The beginning of God’s Kingdom
In the beginning God created a perfect world. He created human beings (Adam and Eve) to be in a relationship with Himself and to obey His words. God had a special place called Eden where He lived with His people. In the beginning, God put His people in His place and asked them to obey His words. God had established a Kingdom - God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing.

The ruin of God’s Kingdom
An angel from heaven called Satan rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven to the earth. He entered the Garden of Eden and tried to destroy God’s Kingdom. God gave human beings the role of ruling the world, but they failed in a big way. They wanted to be their own rulers, deciding for themselves what is right and wrong. They listened to Satan and rejected God’s authority and His loving rule. The result was a broken relationship with God and the Kingdom was ruined.

God’s punishment
God judged human beings and threw them out of His place and did not let them go back into the Garden of Eden. The punishment was a broken relationship with God and with each other. Death entered the world. The Kingdom God had established was ruined.

God’s promise
But God also acted in grace and promised a Rescuer-Ruler who would come and defeat Satan and rebuild God’s Kingdom. The Rescuer-Ruler would come from the family line of Adam and Eve and rescue people back into the Kingdom of God. The rest of the Bible is the progressive story of how the promised Rescuer-Ruler will come and establish God’s Kingdom.
A new beginning
In the story of Cain and Abel we saw that human rebellion had been passed on to the whole human race. We all die because we have all chosen to be the rulers of our own lives. However, human rebellion increased to the point where God decided to judge the world. In the flood God re-created the world and gave human beings a new beginning. By saving Noah He showed His commitment to restoring His Kingdom through the promised Rescuer-Ruler.

Human rebellion again
But things soon went wrong again. People disobeyed God’s words to populate and fill the earth. They tried to stay in one place and build a city for security and a tower for their own religion. Like Adam and Eve they tried to become like God, and make a name for themselves. God judged them by confusing their language, scattering people over the whole earth. God’s purposes were still fulfilled.

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God’s Kingdom ruined
The Story of a Kingdom   Chapter 12

Chapter 12   Genesis 11:27 - 12:3

The Story so Far

See Chapter 11

Objectives

- To show that through the promises to Abraham, God is rebuilding His Kingdom
- To understand that the covenant is based on grace
- To show that God keeps His promises

Connections

- God’s promises = God’s Kingdom
- Abraham and his family fulfil the role of Adam – a priest-king

Summary

God is re-establishing His Kingdom through the family of Abraham – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing.
The promised Kingdom
(Genesis 12:1-3)
After the rebellion in Genesis chapter 11, God does not choose to destroy the world, but to start building His Kingdom again through the family of a man called Abram, whose name is later changed to Abraham. God chooses a new people for Himself who would live in a place where He would bless them. Abraham will also be like a new Adam, a priest-king. Like Adam, Abraham and his children will be rulers in the land; and like Adam, Abraham and his children will be a priest to the world. He and his family will act like a mediator between God and the world. Those who bless him will be blessed; those who curse him will be cursed. Just as God would rule and bless the world through Adam, now He will do so through Abraham and his family.

A covenant of grace
When God first calls Abraham he is a disobedient person who worships other gods (see Joshua 24:2), but God acts in grace and makes promises to him, which he does not deserve. God makes a covenant (contract) with Abraham. It is a contract of grace because Abraham worships other gods and therefore he deserves punishment. He does not deserve God’s grace of a land, a people and a blessing.
## God’s Kingdom

**Constitution:**
‘I will be their God, they will be my people’

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### God’s Kingdom ruined

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The Story of a Kingdom

Chapter 12

Three Main Ideas in Genesis 12-25

God's Promises

Land

People

Blessing

Strong

Weak

Abraham's Faith

God's Commitment to His Promises

GOD RE-AFFIRMS HIS PROMISES AGAIN AND AGAIN WITH SIGNS

A

B

C
SUMMARY OF ABRAHAM’S LIFE

GOD’S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM – THEY NEVER CHANGE

ABRAHAM’S FAITH IN GOD’S PROMISES – CHANGES OFTEN

Abraham = 75 years old

Abraham = 100 years old

GOD SPEAKS AGAIN AND REAFFIRMS HIS PROMISES AT DIFFERENT TIMES IN ABRAHAM’S LIFE
The writer wants us to see that God keeps His promises. The writer shows three times that God keeps His promise:

1. “…as He had said”.
2. “…and the LORD did for Sarah what He had promised”.
3. “…at the very time God had promised”.

