

Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

Week 05: Exodus 20-40

Welcome to week five of the Bible Reading Coach podcast. My name is Karl Vaters, and I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks. As a reminder, the outline for this entire series is available at KarlVaters.com/Bibleoutline. Are you enjoying this podcast? If so, we'd love for you to share it with your friends, they can start from the beginning at any time, or they can jump in with you right now.

This week, we continue with the Bible's second book, Exodus, chapters 20 through 40. We'll be looking from the 10 commandments, all the way to the Ark of the Covenant and the tabernacle. This is a big week. I know, it seems like every week so far, I'm saying this is a big week, what we're looking at today is foundational to everything that comes later. And I keep saying that, because this is true, especially in these first couple of books, Genesis and Exodus. It's really true this week, because for the first time God starts giving them written law, which will eventually turn into what we today know as the Bible.

It starts with the 10 commandments, it doesn't get any bigger than that. Now, before we do get to the 10 commandments, let me ask and try to answer a question that some people might have right now. Why is it that we as Christians feel like what we're reading is true, and that this somehow makes Christianity stand apart from other belief systems and other religions. And here's why. As we saw last week, with God meeting Moses and giving him the name I am, we as Christians believe that we actually serve the God who actually exists, as do our Jewish friends. Because of this, because God actually exists. And because he's the God who made everything else that actually exists. Therefore, the God who actually exists and made everything else that exists, is the one who knows best how it all works. So when he gives us law, we know it's going to be true, because he's the God who exists, who created everything, and the maker knows about the stuff that he made.

Because of this. Christianity is also the most adaptable religion on the face of the earth. Unlike every other religion, which is still pretty much centered around the place where it began, Christianity is spread all over the earth, to every culture to every society, in every language, every ethnicity, why? Because truth fits everywhere, if God actually exists, and he is the God who created everything that exists, and he gave us the rules about how to work, the stuff that he created that exists, then it's going to work everywhere that he created. And that's everywhere. So God is He exists, we can't change him to our liking. So that also makes the Bible very strict. So it's adaptable on the one hand, because truth fits everywhere, but it's also strict because it came from God, and we don't get to change it. And this week, we're going to see where that combination really comes into play, where God comes to his people with both law and grace, starting with chapter 20 of Exodus, the 10 commandments.

Now, even if you're not a Christian, even if you've never been in church before, even if this series is the first time you're paying close attention to the Bible at all. You've still heard the phrase 10 commandments, you might not know what they're about, you may not be able to mention even what one of the commandments are. But you've heard of them before. Why is it that the 10 commandments are so important? Well, let me give you a couple of reasons. First of all, they are the first writings ever to be put on the shelf of the library that we today call the Bible.

Before the 10 commandments, there was no written Bible, after the 10 commandments, we have the start of a Bible. Secondly, they were actually written by God, on stone tablets with his own finger, the Bible tells us. Right? We've heard the phrase before is that written in stone? Well, the 10 commandments, literally were.

And then thirdly, as Christians, they are the foundation for the other laws in the Old Testament and even for the laws in the New Testament. We can find an echo and a reflection of them everywhere else in the Bible. And when you read them for yourself this week, you'll understand that hopefully clearer than ever before.

So the 10 commandments, we get introduced to them in chapter 20. Then in chapters 21 through 23, we have a whole bunch more laws. What more than the 10 commandments? Yes. I've literally sometimes heard Christians go well, you know, God gave us just 10 laws, because that's all we needed. No, God gave us a whole lot of them. The Old Testament has 613 laws. Now the ones in these chapters, chapters 21 through 23 of Exodus are about how to worship about how we are to treat servants kindly, about how to protect people's property, how to observe holidays. It sets three of the primary festivals every year, the feasts of unleavened bread of harvest and of in gathering, we see a lot of laws in chapter 21 through 23.

Then in chapter 24 God reconfirms His covenant with His people. God is a promise making and promise keeping God. And as those who are made in His image, we are called to keep our promises as well to him and to each other. That's what covenant is all about. So it can be a little dry to us today, a couple of several 1000 years later reading this, and understanding what are all these promises and all this language, what it's telling us basically look for this, God makes big promises, God keeps His promises, and God holds his people to our promises. That's what covenant is all about. It's about trust, and God is a trustworthy God, and He wants us to be trustworthy people.

Then in chapters 25, through 31, God gives them the plans for what's called the tabernacle, it's basically a very complex set of a tent, with an outer area that eventually would become the temple, as we'll see a few books later. But as you go through it, and 25 through 31, you're going to see a whole lot of real rigid detail. And the reason for that is very simple. Even today, we can recreate to the exact specifications of the tabernacle in the wilderness. In fact, there are a lot of people who have done so and occasionally there'll be a church near you, or maybe a synagogue near you, or usually a church, where they will have a, an exact replica to the exact size of the tabernacle in the wilderness. And we can do that because the details here are so exact. So for now, this is how God tells them how He will be with them, He will be with them in that tabernacle, and among them as as His people. And we'll see more about that in a moment.

We then move to chapters 32, 33, and 34, where we see disobedience of the people and restoration. From that disobedience what happens is, in chapter 32, Moses goes down with the Tablets of the 10 commandments. He's been up on the mountain for 40 days. And when he goes down from the mountain, he sees that the people in 40 days have gone from waiting on God to engaging in pagan orgies, worshipping a golden idol that they created, and praying to that idol to take them back to Egypt. And it only took 40 days for them to get there. Moses is so angry at this, that he smashes the tablets, He then tells them you choose sides for God or against God. And as you read the story, you're going to see that God makes His side very, very clear. Okay. God then tells Moses to chisel new tablets. So the ones that they end up keeping

are not the ones that were originally inscribed by God, because they were destroyed by Moses, that it was anger at the People's sin.

We then, in chapters 35 through 40, have the building and the dedicating of the tabernacle. And they are so grateful for the tabernacle and for the opportunity to build it, that they are actually at one point ordered to stop giving, we can't hold all the gifts that you're giving in order for us to build this tabernacle. This tabernacle includes what's called the Ark of the Covenant. Yeah, the one from the Raiders of the Lost Ark. Yeah, that one. In fact, that's one of the very few things that that movie gets right is how the size and shape and look of the ark. That's if you've seen it in that movie, that's, again, that's about the only thing that's accurate in the movie, but the physical look of the ark, they get down pretty pretty well. This is the place where God's presence is going to physically live on the earth. For many generations, when Moses wants to talk to God, he goes into the inner part of the tabernacle, where the Ark of the Covenant is, and God meets with him there.

Well, that will be the passage for this week. So let's take a look at to summarize it before we leave. First of all, in the tabernacle passages when you're reading about that ask this, how can God be with but wholly and separate from them, when you read about the Ark of the Covenant and the tabernacle, you get an idea, God is with them, they carry the tabernacle on the ark with them. But he's separate from them because it's in an inner sanctum that only one person can go in and see God. This gives you an idea of God's both coming close to us, but also having to remain holy as separate from us. These seem like obscure things to us because today as Christians since Jesus, we don't need the tabernacle today, because God's presence is with us because of Jesus, which we'll get into when we read the New Testament, and a whole bunch of episodes from now. But as you're reading today, look for these two things. First of all, look for how this keeps God with him, his presence with them. And secondly, look for how this keeps God separate from them, and how this is a part of His Holiness. And then ask yourself, how does this apply to us as we worship today? How do we come into God's presence, but also keeping holy?

There are wonderful lessons about that in the passage this week. We'll take those to heart out to learn a whole lot from them. There's a ton of great stuff this week. I hope you We'll enjoy it. Hope you'll learn from it. And I'll see you next week.

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