



Stepping into God's Story – Episode Three – Rescue and Law

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Glenn Garvin

BIG IDEA – God had to show us, good works don't work!

scripture focus - Romans 4:1-5 NLT Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What did he discover about being made right with God? If his good deeds had made him acceptable to God, he would have had something to boast about. But that was not God's way. For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." When people work, their wages are not a gift, but something they have earned. But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners.

Does being "good" get you into Heaven? Studies show that [52% of Christians](#), 70% of Catholics, and [one third of senior pastors all say "Yes."](#) Overall, 54% of U.S. adults believe they will get to Heaven after they die, and 63% of adults believe "having faith matters more than which faith you have." So...what do you believe and why do you believe it? Let's discuss why God brought The Law (The 10 Commandments) and how they should affect the way we live now.

Think of all the characters in the Bible that have captured our hearts, made us think and spurred us on to listen to God, believe him and obey.

Through CREATION AND THE FALL, we see this couple, Adam, Eve and their sons. Through PROMISE AND A PEOPLE, we see this patriarchal figure of Abraham, his son Isaac and grandson Jacob where God gives a promise then begins fulfilling it.

Today, we are discovering that God both rescues His people and gives them the law, which becomes the bedrock of moral code that is still honored today – even if it is not directly attributed to God.

We left off last week talking about Abraham's deal with God and the miraculous ways God followed through with His promises through Isaac, then later Jacob.

Episode Three – Rescue and Law

You'll find this part of God's story picks up in Genesis 37 when the Joseph breaks into the scene with some bitter brother jealousies and rivalry. **Joseph doesn't make it any easier when he says, to his brothers "I had a dream."**

Genesis 37:2-4 NLT

This is the account of Jacob and his family. **When Joseph was seventeen years old, he often tended his father's flocks. He worked for his half brothers,** the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing. **Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe. But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him.**

You've got to read this for yourself, it will take a bit to read or listen to Genesis 37-50, but it is worth it. It's just too good not to get it yourself.

The brief synopsis is that Abraham's family became a nation, a huge nation – but the entire nation then ends up in slavery.

Joseph's story (next to last son of Jacob). Goes from a despised younger brother of the clan to the second highest position in Egypt! **In this position, Joseph is perfectly poised to save his family's lives, along with the whole people group of Israel!**

How did they all end up in slavery?

Famine forced Jacob to relocate his whole clan to Egypt, saving their lives. While there, the tribe grew rapidly because God blessed them and multiplied their numbers. Israel is now in Egypt, but things go badly because the whole generation of Joseph's influence were dead and forgotten.

The current Pharaoh could only see the massive growth of these foreigners, these immigrants, living off the land. This "new" Pharaoh's own fear drove him to worry about the Jews taking over in a revolution.

Exodus 1:6-10 NLT

Eventually, a new king came to power in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph or what he had done. He said to his people, "Look, the people of Israel now outnumber us and are stronger than we are. We must make a plan to keep them from growing even more. If we don't, and if war breaks out, they will join our enemies and fight against us. Then they will escape from the country.

This new Pharaoh tried infanticide, to deal with the population explosion.

Moses is one of the baby boys that was on Pharaoh's hit list to be drowned in the Nile River.

The great Nile River has its own subplot in the story of God because Moses's own mother puts him in the Nile to save him instead of submerging him! That same river becomes an ongoing object lesson for the Pharaoh ruler of Egypt and that same river still runs in Egypt today, providing water for [280 million people in 11 countries](#).

God delivers His people.

The rescue of this nation, Israel, is its own grand story.

Exodus 2:23-25 NLT Years passed, and the king of Egypt died. But the Israelites continued to groan under their burden of slavery. They cried out for help, and their cry rose up to God. **God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act.

God sends 10 plagues on Egypt to convince Pharaoh to let them go. Each one of the plagues just so happens to correspond to the gods that Egyptians worshipped. God judged Egypt for worshipping false gods. [Ten plagues, ten idols](#). For example, **the first plague, turning the Nile to blood, was a judgment against Apis, the god of the Nile, Isis, goddess of the Nile, and Khnum, guardian of the Nile.** And the plagues begin to do the work of building the faith of the Jews. The Israelites leave with their freedom PLUS all the riches of Egypt. **God promised this would happen when he told Abram,**

Genesis 15:13-14 NLT You can be sure that **your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth.**

God directs His people.

