

Q2 L07 - **Covenant at Sinai** - 2021-05-15

Shawn Brummund: Good morning, and welcome to another edition of the Sabbath School Study Hour. My name is Pastor Shawn Brummund, and I have the privilege of welcoming and opening our session here with prayer.

But before we open with prayer, we want to talk a little bit about the Quarterly. Today we're going to be looking at the Quarterly we've been studying, which is "The Promise: God's Everlasting Covenant." And we're looking at lesson number seven. So, if you have a copy of the Quarterly, make sure that you have it with you. If you have your Bible--if you don't have your Bible with you, make sure that you go and grab it. This is going to be an in-depth Bible study, once again.

And I also want to invite you to take advantage of our free gift offer that we have this morning, which is, "Written in Stone," which is one of my favorite study guides, "Written in Stone," and you can just simply dial 1-866-788-3966. Again, that's 1-866-788-3966. And when you do get an answer, make sure that you ask for Offer Number 111. That's just a little bit easier today. The number is 111. Now, if you want a digital copy, and you are in the US, you can also text the code SH098, and you want to be able to dial that to 40544. So, please take advantage of that, if you've never studied this before. I know that it'll be definitely worth your time and investment in that.

So, before we invite our musician out, we want--actually, we're going to invite our musician out first, and then we're going to open with prayer. Nice to have you.

♪♪♪

♪ When I think I'm going under ♪

♪ part the waters, Lord ♪

♪ When I feel the waves around me ♪

♪ calm the sea ♪

♪ When I cry for help, oh, hear me, Lord ♪

♪ and hold out your hand ♪

♪ Touch my life ♪

♪ Still the raging storm in me ♪

♪♪♪

♪ I need Thee every hour ♪

♪ most gracious Lord ♪

♪ No tender voice like Thine ♪

♪ can peace afford ♪

♪ I need Thee ♪

♪ Oh, I need Thee ♪

♪ Every hour I need Thee ♪

♪ Oh, bless me now, my Savior ♪

♪ I come to Thee ♪

♪ I need Thee every hour ♪

♪ in joy or pain ♪

♪ Come quickly and divine ♪

♪ or life is vain ♪

♪ I need Thee ♪

♪ Oh, I need Thee ♪

♪ Every hour I need Thee ♪

♪ Oh, bless me now, my Savior ♪

♪ I come to Thee ♪

♪ Oh, oh, oh ♪

♪ Oh, bless me now, my Savior ♪

♪ I come to Thee ♪

♪♪♪

♪ When I think I'm going under ♪

♪ part the waters, Lord ♪♪

♪♪♪

Shawn: I want to invite you to close your eyes, as we ask the Lord to be with us. Father in heaven, we come before You as the eternal God of the universe, the One that gave us life and continues to sustain our lives by Your grace. As we come to You this morning, we want to pray that Your Holy Spirit will be with us. We claim the promise, Lord Jesus, that You gave to Your first disciples and extended to us, that when we ask for it with sincerity, that You will give us the Holy Spirit, that Your presence will truly abide with us and dwell in our minds, in our hearts, and that You will be our teacher, that You will help us to be able to learn all things in concern to what You want us to know.

Father, we thank You for your Bible. And as we open it today, we want to pray, God, that You will truly help us to be able to understand it better, that we might be able to see You for all that You are. Please bless our teacher, Pastor Doug Batchelor, today. And Lord, we thank You for him and for his ministry, and we count on being blessed once again. We pray it all in Christ's name, amen.

Doug Batchelor: Happy Sabbath.

Congregation: Happy Sabbath.

Doug: Good to see each of you. Now, they reminded me in the studio, they said, you know, a lot of times when this program airs on various satellite networks, it is not on Sabbath, because a lot of teachers watch it in advance, and so they might be watching it on Thursday. And so I'm supposed to say, "Good morning." And so whatever time it is you're watching it, of course, it's Sabbath here during this time. And wow, we're living in some fascinating times, and I'm just so thankful that as much as the world changes, the Word of God does not change. Flowers fade, and the heavens and the earth might pass away before the Word of God passes away.

We're going to be talking today, continuing in our study dealing with the promise, talking about the covenants of salvation that God made with His people. And our lesson today is lesson number seven. It's the "Covenant at Sinai." And we have a memory verse, and the memory verse is from Exodus 19, verse 4. It says, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself. You know, the story of the Exodus is the story of salvation, and it is just a wonderful analogy. It's a living metaphor of how God saves us, brings us from that slavery to sin into the Promised Land. We're going to talk a little bit about that later in the lesson.

I want to greet those who are worshiping with us online. We know we have folks that are watching on a couple of different Facebook channels, on YouTube, on satellite, and we know you're here. We also have some members, there's some members that can't attend locally. They're part of our online members. And we have members in other countries that have no local church that they can worship with, and so we want to welcome you, as well, those of you who are part of the Granite Bay online group.

