

# I AM

a series in the book of Exodus

March Studies



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# I AM

Exodus is a book where we meet the real God. Today, a lot of people like to define God for themselves. They might say: "I'm not religious, but I'm spiritual," or "I like to think of God as..." But the God of Exodus assures us that he can't be defined by anyone but himself.

In Exodus we meet the God who is a reality—the ultimate reality. And he comes to us saying "I AM WHO I AM" (3:14). When confronted with the real God, we discover

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***In Exodus we meet the God who is a reality—the ultimate reality.***

a God who is more terrifying and more loving than we could ever have imagined or dreamed up. Throughout Exodus, we meet a God who saves his people through judgement: he saves them from slavery through plagues, he saves them from a Passover because of a lamb's blood, and he saves them from war through parting a sea which destroys their enemies.

These are confronting scenes, but they show us again and again that in order to live with God, we need to be changed. In order to live with God we need to be purified, by water and blood, if we're going to be able to approach the fire of God's presence.

Throughout Exodus, God always takes the initiative, revealing himself not only through words, but also through signs and wonders, showing the world his sovereignty, his holiness, his power, his awesome glory, his righteousness, and his compassion.

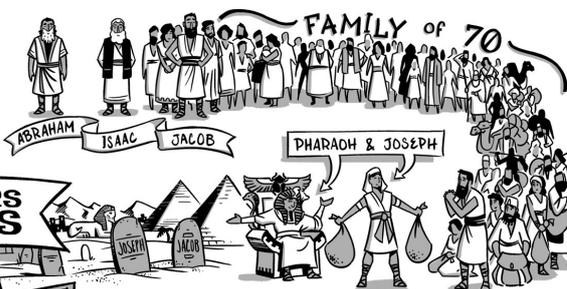
"Aslan is a lion—the Lion, the great Lion."  
"Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"  
"Safe?" said Mr Beaver. "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good."

*From The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,  
by C. S. Lewis*

Christian Standard Bible (CSB) is used in these studies.  
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All the sweet little drawings were very graciously done by Lauren Fung.  
Picture of tabernacle from Mark Barry, from Visualunit.

**BLESSING**

- HUMANITY (GENESIS 1: 28)
- ABRAHAM (GENESIS 17: 1-6)



# EXODUS

**400 YEARS PASS**

**1-18 EXODUS FROM EGYPT**

ISRAEL WAS **FRUITFUL** AND **MULTIPLIED** AND **FILLED** THE LAND (1:7)

**1-4 PHARAOH TRIES TO DESTROY ISRAEL**

TELL PHARAOH TO LET MY PEOPLE GO. I KNOW HE WILL RESIST, SO I WILL BRING PLAGUES AND HARDEN HIS HEART.

MOSES' MOM  
PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER  
MOSES

**5-15 CONFRONTATION BETWEEN GOD & PHARAOH**



**GOD VS PHARAOH**

"PHARAOH HARDENED HIS HEART" OR "HIS HEART GREW HARD"

"GOD HARDENED PHARAOH'S HEART"

**THE POINT**

GOD **KNIEW** PHARAOH WOULD RESIST, BUT STILL GAVE HIM **MANY CHANCES**

PHARAOH'S **EVIL** REACHES A POINT OF **NO RETURN**

GOD **BENDS** PHARAOH'S EVIL TO HIS PURPOSES & **LURES** HIM INTO HIS OWN **DESTRUCTION**



**15 SONG OF THE SEA**

THE LORD REIGNS AS KING

- HE CONFRONTS EVIL
- HE REDEEMS THE SLAVES
- HE LEADS HIS PEOPLE TO THE PROMISED LAND
- HE DWELLS AMONG HIS PEOPLE



**16-18 IN THE WILDERNESS**



# STORIES

## GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES

ABRAHAM (GENESIS 12, 15, 17): GOD'S BLESSING TO ALL NATIONS

ISRAEL (EXODUS 19: 1-6) {

- KINGDOM OF PRIESTS TO THE NATIONS
- RESTORATION OF GOD'S PRESENCE

## 19-40 COVENANT AT MT. SINAI

**19-24**  
GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

TERMS OF THE COVENANT:  
(CHS 20-23)

- THE 10 COMMANDMENTS
- 52 MORE COMMANDS ABOUT WORSHIP & SOCIAL JUSTICE

SIGN US UP!