As we make our way through Exodus, we come to chapter 20 where God begins to tell the people, “Here is how you will live!”

Exodus 20:1-3 NLT

Then God gave the people all these instructions: I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. “You must not have any other god but me.

God rescued, then He gives the command.

We obey because He has rescued us, not obey so He will rescue us.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about God's Law – the 10 commandments and hundreds of health and social welfare laws.

The Bible Project does an excellent job describing the what and why there were 613 commandments in the Old Testament or Covenant.

PLAY VIDEO – Bible Project – The Law



Why do you think God gave the LAW to Israel?

Can you think of some common responses people have when given a law to follow?

I believe God gave Israel the commandments for two reasons: one practical, the other spiritual.

Practical: God gave Israel a set of laws that would not only save their lives, but clearly stand out among the other nations that Israel's God was personal, just, and merciful. Other countries were in awe of the relationship that the nation of

Israel had with their God! It has been proven, even in modern times, the nations that use the 10 commandments and other commandments written in the Torah flourished in comparison to the neighboring countries.

Spiritual: To show us that it is impossible to gain perfection by keeping the commandments. They are impossible to completely obey and the caveat, if you break just one of them, you've failed as if you broke all of them. God's perfection could not and cannot be obtained through human efforts.

God dwells among His people, tabernacle, temple,

With God instructing Moses to set up the tabernacle and later David building the first temple. The buildings were just beautiful object lessons for us to remember that God came down and met with us. Yes, God personally met with Moses, then God would come in the form of a cloud hovering over the tabernacle. God designed a special place in the tabernacle, then later the temple called the Holy of Holies and would meet with the High Priest, a mediator in the Old Testament.

All of that would point to the future, when the messiah would come and physically dwell among us like John writes in 1:14.

The Story of God, through Exodus: God delivers, God directs and God dwells. That ultimately takes us to Jesus who did all three!

Jesus is:

The I Am. John 8:58

The lamb. John 1:29

The fulfillment of the Law. We can't keep them.

The tabernacle. He is with us. John 1:14

Greater than Moses. Hebrews 3:3

Jesus fulfilled the law, totally and completely. Yet, as the Apostle Paul said, the Law is a great teacher. It has brought us even today to the point where we must make decisions in trusting God.

Following God's ways is both practical and spiritual: It is practical when God says, "don't..." that He isn't trying to crimp our style or keep us from having fun. When God says, "Don't," it's because He loves us, wants to protect us and keep us from destroying ourselves.

If you've ever made horrible mistakes in your past, you'll realize God has been trying to help us live a godly life! It's spiritual because God not only knows how desperately wicked our hearts can be, He also knows that our heart, our soul,

our will has a way of HARDENING when we turn from Him. Our hearts harden when we run from Him. God continues to pursue, but our hearts can become so hard, so filled with hate, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness or selfishness that it becomes impossible for the Holy Spirit to speak to us and for us to be willing to listen.

My wife, Robin, just recently reminded me of that powerful verse in Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

NOTES

Over half of US Christians believe good works will get them into Heaven

The [American Worldview Inventory 2020 survey](#) conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University found that a majority of people who describe themselves as Christian (52%) accept a “works-oriented” means to God’s acceptance.

Over a third of senior pastors believe 'good people' can earn their way to Heaven:

Week 3 Teaching Outline

Group Session

In this week’s time together, we’ll see how the covenant family line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) becomes a nation while living in Egypt, but also becomes enslaved to the Egyptians. God raises up Moses to lead His people to freedom. After miraculously rescuing His people, God gives His people the law. He also instructs them to build a tabernacle and offer sacrifices so He may dwell among them.

Personal Study

The Christian faith is deeply connected to the family of Abraham. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is also our God. From the lineage of Abraham comes Christ, and through Christ, people of all nations are made happy (blessed). Notice the timeline on the opposite page.

Abraham, approximately 2,000 years before Christ, points us to Christ. Then after Christ was crucified, resurrected, and ascended back into heaven, the New Testament writers referenced Abraham in their letters. During your personal study this week, press in so you can see how the faith and the family of this one man unfolds throughout the Bible, takes us to Christ, and matters for you today.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN: PROMISE AND A PEOPLE

God pursues Abraham, a man from an idol-worshiping family who has no children with his wife and promises that he will be the father of many nations. God promises land to Abraham and assures him that all nations will be blessed through his offspring. God continues to be faithful to this family. He restates the promise to Abraham's son Isaac and grandson Jacob (who is renamed Israel). A famine strikes the promised land, so Jacob and the family move to Egypt where one of Jacob's sons, Joseph, is already there to provide for the family.

