

3. Exodus through Joshua: The Preparation, Redemption, and Settling of a People

By the time this second period of revelation begins 400 years have passed (Genesis 15.13). The focus changes as God begins to concentrate on a people rather than on just one family. His work of creating a people for Himself is accelerating and expanding in this new epoch, and we should expect to see His covenant take on some new dimensions in order to address the changing circumstances of His people. We will also see that each of the unifying threads of revelation comes into focus in bolder, more dramatic ways, as God continues to act toward His people according to the promise that He spoke to Abraham and the purposes for which He created men in the beginning.

3.1 Read Exodus 1-3, 6.1-12. At the very beginning of this new epoch God makes the point of showing the continuity of all that He was *about to do* with all that He had *already done*.

3.11 Summarize the content of these readings. Write down any initial thoughts you have, based on these readings, about any of the unifying threads of revelation or the Covenant of God.

3.12 In what ways has God been at work through the nations, cultures, and historical circumstances to fulfill the promises of His Covenant for His people? What can we learn about the glory of God from reflecting on His sovereignty in history?

3.13 How does God make it clear to Moses that what He is preparing to do for His people is based on what He had promised to Abraham?

3.14 What new name does God give for Moses to use in identifying Him? This name seems to be based on the Hebrew verb, “to be,” and carries the meaning of perpetually, self-determined existence. Why would this be a fitting way to think if the God of the Covenant? What do we learn about the glory of God from this name.

3.2 Read Exodus 12-15. Like the flood, the deliverance from Egypt represents an act both of God’s judgement and of His deliverance. We see Him moving *against* the sins of hardened men and *for* the welfare of His people.

3.21 Summarize the content of this reading. Which of the unifying threads of revelation seems most to be in focus here?

3.22 What are the specific details concerning the sacrifice that is to be prepared for the Passover? In view of this, why is John the Baptizer's comment in John 1.29 so important for our understanding of Christ?

3.23 How can we see from this section that the Passover was meant to provide continuity for future generations of Israelites with the Covenant activity of God in their past? How would this help to link the people in the later years of the Old Testament with all that God had been doing up to that point? Why would that be important?

3.24 In what ways do the events of the deliverance from Egypt reveal the glory of God? Look at Paul's comments in Romans 9.16-18.

3.3 Read Exodus 19, 20, 24, 40. As God renews His Covenant with Israel He constitutes them as His people and gives them His Law to establish their unique identity.

3.31 Summarize the content of these readings. What do these chapters suggest to you about any of the unifying threads of revelation?

3.32 According to Exodus 19.2-6 and 20.1,2, what is the basis upon which God now declares this further elaboration of His Covenant with His people?

3.33 Is this an altogether new covenant, or is it the elaboration in more specific detail of the Covenant that was already in place (see Galatians 3.16-22)?

3.34 How do the people respond, and what do we learn from this about how God's people are to relate to Him? Are they *earning* His favor or *responding* to it?

3.35 Why was the Tabernacle important? Remember the name by which God revealed Himself to Israel at this time: How would the Tabernacle have reinforced the significance of that name? What was in the Tabernacle, and what was to be done there?

3.4 Read Leviticus 9, 16, 17, 20. Leviticus helps us to understand God’s standard of holiness by explaining the system of sacrifices and holy days that God established to enable Israel to stay right with Him.

3.41 Summarize the content of these readings. What do they suggest to you about any of the unifying threads of revelation?

3.42 In 9.22-24 how did God show that He was pleased with the response of His people to the further developing of His Covenant that He had revealed? What is God saying to His people about their response to Him as His people and His glory?

3.43 The shedding of blood plays an important part in Israel's ability to maintain a right relationship with God. According to chapters 16 and 17, and especially 17.11, why would this be so? According to Hebrews 10.1-8 what did these sacrifices actually do for Israel? To what did they point forward?

3.44 What did God desire above all else for His people? What does this tell us about what it means to be one of the people of God?

3.5 Read Numbers 10, 13, 14, 21.1-9, and ch. 33. Numbers tells us about what happened to God's people between the time that He renewed His Covenant with them at Mt. Sinai and when they finally approached the land of Canaan to enter it, a period of almost forty years.

3.51 Summarize the content of these readings. What initial thoughts come to mind about any of the unifying threads of revelation?

3.52 In what ways did God show that He would be faithful to His Covenant even when His people were not?

3.53 What did Moses invoke to entreat God not to destroy His rebellious people (14.15-17)? What does this tell us about Moses' understanding of what it means to be the people of God? What do we learn from this about trusting God and His Word?

3.54 Reflect on the episode of the brazen serpent. What was it about merely looking at that serpent that saved sinful men and women? In view of Jesus' comment in John 3.14,15, what do we learn from this episode about what it means to be the people of God and to experience His redemption?

3.6 Read Deuteronomy 4-7, 18. In Deuteronomy we find the nation poised on the east bank of the Jordan River, ready to enter the land. This is a new generation of Israelites, their disobedient fathers having died in the wilderness. So Moses reviews for them the terms of God's Covenant before they begin the conquest and settling of the land.

3.61 What are the main emphases in these readings? What do they suggest to you about the unifying threads of revelation?

3.62 In what ways is it clear that the revelation that is being given in the Book of Deuteronomy and the events of that period are built upon and consciously relate back to all the previous activity of God on behalf of His people?

3.63 What seems to be the purpose of God for His people? What is the nature of the relationship that He desires to have with them?

3.64 In chapter 18 Moses tells the people that God will be revealing more of His Covenant will to them in the future. He mentions both a Prophet who will have the words of life in His mouth and other prophets who will speak the will of God. How does this chapter help to link Moses' generation with the future generations of God's people?

3.7 Read Joshua 1, 5, 21.43-45, and ch. 23, 24. Joshua covers the almost ten year period that it took for the Israelites to conquer the Canaanites and begin to settle the land that God had promised to them (see Paul's comments in Acts 13.19: If we subtract the 400 years of captivity and the forty years of wandering in the wilderness from Paul's total we are left with ten years of warfare in subduing the land).

3.71 Summarize the content of these readings. What do you learn from them about the unifying threads of revelation and the Covenant of God?

3.72 How did God assure Joshua that He would be with him? Can you see in this any elements of continuity with past aspects of God's Covenantal relationship with His people?

3.73 Upon what basis did Joshua exhort the people in chapters 23 and 24? How did he show that he understood the basis of God’s dealing with Israel?

3.74 In Joshua’s understanding what was the relationship between what God was doing for Israel in his day and what He had done in the past or would do in the future? Knowing what we do about the way God has literally “moved heaven and earth” to fulfill His Covenant promises to His people, what do Joshua’s remarks teach us about the centrality of God’s Covenant, not only for His people but for all of human history? How does this fit in with what God said to Abram in Genesis 12.1-3?

Final exercise: Exodus through Joshua

What do we learn from this section about the power of God’s Covenant promises? How would you summarize the ways in which God brings forward into Joshua’s day the substance of the revelation He had given to previous generations of His people? What further insights do you gain from this section about the unifying threads of revelation? One final exercise: Given the fact that Joshua’s name means, “he delivers,” and that God used Joshua to deliver Israel *into* the initial realizing of His promises, and considering that the writer of Hebrews seems to have attached some significance to this (Hebrews 4.1-16), what is suggested about the continuity of God’s Covenant between the Old and New Testaments by the fact that Joshua and Jesus have (in Hebrew) the same name?
