “*I AM WHO I AM*” (v.14). He tells us we need not worry about our insufficiencies. He is the all-sufficient One. We need not worry that he won’t show up. He is the all-present One. We need not worry about a Red Sea in our front or hordes of cruel thugs at our back. He is the mighty One. God is implying that when he asks you to take a risk, you are not doing it on your own strength; you are doing it in his. So, learn to look at God’s profit margins and not your own red ink.

“*I AM WHO I AM.*” This beautiful name of God requires more than a description. He is someone you have to encounter, not simply define. It’s not enough to extrapolate about him; you have to experience him for yourself! You have to trust him, not dissect him. The barcode scanner doesn’t work for God. It is you who is being led by him, and you who must trust him, and not the other way around.

PRAY

All-sufficient One, help me to trust in you.



DAY 3

THE HEBREW MIDWIVES

“The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?””

EXODUS 1:17-18

Tyrants always turn people into useful tools and are always looking for those who will become accessories to their crimes. The husband who intimidates his wife or the boss who exploits his employee are both using people to fulfill their selfish purposes. The drug cartels and syndicates use their brute force to lean on people or intimidate others into fulfilling their dark agenda. All the tyrant needs is silence and compliance.

In this historical drama, the characters are being cast. The Egyptian tyrant is as greedy and as dangerous as any, and he is trying to pressure the midwives. He wants political sycophants and mindless slaves who don't have a conscience but will perform his dirty deeds.

In our story, we find unlikely assistance from an unlikely source. Two midwives emerge as heroes who do not obey the tyrant's orders. The Bible even gives the names of these daring women: Shiphrah and Puah. They are small in social stature but mighty in virtue and conviction. It is often the “least” among us who have the least to lose.

Yet, in this case, there's no indication that their resilience was born out of desperation. They still had their lives to lose, or perhaps families. No, it's not that they had the least to lose; it's that they had the most to lose—their morality and conscience.

They saw the moral clarity in the situation. The Bible tells us plainly that the midwives “*feared God,*” not Pharaoh. Potentates are all answerable to the Highest King. Tyrants and mobs may kill, shout, mock, slander, and terrorize, but they will answer—each and every one of them—to their crimes. The question is, when they do, will you go down with them? Or will you be vindicated as God's servant, not the servant of Leviathan, the chaos monster?

It is worth noting that the heroes of our stories are as often women as they are men. Women are not inferior but equal in virtue, integrity, and fortitude. Some of the strongest people I've known in life have been women—made of steel, indissolubly tough. Some of the most talented and courageous figures in history have been women. What wonderful partners women are in our redemption story. And what wonderful saving gifts these midwives were to the Hebrew community.

PRAY

Lord, give us the same courage and moral clarity as the midwives.



DAY 4

RESCUED FROM THE PIT

“Afterward Moses and Aaron went to pharaoh and said, “This is what the Lord the God of Israel says, ‘Let my people go so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert.’” Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord that I should obey him and let Israel go. I do not know the Lord and I will not let Israel go.”

EXODUS 5:1-2

Every story has a pit. The hero falls into hard times or loses their way. They experience a tragedy, adversity, or a fall from grace. Joseph was thrown into a pit, and Daniel was lowered to the hungry lions. The Hebrews were trapped in 500 years of bitter enslavement. Maybe your pit is a terminal illness, the loss of a dream, a moral failure, or just a quiet hopelessness.

Adam and Eve blundered the garden and ruined it for the rest of us. The fall of mankind—at the starting gun—is the ultimate pit, the tragedy that gifted us with all calamities. Sin and separation from God unleashed ten thousand evils upon the world, including the unrestrained greed of mankind, as we see in Pharaoh’s hoards. The question isn’t whether or not you’ll find yourself in a pit, because you’re in one now—mortality is a sinking ship no one is getting out of. Life ends in death. Even if, during the journey, you experience blissfully smooth sailing, you’ll find yourself in foul winds sooner or later. No, the question isn’t whether you’ll fall into a pit; the question is: who will come for you when you’re in one?

This is what makes Yahweh so special and his story so epic. He is in the business of rescuing his children and setting them free from their captivity. The world is always saying they don't recognize God or his authority. None of the tyrants like God snooping around their industries of enslavement. Yet they can't ignore it when God gives them his ultimatum, *"let my people go."* He sends his prophets and his powerful miracles to confront the institutions of oppression. He sends his Son to destroy sin and its vices. The nations may rage at his *"fetters"* (Psalms 2:2). Those cruel masters still have the meat of innocent men and women stuck between their teeth, but the Lord of justice will not be dishonored, nor his people trodden like straw underfoot forever.

Make way for the King. He is coming! Make no mistake, the earth is covered with many manacles of vice and oppression, but the day is at hand. We will only have one King and one law of love. It will not be Pharaoh, or Rah, or Nebuchadnezzar's statue. It will be God on his throne, *"Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb"* (Revelation 7:10).

PRAY

Gracious Lord who forgives all our sins and heals all our diseases, save us!



DAY 5

NO MORE STRAW

“That same day Pharaoh gave this order to the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the people: “You are no longer to supply the people with straw...they are lazy; that is why they are crying out...”

EXODUS 5:6-8

It can be easier to remain in hopelessness than to arouse the hope of freedom only to have it dashed on the rocks of reality. We thought that just because Yahweh came to deliver us, we'd waltz right out without a fight. But what do you do when things get worse? The first burst of elation evaporates in the heat of the tyrant's barbarity. Pharaoh is not going to give up that easily. Freedom is always a fight, but if liberty is worth keeping, then it's worth procuring. And if life is worth preserving, then it's worth defending.

