

READ The BIBLE Together



**EXODUS Part II
(13:17 - 24:18)**

27th September - 19th December 2015

**SHALOM CHURCH, SINGAPORE
(Upholding the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith)**

Days 1-4 Read **EXODUS 13:17-14:31**

For the next four days, we are going to focus our attention on the Red Sea event. As a suggestion, you may want to spend Day 1 doing Q1, Day 2 & 3 doing Q2-14, and Day 4 doing Q15-16.

1. Read **EXODUS 13:17-14:31** in one sitting. After that, write down:

(a) What stood out from this passage?

(b) What questions do you have concerning this passage?

(c) What you think is the main message of this passage?

2. Finally, the Israelites left Egypt! As they left Egypt and headed for Canaan, they could either travel by way of the Philistines (**13:17**) or by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea (**13:18**).

(a) Which route did they take?

(b) Who decided on the route?

(c) What was the reason for the decision?

(d) Can you think of a hymn that expresses trust in God's leading?

3. (a) As the Israelites left Egypt, what did they bring along with them? (**13:19**)

(b) What is the significance of this?

4. (a) By what means did the LORD lead Israel in their journeying?

(b) By what means will the Lord lead us in our pilgrimage today?

5. The Israelites were traveling by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. Then God commanded them to turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon (**14:2**).

According to **14:3-4**, what was God's purpose in calling Israel to camp by the sea?

6. According to **14:5-9**, why did Pharaoh pursue the Israelites?

7. (a) What was the response of the Israelites when they were confronted by the Egyptian soldiers? (**14:10-12**)?

Ponder: Am I quick to blame God and people around me at the first sign of trouble in my life?

(b) **Psalm 106:7** called the response of the Israelites '*rebellion*'. (Please look up the verse). Do you agree? Is it too harsh an assessment? Defend your answer.

(c) Concerning their reaction, a bible commentator said, "*They have still not learned that their circumstances are not the final standard on which to view the work of God.*"

If our circumstances are not the final standard to view the work of God, what is?

8. (a) What counsel did Moses give to the extremely fearful Israelites (**14:13-14**)? Please answer using your own words.

(b) If you were one of the Israelites, would Moses' counsel encourage/comfort you? Why or why not?

9. Why do you think God rebuked Moses in **14:15**?

10. Note the movement of the Angel of God/Pillar of Cloud, as outlined in **14:19-20**.

(a) What do you think is the purpose of this movement?

(b) Who is the Angel of God (**14:19**, cf. **13:21**)?

11. How did God cause the Red Sea to be divided so that Israel can cross over on dry land?

12. Imagine yourself as one of the Israelites then. Will you go forward to cross the Red Sea, or will you refuse to go forward? Explain your answers.

13. (a) What happened when the Egyptians tried to cross the Red Sea to pursue the Israelites?

(b) Do you think their deaths were accidental or perhaps just pure bad luck? Explain your answer.

(c) How did the Bible interpret and explain the Egyptians' death?

14. (a) **14:31** states the result this event had on the Israelites. What was it?

(b) What do you think the record and remembrance of this Red Sea event was meant to do for future generations of Israelites?

(c) What do you think we (21st century readers) are meant to learn from this Red Sea event?

15. Recall that **EXODUS** is about God. So what does this passage in **EXODUS 13:17-14:31** teach me about God (who is He and what he has done) and how should my life change as a result?
16. Recall that **EXODUS** is about Christ. So where can we see Christ from **EXODUS 13:17-14:31**?

Days 5 - 6 Read **EXODUS 15:1-21**

“Having looked with awe at the doom the LORD had brought on the Egyptians, the Israelites give voice to their wonder and gratitude at what has occurred. They had seen no future before them but capture and death at the hands of the pursuing Egyptians, but the LORD had intervened. His people has survived and their enemies, who thought their power invincible, have been wiped out. The people gladly join in singing two songs that are composed for the occasion, the first by Moses (verses 1-18) and a second briefer one by Miriam (verse 21)”

John Mackay

In simple words, **EXODUS 14** tells the story of Israel’s salvation, and salvation demands a response. **EXODUS 15:1-21** is the response – the redeemed joined their voices to praise their Redeemer! Such a response is both fitting and needful!

The song of *Miriam* (**verse 21**) can be understood as either a chorus that she led the Israelite ladies to sing, or as a response to the song of *Moses* in **verses 1-18**. Traditionally, the song in **verses 1-18** is called ‘*The Song of the Sea*’.

1. Look at the Song of the Sea (**verses 1b-18**).
 - (a) How many times was *Moses* mentioned in the song? What is the significance of this observation?

 - (b) Who was the main character in the song?

(c) How was the main character portrayed in the song?

Verse 2:

Verse 3:

Verses 6-7:

Verse 11:

Verse 13:

(d) Look at the answers to 1(c) above.

Which is most meaningful to you? Why?

Which is most perplexing/troubling to you? Why?

Have you ever sung a hymn to praise God after He has delivered you from your trouble?

2. **Verse 9** and **verse 10** formed a sharp contrast. **Verse 9** speaks about the words of a man while **verse 10** shows the act of God.

(a) What did the man want to do? What does this tell you about his mind and attitude? Did he succeed in achieving his goal?

(b) What did God do in response?

(c) Take some time to ponder over these two verses. What lesson(s) can you learn?

3. **Verse 11** asked: “*Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?*”

(a) What is the answer?

(b) Was *Moses* implying that there were other gods in this world? Elaborate.

4. (a) What was the supposed effect of the Red Sea event on other people? (**Verses 14-16c**)

(b) How would this effect benefit God’s people? (**Verses 16d-17**)

5. The song ended by focusing our attention on God as King rather than God as Redeemer (**verse 18**). Why do you think *Moses* ended the song in this way?

Day 7 Songs of praise in redemptive history

*⁹He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up;
So He led them through the depths,
As through the wilderness.*

¹⁰*He saved them from the hand of him who hated them,
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.*

¹¹*The waters covered their enemies;
There was not one of them left.*

¹²*Then they believed His words;
They sang His praise.*

PSALM 106:9-12

PSALM 106:9-12 talk about the Red Sea event. We can summarize these 4 verses using three points:

- [A] He saved them! (**Verses 9-11**)
- [B] They believed Him! (**Verse 12a**)
- [C] They praised Him! (**Verse 12b**)

Note “*they praised Him*” comes after “*He saved them*”. Singing God’s praise is what God’s people do in response to what God has done for them. Hence, we are not surprised by what *Moses* and the Israelites did by the seaside, on the other side of the Red Sea. In fact, we should be very surprise if they failed to sing God’s praise after such a great salvation! This “praising God” in response to “God’s redemption” is a common theme in the Bible. Here are some examples:

- [1] **JUDGES 5** is a song sung by *Deborah* and *Barak* in response to God’s deliverance of Israel from their enemies (*Jabin and Sisera* – **JUDGES 4**).
- [2] **II SAMUEL 22** is likely a song sung toward the end of David’s life, praising God for His deliverance in a variety of circumstances. **Verse 1** puts it in this way: *Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song, on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.*
- [3] **PSALM 40:2-3** ~ *He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth— praise to our God; many will see it and fear, and will trust in the Lord.*

Note that the psalmist’s new song is in response to God’s rescue of him from the horrible pit!

- [4] **ISAIAH 44:23** ~ *Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel.*

Why sing? Why break forth into singing? **FOR** the Lord has redeemed Jacob!

[5] **I SAMUEL 2:1-10** is the song of Hannah sung in response to God hearing her prayer for a child! **Verse 1** puts it in this way: *My heart rejoices in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. I smile at my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation.*

Hannah rejoiced and sang with joy **BECAUSE** of God's salvation!

[6] **REVELATION 5:9-10** ~ *And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."*

Why are the inhabitants of heaven singing a new song in praise? **BECAUSE** the Lamb has redeemed them by His blood!