MAKE A SANCTUARY FOR ME AND I WILL DWELL AMONG MY PEOPLE. (25: 8)

LOTS OF SYMBOLISM

TABERNACLE BLUEPRINT

MOST HOLY SPACE  
HOT SPOT OF GOD'S PRESENCE

GARDEN OF EDEN

**25-31**

ARK OF THE COVENANT

**32-34** ISRAEL BREAKS THE COVENANT

LEAVE ME ALONE THAT I MAY DESTROY THEM.

**35-40**

MOSES BUILDS THE TABERNACLE

MAKE US A GOD!

HERE ARE YOUR GODS WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT.

REMEMBER YOUR COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAHAM!

"THE LORD IS MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER, ABUNDING IN COVENANT FAITHFULNESS. HE FORGIVES SIN, BUT WILL NOT LEAVE THE WICKED UNPUNISHED." (34: 6-7)

MOSES CAN'T ENTER

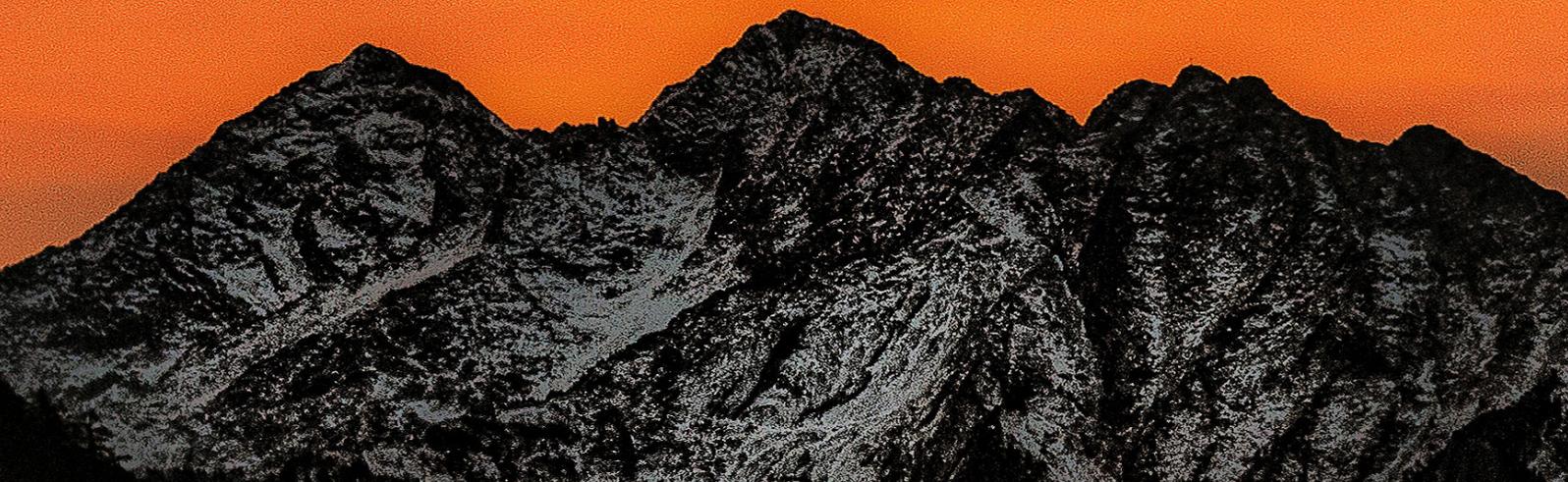
WEEK 6

THE GOD WHO IS HOLY

Exodus 18:13-20:21

“

I am the Lord your  
God, who brought  
you out of the land  
of Egypt, out of the  
place of slavery.