In our first section dealing with the subject of "On Eagles' Wings." And this is based upon a couple of scriptures in the Bible. Now, you realize the Ten Commandments--what chapter? I'll repeat what you say. Where do you find the Ten Commandments? Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, and Jesus gives a partial list in Mark chapter 10, and there's other places in the New Testament. But you find your complete list there in Exodus 20.

So, in Exodus 19, the Lord is leading up to the giving or delivery of the Ten Commandments, and that's why we're studying this. He's telling you, really, what the prerequisites are for the covenant. God reminds them how He took care of them as an eagle protects its young. And these are the passages here. Exodus 19, verse 4, "You've seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself."

Now, when you say eagle in America, what's our national symbol? But it's a bald eagle. Now, the eagle that they had in Palestine was not that same eagle. Now, I think we've got an eagle we're going to put up on the screen here, or two. One says, "I bore you on eagles' wings." There's a bald eagle, but it's not a baby eagle on his back. Someone snapped this picture of a crow. Looked like--it looks like he's hitchhiking on the back of an eagle. Now, you've probably seen before where crows and eagles kind of harass each other in the air, mostly the crows harassing the eagles. It looks to me like they're not necessarily friends, but this crow is just sort of like landing on the back of the eagle to mock him a little bit.

The behavior of eagles bearing their young on their backs is very rarely a witness, and there have been a few ornithologists--Karen, and I had a next door neighbor across the street for 20-something years who was a world famous ornithologist. And I used to take advantage of Ed Harper and ask him questions. When I had Amazing Facts about birds, he always knew everything about birds.

And there's really no journal or documentation of eagles bearing their babies on their backs. There is one report of an ornithologist traveling in another country that saw an eagle dive under its young on its first flight, when it realized it was not getting its wings and caught it on its back and got it lifted up again, and it fluttered down eventually and learned how to fly. But that's very rare.

So, what does this mean? He bore you on His back as eagles. By the way, the eagles that you find in Israel are not the American eagle. It's the imperial eagle. I think we have a picture of that. There it is. And you would also find those in Sinai. It's also a majestic-looking bird. When you think about the eagles in the Bible, keep in mind, what was the ensign on the Roman standard? An eagle. That's interesting, because Moses told the children of Israel that, "If you turn away from me, and you do not obey me, and you worship other gods, and do not keep my commandments, I'll send another nation from afar, whose language you do not understand and they will swoop down on you like an eagle." And when the Romans came and surrounded Jerusalem with their standards, and they had eagles on them. So, I thought that was interesting.

But let me read to you Deuteronomy chapter 32 before I go too far with the eagles here. Deuteronomy 32, verse 10 through 12. "He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him," talking about God with His people, "He kept him as the apple of His eye," meaning the focus of your pupil. "And as an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings."

Here you have it again. God's talking about an eagle carrying them on its wings. And he says, "So the Lord led him, and there was no foreign god with him." You know, we have several pictures of the tenderness of God in the Bible, and it uses birds. You know, Jesus wept over Jerusalem. And he says in Matthew 23:37, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing."

Now, I've seen this many times. I was walking through the woods one time, and I came upon a quail, and its chicks had just hatched out there on the dirt road, and they were off in the distance. I was a little bit away, but I could see them. And the little chicks were all scattered around. They looked like insects, they were so small. And they're pecking away, getting their first meals after they hatched out, and the mother saw me, and she clucked, and they all scurried under her wings, and she spread her wings over them. And then they got off into the grass, and then she came towards me and started flapping around like she was wounded, wanting me to chase her.

Have any of you ever seen this before? Yeah, they will act like they're wounded to direct you away from where the nest is or where the young are. And so-- I don't know why people call chickens, chickens. They're sometimes very brave when it comes to their babies, right? That just isn't fair. And so God uses this picture of taking us under His wings. We sing that song, "Under His wings, I am safely abiding." And so it's a picture of God's loving protection and sacrificial protection for us. It says, "As an eagle stirs up its nest."

You know, when an eagle first builds its nest, and it lays its egg, it's got a lot of down and soft materials that it's collected in the nest. And as the little fledglings begin to grow and start getting developed, and they're stretching their wings, and eagles--I forget what-- I think 20% of eagles do not survive

their first flight. I think that's what the percentage is. After all that time in feeding and rearing them, they are not like some birds that if they miss out on their first flight, they'll just flop on the ground.

Do you know an owl, if it messes up on its first flight, it climbs the tree with its talons. It can climb right back up to the nest. But eagles, they can't do that. Sometimes they nest way up on these rocky crags. And if they don't make it through the first flight and figure out how to use their wings, they're in trouble. So, what the mother does, she makes the nest uncomfortable, while their wings are developing, and they get up, and they just stretch their muscles, and they flap, and they might catch a breeze and hover above the nest, and they flop back down on it. So, most of the time, they've sort of gotten the hang of aerodynamics before they launch out, because their first flight is pretty scary.