“Bricks without straw,” the cruel master says. The Israelites were being crushed under the wheel of injustice. When they gave bitter lament to their situation, they were accused of being “lazy” and then loaded down with greater injustice. People were getting beat for this. People were really suffering, and still, God delayed. The pit keeps getting deeper. The stakes keep getting higher. What do you do with the delays of God's justice?

It takes perseverance and wisdom to walk into the bitter wind of cruelty. The accusations of the enemy can be withering. Financial

punishment, social pressure, political bullying, and slander can lead to violence and impoverishment. Expect that the battle for freedom always starts with a war over words—slanting words and tilting the ground beneath the community towards their hatred and prejudice. Language is backed by financial punishment and oppression. The full might of the Egyptian empire is marshaled to punish God’s people. Though he may delay, God is watching. He is keeping accounts. His justice will prevail.

Be wise but remain innocent. Don’t reciprocate, and don’t get discouraged. Speak the truth, but speak in love. Cling to the words of Jesus. They are a solid foundation. Align yourself with his truths, and don’t try to vindicate yourself. Find your justice and vindication in his courtroom and not in the courtroom of people’s opinions. It is promised, “*there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 8:1). Or, as Daniel found out, God can shut the mouth of lions. Jesus was silent before his accusers; he who was falsely judged has been approved of as the Greatest Judge—the Father in heaven. The Greatest Judge will have the final word, and his word will be majestic. It’s his approval you are living for, and your honor will be restored under his watchful rulership.

PRAY

Though the wicked shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart, in the Lord I will take refuge (Psalm 11:2).



DAY 6

FAITH AND DISCOURAGEMENT

“Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage.”

EXODUS 6:9

Oppression exposes the lies our hearts believe. Will I believe the thundering voice of hopelessness: *nothing will ever change?* Will I believe the lie that God will not deliver: *he won't be there when I need him?* Will I believe the accusation that twists the truth: *you deserve this?*

Don't lose hope. Just as faith is the fertile ground for obedience, discouragement is the fertile ground for doubt and waywardness. If the enemy can get you to listen to pain and weariness instead of God's plan of redemption, he has won. Discouragement sucks the oxygen out of the room and drains your muscles of strength. Then, there is no fight left to seize the day.

Often, God is just warming up his engine when we are running out of gas. What looked like “trouble” to the people in Exodus 5:22 looks like “redemption” to God in Exodus 6:6. He tells Moses in Exodus 7:3-4 that he's about to multiply his miracles and unleash his mighty acts of judgment.

Don't give up. This may be the very moment God is about to break in. Jesus chided his followers in Luke 18:8, "*When the Son of Man returns will he find faith on the earth.*" Stay rested. When you are weary, you are vulnerable. Stay surrounded by community. The isolated zebra is devoured by the lion. All of us have seasons we need to be warmed by the fire of someone else's faith.

PRAY

Lord, help me to be strong and courageous.



DAY 7

PASSOVER, THE HINGE OF HISTORY

“Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt... The whole community of Israel must celebrate it.”

EXODUS 12:17, 47

Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Re-Creation—that is the contour of human history. All human events and choices flow like a river through that riverbed. And right in the center of that river is a bend in history, a hinge where man’s fallenness is turned back upon itself, and God’s redemption begins. The bend in that river is Passover.

Egypt was the pinnacle of fallen civilization; all technology, greed, and control, and no Yahweh. The anarchy of Noah’s day and the tyranny of Babel’s Tower were extreme expressions of humanity’s jaded rulership. Egypt stood in the tradition of collective abuse divorced from heaven’s kiss of love. The Jewish serfs were abused and victimized. They were not free to come and go, to worship, or live free. They lived to serve Pharaoh. They must bake his bricks and build his cities. He will not lift a finger to help or provide straw for their quota. Bricks without straw. Slaves without value. See how sin makes us useful slaves and terrible masters.

God rendered his judgments on mankind’s injustice—through the Passover and plagues he judged. The Egyptian idolatry and tyranny

proved flimsy under the might of the Almighty. God had to break mankind. He had to break down our systems, our management, and our perverted oversight. So he ruined the water, crops, food, and animals. He ruined light and the air itself. And he overwhelmed humanity's fragile structures to show us how little control we have.

There at Passover, at the breaking of the world order, re-creation had begun. Passover is the hinge between destruction and salvation, payment and liberation. There, in the center of the Jewish story, is the firstborn son paying the price. Can you hear the echo in that story?

God sent his son as the payment for judgment. Jesus Christ was the Passover Lamb who died on Passover. Our ruin was cast upon him. Sinful humanity was abolished on the cross so we could exit the cycles of unrighteousness and tyranny and walk into a new promise of freedom. Now, the Passover cross stands at the center of human history—the hinge, splitting the old world off from the new world redemption. Creation, Fall, Redemption, Re-Creation. The Passover cross heaves us out of the pit, out of the “Fall,” and into “Redemption.”

This story is not only universal; it's personal. God formed you. You were lost in sin and self-centeredness. Christ became your Passover Lamb who redeemed you on the cross. I told you this is God's story, but it is your story, too. For those he chose, he is re-creating in his glorious character. The question is, will you choose the One who chose you?

PRAY

Yes, Lord, may my sinful nature pass away on your cross, and may the new life of Christ live in me.



DAY 8

THE FIRST

“Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal.”

EXODUS 13:2

“The LORD also said to Moses, “I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine, for all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether human or animal. They are to be mine. I am the LORD.”

