

Finding our footing in the book of Exodus

Exodus within Scripture and Scripture within Exodus

There are several ways to describe the overall drama of scripture, but a common one is to talk about it in six “acts” through which God keeps the story going.¹

1. Creation
2. Fall
3. God’s promise of salvation
4. Promise of God fulfilled in Christ
5. Holy Spirit and the mission of the church
6. Return of Christ and the new creation

Given this generalized description of God’s story, the book of Exodus could easily be considered “Act 3.” It is a story of God promising and then fulfilling salvation - an act he will do repeatedly. And yet, elements of each of those acts can be found within the book of Exodus!

1. Creation is alluded to in Exodus 1
2. Pharaoh shows the evil and the hardness of heart, but so too do the Israelites reveal an idolatrous heart with the golden calf.
3. Explicitly promised by God and fulfilled in chapter 14 (Song of Rejoicing in chapter 15)
4. The very idea of redemption is Exodus!
5. Israel will be priesthood in midst of nations (Priests as those who represent God to the people and who bring the people to God). The church is called to do that in midst of all nations. People of God shaped for the mission of God.²
6. New Creation is implied in the tabernacle. This is where heaven and earth come together, and God chooses to dwell in the midst of his people.

The God of Exodus

What we will see repeatedly, is that just as God reveals himself in Exodus he also reveals through Jesus. The God of creation wants to be known by his people, wants to redeem them from slavery, and wants to dwell with them. How do you see that recapitulated in the life of Jesus?

So, who is this God? This is the question that Pharaoh asks in Exodus 5, and God responds by doing. And in the gospels, people ask the same thing of Jesus (Mark 4). This is a good reminder through this whole study, that this is question we too should ask. Who is our God whom we meet in scripture?

¹ A great source to explore this more is in *The Drama of Scripture* by Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen.

² An idea Christopher Wright writes about often. See his book *The Mission of God or*, especially relevant here, his commentary on Exodus.

Division of chapters: while there are several ways to divide the book, this one is based on Dr. Christopher Wright's work and focuses on three significant actions of God.

1. Chapters 1-15 **Redemption**

2. Chapters 16-24 **Covenant**

3. Chapters 25-40 **Presence** (God choosing to belong to the people and move in with them)

Throughout this study we will keep asking, "Where are we?" Where are we in the story of God revealing himself to his people? Where are we in the flow of the narrative in Exodus? Where are we geographically (in the rich land of Egypt or in the dry, harsh land of the wilderness)? And then we can start to ask, "How is this God of Israel revealed in Exodus also revealed in Jesus?"

To be ready for the discussion next week: Read Exodus 1–3 (what do you learn about the character of God?)