
SG020206

The Whole Counsel of God – Exodus 32-40

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Introduction

The Book of Exodus is divided into three main sections. Chapters 1-4 – God develops His man (Moses). Chapters 5-24 – God delivers His people. (He delivers them out of Egypt (5-12), He delivers Egypt out of them (13-18), and then He delivers to them His law (19-24). Finally the third and final section of the book of Exodus - Chapters 25-40 – God dwells with His saints. Chapters 25-31 God gives the design of the tabernacle; in Chapter 35-40 the people actually build the tabernacle. In the section in between, Exodus 32-34, the people and Moses grow through a process of rebellion, repentance, revival, and restoration.

Overview of the Section

Rebellion – Exodus 32:1-6

The people, though receiving the law, start out by rebellion against it. With Moses on the Mountain the people want a leader to make them a god, so they can have something tangible to worship. Aaron, because of his fear of man listens to the people.

Reaction – Exodus 32:7-14

The people have violated God's law, and so because He is holy, sin must be judged. But because God is also merciful he had put into Moses the heart of an intercessor that God might turn from His justice. It was the same thing God did with Abraham, Paul the apostle and with Jesus.

Results – Exodus 32:15-33:3

Because of Moses' intercession, God forgives them of their sin. However there are still consequences to that sin. Romans 6:23 says, the "Wages of sin is death", and that was certainly the case. 3,000 people died by the hand of the Levites, many more died because of a plague, and what was really the worst result of it all, there was a loss of the presence of God among the people. God forgives sin, but there are always results and consequences. That is why He exhorts us not to sin in the first place!

Repentance – Exodus 33:4-6

When the people see what their sin has cost them, there is great repentance in the camp. This is the proper response to sin on our part, and as we will see, this repentance brought great things with it.

Revival – Exodus 33:7-34:9

After the people repent, God brings revival. There is a revival in the worship of the people, and there is revival in the deepness of Moses' experience with God.

Restoration – Exodus 34:10-40:38

Repentance and revival also brings about restoration. God has them go to work to build the tabernacle He had designed. They made it exactly to the pattern God had given Moses on the mountain. As they did, when they were finished, the very presence of God was restored to the people again, as He took up residence in their tabernacle and God dwelt with His saints.

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“Rebellion, Repentance, Revival, and Restoration”

The Book of Exodus can be divided into 3 sections

#1 - Exodus 1-4 – God Develops His Man

- It is the story of the background and calling of Moses

#2 - Exodus 5-24 – God Delivers His people

- By bringing them out of Egypt
- By setting them apart in the wilderness
- By giving to them His law

#3 - Exodus 25-40 – God Dwells with His Saints

- The design of the tabernacle
 - The building of the tabernacle

Exodus Chapter 25-31 - deals with God giving Moses the directions to build the tabernacle

Exodus Chapters 34-40 – basically is the account of them putting the tabernacle together

- There are other things but that is the gist of it, so you can read it on your own
 - But in between God’s direction in 25-31 and the actual building in chapters 34 and so on are chapters 32-33 which give us a picture of what was happening with the people of God at that time
- Even though they had just met with the Lord, and received the law, things were not well with the people of God
 - And what we are going to see tonight is a chain of events that will take them from Rebellion to Restoration
 - And there is so much we can learn about our own walks with God from this section

Exodus 32-40

#1 - Rebellion – Exodus 32:1-6

- On three separate occasions the children of Israel told God we will obey your commandments
 - But - the first time they are tempted – they fall off the deep end

It is like any time I try to diet – I say “Lord no more ultimate cheese burgers and I do good as long as I am stuffed with dinner, or when Christy is in the car with me – but the first time I miss dinner because of Wednesday church and I have to drive by two of them on the way home - it calls to me – and I would fail – this is what is happening here

- The children of Israel are scared because Moses is gone and so they want to go back to the safety of what they knew which was Egypt and the gods they served - So they came to Aaron

Now understand Aaron was a good godly man who is really going to blow it in our story tonight

- And because of that, this story teaches us about the grace of God – for He would still become the High priest in Israel – certainly not because of his actions in this chapter
 - Actually in spite of his actions
 - God is gracious

- And I want you to hear that because so many believe there are two gods of the bible – the one of the Old, and the God of the New
 - The God of the Old is into judgment
 - The God of the New is into grace
 - and those who say that – I know haven't read carefully
- For it is in the New Testament – God strikes down Ananias and Sapphira
 - And of course our story tonight is in the old – God is gracious to Aaron – God is the same

