

Fourth Story of Creation to Culmination: Law and Sacrifices

First Third:

Express joy in Christ together

Vision 100

Questions:

How are you doing?

How did you obey last week's teaching?

Who are you witnessing to?

Who has come to faith? Are they witnessing to those in their circle?

Who are you training to become a reproducing disciple? Are they training others?

Second Third:

Pray briefly for God to open up His message to us.

DO stick to the story.

DON'T talk about politics; DON'T chase rabbit trails; DON'T focus on minor points in the passage.

DON'T talk about religion. DON'T dominate the conversation.

This is a true story from the Bible.

Recall the promises God made to Eve in the Garden, and later to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of a coming blessing to all nations through their offspring.

God miraculously leads Jacob (whose name He changes to Israel – thus his descendants are called “Israelites”) and his sons into Egypt, where they stay for 400 years and multiply greatly. While they are honored at first, the Egyptian rulers, fearing their increasing numbers, enslave the Israelites and try to destroy them as a people. God shows His great power by protecting His people, taking them out of slavery through His servant Moses, and bringing them to a mountain called Sinai to worship Him. While there He tells them:

Exodus 19:4-6 I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

He also tells them:

Leviticus 19:2 You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

He gives the people Ten Commandments to help them to understand what it means to be holy like He is. Some of the commands are: Do not worship other gods or make idols; honor your parents; do not lie, steal, murder or commit adultery. All God's commandments are summed up in two statements:

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Leviticus 19:18 You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

God also sets up an elaborate system of animal sacrifices, graciously giving the people a way to restore their relationship with Him and with one another when they break these commandments. He tells them that sin must lead to death, the shedding of blood, but that He can provide a substitute for them, if they follow His method of getting right with Him. To picture this substitute, God required them to kill a perfect animal, like a lamb. God said:

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

But just a few weeks after God gives the Ten Commandments, the people rebel and worship an idol. God is ready to destroy them. But Moses appeals to God based on His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and God does not destroy the people. God then brings the Israelites to the Promised Land He had given to Abraham hundreds of years before. Right before they enter the land, Moses speaks to the people.

Deuteronomy 7:6-11 You are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, ¹⁰ and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face. ¹¹ You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today.

This is a true story from the Bible.

Have someone read the story, and then another person tell it.

What does this story tell us about God? About His character? About His promises? About His purposes in choosing the Israelite people?

What does this story tell us about men? Our obligations to God? About our sinfulness? About how the Israelites could be forgiven before God?

Are there sins to avoid? Promises to claim? Examples to follow? Commands to obey?

Last Third:

Practice telling the story

What will you do differently this week because of this story?

Who will you witness to or share this story with next week?