



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V24 N23

June 5, 2022

## WAY OUT

“Preamble to Israel’s Constitution”

Exodus 19:1-6

### THIS WEEK’S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Salvation by Grace

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

**Ephesians 2:8-9**



Why do faith and boasting not mix?

When traveling west from Denver International Airport on Interstate 70 into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado strange things begin to happen. Your aspiration quickens as the air gets thinner. Your ears may begin to “pop” as you climb in altitude. Your pulse races from fear of going off the road over a cliff. Some will experience “elevation sickness” with symptoms of headaches or nausea. Even your car engine groans due to the extra strain of battling gravity. Significant elevations cannot be ignored. Mountains make us pause.

In the saga of the Exodus, the people of Israel left the lowlands of Egypt. They were led by God to a Promised Land of milk and honey. Before they experienced this state of bliss, they were confronted by mountains. “The Lord may have chosen to use this setting [Mount Sinai] for the giving of the law for two reasons. First, the dominating peaks of this region put mortals in their place. On the Nile Delta, the highest things on the horizon were all made by mortals, permitting, even encouraging, mortals to think more of themselves than they ought; but here in the southern Sinai, people are appropriately humbled by the magnificent terrain shaped by the hand of God. Here humans are inclined to feel as small as they are, with attitudes perfectly positioned to receive a message from God. In addition to that, the southern Sinai also facilitated understanding of a mortal’s total dependence on the Lord. A lack of rain and other natural resources forced Israel to turn to God for survival. The few miracles mentioned in Exodus and Numbers must only be examples of the divine intervention necessary to sustain God’s people in this place for nearly one year. Thus God may have selected Mount Sinai for this special moment in Israel’s history because it provided a physical context that shaped a receptive

audience for what he had to say” (John A. Beck, *Zondervan Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 176-177).

Moses had a long history with this mountain (Ex. 3:1, 12; 4:27; 18:5). Mountains are mentioned 48 times in Exodus. All but one of the mentions refer to Mount Sinai/Mount Horeb. The people of Israel will spend almost an entire year at the foot of this mountain. They will learn much about God while gazing upward. Much more will be learned about themselves as Moses frequently comes down from the mountain to challenge them with God’s laws. The grandeur of God on the high mountain will challenge the grandiosity of a latent self-sufficiency fostered by Egypt. The spectacular display of God’s power on the mountain will outshine any displays of individual superiority. Humility experienced in the alpine will evaporate the accumulated hubris of all things urban. God saved his people by removing them from a place of enemy territory and brought them to himself in a stark, mountainous range. Before God gave the people a *Law* or a *Land*, he brought them to himself. Exodus 19 brings the salvation of God to a physical and literary climax. The mountain of God served as a constant reminder to the people that God alone can save. God saved the people from someone else and brought them to himself at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:4). The covenant with God (Ex. 19:5) came after the salvation of God (Ex. 19:4). The people of Israel did not ascend to God by climbing a self-erected pyramid. Rather, God gathered his people to himself on “eagles’ wings” and descended onto a mountain of his creation to reveal his holiness and grandeur. God gets all the credit when it comes to salvation.

“Great things are done when men and mountains meet; This is not done by jostling in the street.” – William Blake



## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

---

### Read Exodus 19:1-6

*1 On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt – on that very day – they came to the Desert of Sinai. 2 After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.*

*3 Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle the words “day” in v. 1 and draw an arrow connecting them.
- Underline each use of the word “desert” in vv. 1-2.
- Double underline each use of the word “mountain” in vv. 2-3.
- Draw a line connecting the two names given to the deity who spoke to Moses in v. 3.
- Draw a line connecting the two names given to the people following Moses in v. 3.
- Draw a box around each of the actions of God found in v. 4.
- Underline the conditional clause found in v. 5.
- Place brackets around each phrase that shows possession in v. 5.
- Underline each description of Israel’s identity in v. 6.
- Double underline the recipients of this message from the LORD found in v. 6.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about \_\_\_\_\_.”



