

FEBRUARY 2020 | DAY 22

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

With Fellowship of the Rockies

## SCRIPTURE

Exodus 16  
Exodus 17  
Exodus 18  
Psalms 22

**God has triumphed over Pharaoh and the armies of Egypt, bringing a dramatic end to Israel's centuries-long enslavement. Watch today's video recalling God's mighty acts of redemption and salvation in the first half of Exodus.**

**Today the Israelites set out from the shores of the sea into the sprawling unknown. God's people are on the way to the land he promised, but to get there, they'll have to go through the wilderness. The scarcity Israel faces on this desert road confronts the vulnerable nation with several tests. Will they trust God to provide for them, or will they rely on their own wisdom and allow fear to govern their choices?**

**The Israelites' wavering faith contrasts sharply with Moses's father-in-law, Jethro. Where the Israelites come before God surly and grumbling, Jethro, a priest from Midian (so not an Israelite priest), delights in God's wonders, offering sacrifice and praise. And where the Israelites test Moses's patience with their bickering, Jethro offers Moses some much-needed wisdom. Loyalty and guidance sometimes can come from those we least expect.**

FEBRUARY 2020 | DAY 23

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## SCRIPTURE

Exodus 19  
Exodus 20  
Exodus 21  
Psalms 23

**The Israelites' difficult wilderness journey brings them to the foot of Mount Sinai, where God first met Moses (the same mountain was called Mount Horeb previously). Now, it is the place where God will invite Israel into a new way of life.**

**The partnership with Abraham's family expands into partnership with a nation. God not only freed his people from slavery but also offered them a special calling—they are to be a kingdom of priests. They will represent him to the nations by bringing light and justice to the world. It's a tremendous privilege and a tremendous responsibility.**

**When Israel accepts God's invitation, God formalizes their partnership with a covenant, or mutual agreement. If the Israelites are to represent God faithfully to the nations, they will need to live in a way that reflects God's character. The covenant commands summarize this distinctive way of life and God's plan to deal with sin so he can dwell with his people.**

**Watch today's video to learn more about God's covenant, law, and presence in the second half of Exodus.**

FEBRUARY 2020 | DAY 24

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## SCRIPTURE

Exodus 22  
Exodus 23  
Exodus 24  
Psalms 24

Despite the people's faltering in the wilderness, God still wants to partner with them. They are given a momentous opportunity to serve God—not as dehumanized slaves but as honored co-workers. Today's video explains covenants throughout the biblical story and how they showcase God's faithfulness even when his partners stumble.

The covenant God makes with Israel includes commands meant to bring about flourishing. Some of those laws make sense to us today. Don't murder. Don't steal. Don't worship other gods. Check. But other laws can be confusing, frustrating, or even maddening for modern readers.

It's important to remember that these laws embody God's wisdom for a specific people in their time and place. The morals, customs, and values of the Israelites' ancient Near Eastern context were often very different from our own. God's laws work within that culture, patiently but powerfully restoring Edenic conditions.

We should also remember that God's laws accommodate a world marred by sin and death. In an Eden-like world, women would not experience the immense grief of widowhood nor the fear of someone exploiting their vulnerable state. The command to care for widows shows that God knows the world bends toward brokenness. His commands, therefore, restrain evil and do good, often going against the common ways of the world.

When understood in their context, God's laws reveal his ultimate desire for his people to produce love, justice, goodness, and peace.

After Moses reads the terms of the covenant to the Israelites, the people accept them. That's another step forward in God's plan to rescue and bless his world. His promises press on!

FEBRUARY 2020 | DAY 25

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Exodus 25  
Exodus 26  
Exodus 27  
Psalms 25

**In today's reading, Israel's covenant agreement transitions from ancient law codes to ... ancient meeting-tent blueprints? This may seem odd, but as we learn in the video, these instructions for God's dwelling tent, the tabernacle, offer more than just interior decorating designs. While the covenant laws reveal a desire for partnership, the tabernacle instructions reveal God's desire for proximity—for his presence to be with his people. This ornate tent, with its garden-like furnishings, functions as a portable micro-Eden—a Heaven-on-Earth space where God and humanity can dwell together. Tree leaves, branches, and flowers cover the lampstand that illuminates the tent. Its branches hold up seven lights—just like the seven days of creation. The gold-covered furniture and the onyx adorning the priestly garments recall the gold and onyx found in Eden. And throughout the tent, cherubim guard the most sacred space where Heaven and Earth meet which mirrors the cherubim appointed to protect Eden's entrance. Through partnership and now presence, God invites his people to enjoy the intimacy once shared in Eden.**

