

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"TAKE THE LONG WAY HOME" | EXODUS 13 | PASTOR BRIAN

WARM-UP QUESTION:

Did you ever take a "short-cut" that turned out to not be a short-cut on a trip or in a relationship or in a career?

"Concentration of the Firstborn" - (Exodus 13: 1,2; 11-16)

God commands the Jews to dedicate the firstborn, the one who represents the whole family, to Him as part of a reminder about their salvation from Egypt. What does that say about God and His connection to His people?

"Unleavened Bread" - (Exodus 13: 3-10)

God uses the commands of "remember" and "tell" as He lays out the feast of Unleavened Bread: remember what He has done and tell your children. What is difficult about doing either of those commands? What are ways to do them well?

"Cloud and Fire" - (Exodus 13: 17-22)

God led the Jews down the less popular road, the longer road that was inconvenient, in order to protect them and mold them into His people. How do you handle inconveniences in your life? What are signs God is using them to shape you?

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Pastor Brian makes the point that Pillar of Fire and Clouds were God's Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit that lives inside of those who believe and follow Jesus Christ today. We can be led similarly if we listen to and trust in Him. Are you being led by the Spirit lately? Have you been faithful as God has been leading you in a different sort of path?

Exodus 13

6-13-21

Take The Long Way Home

I. Slide1 Announce:

A. Slide2-6 Dan: FamilyNight. FHC. Rummage donations. Blood. Job opp.

B. Prayer: God you seem to draw us out, to draw us in. (Egypt, out of ourselves, our comfort zone)

II. Slide7 Intro: Take The Long Way Home

A. What's *obvious* in the book of Exodus (the big "E" on the eye-chart) is that this is a book about *the Greatness of God*. Slide8a He is God ... big G.

B. To study Exodus is to learn the theology of **salvation**.¹

1. Election: Israelites were the people of His choosing.
2. Substitutionary atonement: a lamb was offered in their place.
3. Propitiation: blood turned aside God's deadly wrath.
4. The communion of saints: They shared Passover together.
5. Sanctification: they swept away the yeast that represented *their old life*.
 - a) So in ch.13 we have 1 more pillar of soteriology (study of salv).
6. Redemption: they now get the instructions for *the redemption of sons*. It procured their release by the payment of a price.
 - a) Redemption helps complete our understanding of the Exodus, **but** it also helps us *appreciate our own salvation*.
 - b) Eph.1:7 *in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins*.
 - (1) This helps us to appreciate what it cost God to procure the salvation for us. So we are to remember, **not only that** Christ gave us salvation, **but that** He paid a **steep price** for it!

III. Slide9a CONSECRATION OF THE FIRSTBORN (1,2; 11-16) Read

¹ Ryken, P. G., & Hughes, R. K. (2005). Exodus: saved for God's glory (pp. 368–369).

A. The Jewish firstborn who were to be dedicated for the service of the Lord *since they were spared in the 10th plague.*

B. This was God claiming his right to Israel's offspring. They belong to Him in the 1st place. I spared them in Egypt, so they are Mine. See vs.15.

1. Slide9b All firstborn are His. The firstborn of Egypt God claimed *by the angel of death*. The firstborn of Israel He is now claiming, *but* He's allowing them also to redeem them back.
2. Slide9c The firstborn in the ancient world signified *the center and future of the family*. James B. Jordan, The Law of the Covenant, pg.251.
3. You remember the firstborn had special responsibilities and privileges, including the *right of inheritance*. So consecrating the first born was really Slide9d just to show *the whole family belonged to God*.
4. The firstborn stood for the family as, a part representing the whole. [*like a captain represents his football team at the beginning of a football game*]
5. This helps us understand why God was so angry with the Egyptian's. Pharaoh tried to kill Israel's sons (really God's) by drowning them in the Nile. This was not only a vicious attempt at *genocide*, but it was also a Slide9e rejection of God's paternal rights.
 - a) By killing the Egyptian's firstborn sons, God was not being *vindictive* or throwing a *celestial temperature tantrum*. On the contrary, it was rightly and Slide9f justly defending His right to be a Father to His sons [we're all His children by *creation*]
 - b) But we also belong to God by *salvation*, which was the point of the ritual for redemption. So God not only made us, but he also saves us. God is our rightful Father both by *creation* and by *redemption*.