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## STUDY QUESTIONS

The “ten words” have a unique status in the book of Exodus. They are the only words spoken directly from God to all the Israelites.

**Read Exodus 20:18–19.** What do you think this scene would have looked and felt like?

**Read Exodus 20:1–21.**

Why is it significant that verse 2 comes before the Ten Commandments?

How does it change these words if we see that Israel have already been redeemed?

The Sabbath is another echo of creation in the book (Genesis 2:1–3). This shows that, in some way, Israel is called to be a re-creation community. Somehow, through them, God will give the world order and make it new again.

Do you think any of these commandments would have reduced Israel’s quality of life? If so, why?

**Read Deuteronomy 5:28–29.** What does this tell us about God’s purposes in giving the law?

Jesus summed up the entire Old Testament law as: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:37). Which of the Ten Commandments are about loving God, and which are about loving our neighbour?

What are some things that we can see that God really values, based on these commandments?

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

Jesus later says that no one can keep these commandments, because they have such a high bar: “you therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect,” Matthew 5:48. The Ten Commandments are given to a people who are already redeemed, and as Jesus pointed out, the Israelites cannot live up to them.

So what are we left with?

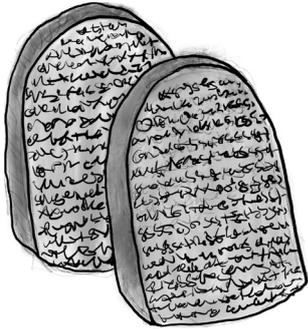
**Read Romans 13:8–10 and Ephesians 6:1–4.** In some way, even though we aren’t bound by these commandments, they can still speak truth and wisdom into our lives.

Which personal relationships spoken about in the Ten Commandments are the hardest for you to maintain in a godly way?

How can the group pray for you in those relationships?

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# DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTION

