**Biblical Theology**

Lesson 6 – A Holy Nation (Exodus - Joshua)

1. If Genesis 1-2 reveals God as the Creator and Genesis 3-11 reveals God as merciful in not wiping out all rebels, and Genesis 12-50 reveals God as Elector and Promise Giver, then Exodus-Joshua reveals God as the Redeemer and Lawgiver.
2. Exodus – Joshua continues with the story of Abraham’s descendants and shows how God brings about the land promise as well as the seed promise that He had given to Abraham. Moses is central to this section as the one God calls to bring His people out of Egypt and he leads them to the cusp of the Promised Land. Joshua also is highlighted as Moses’ successor and the one who actually leads Israel in the conquest of the Promised Land.
3. The book of Exodus tells the story of God redeeming the Hebrews from Egypt through Moses. God demonstrates His power over Egypt and Pharaoh through the plagues, including the institution of the Passover at the final plague, and leads them through the Red Sea and to Mount Sinai. There, the people tremble at the thunderous and powerful glory of God who as for Moses to be their mediator (Exod. 20:18-20; Deut 5:4-5). Moses delivers the law of God to the people of God. This is the center of the book of Exodus as God consecrates Israel as His own and gives the blueprint for the tabernacle (Exod. 25-31). Israel shows their own sinfulness in the golden calf incident (Exod. 32), but Moses as mediator intercedes on their behalf and sees the glory of Yahweh (Exod. 33). The covenant is renewed (Exod. 34) and the people now know that that have a true mediator who is both lawgiver and intercessor. Exodus ends with the tabernacle being built as well as the priestly clothes to be used in the tabernacle and once erected, the glory of God fills the tabernacle (Exod. 35-40). God is dwelling in the midst of a people He has called to be a holy nation and a royal priesthood in order to establish His kingdom on earth (Exod. 19:4-6).
4. The book of Leviticus emphasizes the absolute holiness of God and how just a little contamination forbids one from entering into God’s holy presence. These instructions though carried out by the Levitical priests, are given to the people by the mediator Moses (Lev 1:1; 27:34). These instructions remind Israel of their consecration by God and how they are to be a holy people, as well as how they can be restored to holiness if they become contaminated and that is by animal sacrifice and/or ritual washing with water. The central theme of the book is Leviticus 19:2 which says, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.” This is reiterated in Leviticus 11:44-45, 20:7, and 21:6-8. Willem VanGemeren says, “Though God dwells in His holy tabernacle, He requires His people in their cultic acts and rituals, in their communal life, and in their private lives to be a holy and pure people. The laws of impurities and of holiness remind the people constantly of the divinely established distinctions. Israel had to learn to respond to their covenant God in all areas of life: cultic, dietary, personal relations, and work.”
5. The book of Numbers shows how the one man Abraham is now a people of over 2 million, continuing the expansion of the seed promise and they are to be ordered in a certain manner as they leave Sinai and march toward the Promised Land. The Israelites show themselves to be grumblers and complainers and ultimately fearful to enter in and conquer the Promised Land. Nevertheless, God is merciful in that though the first generation will not enter the land as their punishment, He will preserve them in the wilderness until they die out. The first generation dies out and the 2nd generation is numbered (Num. 26) and the various regulations on sacrifices, vows, etc. is re-iterated to the new generation (Num. 28-30) and there is some settling on the borders of the Promised Land (Num. 32).
6. The book of Deuteronomy is a renewal of the Mosaic covenant with the 2nd generation (Deut. 4-5). Moses gives a series of speeches to the people of Israel in which he lays out God’s blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (Deut. 28) and he encourages the people to respond to Yahweh in faith and obedience not only for their sake, but for the sake of their future generations. Joshua is declared to be Moses’ successor and Moses himself, as great a prophet and mediator he was who spoke to God face-to-face, is not allowed to enter the Promised Land because of his own personal sin.
7. The book of Joshua details the conquest of the land. It also shows the holiness of God and the necessity for the people to remain holy in that when there is sin in the camp, they are defeated by the inhabitants of the land (Josh. 7). When they are obedient, they experience success and victory (Josh. 6). The Israelites ultimately drive out the inhabitants in a general way (Josh. 11:23; 21:43-45) so that the land is theirs, but each tribe has more work to do to drive out remaining pockets of Canaanites in their inheritance (Josh. 17:13). Nearing his death, Joshua charges the leaders to remain faithful to Yahweh (Josh 23:15-16), the people renew the covenant with Yahweh at Shechem and are told to choose between either the world or Yahweh (Josh. 24). A choice is ever present before each generation whom they will serve. If they serve Yahweh, there will be blessing. If they serve any other, there will be cursing for failing to keep covenant with their God.