God keeps His promises; He is a promise-maker and a promise-keeper. Therefore God can be trusted.

In the beginning of the Bible God established a Kingdom – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing. But Adam ruined the Kingdom. In response God promised that a Rescuer-Ruler would come and re-establish God’s Kingdom by defeating Satan. We can be confident that God is going to keep His promise of a Rescuer-Ruler because He has kept His promise of a son for Abraham. But we can also start to see that God is rebuilding His Kingdom through the family of Abraham. God will have His own people again, who will live in His place, under His rule and blessing.
Think it through & discuss

1. What are God’s promises to Abraham?

2. How are these related to God’s Kingdom?

3. How is Abraham like Adam?

4. Explain why this covenant is based on grace.
God’s response to the rebellion at Babel was to choose a man called Abraham. God graciously promised him three things: a land, a people, and a blessing. God was re-establishing His Kingdom through the family of Abraham – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing.

Objectives

- To explain the concept of justification
- To show how God provides substitute sacrifices in order to keep His Kingdom promises

Connections

- God’s Kingdom promises are threatened
- We are children of Abraham if we have faith in God’s promises

Summary

Justification is God’s way of declaring innocent the guilty person.
God justifies people who have faith in His promises.
God provides a substitute sacrifice in order to keep His Kingdom promises.
We are children of Abraham if we have faith in God’s promises.
Abraham – a man of faith (Genesis 15:6)
God gives Abraham three promises but we know that Abraham fails to trust God all the time. However, even although Abraham fails God many times, we still read that he is a man of faith.

Certificate of debts
In the beginning, human beings had a perfect relationship with God. He was their Father and they were His children. But when Adam disobeyed God, the relationship was broken and we all inherited a wrong relationship with God. He became our judge, and passed the verdict that we are guilty. The payment for our rebellion is everlasting punishment.

Abraham’s certificate
Abraham has the same certificate. Yet God acts in grace and gives him promises of a land, a people and a blessing, which he does not deserve. Abraham believes the Lord’s promises and God credits it to him as righteousness. When Abraham believes God’s promises, God the Judge justifies him and changes his certificate to…
What is justification?
Justification is a very important theme that runs through the whole Bible. The Bible gives us two pictures of justification:

Bank account – as guilty people in God’s world we deserve God’s punishment. This is the payment we owe God. But when God justifies a person He cancels this debt and credits into the account perfect obedience – righteousness.

Law court – as people in God’s world who have rebelled against God we are guilty. God is our judge. We stand in His law court condemned to death. But when God justifies us He declares us to be innocent, and restores the relationship with Him. He is no longer our Judge, but now our Father.

Summary - Justification is God’s way of declaring innocent the guilty person. When God justifies a person He removes all their debt and at the same time credits into their account perfect righteousness – perfect obedience. In justification God is treating the person as if they have never sinned and as if they have lived a perfect life. Once justified, the person has a right relationship with God.

Justification is God’s way of declaring innocent the guilty person.
How is a person justified?
Abraham receives righteousness by believing in God’s promise. A person is justified by faith - by believing God’s promises. In other words, God justifies people just like Abraham is justified. He believes God’s promises and is declared righteous – has a right relationship with God. If we too believe God’s promises, we also will be credited with righteousness, and have a right relationship with God.

Justification is received by faith. God justifies people who have faith in His promises.

What does faith in God’s promises look like? (Genesis 22)
Many years after Isaac is born, God tests Abraham’s faith. He asks Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac whom he loves, on a mountain in the region of Moriah. (The city of Jerusalem is later built in the region of Moriah. This is a very important place later on in the Bible.)

Abraham’s faith in action (Genesis 22:3-8)
Abraham’s faith is seen in many ways in these verses:

- “Early the next morning Abraham got up…” v3
- “When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering…” v3
- “…he set out for the place God had told him about…” v3
- “On the third day…” Abraham has 3 days to change his mind v4
- “We will worship…” Abraham sees the sacrifice of his only son as worship v5
- “… and we will come back to you” v5
- “God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering…” v8

Abraham believes one thing – Isaac must live. It is through Isaac that God will keep His covenant and fulfil His promises. Isaac has to be kept alive. There are two ways that Abraham believes that this will happen:

- God will provide a substitute sacrifice – see v8
- God will raise his promised son Isaac from the dead – see Hebrews 11:17-19
God provides a substitute sacrifice

Just as Abraham is about to kill his only son whom he loves, God stops him and provides an animal sacrifice instead. The lesson from this story is clear from the name Abraham gives to the mountain, “So Abraham called that place ‘the LORD will provide’”. God provides a substitute sacrifice. If Isaac died God’s Kingdom promises would have been broken.

