

God is Continuously Good

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[0:00] The book of Exodus.

And the last kind of major heading of the study is what you have right there on the screen.! God is continuously good. Really throughout our study of Exodus, what we have seen, it's very clear. Certainly, the Scripture reveals a God who judges sin and wickedness, who accomplishes His purposes for His people, and all of that, of course, when you look at that in the broader picture, all of that fits with His desire to accomplish, and I say desire as if somehow maybe it could be thwarted, it's not going to be, but His plan to redeem.

And all this fits into that. And so we've seen a lot of this, and really all throughout it we see that God continues to be a good God. All right. So let's look at this, and we'll kind of cover some of this if my...

All right. That's not working. Here we go. There's a third and final heading, really, in your outline.

[1:27] Well, I think there might be a fourth one. I don't remember. I don't think I... Did I give that to you? Is there a fourth heading on that? All right. So I've left that off. I think we're going to finish with this, and then we'll move on to something else.

Here's the third and final heading in the outline. Israel receives God's sacred precepts. And there's going to be a number of things under that, some of which I think we've already seen.

Kind of what we're doing is looking at these chapters that give us the history of some events, some very significant events took place in the life of God's people as they were journeying ultimately to the mountain, Mount Sinai, to receive the Ten Commandments, to receive God's law.

So a number of significant things occurred during that time. First thing, if you want to take your Bibles and turn to Exodus chapter 15, we're going to kind of look at chapters 15, 16, and 17, and because many of these events we're going to consider are given to us right in those three chapters. And so in chapter 15, starting with verse 22, we see God shows Himself faithful to His people, His people who are faithless.

[2:55] Isn't that an awesome thing when you realize that about God, that God is always faithful? We're not. Often not.

And yet, even when we are faithless, God is faithful. He can't be anything else but that. He's faithful. And so He shows Himself that way.

And He does that in our own lives as well. But He shows His faithfulness in very profound ways to the people of Israel. And, you know, obviously because the Bible was written, of course the Old Testament, much of its history, was written about historical events.

And some of the things that we read about reveal God doing something for the people there then, that day. But we also know the power of Scripture is that what He was doing there, He was actually doing for us as well.

What He was teaching His people in that isolated moment, in the immediate sense, what He was teaching them there, He was teaching us here today.

[4:04] And so, it's not just simply history we're looking at. What we're looking at is God very profoundly teaching us things about Himself and about His plan, about His ways, the way He works.

God's teaching us many of the things that He wants us to know and incorporate in our own lives.

So, don't ever read these, any part of the Bible, and especially the historical parts, and think, well, that was, you know, that was back then, you know, thousands of years removed from my day.

And that was for Israel. But that doesn't necessarily apply to me. Don't ever think that because it does apply to us. And so, with that in mind, as we look at, I think, three events, three major events in the life of Israel, as they're journeying to the mountain, we're going to see God faithful in all three of these things.

And we're also going to see how what He did there ties to us, connects with us. All right? So, here are the three events.

And when you look at them as they're presented here on your notes, you're going to probably be thinking, you know, I've read those. Oh, yeah, I remember that, about the story about the bitter waters at Marah.

[5 : 27] And it's a very interesting story. We're going to look at that in just a minute. And you certainly, if you don't remember Marah, the bitter waters, you're going to remember the manna that God provided and quail, which, by the way, He provided both of these things, quail and manna.

And then, of course, you probably remember or have some memory of the story about Moses striking the rock and water is provided and so God takes care of His people.

So, here they are journeying on their way, ultimately, to the mountain of God, Mount Sinai, to get His law. And several things happen along the way. Now, God shows Himself faithful in all three of these events, in spite of the fact that in all three of these events, God's people are the most faithless people you'd ever...

I mean, they're just complaining all the time and they're ready to go back to Egypt all the time. At least that's what they say. And, you know, and several times they're going to say, you know, we didn't ever want to leave there.

You know, we liked it in Egypt, which was a big, fat lie. But it's just, you know, it really gives us a very poignant picture of us, of who we are, you know, and how we are and how we complain.