[7] Another instance in **REVELATION** of the same situation is seen in **15:3-4** ~ *They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested."*

God's people are praising God **FOR** His great and marvelous works! They sing His praise **BECAUSE** His judgments have been manifested.

God's people sing! We sing, not because we are great singers, but because we have a Great God and Redeemer who is most worthy of our praise! Hence, when we gather as a church on the Lord's Day, let us **SING** unto our God and Redeemer!!

Review [1]-[7] above, as well as the songs in **EXODUS 15**. They may mention something about the person, but very quickly all the focus and attention is put on God! The songs/hymns/psalms will mention God's attributes and God's works, and will set forth reasons why we should praise Him! In short, it is full of truths about God, and it engages our mind!

We see therefore that when God's people are singing God's praise, their emotions are involved and their minds are also engaged! As we sing to the Lord corporately, let us do so **JOYFULLY**. Let us also ensure that the songs we sing are **SCRIPTURAL**.

Today is Saturday. As we prepare ourselves for the Lord's Day worship tomorrow, let us recall our great salvation in Christ, and let us resolve to sing about the Lord and unto the Lord joyfully!!

Week 12

[4th – 10th October 2015]

Days 1-2 Read **EXODUS 15:22-27**

1. After crossing the Red Sea, Israel went into the Wilderness of Shur. Who led them to the Wilderness? (**Verse 22**, cf. **13:21-22**)

2. After three days in the Wilderness of Shur, they encountered a problem.
 - (a) What was it? (**Verse 22**)

 - (b) As narrated in **verse 23**, how did the problem become worse?

3. Faced with the problem described in **verse 23**, the people complained against Moses in **verse 24**.
 - (a) To complain against Moses implies that they held Moses to be responsible for the problem. Is this right and fair? Elaborate.

 - (b) The Israelites have a propensity to complain. How do I behave towards God and fellow humans when there are problems in my life? Is this right and fair? Elaborate.

4. How was the problem resolved? (**Verse 25**)

5. According to **verses 25b-26**, what was God's purpose in this event?

6. (a) How was Elim (**verse 27**) different from Marah (**verse 23**)?

(b) Given a choice, would you choose to be in Elim or Marah? Elaborate.

(c) Notes from Peter Enns on Elim

“Elim is a glimpse of what is to come, the lush land of Canaan, the land God promised to the patriarchs and which he has prepared for his people. The numbers twelve and seventy should probably be seen as numbers of completion: The Israelites have plenty of springs for water (perhaps one for each tribe) and palm trees for shade. Elim is a reversal of the desert environment and a foretaste of things to come.”

Days 3-5 Read **EXODUS 16:1-36**

1. On the 15th day of the 2nd month after they left Egypt, Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin (**verse 1**). Who led Israel into the Wilderness of Sin? (Cf. **13:21-22**)

2. **Verse 2** says that the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, while **verse 3** gives us a summary of their complaint.

(a) Consider the first half of their complaint: *“Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full!”*

What were they saying?

(b) Consider the second half of their complaint: *“For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”*

They were accusing Moses and Aaron of something. What was it?

(c) According to **verse 8**, how should their complaint be viewed?

(d) Note from Philip Graham Ryken:

“This is an important insight about the sin of complaining. All our dissatisfaction and discontent ultimately is directed against God. Usually we take out our frustrations on someone else, especially people who are close to us. A psychologist would call this displacement. In the case of the Israelites, although they were taking things out on Moses, they were really angry with God. This is why God always takes our complaints personally. He knows that when we grumble about our personal circumstances, our spiritual leaders, or anything else, what we are really doing is finding fault with him. We are complaining about what he has provided (or not provided, as the case may be). A complaining spirit always indicates a problem in our relationship with God.”

3. (a) In response to Israel’s grumbling, what did God promise to do?

Verse 4a-b:

Verse 8a-c:

(b) From 3(a) above, what can we learn about God?

4. How would God’s provision also function as a test for Israel? (**Verses 4-5, 17-27**, cf. **DEUTERONOMY 8:3**)

5. According to **verse 12**, what was the ultimate purpose for this provision?

6. **Verses 13-26** narrate God’s provision of manna.

(a) What was Israel supposed to do every morning, and how early must they do it?

(b) What must Israel be careful NOT to do?

(c) What special arrangements did God put in place on the sixth and seventh day of the week?

(d) Imagine yourself as an Israelite then. What lessons can you learn from this daily provision of manna?

7. The account mentions two instances where Israel disobeyed God. What are they?



Note that despite their disobedience, God did not cease to provide manna for them!

Day 6 Special Study: *Sabbath*

As slaves in Egypt, we would expect the Israelites to work all the time. Now that they were delivered from the house of bondage and journeying in the wilderness towards the Promised Land, God gave them the gift of the Sabbath. **16:29-30** say, “*See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.*” So the people rested on the seventh day.”

There is no need for any Israelites to work on the Sabbath in order to have food to eat. Rather, God has laid down a new rule for them: *They can rest on the Sabbath (the seventh day)! What a blessing is the Sabbath for Israel! Like how Jesus puts it in **MARK 2:27** ~ The Sabbath was made for man.*

This new rhythm of six days of work and one day of rest was reinforced in the way the manna was given:

- On the sixth day, God gave them twice the amount of manna, compared to other days (**verse 29**). So the Israelites gathered twice as much manna, two omers for each one (**verse 22**).
- What the Israelites collected on the sixth day can last till the next morning. This is unlike the other days where what was left till the next morning bred worms and stank (**verses 19-20, 24**).
- On the seventh day, God “*refrained from supplying the food*”! Hence, there will be no manna in the field on the seventh day. As God rested, His people will rest, following His example.

What is the significance when an Israelite observed the Sabbath?

- [1] He is following the example of his God, which is an expression of worship!
- [2] He is expressing faith in God, believing that God will provide on the sixth day what he needs on the sixth and seventh day.
- [3] He is expressing obedience to God, living his life as God has instructed.

Today, New Testament Christians no longer keep the seventh day Sabbath. For us, our Sabbath has been changed to the first day of the week, called the Lord’s Day, after the resurrection of Jesus. Still, the Sabbath principle applies:

- *The Lord’s Day is God’s gift to us, to rest from our work*
- *In keeping the Lord’s Day, we are following our Lord’s example, expressing our faith in Him as well as our obedience to Him.*
- *In addition, we are celebrating Christ’s resurrection, rejoicing in the salvation we have in Him, as well as looking forward to the eternal rest we have in Jesus.*

Take time to thank God for the gift of the Sabbath (our Lord’s Day). *Do we struggle to keep the Lord’s Day as a day of rest?*

Day 7 Review **EXODUS 16:1-36**

1. Write down the most important lesson you have learnt from **EXODUS 16:**

2. How can we see the Gospel in **EXODUS 16**?

Week 13

[11th – 17th October 2015]

Days 1-3 Read **EXODUS 17:1-7**

The incident took place in Rephidim (**verse 1**). The place is also known as Massah and Meribah (**verse 7**). This incident came after the Red Sea event, the Marah event and the Manna event.

1. Who led Israel to Rephidim? (**Verse 1**, cf. **13:21-22**)

2. (a) What did the Israelites demand of Moses? (**Verse 2**)

(b) What did the Israelites charge Moses with? (**Verse 3**)

(c) What did the Israelites intend to do to Moses? (**Verse 4**)

(d) Moses said that when the Israelites quarreled with him, they were in actual fact testing/tempting the LORD (**verses 2**). Reading **verse 7** as well as **PSALM 95:7-9** (NKJV, NASB, ESV) will assure us that Moses was not overstating his case. The Israelites at this time were actually questioning if God was present with them!