Any of you ever gone hang gliding before? I have. I still own two hang gliders. I haven't used them in a long time. But our boys used to-- we'd go hang gliding. Now it's pretty dangerous with people. Most people have given it up, but I remember the first time I jumped off a hill. I was with an instructor, and he said, "Trust your wings; it'll hold you." And boy, I was so scared because I knew as soon as I launched off this hill, there was, you know, a thousand feet below me. If anything failed, that was the end of Doug. And one of the hardest things--but I had to do it because my 13-year-old son was watching at the time. And I thought, "He's going to think dad's a chicken." But that first flight, that was pretty scary. You feel like a pterodactyl has captured you. You jump out and something's holding you up from behind.

But that's too much about eagles, sorry, all right? Eagles are a symbol of God, because they're also strong. Isaiah 40:31, "Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint." And then in Ezekiel 1, verse 10, it says "For as the likeness--"

Another place where God is compared--or one of the aspects of His character is compared to an eagle. You see both in Ezekiel and in Revelation, the four creatures around the throne of God. What are they? You've got a man, got a calf, got a lion and an eagle. You see this both in Ezekiel chapter 1 and in Revelation chapter 4. The first living creature was like a lion. The second was like a calf. The third had the face of a man. The fourth was like a flying eagle--not just an eagle. What kind of eagle? A flying eagle.

Why does God use an eagle as-- those four creatures all are giving different aspects-- you realize Revelation is full of symbols. These are symbolic prophecies. They're giving aspects of God's character. And some have wondered if Matthew is the lion, the Gospel of Matthew is the lion, and Luke is the man, and John is the sacrifice. He is the calf. And Mark is the eagle. Mark is that fast gospel. Eagles are known for their speed. They're known for their sight. They can see things so far or so far away. And when God said, "I bore you," speaking of Israel, "I bore you like an eagle does his young," saving them from Egypt.

Something else about an eagle is they could fly so high and so far that there's no mountain, there's no army, no river, no ocean is an obstacle. No matter what the obstacles were for the children of Israel, God removed all obstacles and delivered them from slavery. So, there's nothing that can keep God from saving us from slavery. And eagles have incredible vision as well. So, he uses this analogy.

You can also look here in Deuteronomy 1:29. It says in verse 29, "Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified or afraid of them. The Lord your God who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes in the wilderness, where you saw how the Lord your God carried you as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went, until you came to this place.'"

You know, there's a real challenging age in the development of a child, where they're not crawling anymore. They just start to walk, but they're not walking fast enough to keep up with the parents. And you've either got to, you know, hold your hand down, unless they grab hold of your finger, because they can't get their hand around your whole hand. And you've got to walk slow, or you've got to pick them up and carry them.

And sometimes, you know, especially if you're going across the street, they'll see a parent pick up their child and carry them. They said, "Look, I'm not taking any chances." And when there's danger, the parent picks up the child and carries them. And this is what God is saying. He's got this picture of parental love. And so this is what is being highlighted there under Sunday. Also, Psalm 103, verse 13, "As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him, for He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust."

God is so patient and so merciful. Has He been patient with you? Is He patient with me? I just thank God for His patience. So, under Monday, it says, "A Pattern for Salvation." Exodus 6:6, "Therefore say to the children of Israel, 'I am the Lord. I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. And I will take you as my people. I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.'"

You know, this was all foretold. God had told Abraham hundreds of years earlier-- it's very interesting. Abraham went down to Egypt because there was a famine. And he brought his wife, and he was afraid to tell the Egyptians his relationship with his wife, because Sarah was so beautiful that he thought that maybe they'd kill him and take her to be part of the harem of the Pharaoh. And so what happened is God told Abraham, he said, "Your descendants are going to be slaves in a strange land and they will afflict them 400 years, and then I will visit them with plagues. And after that, they will come out with great abundance.

What happened to Abraham? Plagues fell on the Pharaoh when he took Sarah into his house. And no one ever touched her, but he did take Sarah into his house. Plagues fell on the house of Pharaoh, and then Pharaoh sent Abraham away with great wealth. He gave him possessions and treasures because God spoke to him, and he saw this was a prophet of God, and he sent him away. What happened to the Israelites? Plagues fell on the Egyptians, and it says they spoiled the Egyptians. God sent them away with great wealth.

So, did you catch that? What happened to Abraham in his personal experience happened to his descendants later. Now, this is also going to come up in our lesson, because in the same way that God called Israel out of Egypt--it says, "Out of Egypt I've called my son." Did Jesus go down to Egypt when He was a young baby? And was He called out of Egypt back into the Promised Land when Herod died? He was. So, the Bible refers to that as sort of an allegory of what had happened to the people. "I've called my son out of Egypt."

