

God of Covenant

Review

So far in this series:

We have delved into God's "even though" covenant with Noah. A covenant which held no bearing on our response but had everything to do with God's heart for creation. It was a covenant that spoke so clearly of God's despair at sin but in the face of that his equally strong love, mercy and commitment to creation.

We have unpacked God's covenant with Abraham where God promised to make a nation of his descendants and bless them with land. It was a covenant that spoke of God's desire to be in relationship "I will be your God and you will be my people" ...a desire that again points to His grace.

This week we soak in the covenant God made with Moses and his newly redeemed Israel where the people of God are informed what it means to be God's chosen nation.

What progression have you noticed in the 3 covenants now covered in the series?

In what ways has studying these covenants enriched your understanding of God?

How have they lead you to respond to God?

Covenant with Moses - Exodus 19

Read Exodus 19

A "set apart" God.

How does this passage set God apart?

What compels you to pause and reflect on the holiness and majesty of God?

God's people spent a couple of days consecrating themselves, cleaning clothes, abstaining from sex being very wary of approaching the mountain (entering presence of God) at all until it was appropriate to do so.

How do we prepare ourselves to worship God? To approach God?

Is there enough fear and trembling in our worship these days? Or have we emphasized setting God alongside rather than setting Him apart?

A "set apart" people.

"out of all nations you will be my treasured possession" v5.

Think of a treasured possession you own/ed...how did you treat it? What did you do with it?

What does it mean for Israel to be God's treasure possession?

Where does this leave the rest of the nations? Is God not interested?

You will be for me a kingdom of priests. v6

Each kingdom needs a King and here the passage is reaffirming that even though Israel is being set apart, their set apart God is to remain King and ruler. It serves as a warning that they are not to get ahead of themselves with this privileged position God is placing them in.

What do priests do?

What does it mean for Israel to be a kingdom of priests?

Is the "priesthood" just for the internal practice of drawing near to God as his people or does it have further reaching implications?

You will be for me a holy nation.v6

As a holy nation, a treasured possession and a kingdom of priests Israel is being set apart from other nations. Israel is to be different, God's peculiar people. But this does not indicate they will be living in isolation. As holy and priestly Israel become the means by which God will bring the nations to have knowledge of Him. The implications therefore are not solely internal ones but point clearly to international implications. God choosing to work through Israel to bring about his broad far reaching plan.

What does this reveal about the heart of the 10 commandments (and other laws that follow)?

How does Israel's consecration as they prepare to approach the mountain support this idea of international implications?

If it is true that leaders are to lead by example, does Moses' role at the mountain have any parallels with Israel's appointed roles?

Even post Christ we are still called to be a "set apart" people. God is still using us in his ministry of reconciling the world to himself. We are called light, salt, ambassadors, vessels, etc to capture our continued role in drawing all nations to God.

What does it look like to be "set apart" today? (share personal concrete examples with each other)

What motivates you to live "set apart"?

Reference v4 for how God expected Israel to be compelled to obey.

"gratitude is the seedbed from which all missional activity should grow"

Mike Frost

Share how living "set apart" has provided you opportunities to draw others closer to God...celebrate these good news stories.

Honestly evaluate how set apart your life is. Are there any commitments with God you wish to make with the support of your group?