NUMBERS 3:11-13

There is a biblical principle here. The “first” of something matters to God. Jesus was called the first over all creation and the first to rise from the dead. He was indeed God’s first and best gift to humanity. And he is our model for living outside of our pit in a new life of redemption.

The first is the “first of its kind,” indicating that there’s more to follow and that what follows will be like the first. Abraham offered his first tenth to Melchizedek, showing they were in allegiance and league together. Jacob called Reuben the first sign of my strength. The “firstfruits” offering of grain indicates that the entire field belongs to God.

Israel was called God's firstborn among the nations. Abraham's natural firstborn was blessed by Yahweh. Then, through the blessed offspring, God blessed the Gentiles *"with every spiritual blessing in Christ"* (Ephesians 1:3). What God starts in Israel, his firstborn, he continues in all nations. Of Israel, it is said, *"You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"* (Exodus 19:6). Israel is a holy nation set aside for God's purposes. Yet the Gentiles are also called *"a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation"* (1 Peter 2:5).

We often get possessive of the blessings that flow through our hands. But what do we have, including the fruit of our own womb, that God hasn't given us? In this verse, God sounds a bit possessive of those whom he paid for. Three times in one verse, he says, *"They are mine."* We have been given God's first, including the fruit of his divine womb. He wants our first and best.

Partnership with God comes with rights and responsibilities. As in a covenant marriage, our livelihood is twisted together indistinctively with him. Where does one end and the other begin? Each belongs to the other and is an advocate for the other. He is our God, and we are his people. You are the first to receive his blessing and the first to be his blessing given to others. That is the privilege of being his chosen.

PRAY

I give you my first and my best, Lord.

MIRIAM, THE PROPHETESS

“Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron’s sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. Miriam sang to them:

‘Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.’”

EXODUS 15:20-21

Moses and the Israelites had just finished singing this song of praise to the Lord in Exodus 15:1-18. Now Miriam the prophetess picks up the lyrics to the tune and repeats the song in 15:21. This redundancy may feel tedious to the modern reader, but something profound is transpiring. Moses’s song of praise is sung from the people up to the Lord. The song of Miriam, the prophetess, is sung from the Lord back to the people.

Let’s recall Israel’s deliverance. In stage one, God promises to deliver them, *“I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army...”* (Exodus 14:4). In stage two, God delivers. The deliverance is confessed out of the mouth of God’s enemies, *“Let’s get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt”* (Exodus 14:25). In stage three the people of Israel give thanks and praise for God’s deliverance (Exodus 15:1-18). And finally, in stage four, Miriam retells the story of the Lord’s deliverance (Exodus 15:21).

If you experience deliverance and then praise the Lord for it, you give him a single offering. If you experience deliverance and educate the next generation, you get an offering of praise and worship from every generation that walks in the prophetic power of your breakthrough. The Lord is giving the Israelite community a prophetic education in his ways. This is an oral culture committing the song of Miriam to their collective memory. Remember, they practiced regularly looking backward to the past, remembering their stories and where they came from. They are chronicling their victory for future generations to remember.

If you have a song of Moses without a song of Miriam, the move of God dies within a generation. But if you have a prophetic voice, like Miriam's, reminding the people of the mighty acts of the Lord, you impact every generation after. An experience without education and activation leads to stagnation. An experience with education and activation leads to accumulation.

Every generation stands on the shoulders of the one before it. There's the effect of accumulation here. God is retraining the people. He is retelling their story through his eyes. Not only is the Spirit of the Lord delivering them, but he is redefining them. John Locke, no stranger to Christianity, observed, "Whoever defines the word defines the world." Through the prophetic voice of Miriam, God is reorienting his people around the story he is crafting and his character as their king.

PRAY

We sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. He has hurled our enemies into the sea.

KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

EXODUS 19:4-6

What makes you valuable to God? What makes one person valuable to another? Contracts bind business partners together, which makes them advantageous. Services make a person helpful and resourceful. Companionships, on the other hand, are forged through trust and sacrifice. A kindred spirit listens to you, knows you, and seeks to unearth your soul treasure—people who do that are friends to cherish.

So again, I ask, what does it mean to be treasured by God? God calls his special people “holy” or set aside. Listen to how tender God is to those people, “I carried you on eagle’s wings and brought you to myself.” They will be his companions in life. They will know him.

How does one become “set apart?” God says those who “obey” and “keep my covenant” will be my holy people. These are the roads that lead us to intimacy with God. Without these, we have no common union. If your heart is still running after all the things that repulse God,

it shows just how little you understand him. Choices communicate what a person values. How can we be intimate with something or someone we have no appreciation for? Through the behaviors that he defines, God is showing us the general shape of his values and the pathway to intimacy: integrity, justice, truth-telling, doing good to people, serving, and showing honor and respect. These are the things that delight him and cause him to delight in people.

There are plenty of people living for themselves and doing their own thing. Plenty of people are filled with self-love and the adoration of personal effects. God wants a family who wants him, who looks beyond themselves and their own fears and interests. He wants relationship with people who set themselves apart for him, draw close to him to know him, and who yearn to hear his voice and carry on his family name.

God's story continues. It has commenced with his family planning. He made promises to Abraham: *your family will serve my purposes. You will be blessed, and you will be my blessing.* He has never backed down from those promises.

PRAY

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace and conform my will to your desires.



DAY 11

THE LAW AND THE CONSTITUTION

“And God spoke all these words.”

EXODUS 20:1

Isn't it splendid that God is not silent? He speaks to us. In the calm of the midnight hour, we can sense his quiet, watchful presence. In the rush of the dove's wings, he communicates. In the providence of circumstance, he leads. And, with his clear voice, he speaks his words and laws. God created the world with a word. Now, he is sending his words into that world.