## DIG DEEPER

---

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. According to Exodus 19:1-2, when did the Israelites arrive at Mount Sinai and how short might the journey have possibly been (see Ex. 5:3)?
2. What kind of history did Moses have with this mountain (see Ex. 3:1, 12; 4:27; 18:5)?
3. Why do you think God now used a mountain to speak to Moses (Ex. 19:3), when he had spoken to Moses earlier without a mountain (consider Ex. 19:9, 16, 18-21)?
4. Why use two names to describe the people camped in front of the mountain (Ex. 19:3)?
5. What is meant by the imagery of being carried on eagles' wings?
6. How is Exodus 19:4 an expression of salvation by grace?
7. Exodus 19:5 is the introduction of what will be known as the Mosaic Covenant. What are the conditions of this covenant?
8. What are the rewards of this covenant?
9. Describe any limitations included in this Mosaic Covenant according to Exodus 19:5-6.
10. Israel has a special relationship with the LORD (Ex. 19:4-6). How do Christians participate in a special relationship with the LORD (see 1 Peter 2:9-10)?

### Commentary On The Text

The book of Exodus is not just the “origin story” of the people of God. The revelation of the “God of the people” is perhaps the more central import of Exodus. The first eighteen chapters have shown the work of God rescuing his people from oppression. Thankfully the story of God does not end there. “Exodus 19 is the theological and literary pivot of Exodus. Nowhere do we find a fuller revelation of God in relation to the people. In the preceding chapters Israel had been ‘let go’ from serving the pharaoh so that they might serve/worship the Lord. Here they serve/worship at the place of Moses’ original calling and receive their own call to be God’s ‘kingdom of priests’ to the world (chs. 25–31; 35–40)” (James K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, 170).

God brings his people from slavery unto himself (Ex. 19:4). After this miraculous salvation, God brings his covenant and additional blessings for a people who are charged to faithfully worship and serve him (Ex. 19:5–6). Moses delivers this message to the people (Ex. 19:7) and the people gladly accept this challenge (Ex. 19:8) even before they understand the full details of this agreement. “The six verses (Ex. 19:3–8) of this eagles’ wings speech and its response are cast in the familiar Near Eastern suzerain treaty form. ... The Hittites in the middle second millennium used a literary pattern to write their treaties imposed by strong kings on their vassals that is similar to the literary pattern found in these six verses and in Exodus 20. This pattern is as follows: Preamble: v. 3b, a summons by God. Historical prologue: v. 4. Stipulations: v. 5a. Blessings: vv. 5b–6a. Acceptance in a solemn assembly: vv. 7–8. This whole synopsis of God’s suzerain treaty with his vassal Israel is remarkably personal. It begins in v. 3 addressed ‘to the sons of Israel’ and concludes with an inclusion in v. 6 ‘to the sons of Israel.’ Its first and last clauses are introduced by an emphatic plural ‘you’ along with two other references to a plural ‘you’ in v. 4” (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Exodus*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Genesis–Leviticus, Revised Edition, 472).

Before this “suzerain treaty” is inaugurated it is clear that God has already “saved” his people. Exodus 19:4 makes it clear that God has redeemed his people from Egypt through the plagues and Passover. Yahweh rescues his people and fights for them (Ex. 14:14), carrying them on “eagles’ wings” through the Red Sea and through the hostile terrain of the wilderness. Finally God fulfills his promise (Ex 3:12) by bringing the people to himself at Mount Sinai. Only after this multifaceted salvation does God introduce the idea of a covenant (Ex. 19:5). Many today confuse a covenant with salvation, by incorrectly thinking that the way of salvation is by keeping a covenant. Exodus 19 presents the polar opposite of

such an understanding. God alone achieves salvation for his people. He offers a covenant after salvation as a way to live with him and enjoy his blessings. “The gracious character of the Mosaic covenant is supported by the structure of the covenant.... The Lord recounts in the covenant structure what he has done for Israel (historical prologue) in delivering them from Egypt and preserving them from their enemies before he gives them covenant stipulations (the law). The Lord also promises them covenantal blessings if they obey or threatens them with covenantal curses if they disobey. The pattern established in the Mosaic covenant, which is redemption followed by obedience, functions as a type or pattern for New Testament believers. Believers have been redeemed through the work of Christ, and they respond to his saving mercy with grateful obedience. Such grateful obedience, under both the Mosaic covenant and the new covenant established by Jesus Christ, is not legalistic, for there is no idea that such obedience earns or merits salvation under either the old covenant or the new. The obedience of believers flows from faith and is a thankful response to God’s saving work in Christ” (Thomas Schreiner, *40 Questions About Christians and Biblical Law*, 28).