This place is very important in the Bible because many years later a similar thing happens. Later in the Bible another Father has to sacrifice His only Son whom He loves. We will find out on this second occasion that there is no animal substitute because the Son is the substitute. But the other lesson from this story is that Abraham has real faith. Real faith is seen by obedience to God.

Abraham – our great example

Abraham is a very important person in the Bible because he is an example to all of us. Everyone who believes in God’s promises is justified just like Abraham. In the big picture this means believing in God’s promise of a Rescuer-Ruler who will rebuild His Kingdom.

Like father, like son (Galatians 3:6-7)

In the culture of the Bible, sons usually grew up to do what their father did. Therefore if the father was a farmer, his son became a farmer. If the father was a doctor, the son became a doctor. We
have a saying in English “Like father, like son”. In the Bible Christians are called sons of Abraham. What this means is that they are like Abraham. How are Christians like Abraham? Christians too believe in God’s promises. This is what it means to be a child of Abraham.
Think it through & discuss

1. What does justification mean?

2. How are people justified?

3. How can God say Abraham’s sin is punished and declare him perfect? Is God ignoring Abraham’s sin?

4. What if Isaac did die, how would this affect God’s Kingdom promises?
God’s response to the rebellion at Babel was to choose a man called Abraham. God graciously promised him three things: a land, a people, and a blessing. God was re-establishing His Kingdom through the family of Abraham – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing. God tested His own Kingdom promises by asking Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Abraham obeyed God, but just before he was about to kill Isaac, God provided a substitute sacrifice in order to keep His Kingdom promises. God’s promises to Abraham involved his children living in a foreign land as slaves for 400 years.

Objectives

- To show how Abraham’s children end up in Egypt
- To see God’s control of every circumstance

Connections

- God’s promise of a Kingdom is connected to spending some time in Egypt as slaves

Summary

People make decisions because they want to, but God is so in control that even their decisions are part of God’s plan.
A land, a people, and a blessing
Only part of God’s contract has been fulfilled. God promised Abraham a land, a people and a blessing. So far we have only really seen the start of one of these promises. God gave Abraham a son called Isaac but we have still to see the numerous descendants from many nations. We also have still to see Abraham’s descendants receive the land of Canaan. And finally we have still to see all the nations be blessed through Abraham.

The rest of the Bible is the completion of God’s promises of a land, a people, and a blessing. The rest of Genesis focuses on the family line of Abraham and God’s promise of the land.

God’s promise of a land (Genesis 15:13-16)
God promises Abraham a land that his people will live in. But God also first tells Abraham that his people will be slaves for 400 years in another land. But how will the family of Abraham get to a foreign land where they will become slaves?

God’s promise of a people (Genesis 25:21-26)
Isaac grows up and marries a woman called Rebekah. Isaac has twin boys. The first-born is called Esau – he is a bad person. The second son born is called Jacob – he is very bad. His name means “twister / deceiver”. Yet in the end God chooses Jacob and not Esau to be the next person in the family line of Abraham. Remember, it is from the family line of Abraham that the Rescuer-Ruler will come. Again, God’s grace is at work. God chooses Jacob, not because of who he is, or what he does, but because of His grace. Another part of the Bible explains this very clearly for us:

“Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad – in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: not by works but by Him who calls – she was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ Just as it is written: ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’ What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For He says to Moses,
‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion’”

(Romans 9:11-15).

God chooses people not by who they are or what they do, but because of His grace.

The 12 tribes of Israel (Genesis 32:28; 35:22d-26)
God changes Jacob’s name to “Israel”. Israel becomes the name of the nation of people that God had promised Abraham. This is the Jewish nation today in the Middle East where all the fighting is. Jacob has 12 sons and their families become known as the “12 tribes of Israel”. The next person in the family tree of the Rescuer-Ruler is called Judah. However, the rest of the book of Genesis is not about Judah but about a son of Jacob’s called Joseph. It is through Joseph that God works out His plan of Abraham’s children becoming slaves in another land for 400 years.