These aren't just any words. These are ten words—ten great commands. God's great commands! He is teaching the Israelites how to be his people, a people like him, and oriented around his holy character. God is revealing the timeless, immutable secrets of the moral universe; ignore them at your peril. If you keep them, they will keep you. If you abandon them, you will run into disaster. These epic moral laws are universal and unavoidable. Nations of the earth have fallen and risen based on how well they've preserved these words.

What is God doing with these words? He is reconstituting his Hebrew people. See, through the long slog of slavery, Israel had lost their identity. They forgot who they were and how they should act. Their traditions had been erased, and most of their memory. Survive!—became the daily rhythm. That's no way to live. Their morality too, had been reduced to a slave's obedience. “Do what I say!” says Pharaoh.

“I am God—I am Rah,” says the king. “I will it, so get busy doing it,” threatens the tyrant. Maybe you’ve been battered under a Pharaoh, reduced to survival, or just trying not to get noticed by the ego-monster. God—the liberator of slaves—is laying out a new order and a new constitution for his people. These ten great commandments will serve as its moral foundation.

Yahweh is taking for himself a nation he can be King over; “Yahweh is King, not Pharaoh.” But more than that. Yahweh isn’t another dictator barking out orders. He doesn’t leave his people in the dark. He gives them the law, and he empowers them with knowledge. The law doesn’t change moment by moment with the dark, fickle mood of God or the weather. The weather might be whimsical: the sun, the Nile, the grain, and the locust. We don’t serve these capricious forces anymore. God reigns over his creation, and his character is consistent. His law is not just the whim of his will or the cycle of survival. He wants his people to be wise, just like he is. So, he is writing out his ways and laws so you can know them, study them, practice them, and be holy as the Lord your God is holy.

PRAY

Thank you for speaking your words to us, Lord. Help us live according to them.

ALTARS OF UNADORNED STONE

“Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you. If you make an altar of stones for me, do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it.”

EXODUS 20:24-25

The Israelites were prohibited from chiseling the stones used in God’s altar. Why? Because we stop bowing down to God and start bowing down to the altar of our own creation. What begins as a ministry to God can degenerate into a monument for men. God knows that under the camouflage of spiritual ministry, mankind flourishes the altar to exalt himself with it. Mankind autographs everything he touches with “Let us make a name for ourselves.” “See how great my altar is.” “See how beautiful my altar is.” “See how big my altar is!” These words are the blueprints to the Tower of Babel. When worship of the Almighty becomes confused by who we are and what we’ve done instead of who God is and what he has done, we begin to worship an idol forged into our own likeness. That’s the old way of doing things. God wants altars of earth to remind us it’s about him and not the altars we build to him.

Your business, your testimony, your ministry, your connections, your community service, your hard work, your family, your ingenuity, and talent—use these stones to build a holy altar to the Lord and not a monument to yourself. Offer them with excellence to the Father and no personal adornment of yourself, then your worship will be pleasing to the Lord. Our excellence should only ever be used to elevate Jesus and never the altar.

We are a humble landing pad for his glory. *“Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you”* (v.24). See, it is the One who comes down. See, it is all his handiwork. The altar is nothing. It is God who is autographing the altar with his greatness by coming down upon it.

PRAY

Here are my time and talents. May the name of the Lord be praised.

RESTITUTION AND REDEMPTION

“If a fire breaks out and spreads into thornbushes so that it burns shocks of grain or standing grain or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution.”

EXODUS 22:6

Accidents happen! None of us are immune to unintended consequences. Not everything that goes wrong in this world is the tool of evil. Disasters aren't always the spawn of wicked intentions: the car was left in neutral and rolled down the drive. The child swung a baseball bat right into the arm of a friend. A wall that was demolished fell in the wrong direction and ruined the neighbor's garden. The cows that bathed upstream polluted the town's drinking water. The overuse of a resource caused a shortage of essential medicine.

Choices have consequences, sometimes beneficial and sometimes painful. Learning to take responsibility for our choices is an important lesson in life. When possible, restitution is a practical way to maintain friendships and ward off offense. Or, at worst, to appease adversaries. If you break something that belongs to someone else, buy them a new one. Return something in better shape than you received it. This is how *“love your neighbor as yourself”* looks with financial responsibility.

Insurance may feel like a cumbersome burden in our lawsuit society, but it's a necessity in a world of mistakes. No one operates in certainties. When practiced within appropriate boundaries, insurance enables us to make restitution when we can't afford it because sometimes your failures will cost you more than you know and more than you can pay. God warned Adam and Eve that when you partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will surely die. They had no comprehension of just how disastrous that one choice could be. We continue to be generally clueless as to how devastating our sin is and how much it cost the Father to repay. If we could have paid it ourselves, God would have demanded restitution. But the cost was too great, so God bought our debts and paid it himself; that is called redemption.

What a loving God we serve. He loves restitution and redemption. He cares about the repayment of wrongs done to us and he cares that you aren't destroyed under an avalanche of impossible debt.

PRAY

Lord of justice, thank you that you care about the repayment for what was lost.



DAY 14

DO NOT FOLLOW THE CROWD

“Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd.”

EXODUS 23:2-3

The sin of one man is stubborn like an ox, but the agreement of the herd is like a stampede running in the wrong direction. Who can stop it? Yet, defy we must. In the courtroom, God pulls the herd apart one by one. Each person is responsible for their own decisions and their own testimony; no one gets to hide behind their neighbor's lie. If you run with the devil, you will be judged guilty with the devil. God is orienting a people around justice and not social pressure.

