

“Exodus”

Fall Series 2

Lesson 4

“Exodus 19”

Objective: To examine the account of the exodus from Egypt and to learn as much as we can about the nature of God, His mercy and what He desires for His creation. We will seek to do this by examining the historical background of the Exodus account, the interpretive history of Exodus amongst both Jewish and Christian scholars, where helpful. We will seek to understand the message of Exodus for us as Christians living in the 21st century American context.

Materials: The Bible, Ancient translations, Commentaries, both ancient and modern, Books, journal articles, dictionaries, the internet, and other resources as may be appropriate.

Procedures

1. To explore the message God of hope that the original audience will have understood from this text.
2. To understand how this text has inspired, challenged, and educated people down through the centuries guiding them not only in their personal lives, but the destinies of governments and nations.
3. We will seek to find out how these beliefs have played a role in the history of Christianity and how they continue to impact our existence and service to Jesus Christ today.
4. We will provide a sheet to take home as a reminder of what has been examined and to provide additional opportunities for consideration of these truths and their application in our daily living out of our eternal destiny beginning now. This sheet can be used as a discussion guide for small group discussion. We have several groups using this effectively.

The arrival at Sinai brings us to the final stage of the process of forging Israel's national identity and their spiritual conceptual framework, which are not cut short, but seem to be extended with a degree of repetitiveness that seems odd to us today. The people had already shared the experience of bondage and deliverance, but these experiences will now be supplemented and given further context and meaning; this context will be forged in the fires of a unique encounter with *YHWH* as a community called to faith, not as individuals, but as a community. From this point forward the destiny of Israel will be intricately linked to God in covenantal relationship. In Luke 6:12 we find Jesus going out to the mountain to pray. There seems to be a connection between God and mountains that would persist. It should be of interest when there are quotes, or allusions in the New Testament to Old Testament events and words. In this lesson I will try to make those allusions and connections a more prominent feature.

The Hebrew term for "covenant" is *berit* (בְּרִית).¹ The names that are given to the two parts of the Bible in the Christian tradition (Old and New Testament) rest on the religious

¹ Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, in The JPS Torah Commentary series (Philadelphia PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), p.102.

conception that the relationship between God and man resides in this concept of covenant.² In the Roman legal system, which was very highly developed, and in the Hittite and Babylonian languages there was never a single concept, or word, for contract, or covenant. In the Hittite and the Babylonian languages the concept of covenant was designated by a phrase which would be translated as “oaths and bonds.”³ There are many connections between the concepts of the Hebrew covenant and oaths and bonds in these other Near Eastern cultures. In an analysis of the form covenants would come to take in the Ancient Near East, this type of agreement would almost always have the following elements: 1. A Preamble with a formula that would identify the author of the covenant, or treaty; i.e. who were the parties involved in the covenant. 2. A historical prologue; this part of the document would describe something about the previous relationship between the parties. 3. The stipulations would give details regarding the obligations imposed upon and accepted by the parties. This section also would often include a prohibition on

² George E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 17:3 (1954), pp. 50-76.

³ George E. Mendenhall, *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburgh PA: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), p. 31

any agreements with others that would in any way divide the loyalty of the parties entering into this agreement: this stipulation of loyalty would be especially focused toward the inferior party (in this instance clearly that is Israel). 4. There would often be a provision for the location where the document was to be deposited for safekeeping, such as in a temple, tabernacle, or in an ark. If the document was one that affected relations between nations, or as in the case of a covenant between *YHWH* and Israel, it was expected that this document would be brought out periodically for public reading. 5. In such documents, outside of Israel, there would be a list of the gods who served as witnesses of the document. In any case, it was anticipated that there would be a witness, or witnesses. In the case of covenant with *YHWH* He would at times swear by Himself and thus act as His own witness.⁴ There was certainly no one else who could hold him to account. 6. There would then be a section in such a document where the curses and blessings were laid out. This type of thing can be seen in Deuteronomy 28.⁵

⁴ Genesis 22:16; Jeremiah 22:5; 49:13. נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה

⁵ George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 17:3 (1954), pp. 50-76.