All right, going to Monday and looking at Exodus 6, it says, "Therefore say to the children of Israel, 'I am the Lord. I'll bring you out from the burdens of the Egyptians. I'll rescue you.'" This is talking about, again, the salvation from the bondage. What happened there is a pattern of how God saves us. Look at Romans 15, verse 4. "For whatever things were written before are written for our learning, that we through the patience and the comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Everything that's written in the Bible is written for our understanding. I remember reading in Luke chapter 24, when Jesus is talking to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and they don't know it's Jesus. He visits them after the resurrection, and they're walking along, and they're talking about how terrible the weekend had been. Messiah had been executed, and the body is missing, and Jesus listens to them complain. And He finally says, "Oh, fools and slow of heart to believe, all the prophets have spoken, 'Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and entered into glory?' And then beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." All the scriptures the things concerning Jesus.

How much Bible was written when Christ was alive? Just the Old Testament, right? So, when Jesus is talking about Himself in all of the scriptures, what scriptures is He using? Genesis to Malachi. Can you find Jesus in the Old Testament? Is the gospel only in the New Testament, or do you find the gospel in the Old Testament? Were they saved by works in the Old Testament, but were saved by faith in the New Testament? No, nobody is saved by works. Everybody--Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Abraham was righteous not by works but by faith.

Everybody is saved by faith. Read Hebrews. When Paul writes the book of Hebrews, and he's got this chronicle of how the great patriarchs were saved by faith, does he mention any New Testament characters? He's highlighting all these Old Testament characters. They were all saved by faith. Everybody is saved by Jesus. They were saved back then looking forward in faith to the cross. We are saved by faith, looking back to the cross. Everybody is saved by the cross.

So, the story of the Exodus is an allegory of how God saves us. 1 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 1. If you have your Bibles, you might want to turn to this one. Sometimes I read you a real quick scripture, and by the time I'm done, then you find it, but you'll have time to find this one. "Moreover," 1 Corinthians 10, start with the first verse. "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be aware that our fathers," Paul is writing to the Jews, "were under the cloud, and they all passed through the sea."

Now, Paul is talking about the cloud of glory that shaded them during the day. It was a pillar of fire at night. And they went through the sea, the Red Sea. All were baptized into Moses. Anyone ever say, "Come follow Jesus and be baptized into Moses?" Who was ever baptized into Moses? He's saying when they went through the Red Sea, it was a symbol of being baptized into Moses, into his teachings, into following him, the way we are baptized into Christ, into His teachings, into following Him.

See the analogies that Paul was making here? "They were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Cloud and sea. There's a pillar of fire at night, and they went through the sea. We must be born of the water. We must be born of the Spirit. The pillar of fire is born of the fire. The Red Sea is a symbol of being baptized in the water. We need both baptisms, or you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. "And they passed through the sea." All were baptized

into Moses, and the cloud, and the sea. They all ate the spiritual food, and they drank that same spiritual drink. "For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."

Now, was Jesus masquerading as a rock in the Old Testament? Or is Paul simply saying that rock is a symbol of Christ? The bread that came down from heaven, we don't have to guess. Jesus said, "Moses didn't give you that bread. I gave you that bread. I am the bread that came down from heaven. They ate manna, and they're dead now. But if you want to eat a bread that will last forever, you must eat my flesh and drink my blood, or you have no life in you."

So, Jesus gave us so many examples of how He is the bread of life. Can you say amen? "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word," and Christ is the Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And so here Paul is showing us how to read the story of the Exodus, that it's really an allegory of salvation. I'm not done. Go to verse 4. "And they all drank the same--" 1 Corinthians 10, verse 4-- "they drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them. That rock was Christ. But with most of them, God was not well-pleased." Now, there are a lot of them that were saved from Egypt, but they didn't make it to the Promised Land, because they lost faith along the way. "With most of them, God was not pleased."

Is everybody that says they're a Christian really a Christian? Do you think it is the majority, or the minority of people who claim to be Christians that are real Christians? Show of hands, how many of you think it is the minority of people who claim to be Christians? You're right. I hope that doesn't make you lose faith that you can make it. You can't, but Jesus is pretty clear many go in the wide gate, few go in the straight gate, and because people are not searching for it.

All these things-- look at verse 6. I want to read back to verse 5. "Most of them God was not well pleased. Their bodies were scattered in the wilderness, meaning they died along the way. Now, these things became our examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they lusted, that we do not become idolators, as were some of them. As it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play. Nor let us commit sexual immorality as some of them did."