Crowds have a way of making people feel more powerful than they are. A person isn't right simply because they are surrounded by agreement. An entire crowd following one unjust man is united in injustice, or a herd united in the confusion of their enflamed prejudices is still corrupt. Their eyes see nothing beyond what their hearts desire to see or what the confusion of their minds think they understand. So STOP! And think for yourself— before you get drawn down the drain with the rest of the bathwater. In God's view, the crowd is no more than a collection of individuals; he holds each one accountable.

When Lot resisted the men from Sodom, they felt insulted that someone would dare tell them they were in the wrong. Their response is telling: Did you come to be the judge...we will do worse to you. They would till up the entire town to weed out one quiet stone standing in the way of their cultivated consensus. These are bullies acting like children. They want the power to tell everyone else how to act. They want no one to tell them they are acting like selfish little children. The difference between a schoolyard bully, an Egyptian tyrant, or a Gomorrah mob is only in the size of the abuse, not in the quality of misbehavior. Every man or mob is a law unto themselves, and any law or opinion that disagrees with theirs is a declaration of war on their sovereignty.

In God's story, he is trying to prevent his people from becoming the very tyrants he just rescued them from. Regardless of how pricking it is to our pride or how much social pressure we feel, true justice is not a human invention we can ignore. We must bow down to the higher law that governs mankind's judicial courts. It is a law of conscience. The Bible warns not to side with the mob. Curb your appetite to rule. You are not the final court. God is the final court, and there will be no bullying him into conforming to your perverted and petulant sense of justice.

PRAY

May I act righteously and justly, O Lord, according to your will.



DAY 15

DOES GOD NEED A SANCTUARY?

“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.”

EXODUS 25:8

It's not that God needs a sanctuary any more than the ocean needs an aquarium. God's Spirit is already beyond air itself. God isn't bulging out of the universe, as we like to think of it, but the universe is a fine little bubble apart from him. To this end, Solomon prayed, *“Will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built”* (1 Kings 8:27)!

The temple is a meeting house. The sanctuary is for human hands to adorn and human eyes to adore. We need to walk to it with our feet and say our prayers within its walls. The sanctuary creates a bassinet for God to bed down into our behaviors, priorities, and memories. The sanctuary gives us a specific location to know him and enjoy him. God is orienting a people around the priority of his presence.

As soon as God creates a location, he creates a choice; he becomes the object of my concentration in a world of options. Will I choose to draw near or to ignore him? Will I leave the distractions of the village market and the labor of the fields and pursue him?

The “allness” of God's vast presence is too big for us to grasp all at once. I am too small of a creature even to apprehend his oceanic

wisdom in this moment. I am here. Not there. Not everywhere. Not all at once. So, I must grow by degrees and progression, by collecting facts and stumbling from one jilted experience to the next. My accumulation of knowledge about God is painfully laborious. It is a process of searching and worshipping. Yet he is known to me in that slow progressive unfolding! Episode by episode. As we plant ourselves in the activity of his glories, his glories are more readily realized. The more we learn to focus on him somewhere—a sanctuary, for example—the more we begin to see his goodness everywhere.

The New Testament expands this view of God’s temple. Every human heart and every human mind becomes the potential house of worship in which we encounter God for ourselves. Praise the Lord we don’t have to line up around the block to get into the building! Yet, the availability of his Spirit within us does not retract the necessity of pursuing God. We still must turn our attention towards him; seek to “go up to the house of the Lord” to worship him; say “no” to one hundred other activities so we can say “yes” to him; and rearrange our lives around relationship with him. Only then will we more fully enjoy the fruit of his promise, “*Draw near to God and he will draw near to you*” (James 4:8).

PRAY

Lord, teach me to dwell in your house that I may ever praise you.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

“Have them make an ark of acacia wood...Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out...then put in the ark the tablets of the covenant law, which I will give you.”

EXODUS 25:10, 11, 16

Generally, in life, you only keep what is valuable to you: jewelry, family heirlooms, letters from your lover, or a lock of hair from your first baby. God has a treasure box—the Ark of the Covenant—where he collects his valuables. The word for ark is literally derived from the verb “to gather.” It’s a special place where he gathers his memorabilia.

The treasure box he collects his things in is crafted from gnarly Bedouin wood from the wilderness. It is full of unique character and stubbornness. The swirling wood box is overlaid with gold, inside and out. Gold is precious and heavy. Gold is pure and expensive, and it symbolizes the weight of God’s glory.

What does God keep in this gnarled glory-covered box? He keeps “The Testimony.” The Testimony is the court record, a witness of Israel’s history and covenant with God. It testified that God and humanity are wrapped up together in a relationship that is serious. Remember, we said God is sticky like that. He keeps remembering things in all their perfect details. He is keeping track of where this story is going.

Let's put this picture together now. The Ark of the Covenant is a picture of us. Like Acacia wood, our human nature is incurably bent and twisted yet covered over by the glory of God's pure, costly love. We are to be covered with God's glory, inside and out, baptized—if you will—in his pure gold. It is within us that God preserves our testimony, a collection of our witness to his faithfulness. Indeed, we are the containers of his presence.

What a beautiful picture this is of God calling imperfect people out of slavery and into a relationship with him. Your testimony is worth preserving because you are God's handiwork.

PRAY

Thank you Lord, that we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.



DAY 17

THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE

“Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times.”

EXODUS 25:30

In premodern thinking, worshippers would set out food and drink to pacify the appetite of the gods. In this verse, God sets out food that he serves up to his worshippers—“the bread of my Presence.” God is showing us that it’s not us who feed the gods; it’s God who feeds us.