WHERE WE'RE HEADED: RESCUE AND LAW

The family becomes a nation while living in Egypt, but also becomes enslaved to the Egyptians. God raises up Moses to lead His people to freedom. During a tenth plague, God strikes dead the firstborn son of everyone living in Egypt, but "passes over" Israel as they put the blood of lambs on their doorposts. After miraculously rescuing His people, God gives His people the law. He also instructs them to build a tabernacle and offer sacrifices so He may dwell among them.

DAY ONE: Salvation By Promise

When the apostle Paul wrote his Letter to the church at Galatia, he was writing to people who were confused on how one becomes a Christian and how one lives as a Christian. **The Galatian believers had received Christ as Lord but were being falsely taught that they also needed to keep the law that God gave to Moses.** (We will look closer at the law next week.)

In the letter, Paul's message was clear, **"You only need Christ!" and he used the promise God gave Abraham to prove his point.**

Look at the timeline on page 12. Which did God give first: the promise to Abraham or the law to Moses? Why do you think that is important?

Read Galatians 3:15-18

Like many preachers, Paul grabbed attention with an illustration. Just as your grand- parents' will cannot be changed after they die, the covenant God

made cannot be changed. In other words, because the promise came before the law, the law does not change the promise. When God promised Abraham “all nations will be blessed by your offspring,” God was announcing the gospel in advance. The offspring that brings the blessing to all nations is Christ.

As was mentioned in the second session, the establishment of the covenant between Abraham and God can be found in Genesis 15. In ancient days, when two people made a covenant, the practice was to take animals and cut them in pieces. Then the parties making the covenant would spread the pieces out on the ground and walk through them together to signify the seriousness of the arrangement. This symbolic action said, if I break this covenant, may I be cut up like this animal was. It was a graphic way to show how significant the agreement was. As both parties walked through the pieces together, they were saying, I promise to fulfill my end of the deal, and if I don't, I am pronouncing judgment on myself. But when it came time for the covenant ritual in Genesis 15, Abraham was asleep (Gen. 15:12,17-18). God walked alone through the sacrifice. He did all the work. Abraham was there, but he did nothing except believe. God alone fulfills the promise. The promise had nothing to do with Abraham's ability or his obedience. It was all about God's grace and faithfulness.

The same is true about salvation. It's all God's work. Sadly, many people don't really believe this. In a culture driven by achievers, many of us think we play a part in our salvation. We can even find it offensive when someone says we had nothing to do with our salvation, that we bring nothing to the table.

A research study by LifeWay Research found that 71 percent of Americans believe they must contribute something to their salvation. And 55 percent of people in evangelical churches believe this as well.⁵ This is tragic because salvation only comes from God. To think we played a part in saving ourselves is not to rely fully on His grace, on Christ. Like Abraham, we were asleep. We were dead in our sins, but God who is rich in mercy made us alive in Christ (Eph. 2:1-5). We could not fulfill our part of the covenant. God is the One who keeps the covenant for us.

William Temple said it well: “The only thing of my very own which I contribute to my redemption is the sin from which I need to be redeemed.”⁶

Have you ever found yourself trying to earn God's favor? Explain.

So you may be wondering, If we are only made His because of the promise that Christ would come, what is the purpose of the law? The apostle Paul anticipated the question and stated that the law came to point us to Christ. We cannot keep the law of God. We needed someone to keep it for us. We need the promise!

Why, then, was the law given? It was added for the sake of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise was made would come.

Galatians 3:19

The law shows us we are sinful and need Christ to rescue us. If we receive Christ, putting our trust in Him, we are heirs of the promise. We belong to Christ and are part of Abraham's family. If you grew up in church, as a young kid you may have sung, "Father Abraham had many sons, many sons had father Abraham, and I am one of them ..." It's a pretty deep song for a six-year-old kid, but it's true. If your faith is in Christ, you are in Abraham's family. It is your faith that makes you right with God, not your race, your social status, or your gender. Only Christ.

There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:28-29

When was the first moment you became aware of your sin and your need for God's grace? Did you respond in faith at that moment? Explain.

DAY TWO: Saved Just Like Abraham

Maybe you have wondered, OK, I get that we are now saved by believing in Christ, but what about those people who lived before Christ came?

