

Israel's time in the wilderness is of great importance to Christians because of the way Christ fulfilled so many of themes and promises throughout the narrative. God's chosen people, the Israelites have been set free from their slavery but are now in the wilderness and in the process of learning what it means to be God's people before His plans come to completion. Does that sound a little familiar? For us, it's often representative of the fact that we were all born as slaves to sin but because of Jesus' great love and sacrifice we are free. We, too, are in our own wilderness as we have access to freedom but await the completion of God's promises and plans.

New to daily devotionals? Here are a few tips for this series:

- The Old Testament can sometimes feel distant and confusing. Remember that if we wish to truly understand the message of the New Testament, we must know the message of the Old Testament—this rings especially true for the Israelites' time in the wilderness! Take each part little by little and ask God, "How would you have me know you more deeply because of this Scripture?"
- Resist the urge to jump to application. Before you ask "What does this have to do with me?" try asking some of the following questions:
 - What was the experience like for the people in the story? What drove them to make the decisions they did? What cultural and social realities might be different from my lived experience?
 - What attributes of God do I learn about from this text?
 - Once you've asked these questions, *then* ask how the passage might change the way you pray, think, speak and act.

A Little bit of Background...

You might remember Abraham from the book of Genesis—he was the one who God chose to make a covenant promise with, that all people on earth would be blessed through his descendants. Abraham's family grew and grew until a massive famine hit the land and Abraham's son, Joseph, played a vital part in saving many people from the crisis. It was at this moment that the Israelites became Hebrew immigrants in Egypt. They were welcomed at first, but the Egyptians began to blame the Israelites for their misfortunes and they became slaves in Egypt. It's here that Exodus chapter one begins...

Monday, February 11th

Read Exodus 1:1-2:25. This is the account of Israel before Moses came on the scene and the story of Moses' early life. Consider the following:

- What would it have been like to be a Hebrew living in Egypt during this time? What purposes do you think Pharaoh's plans of slavery and genocide were serving from his perspective? What do you think the Israelites thought of God's promises during this time? His character?
- What do you notice about Moses' identity as both a Hebrew and Egyptian? What significance do you notice in the naming of people?
- Why might it be important that God hears the groaning of His people and is concerned? How might that influence the Israelites thought of God's promises and character?
- How might this passage change the way you pray, think, speak and act?

Tuesday, February 12th

Read Exodus 3:1-4:31. This is the account of Moses' meetings with God as he is called into leadership over the Israelites.

- What purpose do you think this "scene" in the life of Moses serves? How would you expect Moses would respond to God? What do his responses reveal about himself?
- What is interesting about the way God speaks to Moses and what He says? What is astounding about God declaring Himself as I AM?
- What are Moses' roadblocks to serving God? How does God respond to His roadblocks? Is God's anger surprising to you? Why or why not?
- How might this passage change the way you pray, think, speak and act?

Wednesday, February 13th

Read Exodus 5:1-11:10. This is the account of Pharaoh's confrontation with the Israelites and the famous "plagues" passages of Scripture.

- What do you notice about Moses' state of mind and faith over the course of these passages? How does he grow and change?
- What do you notice about Pharaoh and his reactions? What do they indicate he believes about God? About himself?
- What similarities do you see between Jesus and Moses throughout the text?
- How might this passage change the way you pray, think, speak and act?

Thursday, February 14th

Read Exodus 12:1-13:22. This is the account of the Passover—the tradition that celebrates the exodus of the Israelite people. For the Israelites, liberation was the defining moment in their history—this tiny community of people had become a free nation because God was beginning to fulfill His promise that he made with Abraham.

- Much of the Passover story foreshadows Christ's coming. How many can you find?
- What do we know about this story? Why has God's judgment come at this point? How do you react to His judgment?
- Three practices came out of these passages: Passover, the Consecration of the Firstborn and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. How do these point back to the story of the exodus? How do they point towards Christ?
- How might this passage change the way you pray, think, speak and act?

Friday, February 15th

Read Exodus 14:1-15:19. Think back to Paul's message from last weekend about crossing the Red Sea.

- How does the context of Exodus 1-13 enhance the message you heard last weekend?
- How does Exodus 14 complete the story of Pharaoh and the hardening of his heart?
- How have you seen Moses' confidence and credibility change over time? Where have you seen God's faithfulness throughout the story?
- What attributes of God are shown through Exodus 15, the Song of Moses?
- How might this passage change the way you pray, think, speak and act?



DEVO | February 9/10