They had problems with other gods, they had problems with evil, they had problems with sexual immorality. Those things would never appear in the church today, right? And it says, "In that day, 23,000 fell. Nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them were also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents." Talking about the book of Numbers. "Nor complain, as some of them murmured and complained, and they were destroyed by the destroyer. Now, all of these things happened to them as examples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come." And if that was true then, how much more have the ends of the age has come now?

So, can we look at the Exodus experience and find out some lessons to keep us out of trouble today? First of all, Moses comes, and he says to Pharaoh, "Let my people go." Who does Moses represent? That's easy. They were baptized into Moses. He's a type of Christ. The Pharaoh. Do you have to think very long? Who does he represent? He's the devil. We all still together? I know it's early, okay? Does the Pharaoh want to let go of them? No. Does the devil want to let go of you? No. Does Moses tell the children of Israel, "I'll make a covenant with you. Keep the Ten Commandments, and I will save you out of Egypt"?

What happens first? The Ten Commandments, or the lamb? Is it the Law or the lamb? He says, "First sacrifice this lamb. Then we'll begin a journey to Mount Sinai." Were they saved from Egypt because they were obedient? Or were they saved from Egypt because of the blood of the lamb? Some people think you're saved because you keep the Ten Commandments. No, you keep the Ten Commandments because He saved you first.

That is so important to get that right. Because if you're waiting until you keep the Ten Commandments, before you accept Jesus, you're never going to get there. That's like telling a person to clean up before they take a bath. That doesn't make any sense. First, they were--they took the Passover lamb. They applied the blood of the lamb. God said, "Now pack up. We're beginning a journey." The journey begins with the sacrifice of the lamb. After they left Egypt, they went through the Red Sea. He brings them to Israel, the Promised Land? No, they head south. They go to Mount Sinai. And there's some debate about where that is. I'm personally more inclined to think it's a mountain more in Saudi Arabia than it was right there in the Sinai Peninsula, because the New Testament says in Arabia. And when it says that Elijah went 40 days and 40 nights to get to Mount Sinai, it would not have taken him that long to get to the popular Sinai location, but it would've taken him much longer to get to the one in Saudi Arabia.

Anyway, we won't go there, but we'll love you either way, whatever you believe on that one. Either way, He took them to Mount Sinai, right? And it was not north. And He says, "If you love me--" How do the Ten Commandments begin? What's the first commandment? People always start with the actual commandment. They don't include the preamble. The preamble is something that God wrote. It says, "God spake all these words, saying--" Now you begin to write. This is where the writing begins. This is where the commandment begins. "I am the Lord your God that brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." What is God saying there? "I am the God who saved you." Then He's implying, "If you love me, here are my commandments."

You see Jesus on the cross dying for your sins. You see how much He saves you. He gives you bread from heaven. He provides your needs, water from a rock, defeats you from your enemies. He did all those things for them before they ever made it to Mount Sinai. Then He brings them to Mount Sinai, and He says, "I've shown you, I've born you on eagles' wings, I've shown you my love. I want to make a covenant. I will be your God if you'll be my people. Do you trust me? Do you know I love you? Will you love me and obey me?" The phrase, "Love God and keep his commandments," do you realize that is in the Ten Commandments? In the commandment about idolatry, showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments. So, it tells you right there that is the key to keeping the Ten Commandments, amen? So, everything that happened to them are an allegory.

Now, were they saved by keeping the Law? No. Did they go into the Promised Land breaking it? No. While they were not saved from Egypt by keeping the Law, they did not go into the Promised Land if they persisted in breaking it. So, people say, "Well, are you saying that I must obey the law to be saved?" You're saved because of the grace of Jesus. But if you are saved by the grace of Jesus, you will obey. If you persist in disobedience after God gives you your wilderness time to learn to obey, He cannot bring you into heaven deliberately sinning. If the devil was kicked out for sinning, he is not going to bring you in sinning. That's what the Bible says. You sinned and you were cast out.

So, the purpose of the plan of salvation, "You will call His name Jesus," for He will what? Save His people from-- in their sins? From their sins. Do you want to be saved in your sin? Or don't you want to be saved from your sin? My sin is a problem. I want to be saved from my sin, not in my sin. But a lot of churches are teaching it that He just kind of saves us. We just bundle our sins with who we are. We thank Him for His grace, and we're going to heaven that way.

Now I think there needs to be a transformation in the life, but it must happen because of the blood of the Lamb, because of love for the Lord. See how the story helps us understand the theology of how that works. Timothy 2, verse 6, "God, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." In Mark 10:44 and 45, "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to serve, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many."