Some have thought that perhaps those who lived before Christ were saved by their deeds, and now we are saved by our faith. But that cannot be true, for if someone could be saved by his deeds, then Christ died for nothing. We are saved by looking back to the cross and placing our faith in Christ. Those who lived before Christ were saved by looking forward and placing their faith in God's promise. We see this in Abraham's life. He did not earn God's favor; He simply believed the Lord, and his faith was credited as righteousness (Gen. 15:6).

When you hear the phrase "credited as righteousness," what do you think of? Why?

It's an incredible phrase. When writing to the church at Rome, the apostle Paul referenced Abraham's faith, using this phrase to explain what happens when someone becomes a Christian.

What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about—but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness. Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed. But to the one who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness. Romans 4:1-5

When Abraham placed his faith in God, God declared him to be righteous, meaning that Abraham was justified and made right with God. To be justified and to be made righteous essentially mean the same thing, deriving from the same root word in the biblical language. To help us get a better understanding, Jerry Bridges explained justified this way:

“There’s an old play on the word justified: ‘just-as-if-I’d never sinned.’ But here’s another way of saying it: ‘just-as-if-I’d always obeyed.’ Both are true. The first refers to the transfer of our moral debt to Christ so we’re left with a ‘clean’ ledger, just as if we’d never sinned. The second tells us our ledger is now filled with the perfect righteousness of Christ, so it’s just as if we’d always obeyed.”⁷

When you stop working to earn your salvation, when you stop attempting to stand before God in your own goodness and merit and trust Him instead—you are justified. You are made righteous.

Just as Abraham received righteousness by placing his faith in God, so do we. Not by our own efforts. Only through God.

God declares you to be righteous. What does that mean to you?

Do you know someone trying to be righteous by his or her own efforts? What can you do to show that person the truth?

DAY THREE: Isaac as an Illustration

Perhaps you have heard a guy at church give his “radically saved” testimony. The guy’s story contains elements like drug addiction, random tattoos, laundering millions of dollars, and getting beat in and out of a gang. Maybe you felt that your testimony pales in comparison to his epic story. Yours is more like a testimony parents want their kids to have—a great Christian family, walking with the Lord from a young age, serving others rather than hurting them. More dull than radical. However, every person who knows Jesus has been radically saved. None of us were deader in sin than another, and none of us have been made any more alive than another. We were supernaturally born of God, not because of anything we did but because of His promise.

Have you ever experienced “testimony envy”? Explain.

The apostle Paul used the birth of Isaac as an illustration of what it means to be supernaturally born of God—to be a Christian. If you read this passage without knowing the whole Bible, without knowing the story of Abraham and Isaac, it is crazy confusing. It is hard to grasp even when you do know the story, but if you will press into the illustration, then you will better understand God’s grace.

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, don’t you hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and the other by a free woman. But the one by the slave was born as a result of the flesh, while the one by the free woman was born through promise. These things are being taken figuratively, for the women represent the two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai and bears children into slavery—this is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, Rejoice, childless woman, unable to give birth. Burst into song and shout, you who are not in labor, for the children of the desolate woman will be many, more numerous than those of the woman who has a husband. Now you too, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as then the child born as a result of the flesh persecuted the one born as a result of the Spirit, so also now. But what does the Scripture say? Drive out the slave and her son, for the son of the slave will never be a coheir with the son of the free woman. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of a slave but of the free woman. Galatians 4:21-31

There is a lot going on in this passage, so maybe this chart will help:

THE LAW

Abraham & Hagar

Ishmael

Mt. Sinai “present Jerusalem”

GRACE

Abraham & Sarah

Isaac

Heaven (Jerusalem above)

Abraham and Sarah longed for a child. God promised them that they would have one, but as time passed, Sarah lost hope. In her impatience, she told her husband to sleep with one of her servants, Hagar. Abraham agreed to the plan,

resulting in Hagar becoming pregnant. Hagar bore Abraham a son, and he named him Ishmael.

At this point, some might think God would write Abraham and Sarah off for not believing the promise, for taking matters into their own hands. But God did what He said He would do despite Abraham and Sarah's lack of faith. Though they were faithless, He remained faithful. Years passed, and Sarah finally got pregnant. The couple named their son Isaac.