The blessings that followed obedience to the covenant (Ex. 19:5–6) expanded upon the promises made to Abraham (Gen. 12 and 15). The people of Israel would experience a special favor from God (“treasured possession”), a special assignment from God (“kingdom of priests”) and a special identity as a nation (“holy nation”). These privileges would make the people of Israel unique before God. This “uniqueness” was not for the purpose of excluding others from God’s blessing but was to serve as the conduit through whom God’s message and ultimately God’s Messiah would come to bless the rest of the nations and peoples of the world. The Mosaic Covenant was a means of blessing the world, not a means of condemning the world.

God’s character, revealed through his law, and God’s faithfulness, revealed through his loyal love, shine through relational, covenantal blessings made to his chosen people. The New Covenant, prophesied in the Old Testament and revealed by Jesus in the New Testament shows how those who are not God’s people by ethnicity or heritage can become part of the people of God through the grace and mercy of Jesus, the Messiah of the chosen people of God. Israel will continue to experience God’s favor and will experience fulfillments of God’s promises to them as a people. Followers of Jesus who are not children of Jacob experience blessings of God through salvation provided by Jesus. Israel is not replaced by followers of Jesus. Disciples of Jesus experience benefits from God through their Jewish Messiah (1 Peter 2:9–10; Romans 10–11).

---

## Word Studies/Notes

### v. 1 *month*

"In ancient Hebrew, 'new moon.'

On the day of the new moon, which marks the commencement of a new period of time in the life of nature, on the third new moon after the children of Israel had gone forth out of the land of Egypt, after this momentous event, which deserves to serve as the starting-point for dating, on that very day, they, the children of Israel, came into the wilderness of Sinai... Since the exodus from Egypt, the last two weeks of Nissan and four weeks of *lyyar* had passed, and we are now in the seventh week... So after six weeks of the travails of journeying the seventh week brought a sense of exaltation and of drawing nearer to the world Divine" (U. A. Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 224).

### v. 2 *mountain*

"Traditionally, Mount Sinai has

been identified with a mountain known as Jebel Musa (Arabic for "Mountain of Moses"). Saint Catherine's Monastery sits at the foot of this mountain and has welcomed visitors for centuries... Exodus 18 may also suggest that the mountain is in the vicinity of Midian, since Jethro, called the "priest of Midian" (3:1), visits Moses when the latter is camped with the Israelites at Mount Sinai. In light of this, some have speculated that a mountain known as Jebel al-Lawz, the tallest mountain in the region of Midian, may be the correct identification of Mount Sinai" (John H. Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament)*, vol. 1, 228).

### v. 3 *Jacob/Israel*

"The parallel use of the names

'Jacob' and 'Israel' emphasizes the origin and history of the people, recalling the events that led them into Egypt in the first place. The allusion here to the change of Jacob's name to Israel may be intended to draw a parallel between the personal transformation of Jacob at Peniel (Gen. 32:24-32) and the transformation of his descendants into a holy nation at Mount Sinai" (T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, vol. 2, Apollos Old Testament Commentary, 365).

### v. 4 *eagles' wings*

"The image of God as a mother

eagle is most fully described in Deut. 32:10-12... This is a wonderfully gracious image of God as a mother who cares for her young during that time when they are especially vulnerable. They can find refuge from the threats of life under the shadow of her wings. In addition, it is an image of growth and maturation, a time of testing, as the mother eagle seeks to help her young learn to fly for themselves. She pushes them out of the nest so that they can try their wings, and if they flounder, she swoops down under them and bears them up on her own strong wings. ... God is one whose wings are always available for refuge in time of attack, for shelter from the destructive elements of the environment, and for loving concern at all times" (Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for (Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 210).

### v. 5 *covenant*

"God cannot be manipulated

through the world; he can only be trusted and surrendered to. God is not sexual and may not be approached through human sexual behavior. God is absolutely trustworthy; he never lies. In creation, humans are of ultimate worth, the very image of God. But how was God to teach his people these complex truths, so contrary to what the Egyptians and every other brilliant people in the world believed? They were former slaves, so no complex intellectual or philosophical educational scheme was feasible. The answer was the covenant. ... God's goals in giving the covenant were not only educational. It is evident in the total context of Scripture that God does not merely intend for people to know his character, he also intends his people to share his character" (Allen Ross and John N. Oswalt, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Genesis, Exodus*, vol. 1, 429).