People spend incredible amounts of time each day buying food, gathering food, preparing food, or consuming food. This is a clue to our spiritual diet as well. God is our spiritual nourishment. We don’t just analyze food; we consume it. Without food, we cannot be sustained.

Jesus was called the Bread of Life. He also affirmed what the Torah spoke in Deuteronomy, *“Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”* He is the Word that came out of the mouth of God—he is the very incarnate presence of the Deity. The idea is really this simple: God’s presence is life-sustaining. Are you hungry today? There is Good News. God invites you into his presence to break bread with him and share life with him. His sustenance is not so far away that you can’t reach it, but it is already in your mouth (Deuteronomy 30:14).

The psalmist says, *“Taste and see that the Lord is good.”* Turn off your skepticism and scientific inquiries, and just enjoy. Come into his presence. The nourishing pleasure of God’s goodness speaks for itself. Search, if you will. There are no replacements anywhere close to this God. He is the paragon of kindness, virtue, justice, truthfulness, reasonability, compassion, goodness, and intimate friendship. His Word will fill you, refill you, and keep you hungry for more of him!

PRAY

Preserve my life according to your Word.

CLEAR OIL

“Command the Israelites to bring your clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning.”

EXODUS 27:20

The lamp is the symbol of God’s light and truthfulness. The lamp must be maintained so that the light of his presence remains clear at all times of night or day. Earthly light runs on fuel. Lamp fuel consists of olive oil. The first squeeze of the olive secretes the cleanest and most valuable oil. The longer and harder you squeeze the olive, the more fragments and pollution you have in it.

The Lord wants your first and your best. He wants the prime real estate in your life. He wants to be your first love and affection. He wants to be the first appetite you satisfy. The first dreams you pursue. Your best hour of the day. The first money you spend. He wants the best of your talents and the first of your focus. He wants no other gods beside him, and he wants your heart in one whole piece.

The first commandment says, *“You shall have no other gods in my presence.”* Or in Hebrew, it could read quite literally, *“...no other gods in my face.”* We read that God doesn’t want anyone else in his face. But it also reads that God wants you to fill your face with him. Your meditation is the oil in the lamp. Your worship fills your world with the light of his presence. Jesus calls the eyes the *“lamp of the body.”* He continues, *“If your eyes are good your whole body will be full of light.”*

If your eyes are bad your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness”
(Matthew 6:22-23).

What kind of oil are you putting into your lamp? Where is the focus of your attention pointing? If you’re filling your mind with meditations of God’s love and of his word, then your lamp is full of clean oil that burns bright and pure. But if you are filling your eyes with the trauma of horror, pornography, anxiety, fear, divisive stories, or self-gratification, then your lamp is full of polluted oil that does not burn brightly.

God wants you to put his clean oil in your lamp. He wants to be first. Fill your face with him so that his light burns brightly. No one else can do this for you. We are reminded of Jesus’ parable of the virgins in Matthew 25. The wise virgins filled their lamps with oil while they kept watch for the groom. And what greater joy will there be than for those whose longing is satisfied with the Groom’s joyous return! His eyes are blazing fire, and he says, *“Come away with me my love.”*

PRAY

Lord, teach me to dwell in your house that I may ever praise you.



DAY 19

SACRED GARMENTS

“make sacred garments for your brother Aaron to give him dignity and honor.”

EXODUS 28:2

“From the blue, purple and scarlet yarn they made woven garments for ministering in the sanctuary. They also made sacred garments for Aaron, as the LORD commanded Moses.”

EXODUS 39:1

Not only does God rescue his children from slavery, but he removes their slave clothes. The mentality of passivity or victimhood and the rag cloth of shame, blame, shifting responsibility, and justifying your own evil behavior must be removed. If you are going to be God’s people, you’ll need to be clothed in dignity, strength, free choice, and holy purpose. You must think like nobility. God had intended for the entire nation of Hebrews to stand in his presence as his priests. Aaron was a symbol of the whole tribe and a promise to all that you may be the most forgotten and exploited among men, but you may become the most valued child of God!

Egypt reduces you to rags, and so does Babylon and all the other kingdoms of this world. They make human life exploitable and disposable. You become a product. And yet, you seek it, and fear it, and depend on it; you need it, and you become useful to the system. But in becoming useful, you become disposable. In the prodigal son

story, the parasites leech off him until he had nothing left of his soul or money. So it is with the greedy world.

Even our deepest relationships can be contaminated with usury. Subtle motives and attitudes can get mixed in. Our friends become our tools. Our own appetites become a pet that must be stroked. We take our spouse for granted when they no longer suit us. And our businesses become industrial vampires that use others for our own gain.

Have the habits of Egypt been dominating your thoughts even after you've walked out of the land of bondage? Are you still haunted by regrets or sins? Are you horrified at a relationship that has sullied your beauty or honor? The Lord wants to cover you with his new wardrobe and restore your mind to peace. You are no longer a victim. You are no longer usable. You are a friend of the great King, and his pleasure is not in what you do for him but in who you are to him!

PRAY

Lord, renew my mind and conform it again to the nobility of Jesus Christ.



DAY 20

THE PRIESTLY BREAST PLATE

“Fashion a breast piece for making decisions... There are to be twelve stones, one for each of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.”

EXODUS 28:15, 21

The work of God’s priestly ministers is always selfless; they are always standing in the middle and acting on another’s behalf. The priest carried the blessing of God to Israel, and he carried the tribes of Israel to God. Each tribe is like a precious stone hanging close to his heart. Each stone is “engraved like a seal” for authorizing legal transactions. When he made legal transactions in the courts of the Lord, he did it as power of attorney on the tribe’s behalf.