Joseph’s journey to Egypt (Genesis 37:23-28)
Joseph’s brothers do not like him because he is Jacob’s favourite son. So the brothers decide one day to sell him as a slave to Egypt, but they go home and tell Israel (Jacob) that a wild animal has killed him. For many years Joseph lives in Egypt, and because God looks after him, he becomes the governor of the land of Egypt. He is second in command to Pharaoh the king.

The famine
(Genesis 41:25-27; 42:1-7; 45:3-7; 46:1-4, 26-27)
God then sends a famine to the lands of Egypt and Canaan. God gives the king of Egypt a dream in which He warns him about the coming famine. Joseph interprets the dream and tells Pharaoh to prepare for the famine. There are seven years of good crop and then a seven-year famine. During the seven-year famine Jacob sends Joseph’s brothers down to Egypt to get food. It is through their visit to Egypt that Joseph recognises them and after some time reveals his identity to them. Then Jacob and all his family go to live with Joseph in Egypt. This is how Abraham’s descendants move from Canaan to the land of Egypt. God’s plan is being accomplished.
The story of Joseph is about God the King remaining completely in control whilst human beings try to ruin His plans. Whilst people rebel against God’s plans, God uses their bad decisions to bring about the rescue of people. God is a gracious God who is in control the whole time. He gets His way. His purposes are always accomplished even though people try to change His plans.

These two verses in Genesis highlight the lesson that God is in control despite people’s bad decisions to ruin His plans. Who sends Joseph to Egypt? These verses give us two answers – Joseph’s brothers send him, and God sends him. Joseph’s brothers make a decision because they want to, but God is so in control that their decisions are already a part of God’s plan to bring Joseph to Egypt.

The big picture
In the small picture God takes Joseph to Egypt to save many lives because of a famine. But in the big picture He guides Joseph to Egypt so as to fulfil His promise to Abraham. And therefore, God’s purpose for His people in Egypt must have something to do with His Kingdom – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing. But for now God’s people are outside of His place…

People make decisions because they want to, but God is so in control that even their decisions are part of God’s plan.
Think it through & discuss

1. There are three main elements to God’s Kingdom – what are they?

2. How is God’s control of Joseph’s life connected to God’s promises to Abraham? Look at Genesis 15:13-16

3. What evidence is there in the story of Joseph that God is in control?

4. God is clearly working out His promises that He made to Abraham. But why do you think God takes His people out of Canaan to make them slaves for 400 years, to then bring them back to Canaan?
The Story so Far

God was re-establishing His Kingdom through the family of Abraham – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing. God’s promises to Abraham involved his children living in a foreign land as slaves for 400 years. Through Joseph God’s people went to live in Egypt.

Objectives

- To introduce the concept of war between God and His enemies
- To understand the purpose of the book of Exodus – God fights for His people so that He can live with them again
- To see the plagues as God’s demonstration of His power to the world

Connections

- The rescue from Egypt is part of God’s covenant with Abraham – Genesis 15:13-16
- War in Egypt is connected to Genesis 3:15 – God fights His enemies
- God wants to live with His people again, just like in Eden – Exodus 29:46

Summary

God fights for His people as the Warrior-King so they can live with Him under His rule and blessing. God also fights against Pharaoh in order to show him who He is – Lord of all the earth.
Understanding Exodus
The book of Exodus is about God’s war with Pharaoh king of Egypt, in order to rescue back His people so that He can live with them.

Fighting for Israel
We must first understand where war comes from. In the beginning of the Bible Satan opposed God’s rule as King, encouraging human beings to rebel. After human beings rebelled God promised to go to war with Satan. Satan started war against God, and God responded by promising to destroy Satan (Genesis 3:15). But what was it that Satan did to God? Satan stole God’s possession. Human beings were made in the image of God – humans are God’s possession. In the beginning God owned human beings – they reflected God to the world. The rest of the Bible is about God reclaiming what Satan stole, and in order to do this He must go to war with him. Throughout the Bible there are various people who act like Satan in opposing God. One of them is Pharaoh the king of Egypt. Israel is God’s people, just like Adam and Eve were. Pharaoh owns Israel as slaves and God wants them back. Pharaoh refuses to let them go, so God goes to war with Pharaoh.