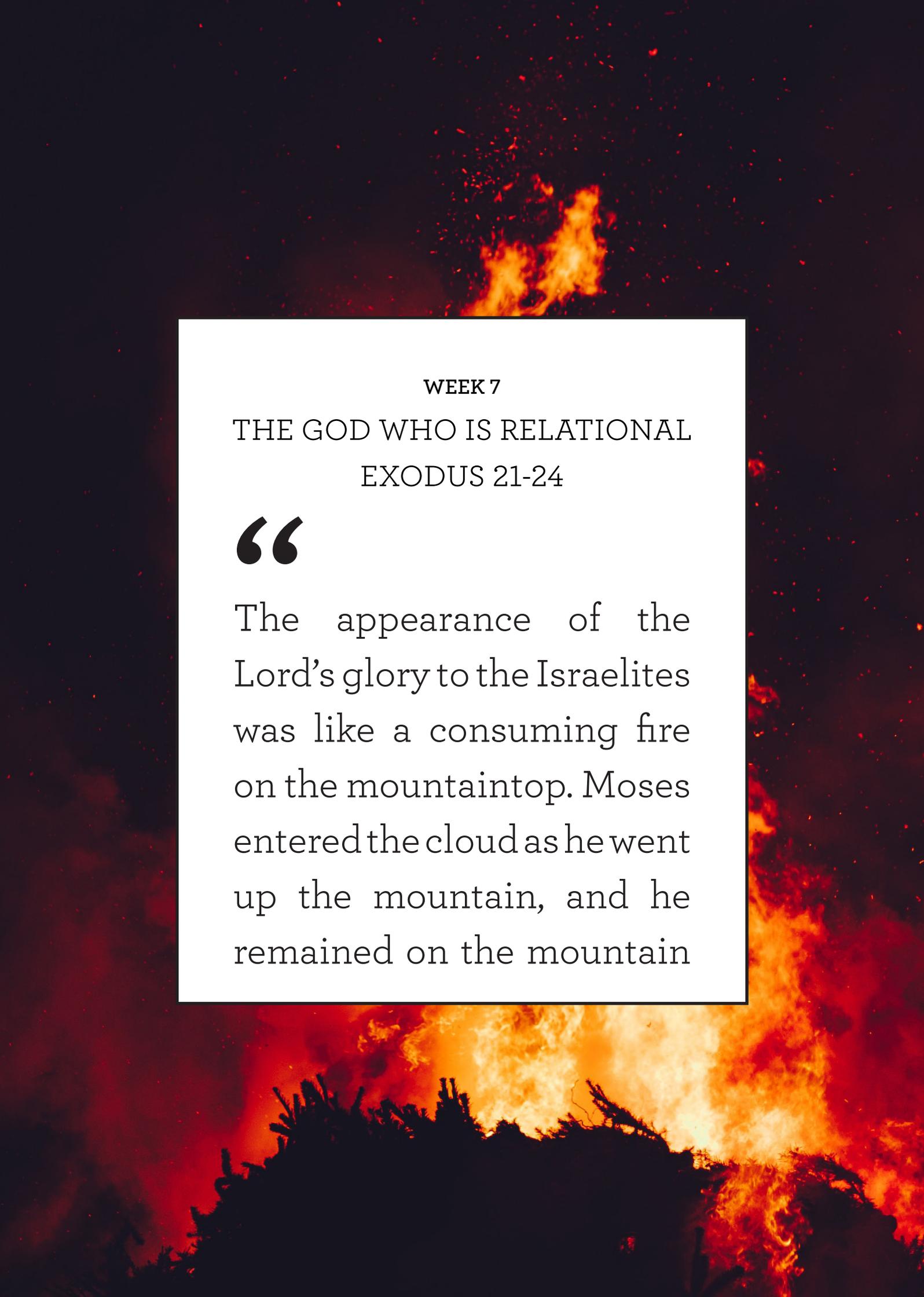


These devotions are written to help you go a little bit deeper into personally applying the text. If you're keen to give them a go, catch up with someone over coffee this week, and have a chat through it together.

*“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. Honour your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land. Fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:1–4.*

For many of us, our relationship with our fathers is very complicated. But we’re called to honour them, even while it can be difficult and painful. The following six points are a simple summary to help you grow in the knowledge of God your Father even if your father sinned against you. They are from David Powlison’s book *Seeing With New Eyes*.

1. Identify and take responsibility for the particular sins that you express towards your father: bitterness, wilfulness, avoidance, blame-shifting, brooding, fears, people-pleasing, slander, lying, self-pity, etc.
2. Turn to God for mercy and help, that the Spirit of love would enable you to bear His fruit thankfully.
3. Identify the specific sins committed against you. Fathers who are selfish or hostile, who lie or betray trust, who duck responsibility, do evil. The love of God gives courage to look evil in the eye. Identifying wrong helps you know what to forgive. It also makes clear what God calls you to tackle constructively. You need humility to recognize that some wrongs may be perceived wrongs—products of your own expectations—not real wrongs.
4. Ponder the good things your father did for you. There are some fathers who seem to incarnate evil. But most are a mix of love and selfishness.
5. The Father gives the power to return good for evil rather than evil for evil. He remakes His children like His Son, Jesus. Come up with a game plan for specific changes in how you forgive, love, seeking forgiveness, confront constructively, refocusing your attention.
6. Find wise believers to pray for you, hold you accountable, encourage, and counsel you. Wisdom for living as a peacemaker, a son of God, is catching. “The companion of the wise becomes wise.” The Father is seeking worshipers and creating children who know Him. Ask, seek, knock.



WEEK 7

THE GOD WHO IS RELATIONAL  
EXODUS 21-24

“

The appearance of the Lord's glory to the Israelites was like a consuming fire on the mountaintop. Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain, and he remained on the mountain

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

How do you feel when you think about seeing God?

Having been invited to be God's "special possession" (19:5), and having received the general obligations (20:1–17) and the detailed obligations (20:22–23:33), the Israelites are ready to accept the terms of God's covenant.

So far in the book we've read of a burning bush, the ten plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea and the giving of the Ten Commandments. But none of these is as dramatic as the scene described in Chapter 24.

### **Read Exodus 24**

What different groups are there in verses 1–2? How far can they each go up the mountain?