“God’s people were suffering from a kind of spiritual amnesia. Their memory trouble made them forget the provision, the protection, and the presence of God. In the words of the psalmist, ‘they soon forgot what he had done’ (106:13a; cf. 95:9). As a result of their forgetfulness, they committed the great sin of complaining.

This suggests one obvious remedy for our own discontent, which is to remember what God has done for us. When we are in need, we should recount all the ways

that he has met our needs for food and shelter, for work and play, for love and friendship. We should rehearse the times when he protected us, sparing us from physical danger or from the consequences of our own folly. And we should revisit the places where he was close to us. God is our provider and protector, our ever-present help in trouble. If we remember this, we will be able to trust him 'without grumbling and complaining.'"

Philip Ryken

Take some time now to rehearse and write down what God has done for you in the week that has just passed:

Take some time to sing this hymn in worship of your God:

*Thanks, O God, for boundless mercy
From Thy gracious throne above
Thanks for every need provided
From the fullness of Thy love
Thanks for daily toil and labour
And for rest when shadows fall
Thanks for love of friend and neighbour
And Thy goodness unto all*

*Thanks for thorns as well as roses
Thanks for weakness and for health
Thanks for clouds as well as sunshine
Thanks for poverty and wealth
Thanks for pain as well as pleasure
All Thou sendest day by day
And Thy Word our dearest treasure
Shedding light upon our way*

*Thanks, O God for home and fireside
Where we share our daily bread
Thanks for hours of sweet communion
When by Thee our souls are fed!
Thanks for grace in of sorrow
And for joy and peace in Thee
Thanks for hope today, tomorrow
And for all eternity!*

3. What was the Lord's response to their complaint? (**Verses 5-6**)

original audience of Exodus 17:8–16 needs no further introduction to these people.”

So who were the *Amalekites*? They were the centuries-old enemies of *Israel*, and here in **EXODUS 17**, we read of their first attack on *Israel*!

2. What was *Moses*' response to this unprovoked attack by the *Amalekites*?

Verse 9b:

Verse 9c:

3. Look at what happened during the battle as narrated in **verses 10-13**. What do you think is going on here? (Discuss your answer with your RTBT group)
4. After the defeat of *Amalek* . . .
 - (a) What did the LORD want *Moses* to do? (**Verse 14**)
 - (b) What did *Moses* build, and why? (**Verse 15**)
5. What lesson(s) have you learnt from this incident?

Days 6-7 Read **EXODUS 18:1-12**

1. Who was *Jethro* and how was he related to *Moses*?
2. How did *Moses* treat *Jethro*? (**Verse 7**)

3. What did *Moses* tell *Jethro*? (**Verse 8**)

4. After hearing what *Moses* said, *Jethro* gave a fourfold response:

Verse 9:

Verse 10:

Verse 11:

Verse 12:

From *Jethro's* response as outlined above, do you think he has become a worshipper of the LORD God of Israel? Elaborate.

5. These 12 verses contain some lessons for us concerning gospel outreach to family members and friends. Can you list down the lessons?

Week 14

[18th – 24th October 2015]

Day 1 Read **EXODUS 18:13-27**

1. In **verse 17**, we hear *Jethro* saying to *Moses* that the thing he was doing is not good.

(a) What led *Jethro* to make such a comment? (**Verses 13-16**)

(b) What suggestions for change did *Jethro* give? (**Verses 18-23**)

(c) What was *Moses*' response to *Jethro*'s suggestions? (**Verses 24-25**)

(d) What would be your response, if you were *Moses*? Explain.

2. *Jethro* was a Midianite and not an Israelite. Do you think it was right of *Moses* to accept *Jethro*'s suggestions concerning how to govern *Israel* the people of God? (Discuss your answer with your RTBT group)

Days 2 - 3 Read **EXODUS 19:1-25**

This is the third month after *Israel* left Egypt. During those three months, Israel had:

- Crossed the Red Sea
- Drank bitter water made sweet
- Ate manna from heaven for food, and that daily
- Drank water flowing from a rock to quench their thirst
- Scored a military victory over the Amalekites

Now they have come to the Wilderness of Sinai (**verses 1-2**). The mountain mentioned in **verse 2** is Mount Sinai, otherwise known as Mount Horeb. The fact that Israel is now encamped before the mountain is very significant, for God has said to *Moses* in **3:12** ~ “*I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.*” So as *Israel* camped before Sinai, they were experiencing the very fulfillment of **EXODUS 3:12!**

From **verse 3** onwards, the main style employed by *Moses* was ‘dialogue’. In these 22 verses, we will find God saying something to *Israel* through *Moses*, and then *Moses* relaying *Israel*'s response back to God, repeatedly. Throughout the dialogue, *Moses* was playing the role of a mediator.

You may wish to read these 23 verses with the help of the outline below:

2. In **verse 4** God likened Himself to an eagle and His care for *Israel* as ‘bearing them on eagle’s wings’. What do you think is the message here?

[Think: *What kind of bird is an eagle?* Read also: **DEUTERONOMY 32:9-11**]

3. In view of what God has done for them (**verse 4**), God laid down a certain demand on *Israel* (**verse 5**). What was it?

4. If *Israel* met God’s demand, what would be the result? (**Verses 5 & 6**)



5. Sadly, *Israel* failed, and never fulfilled this demand of God! In the New Testament, in **I PETER 2:9**, we read these same words again. This time, it is not laid down as a demand upon Christians, but a description of Christians. How did this demand on *Israel* become the description of Christians? What is your answer? [Hint: Think of the Gospel!]

6. Ponder the phrase “*kingdom of priests*”. What does it mean?

Days 6 - 7 Read **EXODUS 19:10-25**

1. In **verses 10-11**, God via *Moses* gave *Israel* instructions on how to prepare for the meeting. What were they?





2. In **verses 14-15**, Moses conveyed God's instructions to *Israel* on how to prepare for the meeting. There was an additional item.
- (a) What was it?
- (b) Why do you think this was necessary, as part of their preparations for the meeting with God? (Would **I CORINTHIANS 7:5** be of any help in your answer?)
3. Throughout **EXODUS 19**, we see a 'tension' between God wanting to meet Israel and God wanting Israel to keep a distance.

To meet

- **Verse 4** ~ . . . *how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.*
- **Verse 11** ~ *And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.*
- **Verse 13** ~ . . . *when the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain.*
- **Verse 17** ~ *And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.*

To keep a distance

- **Verses 12-13** ~ *You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.'*
- **Verse 21** ~ *And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish.*
- **Verse 24b** ~ *But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them."*

(a) Why would the LORD want the people to come near to Him, and yet warn them to keep their distance?

(b) What lesson(s) can we learn from this 'tension'?

(c) Who has bridged the distance between God and men?

Week 15

[25th – 31st October 2015]

Day 1 Read **EXODUS 20:1-21**

In **EXODUS 19**, we saw the LORD coming in power, majesty and holiness to meet Israel. The people were overawed by His splendor and trembled. Yet God's aim is not to have a people who feared Him, but a people who will obey Him. Hence, He will now proceed to reveal His will to them so that they will know the sort of conduct He expected from them.

He began by saying, "*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage*" (**verse 2**). He reminded them of who He is and what He has done for them. Only after that did He give them His Ten Commandments (**verses 3-17**). It is important to note the order here: *first deliverance, then obedience*. Israel was **NOT** told to keep the Ten Commandments *so that* the LORD will deliver them from the house of bondage. Rather, having been delivered from Egypt, they are **NOW** called to live in a way fitting as God's people!

Take some time to read Philip Ryken's comments on this passage:

"We must keep in mind at the outset that the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) is no mere list of laws given in the abstract. It is given by God to a people he has just redeemed. They reflect the manner in which his people are to be 'holy' (cf. chapter 19). It is, therefore, safe to say that these laws are more than simply good rules to live by. They show us something of the nature of God, and for this they deserve our close attention. We see in them not simply what we must do but what God is like.