C. Slide10a (1) So Israel was to *consecrate/give over/pass over* their firstborn. How?

1. In the case of animals, this meant offering the firstborn as a sacrifice.
 - a) One exception was the donkey, and unclean animal, the sacrifice of Lamb offered as the donkeys substitute.

2. In the case of **firstborn sons**, believe it or not, they fell into the same category as **donkeys**. Peter Enns, Exodus, NIV App Comm, pg.255.

a) Immediately after he gives the instructions for donkeys, He does for firstborn sons (13b).

b) **What a comparison**. Donkeys were *unclean* (not hygiene/sp principle). God divided the animals between *clean and unclean* to teach His people the difference of *sacred and secular, holy and unholy*. i.e. certain things **set apart** as holy to the Lord. **They too were set apart. We also are set apart.**

(1) Some parents dedicated their firstborn to work and worship at the temple (Hannah/Samuel). Some paid five shekels of silver to be paid at the Temple (Numb.18:14-16) (Mary & Jo took Jesus to Jerusalem **to present him to the Lord**, Lk.2:22b,23, quoting & fulfilling Ex.13:1)

3. In the case of **baby/parent dedications today**, it's to help parents to understand that **children really do not belong to them at all, they belong to God**. **Thus** it is to acknowledge their complete dependence on God.

a) **Abraham** is the premier example of a child dedication. *He knew Isaac was for God's pleasure, not for his own, therefore he was willing to offer him up on God's altar.*

b) **Slide10b** Now **Moses' catechism** makes sense - **read** vs.14-16.

(1) If a **son** understood this, it would help shape his entire life. (Isaac)
*So let me get this right, when I was a little you dedicated me to God.
To do that you had to pay the price, just like you would for a donkey?*

(2) The son would learn from this that **he had a purpose** in life, that **someone** had paid the price for his sins, & that **now he belong to God**.

IV. Slide11a **UNLEAVENED BREAD (3-10)** **Read**

A.(3) **Remembering** (3,9,14,16) lest in the future they forget to **trust** Him & **serve** Him

B.(8,9) **Instructing** - the younger generation will not know the works of the Lord unless the older generation tells them.

1. The word of God must control our **lips**, our **eyes**, and our **hands** (8,9) and we must share it with others. (phylacteries)

a) **Slide11b Phylacteries/Tephillin** - [Made of black calf skin. 4 compartments inside. Inside 4 parchments, 4 passages of scripture (2 Ex.; 2 Deut)]

(1) **Meaning: Hand** (you shall **handle** His word). **Eyes** (you shall **think** about it). **Mouth** (you shall **speak** about it).

C. We have met a lot of interesting characters so far, **but** back to **the Main Character**. **The God who hears**, listening to the cries of the oppressed. **The God who speaks**, revealing His word to his servants. **The God who acts**, judging his enemies with plagues and rescuing his friends from bondage. adapted from Ryken, Exodus (p. 378,379).

1. Of course He's not merely a character in the **grand drama of redemption**, **He is the Author, Producer, and Director**.

V. **Slide12a CLOUD AND FIRE (17-22) Read**

A. **Slide12b (17) By way of the land of the Philistines** - refers to an ancient road known as **the way of Horus** (later called the **Via Maris** meaning the **way of the sea, the Med.**)

B. **War** - the coastal highway was dotted by **Egyptian** forts, and also the **Philistines**.

C. **Slide13a GOD ALWAYS KNOWS WHICH WAY IS BEST (17,18)**
hard way, easy way

D. (on a billboard) *"Will the road you're on get you to my place?"* – God

1. God declined **the common Road** which the people would've chosen, **and** everyone else would have recommended, **and selected the most unlikely**.

