

Exodus 16

Preceding Text

(Where are we? We've shifted to a new segment in Exodus! Ch. 16-24 **Covenant – Journey to Sinai**)

This is the first time we have moved from the *Redemption* part of the narrative to the covenant part. The people heard the promise of redemption and also experienced it through the dramatic events of passing through the Sea of Reeds. Egypt was initially a place of growth and flourishing, but it became a place of hardship and suffering. Egypt was never intended to be the place designed for God's people. In tension throughout the rest of the book is the relative comfort of the *land/soil* of Egypt and the horrendous *societal structure* of Egypt based on forced labor. Keep this in mind during the next few chapters, because the comfort of the land and resources starts to blot out the memory of the experience of slavery.

We now see YHWH as the God who redeems. In Israelite and Jewish literature, these events are the best example of redemption until we get to Christ/cross. Exodus is prototype and the imagery of redemption of Christ. Jesus will accomplish finally and completely what God did for Israel out of slavery into freedom.

Current Text: Themes and Background

Pay attention to the setting and remember back to chapter 2 and the transformation Moses went through in the wilderness. Think of the massive transformation! Not only visually what they see: the green, productive area of the Nile Delta to the vast and beige starkness of the Sinai – but also in the social context: cities and social progress all around them (even though they are slaves) to wilderness. There are no protective walls/temples/places of refuge.

This is a place of uncomfortable transformation. God did not give the Israelites a quick fix to their problems. The Exodus led to the Sea of Reeds. The sea crossing led to the desert, and the desert holds its own dangers and temptations. This stark and very harsh landscape is different and uncomfortable enough that the people say, “we miss our old life.”

Crucial to this chapter and what follows is the establishment of a new economy – an economy of sufficiency. The landscape shouts to you that you are in danger and that you will not have enough to survive this coming week, yet this becomes the place of learning true vulnerability and trust in God. Reread the entire chapter thinking of having nothing except what you are carrying. Actively imagine how challenging and also how lovely God's plan for provision is.

Engage the Text: Discussion Questions

1. What did you hear as the main point of the sermon? Or what was your primary takeaway?
2. Chuck DeGroat in *Leaving Egypt* says that modern readers of Exodus can think of Egypt as the place where we forget our noble roots as image bearers of God created in

goodness. Discuss how our context in an urban city like Philadelphia slowly erodes our memory of who we (or the people around are created to be as God's image bearers). What life practices can help us remember our God-given identity?

3. "Egypt economy" was built on the backs of slaves. It also represented a highly developed and powerful society. In contrast, the wilderness "manna economy" is built on trust in God. The Israelites had just enough to survive each day but not enough to hoard and protect themselves from hunger the following day. Their very survival each day depended on God. They were vulnerable in a harsh and challenging place. What are the modern equivalents of "Egypt economy" and "manna economy"?
4. From as early as the 3rd Century CE, men and women have left the city go to deep into the desert. They purposefully left the easy pleasures of urban life to create space for God to look deeply into their hearts. Do you feel drawn to desert places? What are you looking for there? How often do you get to "withdraw" to a place where you are not distracted and become fully dependent on God?
5. Why is the way of trust so difficult and yet so appealing?
6. Read Isaiah 30:1–2 – Do you hear this rebuke in a new way while being fully immersed in the Exodus story?
7. What is the text telling us about God's character, God's revelation, and God's mission in the world?

Read for Next Week: Exodus 19

Additional resources

1. Podcast discussion about looking at Exodus with eyes of transatlantic slave trade: [Slavery, the Blues, and Biblical Law](#)