Verse 2 is not a commandment itself, but is a prologue that properly sets up the frame of mind from which all the commandments, indeed all of Israel's existence, should be viewed. It reminds Israel of who God is and what he has done. It begins

with another 'I am Yahweh' assertion (see 6:6; 7:5; also, later, 29:46).

This God has brought the Israelites out of Egypt. The relationship between them has already been established. Now they are to learn what a redeemed life should look like. The law, in other words, is connected to grace. It is based on God's gracious act of saving his people; it is not a condition of becoming God's people, for that has already happened in the Exodus. They now receive rules for holy living, so they can become more and more God's holy people. This is what God wants for them."

1. Do you agree with Ryken's comments that the Ten Commandments is 'not simply what we must do but what God is like'? Elaborate.
2. Take time to memorize the Ten Commandments.

Days 2 - 4 First Commandment (**EXODUS 20:3**)

1. Copy out the First Commandment in the space below:
2. What is God saying in the First Commandment? Hear the explanation of Philip Ryken:
3. *"God is saying, "I am the one and only God. And since I am the only God, I refuse to share my worship with anyone or anything else."*

God will not share the stage with any other performers. He refuses to have any colleagues. He will not even acknowledge that he has any genuine rivals. God does not simply lay claim to one part of our life and worship; he demands that we dedicate all we are and all we have to his service and praise.

Thus the Ten Commandments begin by asserting the great theological principle of soli Deo gloria: glory to God alone."

(a) What gives God the right to demand this of Israel?

(b) God also demands this of every one of us! What gives God the right to do so?

(c) What does “*before Me*” mean?

(c) The First Commandment is put in the negative: *reject false gods*. Positively, it is commanding us to choose God as the true God and enthrone Him as our only Lord. This is how the Westminster Larger Catechism puts it:

“The duties required in the first commandment are:

the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God;

*and to worship and glorify **HIM** accordingly, by . . .*

*thinking,
meditating,
remembering,
highly esteeming,
honouring,
adoring,
choosing,
loving,
desiring,
fearing of **HIM**;*

*believing **HIM**;*

*trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in **HIM**;
being zealous for **HIM**;*

*calling upon **HIM**,*

*giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to **HIM** with the whole man;*

*being careful in all things to please **HIM**, and sorrowful when in any thing he is offended;*

*and walking humbly with **HIM**.”*

[i] Can you do this perfectly, perpetually and personally?

[ii] Do you desire to do this perfectly, perpetually and personally?

3. Israel failed to keep the First Commandment. In fact, no one succeeded to 'adore, choose, love, desire and fear God' perfectly, perpetually and personally! No one except Jesus Christ!

A careful examination of the life of Jesus as portrayed in the four Gospels will show us a Man who perfectly, perpetually and personally thinks, honors, adores, loves, fears, trusts, delights, rejoices and calls upon God! He gives all praise and thanks to God, yields all obedience and submission to God with the whole man, careful in all things to please God, sorrowful when God's Name is dishonored, and walking humbly with God.

In other words, Jesus kept the First Commandment! When we sinners put our trust in Jesus, His obedience is put to our account. Hence, we are accounted as people who have kept the First Commandment. *Legally*, in Christ, we have!

Our challenge today, as Christians, is to live in accordance to this First Commandment *really*. Christ has given us His Spirit, to enable us to do this increasingly. It is therefore the heart cry of every Christian, that we want to and long for the day where we think, meditate, remember, highly esteem, honor, adore, choose, love, desire, fear, believe, trust, hope, delight and rejoice in Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength!

Days 5 - 7 Second Commandment (**EXODUS 20:4-6**)

1. Copy out the Second Commandment in the space below:

2. There are four parts to the Second Commandment: rule, reason, warning and promise.

This is the rule: *You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them.*

What is the difference between this Second Commandment and the First Commandment? (Hint: Israel broke the Second Commandment in the Golden Calf incident in **EXODUS 32**).

3. This is the reason for the rule: *for I the LORD your God am a jealous God*. What does it mean that God is a jealous God?

4. What is the warning attached to this rule?

5. What is the promise attached to this rule?

6. The Westminster Larger Catechism understands this Second Commandment to have something to do with worship.

Q108: What are the duties required in the second commandment?

A: The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his Word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word; the administration and receiving of the sacraments; church government and discipline; the ministry and maintenance thereof; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God; and vowing unto him; as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.

Q109: What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?

A: The sins forbidden in the second commandment are . . .

all devising, counselling, commanding, using, and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself;

tolerating a false religion;

the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever;

all worshipping of it, or God in it or by it;

the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them, all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever;

simony;

sacrilege;

all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.

- (a) Do you agree with how the Westminster Larger Catechism understands this Second Commandment? Elaborate.
- (b) Have you ever been guilty of breaking this Second Commandment, as explained in Question 109 of the Westminster Larger Catechism?

Week 16

[1st – 7th November 2015]

Day 1 Third Commandment (**EXODUS 20:7**)

1. Copy out the Third Commandment in the space below:

2. What does it mean to take the Lord's Name in vain?

3. Here in the Old Testament the Third Commandment is phrased in the negative. The New Testament's positive formulation of this commandment would be **MATTHEW 6:9** ~ *Hallowed be Your Name*.

What does it mean to hallow God's Name?

Days 2 - 4 Fourth Commandment (**EXODUS 20:8-11**)

1. Copy out the Fourth Commandment in the space below:
2. The Fourth Commandment is concerned with the *Sabbath*. Israel is commanded to remember the *Sabbath* and keep it holy (**verse 8**).
 - (a) What day is the *Sabbath*?
 - (b) Israel is to remember the *Sabbath* by keeping it holy. What does it mean to keep a day holy?
3. **Verses 9-10** give us more details of how Israel was to keep the *Sabbath* holy.
 - (a) **Verse 9**: By laboring and doing all your work on six days. This means that working hard during the six days of the week is one part of keeping the *Sabbath* holy.
 - (b) **Verse 10**:
4. (a) Why must Israel keep the *Sabbath* holy? (**Verse 11**)

(b) Another reason is given in **DEUTERONOMY 5:15**. What is it?

5. What should Israel do during the *Sabbath* (day of rest)?

The reason given for the *Sabbath* observance (**verse 11**) reminds us of **GENESIS 2:1-3**. In short, Israel as God's people were called to conduct themselves like their God – He works and He rests, so they must work and they must rest. At the end of every six days, Israel must rest.

In doing so, their minds are turned back to God, and in turning their attention back to God, there is only one logical thing to do: *Worship Him!* Hence, the *Sabbath* for Israel is a day of rest from labor and a day of worship to the LORD!

6. What does the Fourth Commandment mean for the Christians?

Like Israel, we are God's creatures and we have the duty to live like our Creator. He works and He rests, and so we work and we rest. The *Sabbath* principle of working six days and resting one day remains applicable to us, as long as this creation remains.

The *Sabbath* in the Old Testament ultimately points to our salvation in Jesus Christ (**MATTHEW 11:29, HEBREWS 4:9-10**). We do not need to work for our salvation, but simply need to rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ for our acceptance with God. Our Savior died and rose again, and we now remember our "exodus" by keeping the first day of the week as the Lord's Day. We continue to keep one day (Sunday, Lord's Day) in seven as our Christian *Sabbath* because while we enjoy the spiritual rest we have in Christ, we are looking forward to our eternal rest when Christ returns. In other words, as we rest from our work on the Lord's Day, we are proclaiming that "*this world is not our final destination, but we look forward to our eternal rest in the new heavens and new earth, when He comes*".

The question we need to ask ourselves, as Christians, is: *Can we rest? Do we have a problem resting from our work on the Lord's Day? Do we find it difficult to stop work and feel the need to continue with work?*

Just as in salvation, to rest in Christ's finished work is faith. In the same way, to rest and not work on Sunday is faith. We are saying that we trust God to take care of our work, as we honor Him on the Lord's Day, to rest and to worship Him!