So, it's a question of who we want to serve. Do we want to serve the Lord? Or do we want to serve the devil? Now, think about it. When a person says, "It's tough being a Christian, I think I'd like to give up," did the children of Israel ever say, "We want to go back to Egypt"? You and I looking back on that right now, we think, "Why in the world would you want to go back and worship the Pharaoh's gods and serve the pharaoh and make his bricks, buildings and work in the clay pits of Egypt? Why would you want that?" It's amazing that here they are on their way to the Promised Land. God's feeding them with miracle bread every day. They got water out of a rock. His very presence is in their midst. And they said, "We want to go back to Egypt." And yet we know people who say, "I'm tired of following Jesus. The Christian life is hard."

Well, I'll tell you, friends, it is hard. Life is hard. It is a lot harder to be lost than to be saved. "The way of the transgressor is hard," the Bible says. There is no rest for the wicked. It is much harder to be lost. Trust me. I've tried both. It's harder to be lost, to have no peace. It is so much better--life is tough. It doesn't matter whether you're a Christian or an unbeliever. There's going to be challenges, but it's a lot better being a Christian. Don't go back to Egypt. So, all those things they went through, they're lessons for us.

In Tuesday's lesson, it talks about the Sinai covenant. Look at it. It gives like an outline of eight things that happened there in Exodus chapter 19 and on through 24. It says, first they arrived at the encampment at Mount Sinai. They had been delivered by the Lord, and that's Exodus 19:1 and 2. God proposes a covenant with Israel. This is after they've been saved. He's given them water. He's given them bread. He delivered them from the Amalekites who attacked them.

So, He's shown His love for them. He's given them leadership. Israel's response and acceptance of the covenant, they're willing to listen. Preparations for formally receiving the covenant-- you know, God said, "I'm going to speak to you. Wash yourselves. Wash your clothes. Husbands and wives, you need to fast from intimacy." You know, that was part of it. And this is a special occasion. By the way, Paul refers to that. He said husbands and wives should not deny each other unless they agree mutually. And further, it should be limited, lest they're tempted.

But there was a time when God says, "You're about to hear God speak. You must present yourselves pure before the Lord and not be distracted." And then it says--so, there's a preparation for receiving the Ten Commandments. The proclamation of the Ten Commandments, before God gives him the written transcript, he speaks it.

First they get the audio version. Then they get the written version. That's how covenants usually work. You and I are going to make a covenant. I'm going to buy your car. So, you come to my house. I advertised it on Craig's List. I say I want 6,000. You say, "Well, Doug, there's a couple of scratches in the bumper," and so forth. And you say, "I'll probably give you 5,500." And I say, "No, I'll take 57." And you act like that's too much. You're really actually very happy, but you don't want to pay more than you have to. And so finally you kick the ground and say, "Okay." I say, "All right, let me write it up."

So first you have the verbal agreement. No sense making a contract if you haven't got anything verbal, right? Anyone in the law knows that. First get a verbal agreement, or you'll be writing all the time. Then you write it up. So, God announces it verbally. Then the Ten Commandments is the covenant that they have agreed to at this point. So, they get a written copy of what they've agreed to in the covenant. So then you've got the covenants. The principals are spelled out in Exodus 20, and the ratification of the covenant is Exodus 24, 1 through 18.

Matter of fact, let me look at the clock here. Ah, I don't have time to read all that. In Deuteronomy 29:10, "All of you stand today before the Lord your God, your leaders, and your tribes, and all your elders, and all your officers, and all the men of Israel, your little ones, and your wives, also, and the stranger who is in your camp." So, He includes everybody. "From the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water." The wood was for fire. The water-- notice that. Baptism in the fire, baptism in the water. "That you might enter into covenant with the Lord God, into His oath, which the Lord your God makes with you this day, that He may establish you today as a people for himself, that He might be God to you, just as He has spoken to you and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Does God still today have a covenant with Israel? Well, it says they broke the covenant. But didn't God renew the covenant? Well, that's a covenant with Gentiles. Show me that. It says, "A new covenant I will make after those days with the house of Israel." So, we're all still living under the new covenant, right? It's still based on the Ten Commandments. Says, "My law I will put in their hearts." And it says it's based upon better promises. We'll get to that in just a minute.

So, looking under Wednesday, "God and Israel," you read in Exodus 19:5 and 6, "Now therefore if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you will be a special treasure to me above all people. For all the earth is mine, and you will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." These are the words that you will speak to the children of Israel."

Now, what good would we be if we were a church full of pastors, if every one of you was a pastor? And we all got together, and we talked about how good it is to pastor? What would we know about pastoring if we were all pastors, and we just kind of pastored each other? The idea of being a pastor is that you then go pastor sheep. If all the shepherds get together and talk about how wonderful it is to be shepherds, and you have no sheep-- so when He calls them a nation of kings and priests, what's the implication?