Living with Israel
We should also note that God rescues back His people so that He can live with them. Elements from the story of the Garden of Eden will re-appear in the book of Exodus – God’s people living with God under His rule and blessing.

God fights for His people as the Warrior-King so they can live with Him under His rule and blessing.

God’s promises (Exodus 1:6-7)
Even while Israel is in Egypt God is keeping His promises to Abraham – the Israelites are increasing in number. Abraham will have a great nation.
Opposition to God’s promises (Exodus 1:8-11, 22)
King Pharaoh dies and a new Pharaoh rules in Egypt. This king does not like the Israelites and makes them slaves. He even tries to kill the boys of the Israelite nation as soon as their mothers give birth to them. God’s promise that Abraham’s children will be very numerous is being opposed. The Egyptians are trying to reduce the number of God’s people.

A special baby (Exodus 2)
One baby that escapes Pharaoh’s judgement is a baby called Moses. Many years later Moses is going to be God’s mediator of the rescue plan for getting His people out of Egypt.

The God who remembers (Exodus 2:23-25)
Many years pass and finally the king of Egypt dies. The Israelites cry out to God for help. God remembers His covenant with Abraham. This does not mean that God has forgotten it! Rather, it means that God remembers it in order to act, just like He does with Noah.

God identifies Himself (Exodus 3:6-10)
God identifies Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Then He explains what He is going to do. He is going to rescue His people from the Egyptians and take them to the Promised Land. Moses is to go to Pharaoh and tell him to release God’s people.

The purpose of the Exodus (Exodus 3:12, 18)
The real purpose for rescuing His people out of Egypt is so that they can make a 3-day journey into the desert to worship God on a mountain. At the mountain God wants them to make sacrifices to Him.

God’s son Israel (Exodus 4:22-23)
Israel is called God’s son. Pharaoh will refuse to let God’s son go, and so God is going to punish Pharaoh by killing his firstborn son!

The purpose of the exodus is for God’s people to be rescued from slavery to worship the true and living God.
Pharaoh opposes God (Exodus 5:1-2)
Pharaoh asks who is this “LORD”? Pharaoh is seen as a god in Egypt and he has not heard of Moses’ God, and so is not willing to release the slaves. Pharaoh even makes the slaves work twice as hard – Exodus 5:3-21.

God re-affirms His promises (Exodus 6:1-8)
God reminds Moses that He promised Abraham a land called Canaan. God promises that the Israelites will get the land.

The judgements on Pharaoh (Exodus 7–10)
God then sends various judgements on Egypt and Pharaoh for refusing to let the people go. God is showing Pharaoh His power and giving him an opportunity to let His people go. God’s judgements follow a pattern – see the diagram on the next page.
The Pattern of God’s Judgements on Pharaoh

**God sends Moses to Pharaoh and says,**
“Let my people go, so they can worship me.”

Pharaoh’s heart becomes hard. He refuses to let the people go. When the plagues become very severe, he says that if Moses stops the plague then he will let the people go. But then when the plague is stopped Pharaoh changes his mind and refuses to let the people go. His heart becomes hard again.

Moses then performs a miraculous sign. These are also called ‘wonders’, and are plagues and diseases that God sends on the land of Egypt.

After the 1st three plagues God makes a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians. There were 10 plagues altogether. The last 7 plagues touched only the Egyptians.

**The Plagues**
(These were gods of the Egyptians)
1. River Nile turned to blood
2. Frogs
3. Gnats
4. Flies
5. Livestock
6. Boils
7. Hail
8. Locusts
9. Darkness
Who is the LORD?
(Exodus 7:5, 17; 8:10b, 22; 9:13-16, 29b; 10:2)
The purpose of the plagues is to show Pharaoh who God is. Remember Pharaoh’s question – “Who is the LORD that I should obey Him and let Israel go?” During the plagues God is answering the question. Also read Romans 9:17.

God is also showing Israel who He is – see Exodus 6:7. He wants Israel to know that He is their God and they are His people.