This is what one could expect to find especially in the written text of Hittite treaties, which appear to have been very similar to what is found later in Hebrew covenants. There would be a 7th part of such documents and that was where a formal oath would consist of a pledge that the vassal would make concerning his obedience to the sovereign. The 8th part would involve some form of ceremony that would be conducted, accompanied by an oath, or something which symbolized an oath, or oaths. We will see this later in this book as Israel pledges their allegiance to *YHWH*.⁶ The purpose of the covenant oath was to seal⁷ the covenantal agreement itself; to bring it fully into force.⁸ This is what we find taking place when animals are cut asunder and placed so that someone can walk in between the parts.⁹ The covenant that Moses will bring to Israel binds conditions on the people without binding specific, stated conditions upon *YHWH*. However, it does go without saying that there was the expectation

⁶ George E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 17:3 (1954), pp. 50-76.

⁷ Ephesians 1:13-14. In the New Testament Baptism takes the place of the oaths and God acknowledges covenant by the sending of His Spirit, placing His seal upon the covenant.

⁸ Gene M. Tucker, "Covenant Forms and Contract Forms," *Vetus Testamentum* 15:4 (1965), pp. 487-503.

⁹ Genesis 15:10, 17.



of His protection and His support. The concept of “covenant,” or *berith* is very important in the Hebrew Bible and this term is used more than 200 times there.¹⁰

In the case of Israel, the concept of unity among the tribes was expected because of their pledge of singular loyalty to *YHWH*, but behind this unity was an even more important obligation and this was that their covenant with *YHWH* meant that their first obligation was to reject all foreign relations - i.e. with other gods, and by implication, with all other political groups. This meant that Israel was not permitted to make covenants, or treaties with their neighbors either in the desert, or later with other nations when they occupied the land, because to do so would be to recognize the pagan deities as witnesses and guarantors of such a covenant, or treaty. Another aspect of covenant that is important to us is that at times covenants took the form of prophecy as is the case in the covenant that God made to Abraham and to David.¹¹

The things promised were not fulfilled in the time of Abraham, or in the time of David, but would be fulfilled in the future. The

¹⁰ George E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 17:3 (1954), pp. 50-76.

¹¹ George E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 17:3 (1954), pp. 50-76.

fulfillment of both of these covenants is believed, by Christians at least, to have received their ultimate fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah, of Jesus Christ.

One thing that needs to be made clear for modern audiences is that in the period of the Old Testament, covenants and contracts had little in common with each other, beyond the general fact that both were agreements. The main difference between these two forms of agreement was that contracts focused upon what had happened, or what was happening in the transaction. With the covenant the focus was more upon something that would come about in the future; more than upon what had happened, or was happening. This looking to the future in emphasis was of major importance. This unique aspect of covenant makes covenants documents of “hope” and promise and not just some kind of transactional contract, where the idea is that if you will give me this then I will give you that. The concept behind covenant is far more relational than contractual. I think one of the problems we have today is that we see covenant with God more in contractual terms than in relational, covenantal terms.

It is of interest that in all of the archaeological work that has been done in the Ancient Near East no examples of covenants between gods and men have been found outside the confines of Israel. It is important to note that this unique aspect of covenant with God arose in Israel alone. In this way, Israel is different from all other peoples around them. Covenants were sworn agreements, and therefore did not require courts in order to ratify them. This type of agreement does not stem from the sphere of commercial transactions, as I said earlier. Covenants of the kind we find in ancient Israel come from the sphere of treaty with the issue of loyalty standing as the supreme central tenet for this type of agreement.¹²

This then sets up the background for what is beginning to take place in Exodus 19 as God has brought His people out of Egypt and to the mountain in order to enter into a covenant with them, to require of them loyalty to Himself. The people arrived at the wilderness of Sinai on the day of the new moon, or at the beginning of the month (19:1) where they camped in front of the mountain (19:2). The process of covenant begins with Moses

¹² Gene M. Tucker, "Covenant Forms and Contract Forms," *Vetus Testamentum* 15:4 (1965), pp. 487-503.

going up the mountain and God beginning to deliver to Moses His words (19:3) for Israel. Here we have a preamble of sorts with the two parties of the covenant being named, and Moses serving a meditational role by going up the mountain to meet with *YHWH* and then coming down the mountain to the address “the house of Jacob.” At 19:4, the historical prologue begins, which describes something about the previous relationship between *YHWH* and the Israelites. To be sure the items that compose a covenant were not always placed in the exact order that was set out above, and sometimes not all the elements were included, but usually most of the elements would be present in some form.