Days 5 - 7 Fifth Commandment (**EXODUS 20:12**)

1. Copy out the Fifth Commandment in the space below:

2. The word '*honor*' is *kaved* in Hebrew, meaning "heavy" or "weighty". It is the word the Old Testament uses for the glory of God, for the weightiness of His divine majesty.

Hence, to honor one's parents is to give due weight to their position, to give them the recognition that they deserve for their God-given authority. It means to respect, esteem, value, and prize them, as God's gifts to us.

The opposite of honor is dishonor. Hence, the Fifth Commandment forbids us from showing them disrespect. If parents are weighty, then they should not be treated lightly.

Assuming that your parents are still alive . . .

(a) Can you say that you do honor your parents?

(b) Would your parents agree with your answer in (a)?

3. The reason given for keeping this commandment is this: *that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.*

(a) What does this mean?

(b) The New Testament gives us two other reasons for keeping this commandment: **EPHESIANS 6:1** and **COLOSSIANS 3:20**. What are they?

4. Some of the most frightening curses in the Old Testament are reserved for children who rebel against their parents. For example . . .

- **LEVITICUS 20:9**

▪ **DEUTERONOMY 21:18, 19, 21**

Why do you think these curses/threats were given?

5. Concerning the Fifth Commandment, the Westminster Larger Catechism gives this explanation:

Q124: Who are meant by *father* and *mother* in the fifth commandment?

A: By *father* and *mother*, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.

Q125: Why are superiors styled *father* and *mother*?

A: Superiors are styled *father* and *mother*, both to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them, according to their several relations; and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents

Do you agree with the how the Westminster Larger Catechism understands this Fifth Commandment? Elaborate.

Week 17

[8th – 14th November 2015]

Days 1 - 2 Sixth Commandment (**EXODUS 20:13**)

1. Copy out the Sixth Commandment in the space below:

2. The Sixth Commandment is one of the shortest, with just two words in the original: *lo ratzach*. It means ‘*don’t kill*’. What this commandment forbids is not killing, but the unlawful killing of a human being. Perhaps, the best way to render this Sixth Commandment is: *You shall not kill unlawfully*.

(a) What would be deemed as ‘*unlawful killing*’?

(b) Would capital punishment be deemed as ‘*lawful*’ or ‘*unlawful*’ killing? Elaborate.

(c) What about the killing of an enemy soldier in the time of war, or a policeman shooting and killing a criminal when the latter resists arrest? Would the Sixth Commandment be broken in such situations? Elaborate.

3. The Orthodox Catechism elaborates on this Sixth Commandment in this way:

Q119: What does God require in the sixth commandment?

A: That neither in thought or in gesture, much less in deed, I reproach, or hate, or harm, or kill my neighbor, either by myself, or by another and that cast away all desire of revenge. Furthermore, that I do not hurt myself or knowingly cast myself into any danger. God has armed the magistrate with the words as a deterrent to murder.

Q120: But does this commandment forbid murder only?

A: No. In forbidding murder, God further teaches that He hates the root, namely, anger, envy, hatred, and desire for revenge, accounting them all as murder.

Q121: Does this commandment only require that we harm no one?

A: No. When God condemns anger, envy, and hatred, He requires that we love our neighbor as ourselves. We must use tenderness, courtesy, patience, and

mercy towards him. We must also protect him from whatever may be hurtful to him, as much as we are able. Indeed, we must be so affected in mind that we do not hesitate to do good even to our enemies.

Do you agree with the exposition given above? Elaborate.

Days 3 - 4 Seventh Commandment (**EXODUS 20:14**)

1. Copy out the Seventh Commandment in the space below:

2. What does it mean to commit adultery?

3. In **MATTHEW 5:27-30**, Jesus gave a deeper insight into what this commandment forbids. To put it simply, any and every form of sexual immorality – both external and internal – are prohibited.

This would include *fornication (pre-marital sex), homosexual lifestyle, bestiality, rape, incest, pedophilia* as well as *flirting, sexually inappropriate jokes, watching pornography and R(A) movies, reading sexually-explicit magazines, looking lustfully at others.*

Like how the Baptist Catechism (Q76) puts it, this commandment '*requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech and behavior.*'

(a) Are you guilty of breaking this Seventh Commandment?

(b) If you are guilty, then what is the next step you are going to take?

(c) If sexual immorality is a sin that besets you, what can you do to overcome it?

Are you prepared to share your answers above with your RTBT Group?

Days 5 - 7 Eighth Commandment (**EXODUS 20:15**)

1. Copy out the Eighth Commandment in the space below:

2. To steal means to take something that does not belong to you. Some of the common forms of '*stealing*' include:
 - robbery
 - burglary
 - shoplifting
 - pickpocketing
 - extortion
 - embezzlement

- (a) Are you guilty of any of the common forms of '*stealing*' outlined above? If yes, what is your next step?

- (b) Do you think under-reporting in your Income Tax submission is a violation of this commandment? Elaborate.

- (c) Do you think surfing the internet, checking your Facebook and Instagram accounts during office hours is a violation of this commandment? Elaborate.

(d) Do you think watching movies/downloading music from the web, without making any payment, is a violation of this commandment? Elaborate.

3. Concerning this Eight Commandment, Philip Ryken says:

“Whenever we take something that doesn’t belong to us, we sin against God as well as against our neighbor.

Every theft is a failure to trust in His provision. Whenever we take something that doesn’t belong to us, we deny that God has given us or is able to give us everything we truly need.

Therefore, keeping the eighth commandment is a practical exercise of our faith in God’s providence.”

(a) What questions or response do you have after reading the above comments?

(b) There is another way of sinning against God in this Eighth Commandment – read **MALACHI 3:8**. How can we be guilty of stealing from God today?

4. Jerry Bridges outlines three basic attitudes we can take towards money and possessions:

- (a) What’s yours is mine; I’ll take it
- (b) What’s mine is mine; I’ll keep it
- (c) What’s mine is God’s; I’ll share it

Which attitude best represents yours today?

Week 18

[15th – 21st November 2015]

Days 1 - 3 Ninth Commandment (**EXODUS 20:16**)

The Ninth Commandment is “*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*” To bear false witness against one’s neighbor isn’t just telling a lie, but it is telling a lie that would condemn an innocent man for a crime he did not commit.

In other words, the immediate context is the courtroom. In ancient Israel, when someone is put on trial, he stands before a jury of elders, and he is convicted based on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Hence the testimony of the witness is crucial – it can mean acquittal or conviction.

So the Ninth Commandment forbids Israel from committing the most extreme form of lying. Does this mean that it is acceptable for Israel to commit less serious forms of falsehood?

The answer comes from understanding that the Ten Commandments are ultimately an expression of God’s character, and God is a God of truth! Therefore, the Ninth Commandment is ultimately upholding the sanctity of truth and condemning every form of falsehood. This includes lies, gossips and slanders.

1. The Bible clearly condemns lies:

You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. **(LEVITICUS 19:11-12)**

Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. **(EPHESIANS 4:25)**

According to the two passages above, why must God’s people not tell lies?

2. The Bible clearly condemns slanders:

Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him I will destroy; the one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him I will not endure. **(PSALM 101:5)**

Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool. **(PROVERBS 10:18)**

What is slander? This is how Philip Ryken explains it:

“When the Bible condemns gossip, it means something more than just causal talk about other people’s business. Gossip is talking about people in a way that damages their reputation with others. Reputation is important. The Bible says, ‘A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold’ (Prov.

22:1). One problem with gossip is that it tries to steal this treasure. When this is done in speech, it is called slander; when it appears in print, it is called libel. Either way the victims of gossip never get to defend themselves. They never have a chance to explain their circumstances, clarify their motives, or correct the misconceptions people have about them. Instead they are charged, tried and convicted in the court of private opinion.”

