

The human race is in trouble. We've been in trouble for a long time. Enormous energies have been and continue to be expended by many, many men and women to get us out of the trouble we are in-to clean up the world's mess. The skill, the perseverance, the intelligence, the devotion of the people who put their shoulders to the wheel to pull us out of the much-parents and teachers, healers and counselors, rulers and politicians, writers and pastors- are impressive.

At the center and core of this work is God. The most comprehensive term for what God is doing to get us out of the mess we are in is salvation. Salvation is God doing for us what we can't do for ourselves. Salvation is the biggest word in the vocabulary of the people of God. The Exodus is a powerful and dramatic and true story of God working salvation. The story has generated and extraordinary progeny though the centuries as it has reproduced itself in song and poem, drama and novel, politics and social justice, repentance and conversion, worship and holy living. It continues to capture the imagination of men and women, especially me and women in trouble.

It is significant that God does not present us with salvation in the form of an abstract truth, or a precise definition or a catchy slogan, but as story. Exodus draws us into a story with plot and character, which is to say, with design and personal relationships. Story is an invitation to participate, first though our imagination and then, if we will, by faith- with our total lives in response to God. This Exodus story continues to be a major means that God uses to draw men and women in trouble out of the mess of history into the kingdom of salvation.

About half the book (chapters 1-19 and 32-34) is a gripping narrative of an obscure and severely brutalized people who are saved from slavery into a life of freedom. The other half (chapters 20-31 and 35-40) is a meticulous, some think tedious, basic instruction and training in living the saved, free life. The story of salvation is not complete without both halves.

Commentary on Exodus from The Bible Project:

- <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/exodus-1-18/>
- <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/exodus-19-40/>
- <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/the-law/>

Commentary on Exodus 19 from bible.org

- Audio commentary from Dr. Ken Boa: <https://bible.org/seriespage/6-exodus>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/preamble-israel%E2%80%99s-constitution-exodus-19>

For more information on Exodus visit:

- <https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-exodus/>

READ Exodus 19

(The following discussion questions are adapted from The Serendipity Bible)

Opening

- Describe a “mountain top” experience from your life.
- Where were you when you first experienced the reality of God? What happened there? What feelings do you have for this place?

Digging in — Discovering the Word

- From verses 4-6, what does God expect from the people? What does he promise will result? What right does God have to dictate the terms of this covenant?
- How does this language compare with God’s covenant with Abram (see Gen 12:1-3)?
- How do God’s people become a “kingdom of Priests and a holy nation” (vv. 6, 10-15)?
- Why do you think so much emphasis is placed on barring people from the mountain? Washing their clothes? On abstaining from sex? On special effects (dense cloud, thunder, lighting trumpet blast, smoke, earth tremors)? What does this tell you about the importance of the events about to take place?
- As this covenant is with all the people, why do you think God only wants Moses on the mountain with him (vv. 9, 19-20)? What role do the elders and Aaron play in this (vv. 7-8, 24)?

Connecting the Dots — Applying the Word

- After all was said and done, who met with God that day: Only Moses? Aaron and the priests, too? The people, as well? Explain how each may have met God.
- When did you last truly experience the presence of God? What impact did that have on you?
- Would you even want to meet God face to face like Moses did? Who would you trust to send in your place? What questions would you want asked of God?
- What feelings do you have toward the person who walks close with God and talks to him; Apathy? Jealousy? Fear? Relief? Curiosity? Deference?
- How do Christians “wash” or “abstain” to get ready for church? How else do you draw near to God?
- What barriers has Jesus set aside so that we can draw near to God with confidence (see Heb 10:19ff)? What does Peter urge us to do to become “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, belonging to God” (1 Peter 2:9)? What will you do about this, today?