At 19:4 we find an expression of speech that makes it very apparent that in the act of the rescue of the Israelites from Egypt, God was solely responsible for this act of rescue. The Israelites as it were, were borne out, as if on “eagles wings.” This expression along with another expression relating to an eagle and the care of Israel at Deuteronomy 32:11 have often been the source of some confusion. At least some of this confusion goes back to Martin Luther who spoke about the care of eagles for their young. The fact is that no ornithologist has ever been able to verify such

behavior as was described by Luther on the part of the eagle, or the vulture in caring for its young. Not only ornithology, but basic exegesis calls for us to reexamine these texts (Exodus 19:4 and Deuteronomy 32:11). It would seem counterintuitive for any bird to make a regular practice of carrying its young on its wing. This would seem to put in jeopardy the survival of that entire species. What seems more likely here is that the meaning here is imagery that evokes at both Exodus 19:4 and in Deuteronomy 32:11 God's watchful protection represented by the eagles wings with the idea of God's careful and protective deliverance.¹³

We find symbolism in Egypt where there is the well-known motif of the divine protecting wings being spread over the entire Old Middle East. In the Old Testament this type of imagery is found especially in the Psalms. This imagery would seem to indicate that the protection of God is not local, or incidental, but is mobile and permanent. The idea here at 19:4 would be that God carefully and protectively carries Israel during their journey in the wilderness. Just as an eagles wing expresses power and swiftness the imagery here is meant to express how God, in an infinitely

¹³ H. G. L. Peels, "On the Wings of the Eagle (Dtn 32, 11) — An Old Misunderstanding," *Zeitschrift für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 106:2 (1994), pp. 300-303.



more beautiful and powerful way than that of any natural bird cares for Israel and rescues them. God carries His people as if on eagle's wings through the entire wilderness journey. This is not then about God caring for them so much as a mother eagle cares for her young, but in ways that are infinitely more powerful and beautiful; greater than any known conduct of birds given to their young.¹⁴ In Revelation 12:14, the woman is given the two wings of a great eagle so that she could fly to her place in the wilderness and be taken care of out of the reach of the serpent. So here too, the imagery relates to God's providential care and protection for His people.

Beginning at 19:5 we begin to have the stipulations of the covenant as well as what God promises for the people as His "treasured possession." Then at 19:6 there is continuation of the promises with the writer indicating that Israel would be for *YHWH* a "priestly kingdom." The promise that Israel will be "a kingdom of priests" reflects the notion that Israel will occupy an honored and sacred position in the world. The Israelites, in a fashion much like other peoples of the Ancient Near East, entrusted priests with

¹⁴ Psalm 17:8; 36:8; 57:2; 61:5; 63:8; 91:4.

the important and delicate task of mediating between humanity and the divine through the sacrifices and ceremonial function that they offered. The rituals that were performed by such priests were understood to be keeping the cosmos functioning properly. Normally priests were understood to be a limited proportion of a people such as the descendants of Aaron and the Levites as designated in the Torah. Designating the entire nation as priests here is meant to emphasize their holiness in one aspect and their relationship to the rest of humanity.¹⁵

Israel is to serve a meditational role as priests between YHWH and all peoples of the earth and even creation itself. This takes into consideration the lessons to be learned from the incident of Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16-17) where he tries to usurp a priestly position and is heavily punished. Another aspect of the priesthood of Israel seems to be expressed in the writings of Isaiah at 51:5-6¹⁶ - **Foreigners will stay and shepherd your sheep, and strangers will be your farmers and vinedressers. ⁶ You will be called The Priests of the LORD; Ministers of Our**

¹⁵ Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests*, in the Jewish Culture and Contexts series (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), p. 1.

¹⁶ Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests*, p. 2.