And understand the subtlety of what is happening in this story

- it is not that Aaron wants the people to worship another god
 - He says in verse 4 – this is your god that brought you out of Egypt
- In other words – He is not wanting them to worship another god
 - But he is having them worship the true God in a wrong way

And I point this out because sometimes we think – if we could just bring this worship of God down a little bit to street level

- you know all this worship, and Bible study, that hinders people really getting to know God
 - but if we could just dumb it down a little, then the masses would really be able to connect with the one true God
- And though I appreciate that heart of wanting to reach people
 - This effort of Aaron didn't make the people satisfied with God – oh now we have a picture in our mind of who He is, so now we are okay
 - His taking God down a notch, resulted not in revival, but rebellion
- The people start offering sacrifices – burnt offerings and peace offerings – offerings that were suppose to be of total dedication to God
 - But again, because it wasn't done in the right way, even after they did their religious stuff, they rose up to play
 - And that is not Monopoly or Parcheesi
 - Now we are going to find them with their clothes off – it's debauchery – they rise up to do

I think anytime we try to make God and the worship of Him more acceptable to people instead of just being committed to the glory of God and the study of His Word

- the result isn't holiness, its rebellion
- I saw it with youth groups as a pastor – kids can't take a bible study, so they would show MTV music videos and talk about what is wrong, what spiritual lessons could be learned – and though they could get many kids to show up, there was very little fruit of holiness
 - I saw it in families – they would let their children watch these movies, well if they see how cool how relevant I am, they will adopt my values in God – never did it happen
 - This doesn't work

Aaron may have been trying to make the worship of God more acceptable

- His intention is that they would rise up in worship
 - And instead they rose up in rebellion
 - Well this first chain – rebellion leads to our second chain and that being

Exodus 32-40

#1 - Rebellion – Exodus 32:1-6

#2 - Reaction – Exodus 32:7-14

- The people sinned, they have violated the commandments before they even had the chance to dry so to speak in the stone
 - And the reaction – well first we must consider the reaction of God – who is angry with the sin of His people – so angry He decides to judge them all and start over with Moses
- Moses I will start all over with you – people won't be singing "Father Abraham had many sons, but Father Moses..." – God says I want to start over with you

Now when we first read this, it can cause some confusion

- Why is God reacting this way? – this seems so out of character for Him

But here is what I need you to see – no it is not

- what do you mean
 - God is a just God – who always has to deal with sin the same way
 - He judges it – always, always, always
 - God hates sin and always judges it

And instead of looking at this as God out of control and Moses being the rational one

- you know the picture is actually quite comical
 - God says, "your people Moses are down there worshipping a calf"
 - And Moses says, No "these are your people"
- This will continue through the whole section

But then Moses brings up to God the promises he made to their forefather

- You promised Abraham that it would be his seed, not the seed of Moses
 - You Promised Isaac and Jacob, not me
- He intercedes for this people – and then it says God relents or turns
 - Now what is going on – I thought God didn't change – He doesn't – so what is happening

Well – Moses is using language we can understand to describe what is happening – to give us insight into God turning from one direction to go it the other

- but instead of seeing it as I said before as God being irrational and Moses changing God's mind
 - see it as I believe what was really happening

You see who put in Moses heart and make up to intercede for these people

- I challenge you with the fact that it was the Lord
 - You see God is always using intercessors – people who will stand in the gap between a Holy God and sinful man
 - Why
- Because that way – He be completely who He is
 - Just – having to judge sin
 - But at the same time – full of Mercy and Grace
- To be both God needed the work of Jesus Christ on the cross
 - Sin must be punished – I John 1:9 – "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin"
 - Just – He has the right – He died in our place
 - Faithful – He wants to do it, He is merciful

And so often God, having the righteous requirement for sin fulfilled in the death of Christ is just looking for people to intercede for others – that His just judgment might be turned into wonderful grace

- God uses intercessors – those who will stand in the gap in prayer
 - Prayer is powerful
 - Prayer can change things
 - No it changes us – no it does more than that

“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.” – Ezekiel 22:30-31

- God uses intercessors – did with Abraham (for Lot) – did it obviously with Jesus (for all of us) – He is doing it here with Moses

God wants to be merciful – but He is just, sin must be judged, and so He died on a cross and has raised up intercessors – it is all part of God’s plan

- we need that in America
 - people who will stand in the gap
 - people whose hearts are loyal to Him
- Moses intercedes and God brings grace to the nation of Israel – in fact verse 14 says...