So slander is a form of gossip. According to **PROVERBS 18:8** ~ *The words of a talebearer (gossip) are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost parts. In other words, it is something very attractive to many of us!*

How can I stop myself from gossip? (Make sure your answer has the gospel in it!)

3. Take some time to read and meditate on the following extract from our Baptist Catechism:

Q82: What is required in the ninth commandment?

A: The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor’s good name, especially in witness bearing.

Q83: What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A: The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor’s good name.

Days 4 - 5 Tenth Commandment (**EXODUS 20:17**)

1. Copy out the Tenth Commandment in the space below:

2. What does it mean to covet?

3. An interesting aspect of this Tenth Commandment is that it is not concerned about what we do but what we want. Its focus is on what goes on inside us, and only God can see what goes on inside us!

How is coveting a sin against God?

4. Take some time to read and ponder the teaching of our Baptist Catechism on the Tenth Commandment:

Q85: What is required in the tenth commandment?

A: The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.

Q86: What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A: The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

How can we cultivate contentment? (Make sure your answer has the gospel in it!)

Days 6 - 7 Read **EXODUS 20:18-21** cf. **EXODUS 19:16-20**

1. What was the response of the people when they witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of trumpet, and the mountain smoking?



2. (a) What did they want *Moses* to do? (**Verse 19**)

- (b) This was how *Moses* understood the situation, when he looked back: **DEUTERONOMY 5:5** ~ *I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain.*

Pictorially, this is how it is:

**The
LORD
God**



Israel

The position occupied by *Moses* would be called 'mediator'.

3. As mediator, *Moses* did two things:

- He spoke to Israel for God (**verse 20**)
- What else did he do? (**Verse 21**)

4. In the later chapters of **EXODUS**, we shall find *Moses* (acting as mediator) interceding for Israel (**32:9-14**) and being prepared to lay down his life for Israel (**32:32**).

In this role, *Moses* points us to our ultimate Savior and Mediator Jesus Christ! He spoke to us for God and He approached God for us. He interceded for us, and actually laid down His life for us!

Is Jesus Christ your Mediator? How can you be sure that He is your Mediator?

Week 19

[22nd – 28th November 2015]

Days 1 - 3 Read **EXODUS 20:22-23:19**

In **EXODUS 24:3-4**, we read "*So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do." And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD."*

What would "*all the words of the LORD*" refer to? **EXODUS 20:22-23:19**! And according

to **EXODUS 24:7a**, what *Moses* wrote is now called "*the Book of the Covenant*". Hence, **EXODUS 20:22-23:19** is the *Book of the Covenant*.

The *Book of the Covenant* is the application of the Ten Commandments to the specific social context of Israel as a nation.

Take time to read **EXODUS 20:22-23:19** with the help of the structural outline provided below:

Worship: Idols and Altars (**20:22-26**)

Social: Responsibility (**21:1-22:17**)

- + Servants (**21:1-11**)
- + Injury involving humans (**21:12-27**)
- + Injury involving animals (**21:28-36**)
- + Property (**22:1-15**)

Worship and Social (**22:16-23:19**)

- + Seduction and marriage (**22:16-17**)
- + Sorceress, bestiality and false sacrifices (**22:18-20**)
- + Oppression and loans (**22:21-28**)
- + First born and holiness (**22:29-31**)
- + Testimony in court and oppression (**23:1-19**)
- + Sabbath and Festivals (**23:10-19**)

1. What observations have you made after reading the *Book of the Covenant*?

2. What questions do you have after reading the *Book of the Covenant*?

Day 4 Read **EXODUS 20:22-26**

The *Book of the Covenant* begins with worship – instructions on idols and altars.

1. (a) What was Israel forbidden to make? (**Verse 23**)

(b) Why? (**Verse 22**)

2. **Verses 24-26** provide instructions to Israel concerning altars.

(a) Why do you think God will only allow Israel to build altars from earth or with uncut stones?

(b) **Verse 26** states: *Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.*

How should we explain this prohibition?

“Steps up to an altar were frequently used in the ancient world to increase its height and so emphasize its importance. It was also the case that ritual nudity and associated sexual orgies were common features of ancient cultic rites, but no trace of that was to be found in the worship of the LORD.” (John Mackay).

In other words, this prohibition was given to Israel to ensure that Israel's worship of the LORD is entirely different from how the surrounding nations worship their gods!

3. What do you think is the relevance of **EXODUS 20:22-26** to the Christian Church today?

Days 5 - 7 Read **EXODUS 21:1-11**

These eleven verses deal with the situation of Hebrew servants.

Many years ago, Jacob and his sons faced a severe famine in Canaan. As a result, they went down to Egypt for food. After a long stay in Egypt, and as a result of political changes in Egypt, Israel became slaves in Egypt and they were very badly treated by the Egyptians. By God's mercy, He has delivered them from the house of bondage. As freed people, they must be careful how they treat their fellow Hebrews who became their slaves (better termed as servants).

The reminder that these servants are Hebrews is important. In the words of **EXODUS 19:5-6**, both the master and the servants are God's special treasure, belonging to the kingdom of priests and holy nation! The servants are not second-class citizens of Israel!

Why would these Israelites become servants of other Israelites? **LEVITICUS 25:39** suggests that it is because they are so poor that they could not support themselves.

Hence, they sold themselves to other Israelites, so that they can work, and be able to have food.

What could be the possible reasons for their poverty? Perhaps they failed to manage their wealth rightly, and ended up losing their land and all their riches? Perhaps they were lazy, did not work hard, and ended up in this miserable state? Whatever the reasons, the option before them is either to sell themselves to a fellow Israelite as servants, or die of starvation.

Verses 1-6 [Man-servants]

1. What safeguards did God put in place for this institution of '*buying a Hebrew slave*'?

Verse 2:

Verse 3:

2. **Verse 4** appears to be a rather cruel arrangement to separate the man-servant from his wife and children. However, it is actually a form for protection for the wife and children.

Recall the possible reasons why the man sold himself to be a servant. If he has not learnt his lessons well, he could very well be in debt again, and caused his family to suffer with him. In this case, it would be better that the family remains with the master.

If he has learnt his lessons well, he would be able to earn enough money in due time, and come back to redeem his family. **DEUTERONOMY 15:12-18** contain similar instructions on this matter. Those 7 verses tell us that when the servant is released, he is to be liberally supplied. The idea is that after serving for six years, the master will put things in place for him so that he can earn his living, henceforth will not fall into debts and poverty again.

3. **Verses 5 & 6** envisage another possible course of action the man-servant could take after the six years are up.

(a) What is it?

(b) What is the motivation for choosing this course of action?

(c) Once this option is chosen, how long will it last? (**DEUTERONOMY 15:17**)

Verses 7-11 [Maid-servants]

Verse 7 says that '*she shall not go out as the male slaves do*' while **DEUTERONOMY 15:17** says that the female servant shall be allowed to leave after six years, like the male servant.

At first glance, it appears that **EXODUS 21:7** is contradicted by **DEUTERONOMY 15:17** until we realized that **EXODUS 21:7-11** is dealing with a very special case of maid-servants: *Due to poverty, a father sells his daughter to a fellow Israelite. She is either to be his wife or his daughter-in-law.*

Such arrangements were very common among the people living in those days and in that region. Abuses were also very common. Here, **verses 7-11** should be viewed as God giving laws to regulate this practice, and to protect the girl.

4. If the man is not happy to marry this girl after buying her from her father, what must he do? (**Verse 8**)

5. **Verse 9** envisage the situation whereby this girl is betrothed to the son. However, for some unstated reasons, the son chose to marry some other girl.
 - (a) How is **verse 10** a protection for this girl?

 - (b) What does **verse 11** mean?