God, they will say about you. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and fatten yourself on their riches.¹⁷ These understandings have bearing on the New Testament interpretation of this concept and can be seen at 1 Peter 2:9. It is so easy to drift into perceiving such a title as designating honor first and foremost, when the emphasis should be placed on the challenge it offers to those so designated as servants of God who are involved in the reconciliation of all peoples and of God's good creation back to the state of being "very good." Too often the title has been seen as a privileged status for those bearing it to the detriment of those that these priests were intended to serve, in the case of Israel, the nations: In the case of Christians the nations and God's creation. It is not meant to be an office, but a role of service. In Titus 2:14 Pauls wrote: **He gave himself for us in order to rescue us from every kind of lawless behavior, and cleanse a special people for himself who are eager to do good actions.**¹⁸

We are called to be priests today and we are called to be those that mediate for people with God in drawing them nearer to

¹⁷ Common English Bible.

¹⁸ CEB.

Him and in being a part of His task of restoring all of creation to His vision of being “very good.”¹⁹ Today as Christians, we can so often be focused so tightly on our own personal salvation and our own spirituality that we forget that we are called to His purpose, not our purpose, or our benefit, but for His purpose and for the benefit of others. We are called to be the disciples of Jesus Christ, to be like Him, to serve like Him, to sacrifice ourselves for others like He did. We are to take up our cross, not for our own well-being but for the benefit of others. We are reminded that Jesus served to transport us into this priestly role in Revelation 1:6 ...

who made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father—to him be glory and power forever and always. Amen.²⁰

Jesus did not take up His cross in order to improve Himself or to help Himself, He took it up because we needed Him to do this and creation needed Him to do this. He put Himself after the needs of others and in doing this He fulfilled the purposes of God, He fulfilled the purpose of the covenant. He was totally loyal to the purposes of God and the needs of His image-bearers trapped by death and separated from Him. In Hebrews 8:9 we are

¹⁹ Genesis 1:31.

²⁰ CEB.

reminded that the New Covenant that God would make with his people would not be like the old: **It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue to keep my covenant, and I lost interest in them, says the Lord.**²¹

At 19:7 Moses summons the Elders and sets before them all the words of *YHWH*. It appears that these words were then set before the people in a way that they all could indicate that they agreed (19:8) with them. In 19:9 *YHWH* tells Moses that He is going to come to him in a dense cloud in order that the people will trust him (Moses) “forever” (לְעוֹלָם). Moses then tells this to the people and then *YHWH* tells Moses to go and “consecrate” (קָדַשׁ) the people (19:10). There is such a tremendous connection between the account of the Exodus and Revelation. At Revelation 7:14 we are informed as to the identity of the people who are seen in the heavenly vision of John wearing white robes. They are those that have been consecrated in “hardship” and in the blood of the Lamb. John sees these people and wants to know who they

²¹ CEB.

are and he is told: **I said to him, “Sir, you know.” Then he said to me, “These people have come out of great hardship. They have washed their robes and made them white in the Lamb’s blood.**²²

The mood has now been set in the Exodus account for the formal enactment of the covenant between God and Israel. In this enactment we may find the ultimate validation of the leadership of Moses. The validity of Moses’ leadership will be verified and confirmed through a very public and a visible sign.²³ The people in the time of Moses were consecrated and they too have been through hardship, the hardship of slavery and they were rescued through the blood of the lamb of Passover, the plague that broke their chains of bondage and the will of the Egyptians to continue to enslave the Israelites. All this would take place on the third day (19:11) as *YHWH* would come down upon Mount Sinai for all the people to see. Limits are to be set around the mountain to keep the people from touching the mountain (19:12). If they touch the mountain they will be put to death. This moment is cited in

²² CEB.

²³ Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, in The JPS Torah Commentary series, pp. 104-105.

Hebrews 12:18-21²⁴ and it is used to indicate the differences between the covenant of Sinai and the New Covenant that comes through Jesus.

The mountain at Sinai takes on the role of the Tabernacle, or the Temple, and the people are confined to the outer court away from the inner sanctum as they would be later confined to the outer court of the tabernacle and the temple. Any who violate this prohibition are to be put to death through human agency.