The two conceptions were very different from one another. Abraham and Hagar conceived not by trusting God, but by trusting themselves. They conceived in their own efforts. They couldn't wait for God's promise to be fulfilled. On the other hand, Abraham and Sarah conceived only because of God's promise. They were past the child-bearing years, so only in God's power were they able to have a child. It was supernatural in that it was the work of God, not the work of man.

The two children were very different from one another. Ishmael was the son of a slave. Isaac was the son of God's promise.

If you are a Christian, then you are a child of the promise and free. You are not a slave. You have been born of God. You are a miracle because you were dead in your sins, and God made you alive in Him. You were supernaturally brought to God because of His grace, not because you earned it.

Do you live as a child of the promise or as a slave? What's the evidence?

DAY FOUR: Abraham's Example

As you have seen thus far this week, the apostle Paul took readers back to both Abraham and Isaac in his letter to churches. He was not the only New Testament writer to do so. Matthew, James, Peter, and the writer of Hebrews mention Abraham as well. In both Hebrews and James, we see Abraham's faith held up as example. We have learned that Abraham was made right with God because of God, that he was not perfect and struggled just like we do. But we also see what faith looks like in this world, how we should live now that we have been made right with God. Today, study several of these passages and wrestle with the questions that follow.

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and set out for a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of

promise, living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, coheirs of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. Hebrews 11:8-10

Abraham left everything to obey God. He traded familiarity for the unknown. He left comfort to follow the Comforter. What have you given up to follow God? What has your faith cost you?

Verse 10 gives us insight into what motivated Abraham to give up so much: “For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” He was looking to the next life, not this one. The only way we can give up things in this world is if we believe in and long for the next one.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. He received the promises and yet he was offering his one and only son, the one to whom it had been said, Your offspring will be traced through Isaac. He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead; therefore, he received him back, figuratively speaking. Hebrews 11:17-19

If you are a parent, you know this story is staggering. God tested Abraham to see who was really on the throne of his life. Was it his son or was it God? Abraham lifted the knife to his boy because “he considered God able to raise someone from the dead” (Heb. 11:19). In other words, Abraham was not sure how this would work out, but he knew God was good, trusted Him, and believed if Isaac was killed that God could raise him from the dead.

As we move forward to the next session, Genesis 12 will show us that God was going to bless all the nations through one man—a man willing to leave his community, his security, and his identity. He trusted God for all three instead of foolishly attempting to earn them on his own.

God not only wants us to give up sinful things to follow Him, but He also wants to be above the good things in our lives. What good things must you constantly be sure don't become gods in your heart?

But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works. You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe—and they shudder.

Senseless person! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless? Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works in offering Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was made complete, and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God's friend. James 2:18-23

The apostle Paul pointed out that Abraham was justified by his faith. What you just read in the Book of James seems to say that Abraham was justified by his works, so this can seem confusing or contradictory. You have to look at the context. Mull over James 2:18 once again: "I will show you faith from my works." Works never lead to faith, but faith always leads to works. If we have true faith, our lives show it. Abraham believed God, received God's righteousness, and then showed he had true faith by being willing to offer his son. Many have said, "We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone." True faith is always accompanied by works.

When you look at your life, where do you see works showing your faith? Explain.

Scriptures

Genesis 37:2-4 NLT

This is the account of Jacob and his family. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he often tended his father's flocks. He worked for his half brothers, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing. Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe. But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him.

Galatians 3:19

Why, then, was the law given? It was added for the sake of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise was made would come.

Galatians 3:28-29

There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.

Romans 4:1-5

What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about—but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness. Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed. But to the one who does not work, but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness.

Galatians 4:21-31

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James 2:18-23

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Week 3 Teaching Outline

Three Ways God Reveals His Character

1. God delivers.
2. God directs.
3. God dwells.

How Do We See Jesus in the Book of Exodus?

1. Jesus is the I AM.
2. Jesus is the Lamb.
3. Jesus is the fulfillment of the law.
4. Jesus is the tabernacle.
5. Jesus is the greater Moses.

Group Questions

Discussion Guide

1. Share a quick summary of highlights from Weeks 1–2. Why is this week an important point in redemptive history and the unfolding story of God?

Read Exodus 3:13–15 aloud.

13 Then Moses asked God, “If I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what should I tell them?” 14 God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” 15 God also said to Moses, “Say this to the Israelites: The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever; this is how I am to be remembered in every generation.

Exodus 3:13–15

2. What is the significance of God’s name as revealed to Moses, I AM?

Read Exodus 2:24–25 aloud.