2. He can be referred to as **The Indirect God**. **But I like shortcuts! Have you ever taken a shortcut that wasn't a shortcut?** (*think*: shortcut off-roading & got stuck. shortcut in a career. shortcut in a relationship) **Shortcuts aren't always best.** [*barricade, Trumball Whittier*]

E. **Trust in *the way* of the Lord.** See this also happens in our lives. He doesn't just lead us in the ways that are *convenient*, but *in the way everlasting* (Ps.139:24).

1. They could've reached *the Promised Land* in just a few weeks, *instead* the Lord chose *40 years*. He had things to teach them. *But* remember, *Slide13b God doesn't waste anything*.
2. So that's why I chose for our title, *Take the Long Way Home* by Roger Hodgson, frontman for the band *Supertramp*, 1979.
3. That coastal route would have been *the shortest way*, *but* it was *not the best way* because it was *not God's way*. [so God chose for them, as Paul McCartney sang, *The Long - and - Winding - Road*, Beatles 1970]

F. *Slide13c* Listen carefully to Paul, *Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his *decisions* and his *ways*!*
*34 For who can know the Lord's *thoughts*? Who knows enough to give him advice?*
*35 And who has given him so much that he needs to pay it back? 36 For everything comes *from* him and exists *by* his power and is intended *for* his glory. All glory to him forever! Amen.* Rom.11:33-36 NLT

G. *Slide14a* **REST IN GOD'S PROMISES** (19) *bones of Joseph*

H. Interesting, though they left in such a hurry, *yet* they didn't forget *dem bones*.

I. Genesis 50:25 *Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath, and he said, When God comes to help you and lead you back, you must take my bones with you.*

1. *Why did Jacob want to be buried in Canaan?* This was *the land* God had given him; he didn't belong to *the world* (Egypt)
2. *And as* NT believers, not only does *our spirit go to heaven* when we die, *but the body* will also be taken from this world *at the resurrection*.

J. *Slide14b* Look for His Promises. They are *portable*. Take them with you throughout your day. *And* remind yourself of His promises, that He is a God who fulfills His word.

K. *Slide15* **JOURNEY IN HIS PRESENCE** (20-22) *guide*

L. **Fire** = His presence. *God **guides** us into what He has already prepared for us.*

M. **Cloud** - *a freak of nature?* **No**, it didn't depart for **40 years**.

1. The cloud reminds us that God **guides** and **leads** His people.

2. **We all wish we had a cloud!**

a) A cloud to hover over **the guy/gal** I'm supposed to marry.

b) A cloud to float over **the building of the job** I'm supposed to take.

c) A cloud to levitate over **the car** I'm supposed to buy at Carmax.

3. **But** we actually have something **better than** a **cloud**, the **Holy Spirit** living inside of us. **OT** - He was **with** His people. **NT** - He is **in** His people.

a) Jn.14:17 *You know him* (HS), *for he dwells **with** you and will be **in** you.*

4. Isaiah says, the HS was actually in the Cloud. (**see** Is.63:11,12)

5. **Buuut**, I still really want a **cloud**. OK, well you have one **it's inside you!**

6. Do you realize, that you are **never apart** from **His presence**, you just need to be **sensitive** to His leadership. **Are you walking in the Spirit?** (in step with ...)

N. **To lead them** - there was no paths in the desert, no maps, no pioneers, no guides.

1. **Oh wait, it's the same today.** **How do we journey through life?** the same way. ***Being led and guided by the HS as we listen to, and trust in, Him.***

2. The Lord was "in" the pillar (both). **It's the divine presence. It's the nearness of God. Forever!**

O. ***Brian after 3rd service only:** we need help removing about 150 sanctuary chairs in preparation for VBS starting. (Tony will be there to direct which ones)

P. Keywords: salvation, consecrate, consecration, firstborn, dedication, phylacteries, cloud, fire, shortcut, promises.