(19:13).²⁵ Moses goes down from the mountain, gets everyone prepared, he then consecrates the people (19:14), tells them to prepare for the third day and tells them not to “go near” (שָׁרָף - to have sexual intercourse) with a woman (19:15). Then on the morning of the third day there was “lightening,” “thunder,” and a “thick cloud.” Notice that God arrives first and then the people go out to meet Him. They hear God and they trembled in fear (19:16). Moses brings the people out and they stand at the foot of the mountain (19:17). God descends upon the mountain in fire so

²⁴ You haven't drawn near to something that can be touched: a burning fire, darkness, shadow, a whirlwind, ¹⁹ a blast of a trumpet, and a sound of words that made the ones who heard it beg that there wouldn't be one more word. ²⁰ They couldn't stand the command, *If even a wild animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.* ²¹ The sight was so frightening that Moses said, “I'm terrified and shaking!” CEB.

²⁵ Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, in The JPS Torah Commentary series, p. 105.

that smoke wraps the Mountain (19:18) and it shakes violently. In Hebrews 12:26 we find this verse quoted: **His voice shook the earth then, but now he has made a promise: *Still once more I will shake not only the earth but heaven also.***²⁶

The stage is set for initiating the covenant with the people of Israel. So often it is the case that people fail to recognize the great significance of something, or of some momentous happening if it is done too quickly and too simply. It seems to me that God is going out of His way to indicate that this is a hugely important moment, really more important than any other moment in the history of Israel up to this point. How do you as a family memorialize important events and occasions? I am pretty sure that setting a mountain on fire would be something that would let people know that this was really unusual and really important. We often just set a cake on fire. If this moment is not seen as important enough then it was given even more emphasis not only with regard to the occasion, but with regard to the credibility of Moses as a leader when he is summoned to the top of that flaming mountain (19:20). Then when Moses arrives the first thing that

²⁶ CEB.

YHWH tells him to do is that he needs to go down and warn the people not to let their curiosity get the better of them. If it does, and they break through to come past the boundary point to have a look at God we are told that they would “perish” (literally they would “fall” - **וַיִּפֹּל**).

An exception to this prohibition is made for the priests of Israel, but even they must “consecrate” themselves (19:22). If not, they are warned that *YHWH* would “break out” against them. The word that is used here is the same word that would be used if something like a “plague” were to break out among them (**פָּרַץ**). Moses responds, it seems to me, by reminding God that He had warned them earlier to set limits around the mountain and to keep it holy (19:23). He seems hesitant to leave the presence of God; after all he has just arrived. What a place to be, in the presence of God: I suspect all of us in that situation would be reluctant to leave. It is then that Moses is told to go down and to bring Aaron back up with him, while at the same time warning him once again to not let the people break through, or come up the mountain (19:24). There is an allusion to this passage in Revelation 4:1: **After this I looked and there was a door that**



had been opened in heaven. The first voice that I had heard, which sounded like a trumpet, said to me, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”²⁷ So Moses then goes down and warns the people (19:25).

This chapter prepares the people, and us, for the words that will come from God. The stage is set for this momentous event in human history when God would deliver to human beings His words and His hopes for them. The words that would come to these people in the desert of Sinai would resonate in the hearts and souls of generations of people far from this moment and far from this place. This moment would forever change the face of humanity and bring hope, order, and justice to people that so desperately had need of all of these things. These words would stand as the foundation upon which nations of the world would endeavor to create just societies, recognizing that the words given here were different from the words of men, these were the words of God that burned their way not only into tablets of stone, but into the tablets of the human heart. These words resonate with hope for a better future, a better world, and a time when chaos

²⁷ CEB.

and injustice would be banished forever from the face of the world
and its people.

Synopsis

God takes the Israelites deep into the wilderness of Sinai where He will begin forming them into a united people that has their central focus and their loyalty concentrated upon Him. In this effort, God will take the unprecedented step of forming an alliance with Israel. In this alliance He will call upon Israel to be singularly devoted to Him. God will use the ancient form of “covenant” (*berith*) to begin to teach Israel about the singular loyalty that He calls them to have. This ancient form of agreement was one that was common among the peoples of the Ancient Near Eastern civilizations such as the Hittites and the Babylonians. What was however totally unique to Israel was making such a covenant with God.