[6 : 49] All right, so let's consider the bitter waters of Marah that were made sweet by a tree. You look there at chapter 15, verse 22. I do kind of want to read this story. Not very many verses involved here.

And here's how it goes. So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea. We know that story. God parted the Red Sea. All of Israel, two million some odd of them and all of their possessions walked over on dry ground.

And then he, of course, folded the water back and destroyed the pursuing Egyptian army. All right, so here, they're past that.

And Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea. Then they went out into the wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water.

All right, so they're thirsty. Now, when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore, the name of it was called Marah.

[7 : 48] Marah means bitter. And the people did what? They murmured. They murmured or complained. If you said murmur, that tells me what translation you have.

And if you said complain, I don't know what other words might have been used there. We get the idea, don't we? I mean, these people, they're crybabies. And, you know, of course, we're not. We're not like that. But they were. Now, you know, and I know you've thought of this before, surely. Consider what they have seen.

I mean, in the last several days and weeks and months, the mighty power of God. I mean, in indescribable ways. God revealed his power.

Parting the Red Sea. Just that miracle itself. And here, just a short time after that, and they don't have any water, and they're thirsty, and they're complaining. You know, I think it should occur to them that if God can part this huge body of water, that God could provide them water, you know, when they need it.

[8 : 59] But here they are. They get to Marah, and the water's bitter. It's undrinkable. And so they complained against Moses, and they said, what shall we drink?

So he cried out to the Lord. And, by the way, don't get the idea that Moses was crying. He was praying. All right, is the idea there. He cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. All right, we'll just stop there in our reading. Now, we don't have, so I don't want to make too much of this, we don't have a New Testament correlation here with this tree.

So I don't want to say to you that here is a prefiguring, a pre-picture of the cross. I can't say that definitively.

You know, there are a lot of things that take place in the Old Testament, a lot of very interesting turns in the stories in the Old Testament, a lot of very interesting miracles that take place, things said and so forth, that sound very much like, and it's easy to say, well, you know, there's a parallel

for this in the New Testament, or some spiritual application, and I think maybe there could be here. [10 : 25] But just think about it. Each one of us, at some point in our lives, were, I mean, we were lost.

And in sin. And the remedy was a tree. Well, actually, the person who hung on that tree. And God showed Himself powerful here, in that He said, Moses, all you've got to do is take this stick, this tree, and throw it in the water, and then the water would become drinkable. Well, God is powerful. And what He did is He provided a Savior, who would die upon a tree, upon a cross, and would be the remedy for our sin, and the remedy for our lostness in judgment. So, God shows Himself faithful to the faithless. Let's move to the next story. God sends quail and manna from heaven.

[11 : 36] Chapter 16, and let me just start reading with verse 2. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel, what did they do? They murmured. There it is again.

They complained. And why? They complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, and the children of Israel said to them, Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat, and when we ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Now get that. Isn't that the most ridiculous thing you've ever heard? Again, a bunch of crybabies, and, you know, they're blaming God, blaming Moses, and things were so good back there in Egypt, you know, remember?

You know, they were, as I recall, as the story goes, the account of it, they were crying out to God by reason of their taskmasters. You know, and I don't imagine that, you know, they just had an abundance of food.

They were slaves, poor, and at the mercy of the Egyptians. And, you know, they didn't treat them very well.

[12 : 58] And so this is, this is a bunch of baloney, you know, and they're just complaining, and they're faithless. And so, then the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them whether they will walk in my law or not.

And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. Let's look over at verse 12.

I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel speak to them, saying, At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread.

So two things he's going to provide for them, meat and bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God, so it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp, and when the layer of dew lifted there on the surface of the wilderness was a small round substance as fine as frost on the ground.

So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, What is it? By the way, and that's probably, you know, well, King James has manna, right?

[14 : 26] Is that the word that's there? I don't know if it's transliteration. I don't recall. Who has a King James? It says manna. Okay. So the New King James is, and other translations probably, ESV do it too.