24 God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 and God saw the Israelites, and God knew.

Exodus 2:24–25

3. Why did God send plagues on the Egyptians?

4. What are some ways God delivered His people from Egypt? How does God still deliver?

Look up Exodus 20:1–17 and read it aloud.

5. How is “Do not have other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3) a gracious command? Explain.

6. How is the first command the key to everything else?

7. What are some things we worship besides God? Which of these causes the most struggle in your life? Why?

8. What was the purpose of the tabernacle?

8. Of the ways Jesus is shown in the Book of Exodus, which is most meaningful for you? Why?

Look back over the personal study.

9. What was especially meaningful or helpful in understanding the story of God and your life with Christ?

- Day 1: Salvation By Promise
- Day 2: Saved Just Like Abraham
- Day 3: Isaac as an Illustration
- Day 4: Abraham's Example
- Day 5: Reflection

10. How does the takeaway affect your view of Scripture? How will you respond to this part of the story?

8-week overview

CREATION AND FALL

The self-sufficient and eternal God lovingly creates a perfect creation with humanity as His crowning work. Falling for Satan's temptation, humanity rebels and sin enters the world bringing death, pain, and strife. Instead of giving up on humanity, God promises that from the womb of a woman will come the One who will crush Satan's head.

PROMISE AND A PEOPLE

God pursues Abraham, a man from an idol-worshipping family who has no children with his wife and promises that he will be the father of many nations. God promises land to Abraham and assures him that all nations will be blessed through his offspring. God continues to be faithful to this family. He restates the promise to Abraham's son Isaac and grandson Jacob (who is renamed Israel). A famine strikes the promised land, so Jacob and the family move to Egypt where one of Jacob's sons, Joseph, is already there to provide for the family.

RESCUE AND LAW

The family becomes a nation while living in Egypt, but also becomes enslaved to the Egyptians. God raises up Moses to lead His people to freedom. During a tenth plague, God strikes dead the firstborn son of everyone living in Egypt, but "passes over" Israel as they put the blood of lambs on their doorposts. After miraculously rescuing His people, God gives His people the law. He also instructs them to build a tabernacle and offer sacrifices so He may dwell among them.

LAND AND KINGDOM

God brings His people, through their leader Joshua, into the promised land. When God's people worship the gods of the nation's surrounding them, God disciplines them through the attacks of surrounding nations. God raises up judges (or rulers) to rescue His people and call them to repentance. They beg for a king to be like other nations, and God gives them Saul. God raises up a new king, David, and promises that his kingdom will never end. The family that turned into a nation is now a kingdom. David's son, Solomon, builds a temple to replace the tabernacle.

EXILE AND RETURN

Solomon takes foreign wives and allows their foreign gods to clutter the land. His son continues the line of rulers, and the kingdom is divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). Prophets confront the people, but they persist in their idolatry. The Northern Kingdom falls to Assyria and the Southern Kingdom is carried away into Babylonian captivity. When they are freed, they return to a nation and kingdom far less glorious than before and are still unable to keep their promises.

JESUS

A descendant of Adam, Abraham, and David, Jesus is the One who crushes the head of Satan, will bless all nations, and reigns forever. Jesus, the God-Man, enters humanity through the womb of a virgin, perfectly obeys the law that we could never obey, dies as the once-and-for-all sacrifice for our sins, and rises from the dead, conquering Satan, sin, and death. He inaugurates His eternal kingdom and secures salvation for His people.

A NEW PEOPLE

After His ascension to heaven, Jesus sends the promised Holy Spirit and His disciples turn the world upside down preaching the good news of Jesus. In the midst of intense persecution, the gospel spreads, and Gentiles and Jews form a new people. Churches are planted in cities, and apostles write letters encouraging and instructing the people in the grace of Christ and their response to His grace.

A BETTER BEGINNING

A time is coming where God's people—people from every tribe, tongue, and nation who have been rescued by Christ—will enjoy Him and His rule forever in perfect harmony. Satan will be crushed, the effects of sin will be reversed, and all things will be made new.

This first week will ease you into the story with just four scriptures setting the stage for our epic journey. Weeks 2–8 will dive deeper into each day's personal study. Ideally, you'll have time to read one passage of Scripture each day for four days leading up to the first group session, plus one day of personal reflection. If you don't have the full week or you didn't receive your book in advance, that's OK—read what you can before your first discussion begins.