8. When we look at how Exodus-Joshua fits into the overall story of Scripture [Redemptive-History], we see:
   1. Israel as God’s Son. Yahweh calls Israel His “firstborn son” (Exod 4:22-23). The Lord cares for His son in providing for and protecting him in the wilderness (Deut. 32:10-14). Jesus is the Son of God (Matt 3:17; 16:16; 21:33-39; Mark 1:1; 3:11; 15:39; Luke 1:32, 35; John 20:31; Heb 1:2) and is provided for and protected in the wilderness (Matt. 4:11)
   2. The Presence of God. The presence of God was symbolized by the tabernacle. The Israelites carried the tabernacle with them wherever they went in the journey toward the Promised Land. It was where God met with Moses. Jesus is called “Immanuel” which means “God with us” (Matt 1:23). He is said to be God “tabernacling” among mankind (John 1:14). He promises His continued presence with His people into eternity (Matt. 28:20) and God’s presence is manifest within His people via the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26-27; 16:7-11).
   3. Offices of Prophet & Priest. The office of prophet in the Old Testament points forward to the work of Jesus Christ as prophet. A prophet’s job was to speak forth the Word of God, whether it was a word for the present or a word concerning the future. Jesus does both. He reveals the Father (John 1:18), is the Word (John 1:1), is the one who spoke through the prophets of old (1 Pet. 1:10-12), and speaks what the Father reveals (John 15:15).   
      The priests of old were intercessors from man to God, who offered sacrifices to God in order to bring reconciliation for their sins. Jesus intercedes on our behalf (Heb 7:25) and He is able to do that because He offered Himself as the spotless sacrifice (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:14, 28) to reconcile us to God (Heb. 2:17).
   4. Atonement. The Israelites were taught that there needed to be a death whenever sin occurred. They were taught the need for a substitute by placing their hand on an animal and that animal being sacrificed in their place. Thus, daily and yearly they saw with their eyes the heinousness of sin and the depths of what it took for the holy justice of God to be satisfied.   
      Christ substitutes Himself in our place and becomes a curse for us (2 Cor. 5:21; Gal 3:13). In the bloody cross of Christ, we see the heinousness of sin and the depths of what it took for the holy justice of God to be satisfied (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10).
   5. Exodus Paradigm. The gospel according to Matthew structures Jesus’ life based on the Exodus. There is an evil ruler who are causing children to be killed (Exod 1:15-22; Matt 1:13-18). Both involve Egypt (Matt 2:15). Both involve a passage through water (Red Sea [1 Cor. 10:2]; Baptism of Jesus). Jesus’ 40 days in the wilderness recalls Israel’s 40 years in the wilderness where both encounter temptation. There is a journey to a mountain where God reveals His glory (Mt. Sinai; Sermon on Mount). Jesus in His earthly life recapitulates Israel’s earthly life in the Exodus and wilderness journey. The Promised Land represented rest for Israel (Exod. 33:14; Deut. 3:20; 12:9-10; 25:19; Josh 1:13-15; 21:44; 23:1). Jesus leads us into His eternal rest in the New Heavens and Earth (Heb. 4:1-16).   
      The church is also patterned on the Exodus, but explicitly warned not to be like the 1st generation (1 Cor. 10:1-17). One writer puts it like this: “Just as Israel had gone through the Exodus, went into the wilderness and ate with God; so Paul brings the Corinthians through the Exodus, into the wilderness and to the table of God. If we eat with God then we cannot sit at a table with an idol.”
9. In sum, Jesus is the prophet greater than Moses who reveals Himself as lawgiver in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) as well as intercessor (Heb. 7:25). Jesus is the High Priest greater than the Levitical high priests (Heb. 5:1-10; 7:1-28). Jesus is the spotless lamb who actually makes atonement for sin, whereas the blood of bulls and goats could not (Heb 10:1-14). Jesus is the faithful Son of God who went to Egypt and came out, was faithful in the wilderness, and entered the Promised Land of rest. All of this Jesus accomplishes so that God may dwell with His people and His people may be in His presence. Jesus is the true and faithful Israel, whereas the Israel of old failed. Exodus through Joshua becomes the pattern after which Jesus comes and fulfills that pattern on behalf of the New Israel, the Church.
10. Since Jesus has fulfilled all these thematic strands, types, paradigms, and institutions, is it any wonder that Old Testament language for God’s people is applied to the New Testament people of God? The Church is the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) who is a kingdom of priests and holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9) who presents themselves as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1) as well as the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15) through the Jesus, our true sacrifice. And so we serve as prophets to our God through Christ in proclaiming Him to the world (1 Cor. 1:23; 9:16; 2 Cor. 10:16; Gal 1:16; Eph. 3:8; 2 Tim 4:2). We serve as priests to our God through Christ in interceding for the world (Rom. 15:16)