



A Distinctive People (Exodus 19-40)
Term 1 2024

Bible Study Guides 1-4

Study 1 – “Kingdom of Priests”, Exodus 19:1-25

1. Pray
2. Conversation Starter: What moment in your life do you consider to be a foundational, identity-shaping moment for you?
3. What do you know about Exodus 1-18? What are the key events?
4. What role does the Exodus story play in the rest of the Bible?

5. Read Exodus 19:1-25

6. What in particular stands out to you in this passage?

7. How would you define the words 'holy' and 'priest'?

8. What would it mean for Israel to be God's 'treasured possession' and 'a kingdom of priests, a holy nation'?

9. Why do you think God chooses to appear in this way (clouds, smoke, fire, earthquakes)?

10. Why does God not allow the people to touch the mountain, and give so many warnings to the people so they don't force their way through and try to see him?

11. How does this story connect to the gospel message revealed in Jesus Christ?

12. Read 1 Peter 2:4-12

13. Who now is the kingdom of priests, the holy nation and why?

14. What now is the kingdom of priests, the holy nation, meant to do?

15. 'A kingdom of priests, a holy nation' is a corporate identity, not merely an individual one. What is the significance of this?

16. How can we (our growth group, our church) practically live out this identity as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation?

17. Pray

Study 2 – “10 Commandments, Part 1”, Exodus 20:1-12

1. Pray

2. Conversation Starter: Why do you think the word 'commandment' has, for many, become a negative word?

3. Would you be able to list the 10 commandments, off by heart, in the correct order?

4. Read Exodus 20:1-12

5. What, in particular, stands out to you in this passage?

6. What is the significance of the placing of v. 2 immediately before the commandments? How does this shape our understanding of the meaning and purpose of the commandments?

7. The great Reformer John Calvin wrote these famous words 'The human heart is a perpetual idol factory.' Do you agree?

8. What, do you think, are the main idols of our contemporary Australian culture?

9. What would you say to the person who thinks that all religions are worshipping the same one god, just under different names?

10. Why do you think the Sabbath is so important that it is included in the 10 commandments?

11. Why is 'Honouring your father and mother' so important it makes it into the 10 commandments?

12. Read Matt 22:34-40 and Galatians 5:1-6, 13-18

13. What is the role of the 10 commandments, and the Old Testament law in general, for Christians?

14. What is the relationship between the commandments and our identity as a 'kingdom of priests' (chapter 19)?

15. How can we practically identify and expel idols from our lives?

16. How can we rightly keep the Sabbath in a Christ-shaped way?

17. How can we practically honour our parents? Or if we are parents, how can we make it easier for our children to honour us?

18. Pray

Study 3 – “10 Commandments, Part 2”, Exodus 20:13-17

1. Pray

2. Conversation Starter: If you were going to start your own nation called [YOUR NAME]istan, what would you set up as its core ethical values? What laws would be in place to ensure those values are maintained?

3. What ethical values are uncovered by the 10 commandments?

4. Remember back to last study, what is the significance of v. 2? – What light does it shed on the motivation to obey the law?

5. Read Exodus 20:13-17

6. What, in particular, stands out to you in this passage?

7. Which commandment do you find most confronting?

8. Where or how does Jesus affirm these commandments in his teaching?

9. Read Matt 5:21-24

10. How can anger be counted as murder? In what ways can we deal with our anger?

11. If you found out a friend of yours was cheating on their spouse, what would you do? Why?

12. Read Matt 5:27-30
13. Significant sin, including adultery, often starts with little things and grows little bit by little bit. How might we get as drastic as Jesus does (v29-30!) with those little compromises in our life? *If you need help in this area, please reach out to a trusted, mature Christian friend, or one of your ministers.*
14. What do the following proverbs show about the true nature of lying? (Read Pro 12:19; 12:22; 14:25; 19:9; 21:6; 26:28 29:12) Share some ways we can ensure we tell the truth with love.
15. Melissa Kruger in her book *The Envy of Eve: Finding Contentment in a Covetous World* writes:
We usually covet in the areas where we compare ourselves to others the most. We compare colleges, boyfriends, weddings, children, parents, homes, jobs, trials, gifts, ministries, grandchildren, health, and numerous other items. Usually, at the heart of this comparison trap is the mistaken belief that another person is getting it all while we are getting second best. (84)

In what areas are you most likely to compare to others?
How might this affect your relationship with those people?

16. If you are experiencing covetousness, what could you do to counteract it? (see for example Phil 4:4-7).

17. What should we do if we trust in Christ, but we feel unable to keep his commandments?

18. Pray

Study 4 – “Justice”, Exodus 23:1-13

1. Pray

2. Conversation Starter: What’s an example of justice being done?
What’s an example of injustice in this world?

3. Read Exodus 23:1-13

4. What, in particular, stands out to you from this passage?

5. How would you define ‘justice’ from this passage?

6. What do we learn about God in this passage?

7. How might we today ensure that we ‘do not oppress a foreigner’ (v. 9)?

8. How would you answer someone who makes the accusation that the Bible condones slavery (see v. 12)?

9. What would motivate someone to act unjustly?

10. Are there any ways you have acted unjustly that you need to repent of?

11. How is Jesus the hope for both those suffering injustice and those who’ve acted unjustly?

12. Read this quote by Tom Holland, an historian who specialised in the study of Ancient Greece and Rome. He reflects on how it felt to be an atheist reading this ancient history:

The more years I spent immersed in the study of classical antiquity, so the more alien I increasingly found it. The values of Leonidas, whose people had practised a peculiarly murderous form of eugenics and trained their young to kill uppity Untermenschen [a person considered racially or socially inferior] by night, were nothing that I recognised as my own; nor were those of Caesar, who was reported to have killed a million Gauls, and enslaved a million more. It was not just the extremes of callousness that unsettled me, but the complete lack of any sense that the poor or the weak might have the slightest intrinsic value. Why did I find this disturbing? Because, in my morals and ethics, I was not a Spartan or a Roman at all. That my belief in God had faded over the course of my teenage years did not mean that I had ceased to be Christian. For a millennium and more, the civilisation into which I had been born was Christendom. Assumptions that I had grown up with – about how a society should properly be organised, and the principles that it should uphold – were not bred of classical antiquity, still less of ‘human nature’, but very distinctively of that civilisation’s Christian past. So profound has been the impact of Christianity on the development of Western civilisation that it has come to be hidden from view. It is the incomplete revolutions which are remembered; the fate of those which triumph is to be taken for granted. (Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind)

Do you agree with the contention that the view that the poor have intrinsic value is based upon Judeo-Christian theology?

13. How might we use this contention in our evangelism?

14. Pray