How might this set us up for the tabernacle?

When Exodus speak about "sealing" the covenant, it more literally refers to it as "cutting" the covenant.

What has "blood" meant so far in the book?

Read 24:6–8. Imagine what it would look, smell and feel like for all that blood to be thrown against the altar of God and upon yourself.

This ceremony involves cutting up animals and spattering the blood on the people and the altar (which stands for God). God and the people

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

are thereby saying: “May I be dismembered and my blood spattered if I break this covenant.” (Read Jeremiah 34:17–20 if you want to see this more clearly playing out).

**Read Exodus 33:20 and 1 John 4:12.** How do think these verses fit with Exodus 24:9–10?

How does Exodus 24:17 fit with your view of God?

What do you think it was like to eat and drink in the presence of the Lord on the mountain?

**Read Matthew 26:26–29.** How does Matthew help you understand Exodus 24?

How does it give you a hope for the future?

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# DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTION



**These devotions are written to help you go a little bit deeper into personally applying the text. If you're keen to give them a go, catch up with someone over coffee this week, and have a chat through it together.**

"Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of Israel's elders, and they saw the God of Israel. Beneath his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as clear as the sky itself. God did not harm the Israelite nobles; they saw him, and they ate and drank." (Exodus 24:9–11)

Eating together still means something. Share a meal with a neighbour and a relationship changes. It is warmer, more familial. To dine with someone—today, and even moreso in Biblical times—meant: "Welcome. We want you to feel like one of the family."

Who can you share a meal with this week to show some of this warmth to?

When God invited Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel to Mount Sinai, they ate and drank with God. But this was just a shadow of the great reality of heaven.

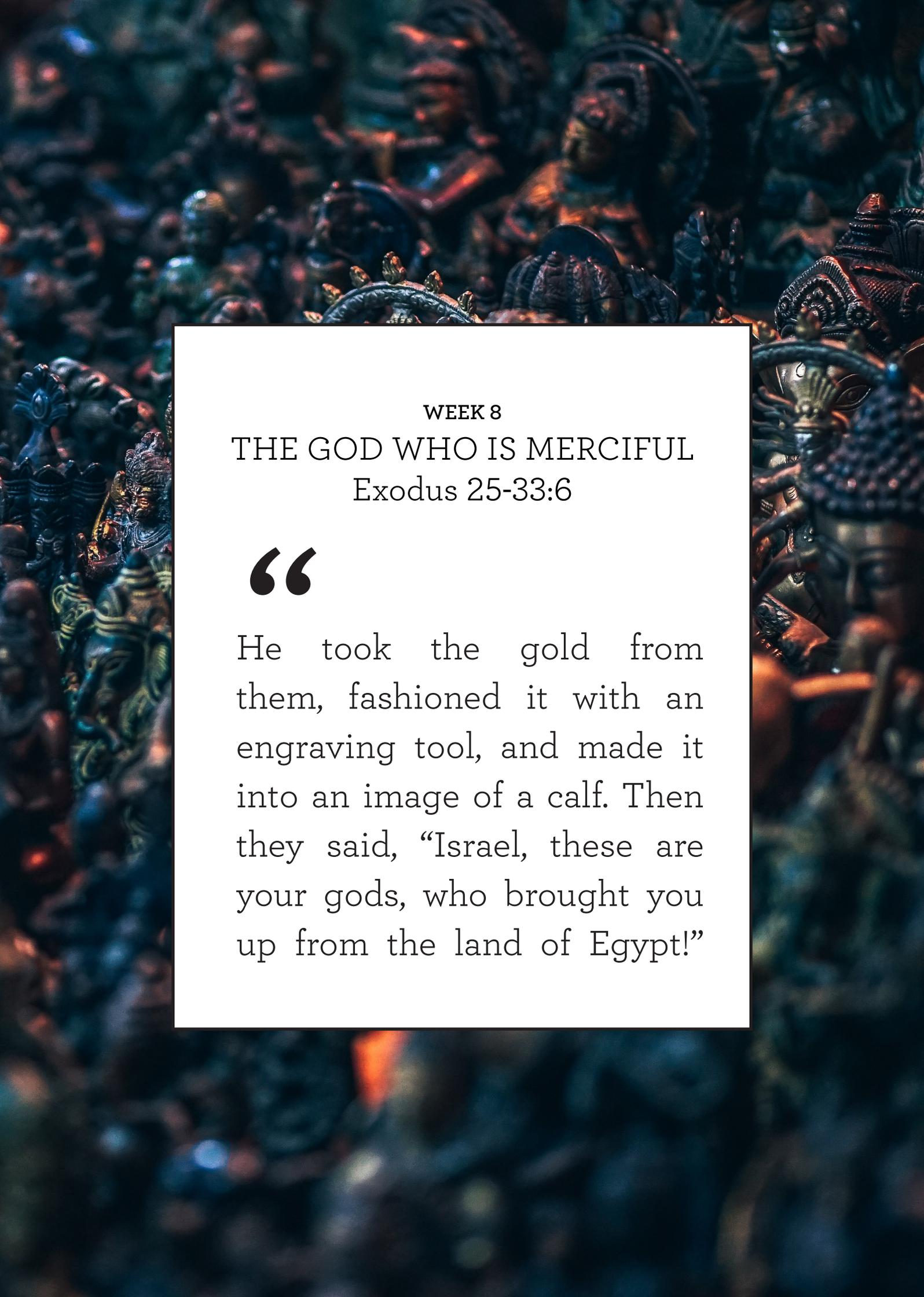
The main events of heaven are banquets and weddings. "Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food" (Isaiah 55:2). Everything in Scripture anticipates this banquet. Your soul will be at rest, fully satisfied, yet always ready for more. Who doesn't have a little more room for food that's especially good?