6. What do you think is the relevance of **EXODUS 21:1-11** to Christians today?

Days 1 - 4 Read **EXODUS 21:12-27**

After dealing with servants, the *Book of the Covenant* now turns its attention to injury involving humans. Altogether, it covers seven scenarios.

Scenario #1 (verses 12-14)

1. There is a distinction made between murder and manslaughter.

(a) How are the two crimes differentiated?

(b) What is the punishment for each crime?

Scenario #2 (verses 15, 17)

2. (a) According to **verse 15**, he who strikes his father or his mother must face the death penalty. The word (*naka* in Hebrew) refers to a vicious assault, virtually an attempted murder.

Ordinarily, such a violent attack only required the death penalty if someone actually got killed. But here, when the one being violently attacked is one's parent(s), the child must die.

Why do you think God make this crime punishable by death?

(b) According to **verse 17**, he who curses his father or mother must face the death penalty. The curse is not a single act of disrespect, but a total repudiation of their parental authority. The person who cursed his parents has disowned them, and treated them with utter contempt!

Why do you think God make this crime punishable by death?

Scenario #3 (verse 16)

3. The punishment for kidnapping is death. Do you think this is too harsh? Elaborate.

Scenario #4 (verses 18-19)

4. The crime in view here is '*causing serious bodily harm not leading to death*'.

(a) What is the punishment to be meted out to the guilty person?

(b) If the one who was injured dies, then what do you think will be the punishment for the guilty person?

Scenario #5 (verses 20-21)

5. Here we are confronted with the case of a master causing bodily harm to his servant.

(a) If the servant died as a result of his beating, the master will be punished. What do you think will be his punishment? (Consult the context to help you with the answer)

(b) If the servant did not die but recovered after a day or two, then nothing else will be done to the master. Why not?

The assumption here is that the master has a right to administer corporal punishment. If the servant disobeys, then he has the right to punish the servant. If as a result of the punishment, the servant could not carry out his duty for the next few days, who is the one who suffered the loss? The master! Hence, there is no need for further compensation since the servant works for him. And nothing also is said about medical care, since it is in the master's best interest to get the servant healed and back to work as soon as possible!

Scenario #6 (verses 22-24)

6. (a) What is the situation envisaged here?

- (b) What is the punishment to be meted out to the offender?

- (c) What is the principle to be observed?

Scenario #7 (verses 26-27)

7. (a) What is the situation envisaged here?

- (b) What is the punishment?

- (c) How is the situation here different from Scenario #5?

Note #1: The basic principle underlying these laws is **GENESIS 9:6** ~ *Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.* To raise your hand against God's image is serious business!

Hence, if you kill the person, then you must be punished (either death for murder or confinement for manslaughter). If you hurt the person, then you must also be punished, never mind if the person hurt is a servant or a free man. Hurting a person can be more than physical. You could be hurting him by kidnapping him, depriving him of his freedom, and selling him away as slave. To show utter contempt for your parents is also hurting your parents, a violation of the Fifth Commandment.

Note #2: The justice principle of **verses 23-25** must be understood correctly. It is not meant to be used by the victim to demand for an eye or a tooth! Rather, it is to be used by the judge when he passed the sentence, ensuring that the punishment fits the crime. It is also to be used by the offender, such that knowing that I have caused so much hurt, if I am truly repentant, then I want to ensure justice is done and make restitution accordingly.

Sadly, this justice principle was misused by the Jews during Jesus' time and hence, the words of our Lord in **MATTHEW 5:38-48**. In short, Jesus is saying that as His disciples, we want to show mercy rather than demand justice! Why?

Ultimately, the answer is the Gospel – we deserve God's justice that is hell for us, but God showed us mercy, sent His Son to die for us, forgive us and made us His children!

Day 5 Read **EXODUS 21:28-36**

The *Book of the Covenant* now turns its attention to *injury involving animals*.

1. List the various scenarios given, and for each scenario, state the punishment to be meted out to the offender:

2. Do you have any comments, concerns or questions about the regulations here? Discuss them with your RTBT group.

Days 6 - 7 Read **EXODUS 22:1-15**

The *Book of the Covenant* now turns its attention to *property*.

1. List the various scenarios given, and for each scenario, state the punishment to be meted out to the offender:

2. Do you have any comments, concerns or questions about the regulations here? Discuss them with your RTBT group.

3. According to Philip Ryken, *“There are many good reasons to study the Old Testament law. It teaches us what God expects. It guides us into godliness. It exposes our sin and thus shows us our need for the gospel. But the law does something else that is very exciting: It reveals God’s character. This makes the Old Testament law different from any law code or book of court decisions. The law reveals the Lawgiver. We do not study it to find out what we have to do, but to know our God. And as we study and apply his law, we are conformed to his character.”*

What can we know about God from **EXODUS 22:1-15**?

Week 21

[6th – 12th December 2015]

Day 1 Read **EXODUS 22:16-17**

We come now to the section in the *Book of the Covenant* where we are confronted with a mixture of laws concerning worship and social responsibility.

Today, we will begin with the law given in **verses 16-17**. It was designed to promote godly patterns of courtship, marriage and sex – in that order.

1. (a) The man and woman in **verse 16** are guilty of _____.
(b) What should they do? (**Verse 16**)

2. Continuing with the situation painted in **verse 16**, **verse 17** depicts the situation where the father of the girl refused to agree to the marriage.
(a) Faced with this rejection, what must the man still do?

(b) What do you think could be the reasons why the father refused to let his daughter marry this man?

(c) What lessons can we learn from the action of the father?

3. What can we learn about God's character from these two verses?

Day 2 Read **EXODUS 22:18-20**

In these three verses, we are confronted with three heinous crimes that involve false worship: *witchcraft*, *bestiality* and *sacrifices to pagan gods*. The punishment for each of the crimes is the death penalty.

Put in another way, these laws were meant to protect the purity of worship in Israel. How should we apply them in the church today?

Day 3 Read **EXODUS 22:21-27**

God's law reveals God's character. The next set of laws shows us our God as One full of compassion.

1. (a) How should Israel treat the foreigners in their midst?

(b) Why should they treat the foreigners in this way?

2. (a) How should Israel treat the widows and orphans in their midst?
 - (b) Why do you think God is so angry with those who mistreat widows and orphans?
 - (c) Can you think of two New Testament passages that instruct us on how to treat widows and orphans?
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3. (a) How should Israel treat the poor in their midst?
 - (b) “*And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious*” – how is this a motivation *not* to mistreat the poor?
4. In view of these 7 verses, what must change in your life right now?

Day 4 Read **EXODUS 22:28-31**

1. What was Israel prohibited from doing? (**Verse 28**)
2. What was Israel commanded to do? (**Verses 29-30**)

3. In **verse 31**, Israel was forbidden from eating meat torn by beasts in the field. The reason for this prohibition is because Israel is to be holy to the Lord.

The word '*holy*' means separation and different. So Israel is to be separate and different from the rest of the nations, and this is one way to do so. While other nations may eat meat torn by beasts in the field, Israel must not!

When Israel obeys, Israel is sending out a clear message that God is their God and their Lord. He rules over them, over every aspect of their life, including what they may or may not eat! In this way, they express their separation and difference from the rest of the nations.

Living as God's people in the New Testament, this law is not applicable to us today but the principle remains in force. So how can we so live that we visibly express our holiness? List two ways below:



Days 5 - 6 Read **EXODUS 23:1-9**

1. **Verses 1-3** list down 5 things Israel must NOT do. What are they?



- (a) Are you guilty of any one of them? If yes, what are you going to do next?

(b) Do you have any questions about any one of them? If yes, discuss them with your RTBT group.

(c) What can we learn about God's character from these five prohibitions?

2. (a) What is commanded and expected of Israel in **verses 4-5**?

(b) What can we learn about God's character from this command and expectation?

3. **Verses 6-8** list down 3 things Israel must NOT do. What are they?