God uses the plagues to show Pharaoh who He is – Lord of all the earth.
Think it through & discuss

1. What is the main story of the book of Exodus?

2. Who is the war between?

3. Why is God fighting for His people in Egypt?

4. What do the plagues teach us about God?

5. How is the book of Exodus connected to God’s Kingdom?
The Story so Far

God was re-establishing His Kingdom through the family of Abraham – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing. God’s promises to Abraham involved his children living in a foreign land as slaves for 400 years. Through Joseph God’s people went to live in Egypt and after some time they became slaves to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God then sent Moses to Egypt to rescue His people, but Pharaoh refused to let them go. So God responded by sending plagues to show Pharaoh who He was.

Objectives

- To understand the concept of redemption as seen in the Passover
- To see God as a warrior who rescues His people by fighting for them against the enemy

Connections

- Pattern of exodus - oppression – war – redemption – rescue – living with God – worship
- In order to enter God’s Kingdom His people must first be redeemed and rescued from the enemy

Summary

When God redeems His people He buys them back into a new relationship with Himself through the death of an innocent party.
When God rescues His people He fights as a warrior for them against the enemy.
The 10th plague (Exodus 11:1, 4-6)
God’s 10th plague is the death of every firstborn son in Egypt. This judgement is on both the Israelites and the Egyptians (Exodus 12:12). God is coming to judge the Israelites as well as the Egyptians. Later in the Bible we read that the Israelites had started to worship other gods whilst living in Egypt (Joshua 24:14). So they also deserve to be punished with the Egyptians.

The Passover (Exodus 12:1-3, 5-7, 11-13)
The way of escape from God’s judgement is only revealed to the Israelites, and is through the blood of a baby sheep or goat:

- The animal has to be a one-year-old male, with no defects.
- None of the animal’s bones are to be broken.
- The entire animal is to be eaten, and anything left over must be burned.
- They are to eat the animal dressed ready to travel.
- The people are to put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts.
- The meal is called “The LORD’s Passover”.

When God comes to Egypt that night in judgement He will see the blood and pass over those houses. But God will judge every house in Egypt that does not have the blood.

The way of escape from God’s judgement is by the blood (death) of an innocent substitute. The innocent dies in the place of the guilty.

What does the Passover mean? (Exodus 12:25-27)
God’s punishment for disobeying His words is death. Later in the Bible we read that the Israelite people worshipped the Egyptian gods in Egypt:

“...the gods your forefathers worshipped beyond the River and in Egypt…” (Joshua 24:14).

They are guilty of worshipping other gods and so deserve to die. This is why the plague of death is on everyone in Egypt. If the Israelites do not follow God’s way of escape from His judgement then the firstborn son in their home will die as well. The Passover
means the time when God passes over the homes of the Israelites, and spares the firstborn son from death. In the place of the firstborn son an innocent animal has died. The meaning of the Passover is that God protects His people from judgement and punishes someone else instead – an innocent lamb.

Victory over Pharaoh (Exodus 12:29-32, 37)
Remember Pharaoh had asked the question “Who is the LORD?” God then demonstrated His power in the first nine plagues, but Pharaoh still refused to acknowledge God’s power. During the 10th plague Pharaoh learns just how powerful God is. It was this night that God won the war with Pharaoh, but Pharaoh was not yet destroyed.

A promise-keeping God (Exodus 12:40-41)
God’s promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Egypt when the Israelites leave after 430 years of slavery. God keeps His promises (see Genesis 15:13-16).

Redemption (Exodus 6:5; 15:13)
Why does God take His people out of Canaan, make them slaves for 400 years and then bring them back to Canaan? God’s people have to learn that in order for them to inherit God’s Promised Land they first have to be bought out of slavery. The Bible uses the word “redemption” to describe this. It means the payment for freeing a slave. A ransom is paid to allow the slave to be joined in a new relationship with the person who bought him. Therefore, in the Bible it says that God redeems Israel. God buys Israel out of slavery in Egypt and into a new relationship with Himself. The payment for Israel is the death of the Passover Lamb – an innocent substitute dying in the place of the guilty.

In the big picture the reason God takes Abraham’s children (the Israelites) to Egypt and makes them slaves, is to show them what it means to be redeemed.

The Warrior-King (Exodus 13:20-22)
Like a triumphant King God travels in front of His people. God leads His people during the day by a pillar of cloud and at night by
a pillar of fire. God is the victorious Warrior-King who marches out of Egypt with His people.