The best banquets celebrate a wedding. When the apostle John was given a peek into eternity, he saw the people who belonged to God "coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2). The bride, we learn, is the church. We aren't brides, but a bride. In a culture like ours where the individual is primary, we aren't used to thinking of ourselves as one body or one bride.

But heaven overflows with loving unity. Right now we have unity and fellowship with the Lord, though our fellowship with people like ourselves can be a little shaky. But heaven is perfect unity with God and all his people.

How can you contribute to the unity and hope of your church community this week?

Spend some time praying together for unity and warmth in the body of Christ—especially for those you're struggling to love.



WEEK 8

THE GOD WHO IS MERCIFUL  
Exodus 25-33:6

“

He took the gold from them, fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it into an image of a calf. Then they said, “Israel, these are your gods, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!”

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

The goal of the second half of Exodus is stated in 25:8: “Let them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.” The goal is the presence of God.

### **Read Exodus 32.**

In verses 1–6, what belief drives the people of Israel to make an idol?

Do you think they’re breaking the first or second commandment?

What does God say they deserve for this idolatry? Do you think that’s fair?

**Read Acts 7:39–40.** What insights to the golden calf incident do we get here?

**Look at verse 10 again, and then verses 19–20.** Do you think this level of anger is justified?

How does Moses plead with God? (verses 11–14)

If this was the only chapter of the Bible you had ever read, what image of God would this give you?

What do you think about Aaron’s excuses? (verses 21–24)

This story is about the deadly seriousness of sin. 3000 people died by the sword of God’s judgement because they broke the covenant and worshipped other gods (it’s like a bride committing adultery on her wedding day).

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

How does the rest of the story present a balance between God's mercy and his justice?

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:6–14.** How does this apply the story to us, as Christians?

What might idolatry look like today?

**Read Exodus 32:30–32 again.** How can you see the heart of Christ in these words?

Jesus says to us, "God will never blot out your name, because he blotted out mine." How does this give you confidence this week?

Who's someone in your life whom you pray for about their rejection of God?

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# DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTION



**These devotions are written to help you go a little bit deeper into personally applying the text. If you're keen to give them a go, catch up with someone over coffee this week, and have a chat through it together.**

Our lives might look very different from the golden calf incident, but it doesn't mean that we're free from idolatry. It just means that our false worship might be more subtle.