Israel was to be a light to the world. They were to be priests like in the days of Solomon, when all nations came to Israel to learn about their God. And all the people that--see, God strategically located Israel at a land bridge between Asia and Africa and Europe, and all the traffic went through the land of Israel. That's why some of the kings became very, very wealthy from the tolls and tariffs that went through there. That's why the Romans wanted Israel. You think, "Why would they want that place? Everyone is fighting over it." It was the land bridge, and it was very important territory--not to mention, back then it was a land flowing with milk and honey.

So, the idea was as the nations of the world were on their trade, and they'd come through Israel, every Israelite was to be a priest, to tell the others about God. And Moses said, "The other nations will see you, and they'll say, 'What nation is there that has such just laws, that has God in their midst?'" They were to be witnesses. That's why He said, "You're to be a nation of priests."

Now, was that just for Israel, or is that for us today?" Well, you are Israel today, if you're a Christian. I mean, I think God still has a special plan for the Jewish people and Israel, but I think you are Israel. If you are Christ's, you are Abraham's seed. He is not a Jew which is one outwardly. He is a Jew who is one inwardly. And it is not circumcision in the flesh. It is circumcision in the heart. This is what the scripture teaches, right? We are grafted in. Paul says you and I are grafted into the stalk of Israel. We're grafted into that tree.

The book we read is a book written by Jewish authors. There are a couple of very minor exceptions. And so the covenant that they made, we get the benefit from that. And so we are to be a nation of kings and priests. And look at how Peter says it. 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people." Is Peter talking to Jews or to Christians? Christians. We are a nation of priests. It's the same thing God said to Moses. This is His plan, that His church, we become priests to the world. I say priests, I don't mean in the sense that you're carrying on rituals. I mean in that you're advocates, you're teachers, you're like the ancient Levites in that you're sharing the Word of God.

It says we are a holy nation. You read in Revelation 1:5 and 6, "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and ruler over the kings of the earth, to Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Is that clear? Does that just happen when we get to heaven, or are we to be a nation of priests now?

Romans 3, verse 19, "We know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world might become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law, no flesh is justified in His sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin, but now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ and on all who believe. For there is no difference. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

It doesn't matter whether you are a Jew or a Gentile. We're all saved now by that promise, that covenant. That's our last section, under Thursday, "Promises, Promises." So, Moses gives the Ten Commandments. Now first let's go to Exodus 19, verse 7. "So Moses came, and he called the elders of the people, and he laid before them all the words the Lord commanded him. Then all the people answered and said, 'All the Lord has spoken, we will do.'"

All right, so they are making a promise. Did they keep their promise? One of those promises says, "Do not make graven images." While Moses is getting the Ten Commandments, did they make a graven image? And it said, you know, don't commit adultery, but it says that Aaron--the people were naked. And they had a--it says they worshiped, and then they rose up to play. And you leave it to your mind what happened there, but it wasn't a traditional worship service. Yeah, I won't say anymore.

So, the people promised, "All the Lord has said, we will do." Now go to Exodus 24. "Now he said to Moses, 'Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel and worship from afar.' They weren't to come as close. "And Moses alone shall come up near the Lord." Moses was a mediator. What is Jesus? He's our mediator.

Some of you remember the old gas stoves that had three settings. Low, high, and what? Medium. In the middle. That's where you get the word medium. It's in the middle. And Moses is in the middle between God and the people. Jesus is the mediator. I love that story where Christ is transfigured. And one

day he goes from talking with the disciples to talking to God. Moses and Elijah and back again. It's like Jesus is the ladder that goes between heaven and earth, which of course, is what Jacob dreamed about. And so he says, "Come up to the Lord. Moses alone will come near me, but you shall not come near nor shall the people go up with him. So, Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments, and all the people answered with one voice--" Here's the promise of the people. They're saying, "We agree to the covenant. All the words the Lord has said, we will do."

When I do a wedding, and the bride is there, and the groom is there, and at some point I will look at them, and everything gets real quiet, and they'll say, "I do." Why? Because there's a covenant. And I'll look at the man, and he'll say, "I do." And usually, hopefully they're real excited to say, "I do," right? If they're not happy about it, then I ought to tell them to pause. So, that's a covenant.

God has given the Ten Commandments, making a covenant with the people, but the people's promises broke down. Now we're under the same law, but better promises, God's promise. He says, "I will write my law in their hearts. Same law, but instead of the people saying, "I will," God says, "I will do it." It's based on His promise. Can you say amen?

All right, I have more I could say, but the clock is disagreeing with me. And so I want to remind you to request the free offer. Hopefully that will appear on your screen once again. And I want to thank you all again for studying with us today and say God bless you to our viewing audience. We'll continue to study God's Word again next week.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts, wherever and whenever you want, and most important to share it with others.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives.