### v. 5 *treasured possession*

"By what he did in Egypt,

he demonstrated that the whole earth is mine, and it was there too that out of all nations, he chose Israel, making them his treasured possession. The word is *sēgullā*, and it means a 'personal treasure.' We must understand it against the background of the absolutist monarchies of the ancient world, where the king was the theoretical owner of everything. Within this total ownership, he might gather and put to one side things that he specially prized and considered to be his own in a unique way" (Alec Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage*, 198-199).

### v. 6 *priests*

"Israel's assignment from

God involved intermediation. They were not to be a people unto themselves, enjoying their special relationship with God and paying no attention to the rest of the world. Rather, they were to represent him to the rest of the world and attempt to bring the rest of the world to him. In other words, the challenge to be 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' represented the responsibility inherent in the original promise to Abraham in Gen 12:2-3" (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, The New American Commentary, 423).

### v. 6 *holy nation*

"Consists of the noun *gôy*,

'nation', qualified by the adj. *qādōš*, 'holy'. Surprisingly, perhaps, this is the sole occurrence of the expression *gôy qādōš* in the OT; the opposite expression *gôy hōtē*, 'sinful nation', comes in Isa. 1:4. This is the first instance in Exodus of *gôy* being used of Israel; previously *gôy* is used once with reference to Egypt (9:24). Prior to 19:6 the term '*am*', 'people', is frequently used to denote Israel (e.g. 1:20; 3:7, 10, 12, 21; 4:16). A subtle distinction may be observed between the terms *gôy*, 'nation', and '*am*', 'people'. Whereas the latter merely designates a group of human beings having something in common, the former denotes a group of people inhabiting a specific geographical location and forming a political unit" (Alexander, 369).



## APPLY THE TEXT

---

### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

First, accept God's salvation by faith, which is always by grace. Then obey God's commands to enjoy his additional blessings.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



## 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

Are you taking a summer vacation? I recently went on an amazing trip to Florida with my daughter to celebrate a friend's graduation. We made the decision to drive because we love road trips, and we're crazy. Before we left, we had to get ready and put a plan in place for the route, packing, stopping points, snacks, etc. But before we did any of that, we had to get ready to get ready. There was a mental preparation that we had to work through in order to be ready to plan our trip. Dreams were dreamed, possibilities were considered, and sites were Googled before we acted to plan, pack, and drive. It seems to me that our text today is a "get ready to get ready" for the Israelites. God plants a seed and introduces Israel to his covenantal promise to make them into a great nation. His gracious proposal to the people is simple: obey him and keep the covenant, and they'll be his treasured possession, a special nation of his holy people. He's getting ready to gift them with his law, but in order to get them ready, he has to get them ready to be ready. I love that he gives his people this space to reorient themselves and turn to him. Is this what new morning mercies are? Is this the quiet space of the morning before we hit the ground running? What if we spent those first few minutes of the morning getting ready to get ready? What if we spent time inviting God to order our day? Let's get ready to get ready.

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read Exodus 19:1-6.

1. How long had the Israelites been traveling?
2. Where did the Israelites camp and why is this important?
3. What was God's gracious proposal for the Israelites?

### What Do You Think?

How is the covenant God made with Moses different or similar to a believer's relationship with Jesus?

### What Do You Do?

God expects His people to obey Him and keep His commandments. Consider the choices before you this week. What are you choosing to do to obey God and keep His commandments?

## CORE COMPETENCY: Salvation by Grace

I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

### MEMORY VERSE: Colossians 3:12

*"Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)  
*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)  
*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)  
*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)  
*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)  
*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)  
*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)  
*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)  
*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)  
*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)  
*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)  
*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)  
*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)  
*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)  
*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)

*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)

*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)

*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)

*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)

*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)

*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)

*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)

*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)

*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)

*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)

*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

**Tom Bulick** (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for 12 years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

**Stephanie Thomas** (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

© 2022 Central Bible Church.

Material researched, written and supervised by Dr. Tom Bulick. All Scripture referenced from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. This resource is freely distributed and may be copied without permission.



**CENTRAL  
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard  
Fort Worth, Texas 76120  
817-274-1315  
wearecentral.org