**Pharaoh’s decision (Exodus 13:18; 14:5-9)**
After the Israelites leave Egypt, Pharaoh changes his mind and decides to go and bring them back. Pharaoh goes with his army into the desert to find the Israelites. The Egyptians find the Israelites at the Red Sea. God has led His people into a dead-end – in front of them is the Red Sea and behind them are the Egyptians. Why has God led them into a dead-end?

**Israel’s complaint (Exodus 14:10-12)**
The Israelites start to complain to Moses, saying that they would have been better to stay and die in Egypt. The reason they complain is because they think that they are about to be killed by the Egyptian army that has chased them all the way to the Red Sea. Israel is now saying they wish they had never been rescued!

**Rescue (Exodus 14:13-16, 19-28)**
As the Egyptian army approach, God separates the waters of the Red sea and allows the Israelites to pass through on dry ground. But when the Egyptians try to follow them He closes over the waters and they all die. God has rescued the Israelites. The Bible tells us that God is like a warrior fighting on behalf of His people against the enemy (Exodus 14:14, 25b; see also Exodus 15:3). Israel does not fight - God the Warrior fights for Israel against their enemy. God is the Rescuer of His people. When God redeems His people He rescues them by destroying their enemy.

**God the warrior fights for His people against their enemies. God is the Rescuer of His people.**

**Israel’s faith (Exodus 14:29-31)**
When Israel sees God’s power against the Egyptians they respond in faith. They trust their Warrior-God.
Think it through

1. What is the 10th plague in Egypt, and what does it mean?

2. What is the redemption price for buying Israel out of slavery?

3. Why does God send His people to Egypt in the first place? Why not let Abraham’s children be born and grow up in Canaan?

4. Why does God lead them to a dead-end and then rescue them? (see Exodus 14:13-14)

5. What have you learnt about God from this study?
God was re-establishing His Kingdom through the family of Abraham – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing. God’s promises to Abraham involved his children living in a foreign land as slaves for 400 years. Through Joseph God’s people went to live in Egypt and after some time they became slaves to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God then sent Moses to Egypt to rescue His people, but Pharaoh refused to let them go. So God fought for His people as the Warrior-King against Pharaoh and destroyed their enemy.

Objectives

- To introduce the 10 commandments in the context of Israel’s role as a priest
- To understand the covenant at Mount Sinai as a follow on with Abraham’s covenant, and part of God’s Kingdom promises
- To see the contract as both conditional and unconditional

Connections

- Adam and Israel as priest-kings – God will rule and bless the world through Israel
- Both Adam and Israel live in covenant with God under His loving rule
- God is re-establishing His Kingdom through His rule over His people

Summary

Israel is a priest-king to the world. Through Israel, God will rule and bless the world. As God’s son, Israel must live in obedience to his Father and King
The wrong way?
Interestingly, God does not lead His people directly northeast to Canaan, but southeast to Mount Sinai in the desert. Geographically this is a long way round to get to Canaan and therefore what takes place at Mount Sinai must be very important.

Reminder about redemption (Exodus 6:5; 15:13)
The Bible uses the word “redemption” to describe how God bought His people out of Egypt. It means the payment for freeing a slave. A ransom is paid to allow the slave to be joined in a new relationship with the person who bought him. Therefore, in the Bible it says that God redeems Israel. God buys Israel out of slavery in Egypt and into a new relationship with Himself.

Israel now has a new owner, and so the question is, how should Israel live in relation to their new King? What are the rules of this King’s country, and His house? And what purpose does Israel now serve under the King’s loving rule?

What God has done for Israel (Exodus 19:3-4)
God has rescued Israel from Egypt. He uses the picture of being brought to God, carried on an eagle’s wings. This has been an act of grace since Israel was disobedient to God by worshipping the gods of Egypt. God has now entered a relationship with them.
What Israel is to do for God (Exodus 19:5-6)
In response to God’s kindness Israel is to obey their new King and Father, by keeping the covenant (contract) that God is about to reveal to them. God explains Israel’s role in the world. Among all the nations Israel is to be holy = set apart = different. Israel is also to be a priest = mediator. To summarise, Israel is to serve the world by being different from the world. By being different Israel is to be an example to the world of what it means to live under God’s rule. Israel will be different by obeying God’s instructions.

