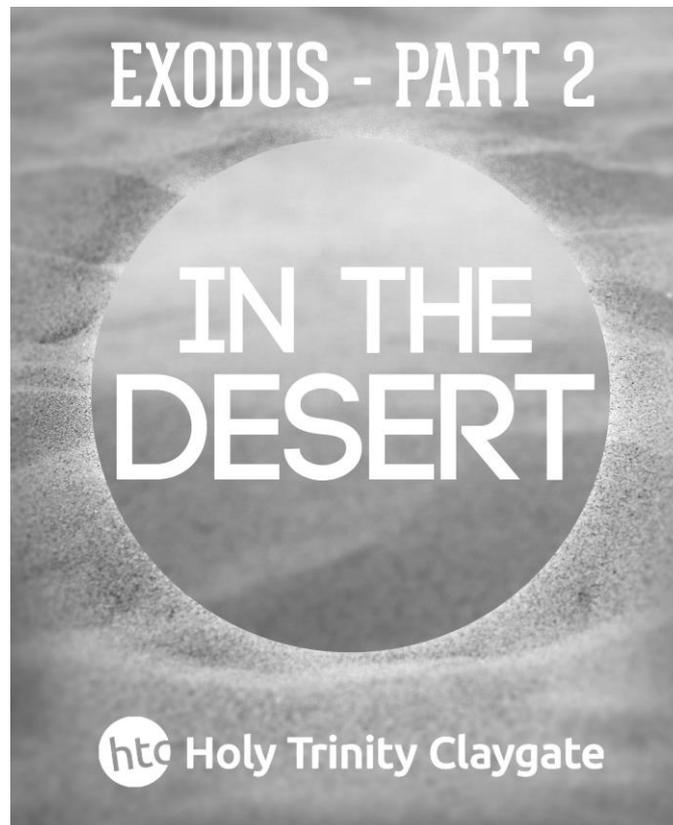


# Holy Trinity Claygate



Exodus Part 2 - In the Desert

Small Groups Study Material  
Autumn 2014



## Study 1: Exodus: the story so far - Exodus 15:1-21

### Introduction

- put the following events in chronological order, with the earliest first:
  - the American Civil War, the Battle of Hastings, Magna Carta, death of Queen Victoria, the publication of the King James Bible, the start of WWI, the discovery of penicillin, the death of Edward VI, the invention of the automobile, the writing of *Pilgrim's Progress*
- now on a big bit of paper capture as many events as possible from our series Exodus Part 1 – and after you have done this number them in order of occurrence.

### Read vv1-7, 11

- what specific act is Moses thanking God for in vv1-5?
- what was at stake in this miracle (i.e. what were the implications if it had not happened)?
- what are the other ways in which the Israelites have previously seen God demonstrate a) his power and b) his superiority over other powers? (cf vv6-7, 11 – previous chapters in Exodus)

### Read vv13-18

- what is Moses' hope for the future? what aspects of this hope might have been particularly reassuring for the Israelites?
- what do you think gives Moses confidence that this hope will become real?

### Stepping Back

- what are the mighty acts we can praise God for as followers of Jesus Christ?
  - how do these demonstrate God's power and rescue of us?
- when and why might it be valuable to recall God's mighty acts in the past?
- what promises has God made to us for the future? what can give us confidence that God will keep his promises?



## Study 2: A complaining people; a providing God - Exodus 16:1-17:7

### Introduction

- describe a time when you were really hungry / really thirsty. How did it affect a) your feelings and b) your behaviour towards others?

Today we are looking at how God provided for the Israelites' needs as they began their journey in the desert. Look at the map to trace their journey through Marah and Elim (15:22-27) to the Desert of Sin.



### Read 16:1-12

- why were the Israelites complaining (v3)? what do you think of their response?
- what instructions does the Lord give (v4-5)? why does God respond in this way (v4)?
- how would the sight of the glory of the Lord (v10) be an encouragement to the Israelites? (see also 13:21-22)

### Read 16:13-30

- summarise the ways in which God provides food for the Israelites in these verses.
- in what ways do the people disobey God's commands (vv20 & 27)?
- looking at the whole passage (vv1-30), how would you summarise a) the people's behaviour and b) the character of God?

### Stepping back

- what might be the signs of us having a grumbling spirit in our own lives? what might provoke grumbling today?
  - how does this passage help us to see ways in which God is at work in difficult times in our lives?
- how does understanding this passage help us deal with disappointment in our own lives? (cf 1 Corinthians 10:13)
- in what ways does God provide for our own daily needs? You might like to refer to Matthew 6:11 & 25-34 and John 6:32-40.



## Study 3: The 10 Commandments - Exodus 20:1-17

### Introduction

- without opening your Bible (!) – how many of the 10 commandments can you list?

### Read vv1-11

- why do you think God begins (v2) by reminding the Israelites who he is and what he has done? what is the significance of the fact that the law was given *after* God has brought them out of slavery in Egypt?
- what do these first four commandments have in common?
- what would disobedience to these commandments look like in today's world?