The covenant form expresses many aspects that are highly relational and seek to bond people together in ways that are not contractual and transactional. This form of agreement was commonly used between nations and was what we would call a treaty. The emphasis on allegiance is a central feature of this form of agreement. Such alliances have a section that clearly indicates the negative consequences upon a party that fails to adhere to the

conditions of a covenant. The understanding of covenant as a relational agreement and not as a contractual agreement is central to understanding both the Old and the New Covenants.

God seeks to have the Israelites join with Him on His mission to fulfill promises that he made to Abraham in Genesis 12 and 15. God seeks to bless all the nations of the earth and through the calling of Israel to be a priestly people He seeks the restoration of creation to its condition of being “very good” as described at the end of Genesis 1. He also seeks for human beings to take on their destiny of being God’s image-bearers in that “very good” universe. As priests the Israelites are called to be agents of redemption and restoration. This same calling would come to those who would later be called by Christ. These same themes are picked up in the New Testament as Christians are described in terms of being a priesthood and a royal priesthood. God seeks once more to walk among mankind as He did in the Garden in the very beginning. He calls His children to join him in relationship that will bless all others and all of creation.

Questions

1. What are some ways that you emphasize that something is important in your family? Why do you do it that way?
2. What are some ways that you have seen people forged into a community? Why do you think this happened?
3. When you think of the word “covenant” what are some images that come to your mind?
4. Why do you think God chose to use an agreement form related to a “treaty” and not one that looked like a “contract?”
5. What are some ways that you are reminded of being a part of the “New Covenant?”
6. What are some ways that could help you be reminded more fully and frequently of your membership in the people of the New Covenant?
7. Why do you think the concept of “covenant” seems so important in the Bible as it is used more than 200 times in the Old Testament Scriptures?
8. How would you define the word “loyalty?”
9. What is the difference between the concept of “faith” and the concept of “allegiance?” Why are they the same, or why are they different?
10. What are some areas of life today where we make “covenants?”
11. Why do you think Israel is unique in the ancient world in the fact that they made a “covenant” with God?
12. What do you think it means to be loyal to someone?
13. What do you think it means today for a person to be loyal to God? What are some practical ways that this can be seen?

-
14. When is a time that you have felt the protection of God powerfully in your own life?
 15. What do you think it means to be a priest today?
 16. What are some ways that you recognize leaders in the church today?
 17. What are some ways that you live life as a person who has been consecrated by the blood of the lamb?
 18. What are some ways that your faith in God changes your life?

To Take Home

What is Important to know?

It is important to know that those who are called into covenant with God are called to a singular allegiance and loyalty to Him. This means that we need to take care when we make agreements that will divide our loyalties in life. Sometimes this is going to mean not following certain career paths, not engaging in certain relationships; those that pull us away from a singular allegiance to God. What are some ways that you express your singular allegiance to God, your faith?

Where is God in these words?

God is in the words of this chapter seeking to build relationship with His people in ways that are no superficial and shallow. God is not seeking to become a genie in a lamp that is called upon to grant wishes to people and then to be put on a shelf and left in the lamp. He seeks to lead His people into greater meaning and existence; into their true destiny. God also seeks to warn people of the dangers of relationship with Him. He is not safe for those who fail to listen, or for those who would forget that He is *YHWH*. What are some things that initiate in you respect for others?

What does any of this mean for how I live my life?

The words of this chapter indicate the deep desire on the part of God to have relationship with His creation, with human beings. God does not give up on people even when they fail repeatedly. He does however abhor arrogance and disloyalty. He seeks desperately to teach the people of Israel these lessons and these same issues continue to be important for us today. Unfortunately, these same traits (of disloyalty and arrogance) are endemic in the human population. God calls upon us to be people that are devoted to Him and not arrogant and self-serving. What are some ways that you seek to express your loyalty and allegiance to God?

What is the word of God calling us to do?

The word of God here is calling us to recognize that He seeks relationship with us and that in that seeking of relationship we can begin to see the nature of God. He has protected and delivered a hopeless and helpless people from the most powerful nation of the ancient world. This was a nation that held power not simply by the force of their technology and superior numbers, but through the power they gained in alliance with dark spiritual forces that they believed to be gods. God calls us to recognize that He is the true source of our security, our hope, and our future. What are some things that tempt you not to rely upon God?