They interpret the word. So we don't know what manna is or was. And they didn't know what it was either. That's why they called it, What is it?

They don't know what this is. This was something new, something that did not originate from the earth. It was something from heaven, and didn't God say that it was going to rain bread from heaven?

Now, really, back there in the first part of chapter 16 when he said that, he is referencing not just the manna, I think, but also the quail. He's going to provide bread for them, bread in the sense of food. And at a certain time of the day, it's going to be quail, and in the early morning, when the dew goes away, the frost goes away, there will be the manna. So, meat and bread, he's going to give this to them from heaven, and provide for his people, so that they will know that he's the Lord, their God.

[15 : 42] It's a test. I don't think they passed it, because pretty soon they got sick of the quail and the manna. We're not going to read about that, but a little bit later, they get tired of that. You know, and, you know, God has infinite patience.

Alright, so, the manna. And, and so, for they did not know what it was, and Moses said to them, this is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.

God's providing for you. Now, I said a moment ago that the stick thrown in the bitter water, we don't have a parallel for that in the New Testament, so we can't say definitively that the Holy Spirit was saying, here is a prefiguring of the cross.

we might make an application that God's power was mighty and He used the stick there and He used the stick in our lives too. But here, in regard to the bread from heaven, we do have a clear statement of that, a correlation in the New Testament.

in John chapter 6 and verse 31, let me read it to you. Jesus is going to do the speaking. The Jewish leadership have said to Jesus, verse 31, when our fathers ate the manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

[17:05] This is a direct reference to here in Exodus chapter 16, this event here. Alright, so He's saying this to Jesus. And Jesus said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven.

It wasn't Moses who gave it to you, gave it to our people, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. The true bread. This is something different.

Now, He's comparing it. It wasn't bread from heaven. God did provide bread from heaven for God's people back in Exodus 16. But now Jesus is talking about a true bread.

A true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. And they said to Him, Lord, give us this bread always.

They're still thinking about food, alright, obviously, because, you know, they could get past their flesh and their own hungers. So, hey, let's have that bread.

[18:09] And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. Alright, so a direct correlation there.

God rained bread from heaven upon His people there so that they would know He's the Lord. And Jesus makes a reference to that.

Or actually, the Pharisees made a reference to it. And Jesus said, alright, I'll take you on that one. I'm that bread. The true bread from heaven. Alright, so God shows Himself faithful to the faithless. And then one more in chapter 17 starting with verse 1. Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the wilderness of sin.

That's not sin in the sense of sinfulness. That was the name of it. Sin. According to the commandment of the Lord encamped at Rephidim, there was no water for the people to drink.

[19:10] Therefore, the people contended with Moses. Here they are again. They're arguing with him. And they're complaining.

And they said, give us water that we may drink. A bunch of crybabies. So Moses said to them, why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord? People thirsted there for water.

And the people complained against Moses and said, why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst? This is just beyond comprehension.

They would say something like this. So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, what shall we do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me. I think I'd probably be saying the same thing.

What are we going to do with these idiots? And the Lord said to Moses, go on before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river and go.

[20:13] Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb and you shall strike the rock and water will come out of it and that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

So he provided water for the people by striking the rock. Interesting story. Amazing miracle. Is there a parallel in the New Testament?

Yes, there is. And it's 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 1 and Paul makes direct reference to this very event there in the Old Testament.

And he said in chapter 10 verse 1, Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud all passed through the sea.

The cloud that guided them out of Egypt and they passed through the sea. The Red Sea that was parted. All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. All ate the same spiritual food.

[21:14] That's the manna. They all ate the same. And all drank the same spiritual drink for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ.

So, you have a number of Christophanies in the Old Testament. Pre-incarnate appearances and representations of Jesus.

And here, it was the rock. It was the rock. And so, here's a direct reference to this event here in the Old Testament in the life of Israel.

Alright? So, here we have God. He shows himself faithful to the faithless. Alright? Let's move on from there. God shows himself powerful for the powerless.

Chapter 17, starting with verse 8, is an interesting part of the story. It's where Israel ultimately defeats the Amalekites at Rephidim.