In *Counterfeit Gods*, Tim Keller helps us by giving four ways to identify idols in our hearts and lives:

1) Look at our imagination. Where do your thoughts go when there's nothing else demanding your attention? What do you enjoy daydreaming about? Do you dream of potential scenarios about career advancement? Or material goods, such as a dream home? Or a relationship with a particular person? One or two daydreams aren't an indication of idolatry. Ask rather, what do you habitually think about to get joy and comfort in the privacy of your heart?

2) How do you spend your money? Jesus said: "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Your money flows almost effortlessly toward your heart's greatest love. As Paul says, if God's grace is the thing in the world you love most, you will give your money away to ministry, charity and the poor with joy (2 Corinthians 8:7-9). But most of us tend to overspend on clothing, on our children, on status symbols such as homes and cars. Our patterns of spending reveal our idols.

3) How do you respond to unanswered prayers and frustrated hopes? If you ask for something that you don't get, you might become sad and disappointed. Then you go on. Hey, life's not over. But when you pray and work for something and you don't get it and you respond with explosive anger or deep despair, then you've found your real god.

4) What are your most uncontrollable emotions? Just like a fisherman looking for fish knows to go where the water is moving, look for your idols at the bottom of your most painful emotions, especially those that never seem to lift and that drive you to do things that you know are wrong. If you are angry, ask: "Is there something here too important to me, something I must have at all costs?" If you are fearful, ask: "Am I so scared because something in my life is being threatened that I think is necessary when it isn't?" If you're driving yourself into the ground by overworking, ask yourself: "Do I feel that I must have this thing to be fulfilled and significant?" When we ask questions like that, when you "pull your emotions up by the roots," you'll often find your idols clinging to them.

Pray for each other, and the freedom and salvation from the things in your hearts competing for your worship of God.

WEEK 9

THE GOD WHO IS WITH US

Exodus 33:7-40

“

The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.



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## STUDY QUESTIONS

*"In the end and at the end, what we get from God is God."* Tim Chester

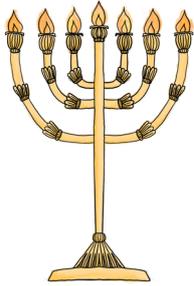
How does looking at who God is and what God does in the book of Exodus make that statement infinitely, eternally exciting?

In many ways, the design for the tabernacle echoes the garden of Eden—showing that it is a blueprint for the new creation. How does the building of the tabernacle excite you about the new creation that it's pointed towards, and that God's people are heading to?

Think back over our time in all 40 chapters of Exodus. What story or passage stands out to you the most? What truths do you most want to remember and apply to your life?

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# DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTION



These devotions are written to help you go a little bit deeper into personally applying the text. If you're keen to give them a go, catch up with someone over coffee this week, and have a chat through it together.

“Don’t you yourselves know that you are God’s temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is holy, and that is what you are” (1 Corinthians 3:16 –17)

“Flee sexual immorality! Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the person who is sexually immoral sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore, honour God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

God has been revealed in Christ, and when someone becomes a Christian, all that fullness dwells in them. We don’t need anything else to fill us up—we have Christ. This is staggering when you consider the greatness of our glorious, mighty, gracious and holy God. You are the temple of God. God has chosen to reside in you by the Holy Spirit. You are his and he is yours!

In these two passages from 1 Corinthians, we can see how seriously God takes this reality. God is very clear that if we damage ourselves or damage other Christians, God takes it very seriously.

As living temples of the Spirit, we are the property of the one who dwells in us. Our bodies are no longer our own; they are the property of God. So people who destroy the church, by damaging the faith of believers, will be held accountable by God. And what we do with our own bodies is really important, as well. Sexual expression outside of marriage gives a part of ourselves to another, so in some way we are becoming their property. So we have to “flee” such an unthinkable ownership and honour the one who bought us.

How does it feel to read these words? Do they ring true?

Are there parts of your life that you need to give to God, and honour him in?

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# PRAYER POINTS

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# NOTES



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2018