

Ch 4 God's Laws, Israel's Flaws: the Covenant Through Moses

Suggested Reading: Exodus 1–20, 24, 32–34, 40

The Long Story from Abraham to Moses (Genesis 23–Exodus 1)

- God said it would take time for Abraham to become a great nation/name in Gen 15:13
 - o Abraham's grandson Jacob, with name change to Israel, has twelve prolific sons
 - o The whole clan move to Egypt because of a famine, begins with selling Joseph
 - o They remain in Egypt for about four hundred years – a nation isn't born overnight

Nothing's Perfect (Exodus 2)

- Israelites end up as slaves of the Egyptians
- God hears their groaning & remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac & Jacob
- It begins with the birth of a child, Moses whom his mother hides
- She floats him down the river and he is found by Pharaoh's daughter
- Moses's biological mom gets paid by the government to nurse her own baby
- Moses in line to rise in the royal court until he can state policy to free the Hebrews
- Instead, kills an Egyptian who's beating up one of his fellow Hebrews, buries in the sand
- When discovered, flees far to escape his adopted grandfather the Pharaoh
- After forty years of shepherding, Moses is already an old man

The Burning Bush (Exodus 3)

- God once again intervenes in Moses's life
- Moses asks God's name: *YHWH, I am or He is*
- God commissions Moses: *Let my son go that he may serve* (worship) *me* (Ex 4:22–23)
- *Israel is my first-born son* (like God adopts the Israelites as a new Adam, a new humanity)

The Rout of the Gods (Exodus 7–14)

- Plagues were God defeating the gods of the Egyptians
 - o **Hapi** – Nile | **Hekhet** – Frog | **Amon-Re** – Sun | **Pharaoh** cannot save his son

The Route of the Israelites (Exodus 15–19)

- God gave them water from the rock and manna, the bread of angels (Ps 78)
- Israelites made it to Sinai (= Horeb), where God spoke to Moses from the burning bush
- Purpose: make a covenant (family bond) with them (adopt Israel into a *filial relationship*)
- Gives them the 10 commandments with a promise: *you shall be to me a royal priesthood*
- Other nations are younger brethren of their older sibling, Israel (first-born son)

The Covenant at Sinai (Exodus 20–24)

- Moses goes up the mount, God gives him the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone
 - o Thru this, God tried to restore to Israel the filial relationship that Adam once enjoyed
 - o Purpose of the 10 commandments? Family rule toward Father & siblings (God wrote)
 - o Exodus 24 Moses builds an altar at the foot of Mount Sinai to offer sacrifices to God
 - o Blood is thrown on the altar and people, signifying a family covenant of one blood
 - o *They saw God, and ate and drank* (Ex 24:11)
 - o Israel has the status of firstborn son and royal priest among the nations

The End of the Honeymoon (Exodus 32–34)

- Moses goes up the mount, the people return to the Egyptian bull worship (Apis)

- *sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play* (sexual immorality) (Ex 32:6)
- Moses destroys the tablets and calls the Levites (his tribe) to stop this
- Moses promised Levites the status of priests for Israel, replacing all (Ex 32:25–29)
- Second Sinai: damaged covenant remade
- Moses goes up the mountain and writes the commandments with additional laws (penance)
- It is for the people's sin that the Mosaic sacrifices come into being

Desert Deserters: Abandoning God in the Wilderness (Numbers 1, 10–25)

- The people rebel against the Lord in the desert wanderings (at least 9x) through 2 generations
- Moses stays God's hand acting as an intercessor for the people

Deuteronomy, One Long Homily (Deuteronomy 5–9, 31–34)

- A final (third) remaking of the covenant through Moses after 40 years in the desert in Moab
- God does not appear to the people, only to Moses & Moses corrects the people and adds laws