[22:28] Remember now, it was at Rephidim that Moses struck the rock and water was provided and the people were refreshed. In fact, the word Rephidim means refreshed.

And so, it's kind of a picture if you want to make a spiritual application of those times in our lives when we are refreshed and spiritually refreshed. We might use another kind of terminology to describe it being kind of on the mountaintop, you know, where things are just going well and where our communion with God is sweet and wonderful.

So, it's a time of refreshing. And it's interesting, then, that right after that, the Bible tells us starting with verse 7 or verse 8, Now, Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

Amalek came, just right hot on the heels of this kind of mountaintop time, you know, in this time of refreshing. Amalek comes and attacks them. And Moses said to Joshua, Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek, tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod, the rod of God in my hand.

So, Joshua did as Moses said to him and fought with Amalek and Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. So, it was when Moses held up his hand that Israel prevailed and when he let down his hand, now his hand had the rod, alright, when he let down his hand or the rod that Amalek prevailed but Moses' hands became heavy so they took a stone, put it under him and he sat on it so he made a seat for Moses.

[24:20] And Aaron and Hur supported his hands one on one side and the other on the other side and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun so Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Alright, so here's this battle. In a time of refreshing and then suddenly Amalek comes and attacks them and then you read this interesting story about Moses holding the rod of God up and ultimately Joshua and, or not Joshua but Aaron and Hur helping to support him and they win the battle.

Now, there's several things that we can learn about, about this, the spiritual application. And I think we can easily make these applications and we're not reading something into it.

Israel, of course, very, very clearly, God's covenant people, Israel is representative of all born again believers, God's people.

Amalek, if you go back and read Genesis 36 and verse 12, we're not going to do that, but there we discover that Esau's grandson was Amalek.

[25:46] Now, when it says here in the text, here in chapter 17 that Amalek attacked, it was the Amalekites, the descendants of Amalek. He attacked, they attacked.

Amalek is Esau's grandson and he represents then, I think, the flesh. The flesh. You remember the story about Jacob and Esau?

And Esau was the older of the two twins and therefore it was his birthright because he was the older, but he sold it for a pot of stew.

You know that story. That is, and so he set the picture of the flesh and God said in Malachi 1.3, I hated Esau.

The battle's certainty. This side of heaven, the battle with the flesh will never end.

[26:49] We, just like Israel, battle with the flesh and battling with the flesh seems always to intensify and come hot on the heels of these mountaintop experiences, these times of spiritual communion and refreshing and then suddenly the flesh just kind of comes out of nowhere and we say, well, where did that come from?

You know, someone will look at you cross-eyed and you'll lash out at them or you, you know, make a bad decision and allow your flesh to win and feed that flesh and you say, where did that come from?

I was just having such a wonderful time with the Lord and then, where did this come from? We're going to do battle with the flesh all throughout our lives. Here in verse 12 of chapter 17, the battle continued until the going down of the sun and the battle with the flesh is going to continue until the going down of the sun.

That is, when this life is over, it's an ongoing battle. In verse 16, it says, the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation, literally from generation to generation to generation.

It's symbolic of the battle between the believer and his or her flesh, that unredeemed part of us that will not be redeemed until the resurrection.

[28 : 25] So, the battle is certain. There's the certainty of the battle. The enemy's strategy. What does the Bible tell us about the strategy?

He attacks unexpectedly. I've already kind of given you a clue to this already, but the Bible says, then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

And Rephidim means refreshment, a place of refreshment, a place of rest. And so, the flesh will attack us unexpectedly, just out of the clear blue. He attacks indirectly.

We'd have to go to Deuteronomy 25 to discover this, but there is another account of this same event in Deuteronomy 25, and in that account, the Bible reveals that the Amalekites attacked from behind.

They come unexpectedly and indirectly. He attacks viciously.

[29 : 32] He attacks our weaknesses, not our strengths. Again, Deuteronomy account shows that the enemy attacked all that were feeble, is what the Bible says.