“So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.” – Exodus 32:14

- Did you hear what I just read – the Lord relented
 - In the KJV – it says He repented
 - In the NLT – it says He changed His mind
 - What???
- We don’t like to use phrases like that about God
 - Because when we change our minds, it is because we didn’t have enough information in the first place when we decided something or just plain we made a mistake
 - And we know those things can not be true of God, so we are uncomfortable with the language

But understand precious ones

- when it says God changed His mind, or God relented
 - it doesn’t mean He didn’t have all the information
 - God had all the information and He was completely justified in wiping those people off the map because of their rebellion
- He had all the information and He had not made a poor choice

The word in the text translated “relent” means to turn from an undesirable course of action”

God was justified, He had every right to destroy the people, but He didn’t want to do, it was undesirable

- And God partners with Moses and his devotion to prayer to arrive at the desirable action
 - God brings grace
 - But now notice, please the next link in the chain of events – rebellion, reaction...

Exodus 32-40

#1 - Rebellion – Exodus 32:1-6

#2 - Reaction – Exodus 32:7-14

#3 - Results or consequences – Exodus 32:15-20

- you see here is something we need to keep in mind

God has grace and there is always forgiveness – but there is always consequences for sin – it is why God tells us not to sin in the first place

- First Moses installs some consequences
 - He is upset, he throws the 10 commandments down – in fact this makes Moses the only one in the Bible to break all 10 commandments at once – ha – little trivia for you
- But Moses is mad and so He melts down the calf and mixes it with water and makes the people drink this nasty result of sin

When I was a kid, we would walk home from school and Mom would get home about 5pm and one day I decided to make cookies – I was about 10 or 11 so it wasn't as dangerous as it seemed, well maybe, anyway the bad part was, I loved the frosting of the cookies, so I figured the more frosting, the better it would taste, so I went through tubs of the stuff, from other boxes to make my cookies and then I took a bite, right about the time my mom came home. It was nasty, so nasty, but I had made them, so I was made to eat them – probably only one or two, but in my mind it was the whole batch, but I didn't eat frosting for a year or two after that – My sin tasted gross

- such was the case for those in Israel
 - such is the case for us

So Moses installs some consequences and then turns to his right hand man – what were you thinking – verses 21-24

- oh my his right hand man let him down

I remember when Christian Slye was my assistant in youth ministry – he is a great pastor now in Denver but he was young then – we were at camp and Maranatha was planning a raid, and I being the coolest youth pastor said, you can defend your cabin – so I went back where of all people Ray Bentley was staying, he had spoken that night and I was picking his brain about serving the Lord when the noise of war was heard in the camp – I told Ray not to worry but then Mark Orosco came up in a golf cart and said, you have to come down – there is nakedness everywhere – so I drove down to the boys side of the camp and he was right, so I started yelling, everybody back inside, put your clothes on – and when I was with my kids I yelled, what part of you can defend your cabin made you think to get naked and go to theirs – whose idea was this – and they all said “Christian” – oh man, my right hand guy – say it isn't so

- this is where Moses is at – the people are running around naked – Aaron, who did this – what did they do to you to make you lead them in this
 - what happened Aaron, they must have tortured you, they must have put you through a horrible ordeal for you to do this
 - and yet Aaron makes things worse by giving the dumbest excuse in the Bible
 - don't say it – people are going to read this Aaron years from now – don't oh no – you said it

So the consequences were Moses getting mad, melting down the golden calf and making them drink it, chewing on his right hand man a little bit

- and we see the consequences continue in verse 25
 - verses 25-29

Moses wants to know who is with me, and Levi stood with Moses

- in Genesis 34 Levi was involved in gross sin

Now his descendants realize the emptiness of that and they stand up with Moses and stand against the sin of their brothers

- This establishes Levi as the priestly tribe – sin brings death – obedience brings blessings – that is just the way it is

But it teaches us something else, before we move on – that day 3,000 men died – that number 3,000 will come up again

- Where – on the day of Pentecost - 3,000 people were saved
 - On the day the Law came down in the hand of Moses – 3,000 died – On the day the Spirit came down – 3,000 were saved (Acts 2:41)

“The law brings forth death, the Spirit brings life” – Romans 8:2–

“The law came through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” – John 1:17

Well – the first result of their sin was Moses made them drink this nasty water and made a division of the people, secondly

- In **verse 30-35** we see a plague – I would bet somehow tied into the sin they were involved in
 - That is always the way it is – we have talked about that
 - God tells us to run from our sin, because our sin is bad for us – God is not trying to steal your joy, He is trying to keep you from pain

The next consequence was a plague, but the final one I want to draw your attention to the most **33:1-3**

- God tells Moses – I have forgiven you, I have forgiven this people
 - I will let them go into the promise land, but I am not going with them

It is not good for them – I am Holy and they constantly walk in their own ways – they don't want the presence of God

- Now obviously we understand God is everywhere – what God is speaking about is just that tangible presence that God is there, that God is with you
 - I'll be watching from a distance, sort of a thing
- And this is when, praise the Lord, the breakthrough comes...