FEBRUARY 2020 | DAY 26

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Exodus 28  
Exodus 29  
Psalms 26

**The symbolic restoration of Eden continues at the foot of Mount Sinai. After giving Moses instructions for building the tabernacle, God appoints priests to serve and to keep this sacred tent. Just like the first humans in Eden (whom God told to serve and to keep the garden), the priestly work is to represent and embody God's heavenly, divine presence on Earth. God originally invites all the Israelites to be his priestly representatives. But when the people shrink back from God's intimidating presence, God chooses Aaron and his family to act as priests on Israel's behalf. In today's reading, God explains how the priests will be set apart for this important role. They will wear special garments that evoke humanity's ideal garden state. Yesterday, we learned how the tabernacle's grandeur communicates God's desire to dwell with his people in the splendor of Eden. Today, we discover how the priests' ornate garments point to humanity's original vocation as royal priests. Watch today's video to learn about the restoration of the priesthood through Moses and Aaron—and about the need for a future royal priest who will surrender fully to God.**

FEBRUARY 2020 | DAY 27

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Exodus 30  
Exodus 31  
Psalms 27

What do you think a Heaven-on-Earth space smells like? Today's reading introduces the aroma of the tabernacle. The priests are to burn sacred incense before the holy of holies, shrouding the entrance to God's throne room with sweet smoke.

God tells Moses to mark the holy status of tabernacle furniture and priests by anointing them with fragrant oil. Anointing oil was the concentrated product of garden trees, the essence of Eden distilled into liquid form. Today's video explains the purpose of anointing: to mark people and objects as bridges between Heaven and Earth.

After telling Moses to consecrate the priests as sacred representatives and the tabernacle as sacred space, God instructs Moses to consecrate the seventh day as sacred time. Consecration sets these people and objects apart from the average world, identifying them as uniquely connected to God's own holiness.

God rested on the seventh day of creation, and he invites his covenant people to pattern their lives according to his own divine wisdom and rhythms. All of the laws, tent blueprints, priestly clothing, aromatic recipes, and rhythms of rest and worship serve a single purpose: to mark Israel as God's chosen people who reflect God's character to the world. Moses has been receiving God's instruction for 40 days and 40 nights, veiled in thick clouds at the top of the mountain while the people wait below. Now, he picks up the stone tablets inscribed with the covenant code and walks back down to the camp. It's time for Israel to put their covenant identity into action. How will they respond?

FEBRUARY 2020 | DAY 28

# ONE STORY THAT LEADS TO JESUS

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## SCRIPTURE

Exodus 32  
Exodus 33  
Exodus 34  
Psalms 28

As days stretch into weeks, Moses is still on the mountain, and the Israelites' enthusiasm about their new covenant dissolves into restlessness. They become aggressive with Aaron, demanding he make a god that works according to their own wisdom and schedule.

Aaron caves to the pressure, melting down gold to build an idol shaped like a baby cow. Barely a month has passed since they escaped from Egypt, and already, God's people are violating the first two terms of their covenant agreement. And the first high priest is leading the charge! When Moses sees the Israelites dancing around the golden calf, he furiously smashes both the idol and the stone tablets. Israel's covenant agreement lies shattered at the foot of the mountain, mixed with the golden evidence of their sin. The people spiral into ruinous chaos, and it takes a tragic sweep of violence to restore order.

Hurt and rightly angered by the Israelites' blatant disregard for the covenant, God prepares to turn the Israelites over to the consequences of their betrayal. We've seen the severe results of rejecting God: exile (Gen. 3), scattering (Gen. 11), de-creation (Gen. 6 and Exod. 14). We might expect a similar fate for the Israelites.

But Moses intercedes for them, offering his own life as a substitute for theirs. Moses urges God not to give up on his partnership with Israel by appealing to God's own character. And God extends the Israelites an undeserved grace: He relents.

Today's video highlights God's gracious and compassionate character, even in humanity's darkest moments.