So, they came from behind indirectly, like cowards, and not a frontal attack, not an attack against the strength of Israel, but they attacked all the stragglers behind, the feeble, the elderly, the faint, the weary, Deuteronomy 25, 18 tells us.

And that's just like our flesh, or the way Satan tempts our flesh. I don't know about you, but, and I'm sure that's true of you, there are a lot of opportunities to sin.

I mean, there are just all kinds of ways you and I can sin. But there are a whole host of those things that are out there that I'm never tempted to do. I'm never tempted to stop by at the liquor store and pick up a fifth of whiskey and get drunk.

My flesh never attacks me there. My flesh attacks other places that I'm not going to share with you. Unless, of course, you want to share with me.

[30 : 45] But you don't understand what I'm saying. There are a lot of things. I mean, I've never tempted to go out and rob a bank. It doesn't even enter my mind. I mean, those are easy things. But there are a lot of other things, too.

But the flesh, you know, Satan will prompt and tempt our flesh in those areas of our lives that are weaker.

Those areas in our lives where we, you know, we have certain cravings that we can't control by ourselves or we don't allow the Lord to help us to control.

Always the weak areas and that's where the flesh will attack us. So he attacks viciously. He attacks arrogantly because the flesh hates God.

God reminded Israel that when Amalek attacked their feeble and faint and weary, in verse 18 of Deuteronomy 25, he said that he feared not God.

[31 : 50] Folks, the flesh, that unredeemed part of us, hates God. There's a part of you that hates God. Does not, I mean, hates God's Word and His law and His commandments.

And when we allow the flesh to have control rather than the Holy Spirit, then we will always do contrary to God's Word because the flesh does not want to obey God.

The flesh does not want to love Him. The flesh does not want to serve Him and worship Him because the flesh always attacks arrogantly.

He does not fear God and it does not fear God. The battle's victory. First, it begins with God's strength and not man's.

You're going to have victory over the flesh. It's going to be because of God's strength and not your strength. Moses' rod, this is rather interesting, I think, and you can go back and look at these passages some other time, but Moses' rod, before he threw it down, Exodus 4, 3, represented his own strength.

[33 : 09] It was his own rod. It was just Moses' rod and it's referred to as Moses' rod in chapter 4, verse 3. But when God told him to throw it down and when he picked it up, from that point on,

generally, it's referred to as the rod of God in chapter 4, verse 20.

And that then represents God's strength. So it's God's strength that's going to win the victory over the flesh. Second, the strength of God must operate in a life, the life of a believer, through two spiritual disciplines.

And I believe they're presented to us here in Aaron and Hur. In chapter 17, verse 11, I read it a moment ago, but let me read it again. I know we've got to wrap this up.

And so it was when Moses held up his hand that Israel prevailed and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands became heavy, took a stone, they sat him on it, and Aaron and Hur supported each arm, each hand, as he held up the rod.

Aaron and Hur are symbolic of two spiritual disciplines. I don't think it was by chance that Aaron and Hur were selected to go with Moses to the top of the mountain as God's army and the leadership of Joshua fought against the Amalekites.

[34:42] I don't think it was by chance that God had that done that way. Because Aaron, I think, represents prayer. Aaron was the first high priest, the one who represented the people before God prior to Jesus coming and prior to, you know, then each believer being a priest, the priesthood of the believer.

In Israel, there was one priest, high priest, and he was the go-between, represented the people before God and represented prayer. And I think Aaron represents prayer here. supporting the strength of God in the life of the believer.

Hur represents purity. The word her means white. And I think it's symbolic of purity and represents spiritual purity.

And so, victory of the flesh comes out through prayer and purity. Purity. Moral purity in your life. You see, the moment you struggle with the flesh and you struggle to the point of failure and you wonder, how did I get here?

[36:09] Then, that's when you need to look back and say, what about my prayer life? and what about the way I've been living?

Have I been living according to God's word? In purity? Have I been praying? You don't have to look very far to explain what might be happening to you spiritually and some of the failures that may come in your life where the flesh takes control.

Prayer and purity. Thank you.