Male: When I was 15, I bought my first bag of marijuana out of curiosity. And from the age of 15 on to 23 was a constant experimentation with different substances. By the time I was 23, there was not a drug I had not tried. I had worn myself out searching for happiness. And one day I came home tired as usual, and I started drinking. And as usual, after I started drinking, I started looking for a higher buzz. Someone came by with some Xanax. Someone also came by with something else that I liked, and that was cocaine. This time, not thinking, I took the whole thing. So, I went to bed about 5 in the afternoon.

My roommate went off to work that night. When he came back from work the next day, though, he noticed something was wrong because I was still in bed in the same position. He tried to wake me up, and he couldn't wake me up. When my parents found me, they found me curled up in the fetal position in my hospital room, unconscious still, and I stayed unconscious in this coma-like state for the next week. I stayed the next month in the hospital, slowly getting better, to where I could sit up in bed, and I had to learn to walk again.

But my parents found this one facility out in the hills of Tennessee. I had to admit that I liked the place, but they were Christian. And even worse than that, I said yes when they asked me if I wanted to go to church that week. Before the pastor said the benediction, I was so excited because I was planning my escape. And so after everybody was all in bed that night, I made sure that they were snoring and that they were asleep. I went into the kitchen and stole a few bananas, got my backpack ready. I figured I could get sober on my own. My favorite song was, "I Did It My Way." Of course, my definition of sober was a nice supply of marijuana each day and alcohol on the weekends. And of course, if I had a bad hangover, I might need some of those relaxing pills to take. But other than that, that would be it.

So, here I am, stranded on the street in the big city of Houston, my bag of clothes is gone. My cell phone was gone. My wallet, my bus ticket's gone. I don't have anything but the shirt on my back. It's at that point that this man comes up to me, this mysterious man. He's actually very short and appears to be homeless. And he led me to some food and even a place to stay that night. Looking back, it is my firm conclusion that that was an angel.

So my dad was able to come down to Houston and pick me up and take me back up to the health retreat at Wildwood in Tennessee. They had a satellite. On this channel there was a man named Doug Batchelor. I liked what I heard. I liked the way he explained the Bible. It was so simple, and he also had an experience similar to mine.

And I talked to Lou about him, and they happened to have a whole set of cassette tapes. I would wake up at 4 in the morning sometimes, and I would get up, and I would watch two of those videos before breakfast. I would sit this close to the TV watching what Doug Batchelor was saying, just eating up every word of it. I was so tired of hearing lies and even believing my own lies, that it was so wonderful to find something that was solid and that I could rely on.

And so when I got home from rehab, in my local church, Eric Flickinger from Amazing Facts was holding an evangelistic series. They solidified my conviction, and it was then I made the absolute decision to follow Jesus.

I praise the Lord Jesus Christ for Amazing Facts. I praise God for Amazing Facts because they're so Bible based. They send out evangelists who are willing to teach the truth to people. I'm thankful that they're preaching right now all over the world, changing lives, just as they changed mine.

Announcer: Together, we have spread the gospel much farther than ever before. Thank you for your support.

Casey: I would go out and go drinking, and I just wanted to have fun. I was working a lot at the time, going to school and just wasn't really interested in really following God. I would have people tell me, "Why don't you just have faith?" if I was going through some type of trial during my life. I didn't understand what that meant. I would pray, but I didn't feel any less stressed about or worried about a situation. I didn't understand God's Word. It seemed like it contradicted itself, and so I struggled with that a lot.

My ex-husband and I, we had began dating. And within seven months, we got married, which was really fast. After we got married, he was very disrespectful, and he was cheating a lot. Found out he was cheating when I was pregnant with my first son. I tried to get him help, and he checked himself

out of rehab a week later. Living homeless in our hometown, he was saying and doing things that he shouldn't be doing. He was committing crimes. It always started with alcohol and then pot or marijuana, and then he would go to the meth.

So, it was just a really ugly chain of things, and that's why I moved in with my sister. We were staying with her, and her husband and I started doing studies with my sister. She was studying with some people, and I joined the studies. And I learned a lot of different things that I had never known about the Bible, and it started opening up to me and making sense. So, my sister had installed the satellite, and I found Amazing Facts.

The one thing I love about Doug Batchelor is he uses his own life situations, and he uses really good stories to connect, stories from the Bible or teachings. I didn't understand why he was always bringing up the Sabbath and why it was so important. And I was asking my sister, "Why does he keep talking about the Sabbath?" And later on I found out, through studying more, and listening to his teachings about it, the truth about the Sabbath.

I know that I started changing as a person. I wanted to follow the truth. I wanted to have a closer relationship with Christ and be closer to God. So, after doing the studies and learning the truths that I had been learning, I decided to take that next step and give my life to Christ through baptism. Besides learning these messages, these truths about the Bible through Amazing Facts, all of these wonderful people from Amazing Facts, the way they've reached out to me, they really showed me that they have caring hearts, that they're Christ-like, because that's what a Christian is. My name is Casey. Thank you for changing my life. 🎵🎵