Reflect on how our High Priest—Jesus—went into the Garden of Gethsemane carrying the names of God’s children on his heart. He labored in prayer for each one of us. It was for the joy set before him that he endured the cross. What was that joy? Why did he decide to go to the cross? Because he was reconciling humanity to God. He was standing between us. He was giving us to the Father, and he was giving the Father to us! What joy!!!

In God’s story, he is not just giving us a new freedom, a new identity, a new mentality, and a new way of living; he is also giving us a new

purpose and role in his kingdom. You and I have been called as ministers of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). We are to carry the nations on our heart as we intercede on their behalf. They are the jewels of heaven. They may not look like it yet. They may not act like it yet. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, “*We were dead.*” In Ephesians, the Gentiles were called “*objects of wrath.*” But because of his great love for us, Christ died. God saw a treasure in each of us. We must learn to envision it within others and pray without stopping until his glory is revealed in them.



PRAY

Lord, use me as your witness to pray and proclaim the truth of your great love.

THE SABBATH

“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy...It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

EXODUS 31:12-13, 17

God instructs the Israelites to observe Sabbaths—not just the idea of Sabbath, but here he says “my Sabbaths”—plural. He is reminding them to keep the Sabbath weekly, be diligent about the details, and practice them over and over.

God calls the Sabbath a sign. Sabbath keeping is like a wedding ring on the finger, telling everyone who God’s special people are and who they belong to. God’s special people are those who don’t find their identity in their great accomplishments, Nobel Prizes, or charity endowments. God’s special people learn to commune with him, rest with him, and spend time with him on his holy day. Presence-keeping makes you holy!

God is commending the Israelites—you are no longer slaves to the Egyptians, no longer required to be “useful.” You have been set free! Now that you have a choice, how will you organize your weekly

schedule? Being in rhythm with the Father is significant. Jesus spoke of the Heavenly Father both as working and resting. We find union with God when we purposefully labor in the Father's work and rest with the Father on his Sabbath.

"In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." The children of God rest with the Father on day seven. When mankind is out of synchronization with God's calendar, they don't know how to abide in him or balance purposeful labor and rest.

Outside of God's loving provision, mankind doesn't know how to rest or when to say enough is enough. His anxiety is constant. His greed is devouring. His jealousy is relentless. He takes a good thing and turns it into an addiction. He takes a blessing and turns it into a bondage. The evil that overtakes him is quite often his abuse of something the Father gave him.

On the other hand, God's people truly stand out from the crowd when they Sabbath with the Father. God's trusting children learn by listening, grow by abiding, and advance by waiting. This may be the most important lesson you ever learn: Rest with the Father! Trust in his Lordship. Wait on the Lord, and he will renew your strength. He is the endless wellspring of life. You are not. Sabbath with him. He will restore your soul!

PRAY

Lord, teach me to rest in you, trust in you, abide in you.

THE WAYS OF GOD

“If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Then the Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you and I will give you rest.”

EXODUS 33:13-14

God’s ways are discoverable, discernable, and learnable. He is not hidden behind a mystic mountain or encrypted in some perverse riddle. All who seek him will find him. Psalm 25:8-9 says, *“Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.”* Notice how patient God is in helping us learn his ways.

That’s not to say he is easy to follow—just easy to find. The scripture teaches us to be imitators of God. Anyone who imitates perfect love is going to come up short. It wouldn’t be a sacrifice if it didn’t cost you greatly. It’s the hardship and difficulty that proves he is valuable to you. Earlier, we said we are valuable to God, but now this is how we prove he is valuable to us.

The Bible uses the word “way” to indicate a person’s habits. A “way” refers to a path that’s been worn down by use. When you walk through the woods, you can see the deer paths where they frequently run. They have beaten the brush with their habits. You can also see the logging trails that are considerably larger. Moses is asking the Lord, teach me the roads you make and the ruts that you run so that I can understand who you are by the choices you make.

A person can lie about what they believe or who they love. But their well-worn paths tell the truth about what they are chasing after and what is truly worth their time and attention. Your ways reveal what's in your heart and what you are pursuing.

Moses wanted to know God, and so should we. Above all else, our longing should be to love God by walking in the ways of his love. There's only so much you can learn about love until you walk it out. There are many truths concealed to the mind that are only unlocked after they have first been expressed through your choices. *“Choose you this day whom you will serve”* (Joshua 24:15). When we choose his ways, he always promises the peace of his presence, *“My Presence will go with you and I will give you rest.”*

Peace in God is a coming home to rest, like when two dissonant musical chords resolve and settle into perfect harmony. Some people will continue to stand in dissonance and refuse to enter God's rest. The psalmist said, *“They will be destroyed in (their) way.”* But for the humble *“who take refuge in him,”* they will be blessed.

PRAY

Teach me your ways, oh Lord, so I may know you and continue to find your favor.



DAY 23

FREEWILL OFFERINGS

“Everyone whose heart was moved and whose spirit prompted him came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its services, and for the holy garments...”

So the Israelites brought a freewill offering to the Lord, all the men and women whose hearts prompted them to bring something for all the work that the Lord, through Moses, had commanded to be done.”

EXODUS 35:21, 29

Isn't it beautiful how the Lord receives our offerings? Some of us, like the widow, have little to give, and some of us have much. God receives the pauper's penny with more exuberance than the rich man's millions. God doesn't measure building programs by dollars and cents but by the size of your heart. His kingdom isn't increased under compulsion; it's built with love, thank offerings, and joyful hearts.