### Read vv12-17

- what do these six commandments have in common?
- what makes the final commandment (you shall not covet...) different from the others in this section?
- how do the commandments reflect the character of God?
- how do the commandments help God's people to live in relationship with God?

### Stepping back

- what relevance do the commandments have to us as Christians? You might like to look at Matthew 5:21-30 and Romans 13:8-10.
- we now have the law written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit (see Jeremiah 31:31-34). How does this help us to obey the commandments?
- how would you answer someone who asks 'will I go to heaven if I keep the 10 commandments?'



## Study 4: Living out the character of God - Exodus 23:1-19

### Introduction

- if you could change one law in the UK which would it be?
- what role do laws have in our country today?

Today we are looking at some of the additional laws that God gave to Moses further to the 10 Commandments. They provide an excellent example of how the OT law functions differently from how we often think.

### Read vv1-9

- who are these laws designed to protect?
- if they come from God, what do they suggest about his character and heart?
- why might they have meant something particularly to the Israelites (cf v9)?

### Read vv10-19

- what are the point of the Sabbath laws (vv10-12)? how do they connect with the bigger story of God?
- what do you think was the point of the two additional festivals to Passover (the Feast of Unleavened Bread)? what were they to remind the Israelites of?

### Stepping Back

- if the laws in vv1-9 are an expression of God's character and heart, how do they help us in our commitment to social justice / helping the marginalised?
  - what are the practical ways we can not 'follow the crowd' (v2) but put the needs of the vulnerable first?
- given that our society no longer has a regular rhythm of sabbath rest, what does it mean for us to take the sabbath seriously?
- what are the key festivals in our Christian year? Give examples of how in the past they have helped you keep your faith alive.
- how has this study helped us think about the role of the OT law for Christians today? how does the Holy Spirit help us live out the law in relationship with God?



## Study 5: A God of second chances - Exodus 34:1-35

### Introduction

- can you think of a time in your life when you have been given a second chance in some way – or where you have given a second chance to someone else? how did you feel?

In today's passage we see God giving the Israelites a second chance, after they had turned away from him to worship a golden calf.

### Read vv1-14

- look back over the last couple of chapters of Exodus, and trace the story of how the Israelites turn away from God and worship a golden calf (32:1-6), Moses intercedes before God on their behalf (32:30-34), God punishes their sin (32:35 & 33:3) and the people begin to show signs of repentance (33:4-6).
- in this passage (34:1-14), what signs of God's grace do we see:
  - in v1 (cf 32:15-16 & 19)
  - in vv5-6 (cf 33:18-23)
  - in vv10-11?
- what other aspects of God's character do we see in this section?

### Stepping back

- what parallels can you find between this episode and the story of Peter? (John 18:15-18 & 25-27; John 21:15-20)
- how does this passage help us to deal with sin in our own life?

***The next two sections are optional - complete them if time allows!***

### Read vv29-35

- how would you describe the role of Moses in these verses?
- why was his face radiant? why do you think this caused the Israelites to be afraid?

### Stepping back

- read 2 Corinthians 3:7-18. What is the key difference between Moses' relationship with God and ours?

**To finish**

You might like to spend some time in silent prayer:

- thank God that the veil has been taken away in Christ, and we can come into God's presence for ourselves
- come to God in repentance for areas of sin in your own life
- thank him that we are assured of forgiveness through the cross
- ask for his help to transform you increasingly into his likeness through the Holy Spirit, so that you might reflect his glory

## Study 6: People to serve God - Exodus 39:1-31

### Introduction

- in what place or building have you most clearly sensed the presence of God? what contributed to this being the case?

In this final study we look at a wonderful provision God made for his people – he promised to come and be among them. This was something they were to take very seriously – but their efforts are nothing to the lengths God took later on to be among his people...

First of all, take time to look overleaf at the design of the tabernacle and the priestly garments worn by the high priest. The instructions concerning these take up chs 24-30 and 35-40.

### Read Exodus 25:8-9 and 29:35-46

- what is the main aim of the tabernacle? (see also 25:22)
  - what would it have meant for the Israelites to have God dwelling among them? how might it have encouraged them?
- what is the role for the priests?
  - in what way might have the regular sacrifices helped the Israelites recall their need to depend on God?

### Read Exodus 40:34-38

- describe the various reactions of the Israelites to this experience. How might it have equipped them for the journey to come?

### Stepping Back

- with clear echoes to Exodus, John tells us that in Jesus God 'made his dwelling among us' (John 1:14).
  - how is this action even more remarkable than God dwelling among the Israelites in the tabernacle?
  - what are the different ways we can recognise God dwelling in us by the Holy Spirit? (1 Corinthians 3:16)
- why are animal sacrifices no longer necessary? (Hebrews 9:11-14) So in what way are we to depend on God now?
- reflecting on this Exodus series:
  - share one thing that has spoken to you personally
  - share one way in which you have reminded of the good news to share during Life to the Full