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What can we learn about God's character from these three verses?

4. How must Israel treat foreigners in their midst, and why? (**Verse 9**)

5. In view of these 9 verses, what must change in your life right now?

Day 7 Read **EXODUS 23:10-13**

Verse 13 is a reminder to Israel that everything said in the *Book of the Covenant* is meant for their obedience, and Israel must remember that they belong to YAHWEH. Hence they must be careful not to invoke the names of other gods in their daily lives.

Verses 10-12 deal with the Sabbath laws. **Verses 10-11** deal with the Sabbath Year while **verse 12** deals with the Sabbath day.

How would these Sabbath laws help the Israelites love God with their own being and their neighbor as themselves?

How would you apply these Sabbath laws, as a New Testament Christian, in your Christian Life today?

Week 22

[13th - 19th December 2015]

Day 1 Read **EXODUS 23:14-19**

1. Three annual Jewish feasts are mentioned here. What are they?



2. What does “*appear before the LORD God*” (**verse 17**) mean?

3. **Verses 18-19** contain four regulations concerning how sacrifices should be made:
- (i) No leaven to be used in the sacrifice
 - (ii) No keeping of the fat until morning
 - (iii) First-fruits of the land must be offered
 - (iv) No boiling of a goat in its mother's milk

Starting with (iv), the goat in view is to be offered. It is understood that a Canaanite ritual is to boil the goat in its mother's milk before sacrificing it. So (iv) must be understood as a command from God not to adopt Canaanite practices when Israel comes to worship God.

In giving the first-fruits – (iii), they are acknowledging the importance of God in their lives – He takes first place. The same thing applies to the fat. In those days, the fat is deemed to be the very best part of the animal, and the fat is to be offered to God. (ii) removes the temptation to keep the fat until the next morning instead of offering all of it to God.

Finally, in (i), the command is to never offer leaven together with the sacrifice of blood. This is because leaven is normally a symbol of evil in the Old Testament, and so no sacrifice of blood (ultimately pointing to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross) must be mixed with what is symbolically evil.

4. How would these six verses impact our weekly worship on the Lord's Day?

Day 2 Read **EXODUS 23:20-33**

“When the great kings of the ancient world entered into a treaty with their vassals, after they had stated what they required their vassals to do, they presented the blessings that would flow from obedience to the treaty and the curses that would result from disobedience. Here the LORD follows a similar course, but with two different emphases: the major focus is not on the people's obedience, but on the LORD's provision for them, particularly the presence of his angel; and the blessings that are bestowed on those who are obedient to the covenant and loyal to its King are stressed with the potential curses on disobedience only being implied.”

John L. Mackay

1. God promised to send His Angel.
- (a) What will the Angel do?

(b) How must Israel treat the Angel?

2. God promised to bring Israel into Canaan. How will it be done?

3. (a) How should Israel treat the inhabitants of Canaan?

(b) Why must Israel adopt such an attitude towards the Canaanites?

Days 3 - 4 Read **EXODUS 24:1-18**

We can outline **EXODUS 24** in this way:

Verses 1-2: God calls *Moses* to come up to Him, together with *Aaron, Nadab* and *Abihu*, and the seventy elders

Verses 3-8: *Moses* conveyed the content of the *Book of the Covenant* to Israel
Israel accepts it
The covenant is ratified with blood

Verses 9-11: *Moses, Aaron, Nadab* and *Abihu*, and the seventy elders go up to meet God

Verses 12-18: *Moses* alone went to the summit to see God, for forty days and night

For Days 3 – 4, we shall focus on **verses 3-8**.

1. *Moses* told Israel all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. “*All the words*” probably refer to the Ten Commandments while “*all the judgments*” probably refer to **EXODUS 20:22-23:33** (what we now call the *Book of the Covenant*).

(a) What was the people’s response?

(b) Based on the people's response, *Moses* did the following:

- He wrote the *Book of the Covenant*
- He built an altar and 12 pillars
- He sent young men to _____
- He took half the blood and _____
- He read the *Book of the Covenant* to the people
- He took the other half the blood and _____

2. What do you think is the significance of sprinkling blood on the altar?

3. What do you think is the significance of sprinkling blood on the people?

Day 5 Read **EXODUS 24:1-18**

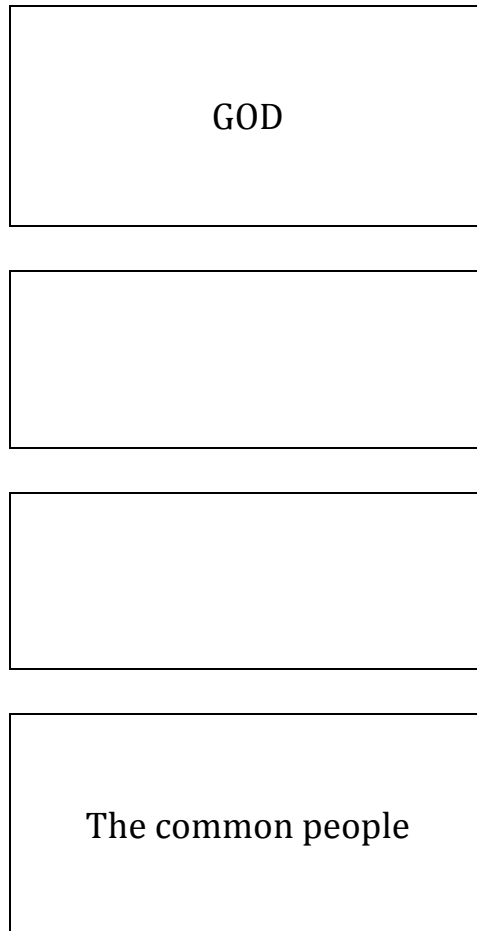
Recall the outline of **EXODUS 24** given in Days 3 - 4. Today, our focus will be on **verses 9-14**, cf. **verses 1-2**.

1. **Verses 9-14** describe a meeting between the LORD God and *Moses, Aaron* and his two sons and seventy elders.

(a) Who initiated this meeting? (**Verse 1**)

(b) From **verse 2**, we are told how far various people may come to meet and worship God.

Pictorially, it looks something like this:



2. **Verse 10** said that the leaders saw God and elaborates on what they saw.

(a) What did they see?

(b) What does this mean?

(c) What does "*He did not lay His hand*" (**verse 11**) mean?

3. **Verse 11** further says that the leaders ate and drank at this meeting with God. What do you think is the significance of this meal?

Note: The leaders (representing Israel) met with God and had a meal before Him only after the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the people (**verses 3-8**). The order is very important!

Day 6 Read **EXODUS 24:1-18**

Today, we shall look at **EXODUS 24: 12-18**.

1. What is God's purpose for calling *Moses* to go up to the summit to meet Him?
2. In *Moses'* absence, who would function as the leader(s) of Israel?
3. A younger man was allowed to accompany *Moses* up to the summit, although it is generally assumed that he did not go all the way to the top. Who is he and where else in **EXODUS** have we met him?
4. For how long was *Moses* up in the mountain with God?

Day 7 Review **EXODUS 13:17-24:18**

We have spent another 12 weeks on **EXODUS**, looking at Israel's journey from the time they left Egypt to their arrival at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

1. What is the most important lesson you have learnt in these 10 weeks from **EXODUS**?

2. What unresolved questions do you have concerning **EXODUS 13:17-24:18**? Discuss them with your RTBT group.

NOTES

Acknowledgement

Whatever the weaknesses of this Read-The-Bible-Together guide, they would have been far greater without the kind help of CHEW Theng Sang, Justin CHONG, SOH Jyue Theng and Sarah SOH in giving their time and energy to review the entire guide, asking questions all the way and giving many valuable suggestions.

Thank you, brothers and sisters!

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another! (Proverbs 27:17, ESV)

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Questions or comments concerning this RTBT guide?
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