God loves generosity because he himself is lavish with his giving. Romans 8:32 says, *“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”* God knows how to give great gifts. Through his freewill offering the Lord rebuilt the temple of human hearts—The Church—

for the Spirit to dwell in. He is not asking us to do anything he hasn't done himself.

Years later, after Israel had lost their way and betrayed their covenant with God, they were giving God second-rate gifts. It revealed the status of their impoverished hearts. Observe how God responded in Malachi,

*When you present a blind animal for sacrifice, is it not wrong?
And when you present a lame or sick animal, is it not wrong?
Bring it to your governor! Would he be pleased with you or show
you favor? (1:8).*

You can sense how offended God feels at the flimsy offering that costs them nothing. He continues,

*My name will be great among the nations, from the rising of the
sun to its setting. Incense and pure offerings will be presented in
my name in every place because my name will be great among
the nations (1:11).*

God is a righteous and generous King. There is no other God in the earth like him. Will you be a part of building him a house that matches his glory? Will you be a part of building him a sanctuary worthy of the King of Kings? Will you give your freewill offerings of time and worship, your heart and your intellect, your monies, and your priorities? Remember, it is his story and not our story that we are in, and it is his sanctuary and not our own that we are building.

PRAY

Receive my thank offerings. I give them freely to honor the Lord's great love.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD

“And so Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”

EXODUS 40:33-35

And so, we arrive at the end of our journey. The destination has always been sweet communion with our Father. The Lord, in his glory, living among his people—that is breath-taking. He is not out there somewhere or halfway across the continent, but among us and in our very camp—here! He has chosen us to be his children, the recipients of his love, and the watchers of his wonders.

Moses had to be diligent, and he was. He “finished the work.” He did everything according to the strenuous specifications the Lord had given him. Some people accuse God of being legalistic. They don’t understand his reasons, or they lose sight of the end result. His specifications are his way of compensating for our sinfulness and forging a path to communion again. What a gracious Father.

Did the people of Israel understand just what he was giving them when he began rescuing them? He was giving them HIMSELF, in all of his infinite glory! Eternal treasures of joy. A land in harmony with the Creator. A place without injustice, or perversion, or selfishness. God and humanity in a trusting relationship. He was giving them partnership with him.

Some of you may still be asking the question, is the sacrifice worth the payout? The road is long and rigorous. The path is steep at times, and the suffering is great. The self-denial and the enmity with the world is a lot to ask. Is it worth it? Jesus tells the story of the man who found a treasure in the field. He opened up the box and discovered breathtaking beauty of value he could not estimate. He went and sold every last possession he owned to buy the field to own the treasure. God has given us the treasure of himself. His glories are worth more than you will know in this lifetime. Don't grow faint. Don't delay. Exchange everything to get the treasure of the I AM WHO I AM.

“The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle,” that is a promise of the last days. In Revelation 4, we see the future in a vision: his appearance is like refracting diamonds and pure liquid love glowing red with passion. His rainbow is a cool grace of greens, bringing tranquility to all gathered around. Angels, humans, and wild creatures throw their full affections into worshipping him. This is what we were created to do: to gaze at the beauty of the Lord and to worship and adore him in his temple.

The creatures are not the center. Apart from him, you and I find no lasting meaning. The creatures just gather around the river of delights and drink from the fountain of all joy. He is the source. That is where your story begins, and returns, and begins again—with the Great I AM. He sets common bushes ablaze. He uses unlikely midwives and selects suffering serfs to rebuild his kingdom. He tramples kings, lifts up the needy, and wraps himself in animal skins so that he can abide with his people.

PRAY

Along with all creation, I cry glory to your holy name!



The thread that weaves Exodus together.

Many of us don't even know what story we are in. We have encounters with mysteries bigger than ourselves, and it takes humility to take off our shoes and stand on someone else's holy ground (Day 1). There, on holy ground, the I AM WHO I AM speaks, and it turns out he is the author of this story and not us (Day 2).

All great stories have a conflict, a pit where the protagonist ends up for a while (Day 4). We find unlikely assistance from unlikely sources (Day 3). Just when we thought we might be saved from our pit, things get worse, and it tests our faith and requires perseverance and wisdom (Day 5). If we're not careful, and if we lose heart, discouragement can shipwreck our journey out of the pit (Day 6).

Passover is the hinge in history where God intervenes (Day 7). At Passover, God instigates something new, and at the heart of his mysterious intervention is the sacrifice of the firstborn son. The "first" is also a model and template for things to come, as Jesus was the firstborn who modeled the way for all to follow (Day 8).

As the Israelites are delivered, God begins to redefine their story (Day 9). He also begins to redefine their value (Day 10). He speaks to them and gives them words and laws that prevent them from becoming the

tyrants they were delivered from (Days 11, 14). Their worship must be God-focused (Day 12), and their laws must be full of redemption (Day 13).

God reorients the community around his presence (Day 15) and around the testimony of what he's done for them (Day 16). He calls us to find our nourishment from him (Day 17) and give him our attention (Day 18). Not only is God redefining our value, but he's also redefining how we think and how we think about ourselves (Day 19), and he is giving us a sacred purpose to live for (Day 20).

More than anything else, it's the Sabbath that teaches us how to rest and trust in our Father and not in our self-sufficiency or mastery of the world. The reason God set us free was so that we could be a people free to follow him, offer our thank offerings gratefully (Day 23), and freely choose to walk in his ways (Day 22). The conclusion is reached in God's story when the glory of the Lord mixes with mankind. This has been his desire since the Garden of Eden—to dwell with us and among us, to have children who love him and love to live life with him. That is what the new creation and the new world will hold in store. The Glory of the Lord in the tabernacle of Moses points to that ultimate reality.



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