Exodus 32-40

#1 - Rebellion – Exodus 32:1-6

#2 - Reaction – Exodus 32:7-14

#3 - Results or consequences – Exodus 32:15-20

#4 - Repentance – Exodus 33:4-23

- when the people realize what is happening it's a scary thing to them
 - and praise God it brings about repentance – they strip themselves, they cry out as we will see repeated through Moses – if you are not going with us, we are not going – great repentance happens
- This story is really personal to me because it much parallels my testimony
 - I remember a time in my life when I was doing my thing, going my own way and the Lord just spoke softly to my heart – I love you, I am for you – but I am not going with you in this direction
- And it scared me so bad – I changed direction

And I tell this story not to talk about me – but to point out the need for repentance

- Of not just saying sorry God for all I done, but really naming it, as we will see Moses do in just minute – I am sorry for this sin – and then heading in the complete opposite direction
 - This is so important – because what you are doing is agreeing with God – Lord – that thing – this specific decision direction – this is wrong and I am going to head in the opposite direction
 - That is real genuine repentance

What so often happens today is we are convicted, we feel the Holy Spirit nudging us gently or not so much so, and yet we go “your right sorry God”

- but that it, we forget and then we find ourselves back where we were before
 - that is not genuine repentance
- And if you are in place of rebellion, and you know God loves you and has even forgiven you, and you are experiencing some consequences – repent, genuinely get with God, pour out your heart – acknowledge specifically where you have gone wrong – and go the opposite way
 - It is so important that we repent – why
 - Because in the chain, after repentance comes revival and restoration

Exodus 32-40

#1 - Rebellion – Exodus 32:1-6

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#4 - Repentance – Exodus 33:4-6

#5 - Revival – Exodus 33:7-34:9

- The people repent, change direction and notice what happens – verse 10 worship is restored - (first thing – repent and begin to worship again) – revival comes

The presence of God in a noticeable way is part of the restoration process – “I feel like God is so distant”

- it is not the Lord – it is you, it is me – repent – that revival must come
 - worship, the presence of God, and a deeper understanding of who He is
 - that is what revival is, and it follows repentance

In Texas every few months the churches out there have something they call a revival

- and they have a special speaker and special worship, and special meetings and it is suppose to produce revival
 - and maybe it does – but I guarantee if it is genuine it starts with repentance
 - and the truth of that is, we can have that tonight – no special speaker, we always have special music
 - But we don’t really need any of that – we need to repent – and times of refreshing will come, the book of Acts tells us.

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,” – Acts 3:19

- we can have a revival tonight but it will always start with repentance
 - I remember the first night of Bible college, I don’t know if they still do this, but the first night the pastor over the college would share about repenting, and there we went into worship and it was the most amazing time of revival I have ever experienced
 - Worship, God’s presence, a deeper knowledge of who He is – it follows repentance

As does a greater knowledge of God

- God reveals Himself in 34:6 – Here is who I am Moses
 - The Lord, the Lord God – the one in charge
 - Merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth – God is not different in the Old Testament – He is the same yesterday, today and forever
 - Showing mercy to thousands

But not clearing the guilty – those that will not repent – their effects will be felt for generations – that is what He is saying – not that God will judge your children, but your children will feel the effects of your sin

- So repent – that is what God wants
 - That is why in verse 14 God says, my name is Jealous – not that God is jealous of you, but for you - He wants the best for you

And know that as we repent, times of refreshing will come, we will know Him deeper and generations will be blessed

- That was certainly true of the nation of Israel
 - For after repentance and revival comes restoration

Exodus 32-40

#1 - Rebellion – Exodus 32:1-6

#2 - Reaction – Exodus 32:7-14

#3 - Results or consequences – Exodus 32:15-20

#4 - Repentance – Exodus 33:4-6

#5 - Revival – Exodus 33:7-34:9

#6 - Restoration – Exodus 34:10 – 40:38

- You need to read the rest on your own but God restores, reiterates some key parts of the law, and gets the tabernacle project on again – keeps moving forward as He wants to do with you – repent!