Adam and Israel
Remember in the Garden of Eden – Adam was to be an example to the world of what it meant to live under God’s rule, but he failed. God is giving Israel the same role. If Adam had obeyed, blessing would have come to the world, but it didn’t. If Israel obeys, they will be God’s special treasure and blessing will come to the world. Israel is like a new priest-king to the world. God will rule and bless the world through Israel. But just like Adam in Eden, Israel in Canaan would have to live under His rule.

The King’s instructions (Exodus 20)
God speaks to the people and gives them 10 instructions to obey:

1. You shall have no other gods before me
2. You shall not make an idol of anything, including myself
3. You shall not misuse my name
4. Remember the Sabbath by keeping it holy
5. Honour your mother and father
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour
10. You shall not covet your neighbour’s possessions

The King’s Covenant
At Mount Sinai God is making a contract with His people. God the King is giving His law to His people. It is a contract between the King and His subjects. That is why there are two copies written on two pieces of stone – one for the King and one for the people. They are like the family rules from a father to a son. They give a picture of what life in the King’s country should look like.
Summary of God’s instructions (Leviticus 19:1-2)
God’s 10 instructions can be summarised in these words – “Be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy”. In fact all of the rules and regulations can be summarised in these words.

God’s Law can be summarised as – Be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

An unconditional contract - grace
God’s contract with Israel is both unconditional (no conditions) and conditional (conditions apply). It is unconditional because it is based on God’s gracious promises to Abraham. Israel did not deserve to be rescued from Egypt but God acted in grace and gave them what they did not deserve. This is implied in Exodus 19:4 when God speaks to Israel,

“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself”.

God has carried Israel out of Egypt. God has done it all. This is His act of grace to Israel. God’s contract with Israel is unconditional, based not on their good efforts, but on what God has already done for them.

A conditional contract - obedience
But with grace comes responsibility. This is going to become a key theme from now on in the Bible. When God gives grace to someone they have a responsibility to follow His ways. Now Israel has a responsibility to live in obedience to the God who has rescued them. So this contract from Mount Sinai is also conditional. To continue as God’s son, and thus remain in contract, they must obey His words and keep His instructions. It’s the natural responsibility that comes from the privilege of being God’s chosen people.

The conditional side of the contract is seen in Exodus 19:5-6:

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”.

If Israel obeys they will be God’s holy people, His treasured possession.
The covenant is established by grace but is to be maintained by Israel’s obedience. The contract is therefore both unconditional (no conditions) and conditional (conditions apply). It is unconditionally established, but it is to be conditionally maintained.

**God’s covenant is established by grace, but is maintained by obedience.**

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**GRACE**

Relationship with God is established by grace.

**LAW**

Obedience is the way of life for those in a relationship with God.

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**‘I will be their God, they will be my people’**

**Israel’s response (Exodus 19:8; 24:3-4)**

The Israelites understand the conditions of God’s contract. Before God makes the contract the people promise to obey it. Then God gives more rules to Moses. Afterwards the people respond again that they will obey. So the Israelites understand that the contract is established by grace and to be maintained by obedience. They do not do anything to deserve God’s contract, but now that they are in it, they must obey.

**God’s Kingdom**

God’s Kingdom is God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing. God has rescued His people out of Egypt and now He is going to give them a new land in which He will live with them. The rules of God’s Kingdom are given to Israel at Mount Sinai, which they are to obey. The themes from Eden are returning. God is ruling His people through His words.
Think it through & discuss

1. In what way does the covenant at Mount Sinai connect with God’s promises to Abraham? Think about where Israel has come from and where they are going.

2. Have God’s instructions at Mount Sinai anything to do with His Kingdom?

3. What is Israel’s role in the world?

4. What are the connections between Adam and Israel?

5. In what way is God’s contract both unconditional and conditional?
The Story so Far

God was re-establishing His Kingdom through the family of Abraham – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing. God’s promises to Abraham involved his children living in a foreign land as slaves for 400 years. Through Joseph God’s people went to live in Egypt and after some time they became slaves to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God then sent Moses to Egypt to rescue His people, but Pharaoh refused to let them go. So God fought for His people as the Warrior-King against Pharaoh and destroyed their enemy. God then brought Israel to Mount Sinai where he gave them His rules. He was now their King and so they could not live any way they wanted. Israel was to live in obedience to God through obeying His rules, and so like Adam, be a priest to the world. Through Israel God would rule and bless the world.

Objectives

- To introduce the tabernacle and it’s contents
- To show how it relates to God’s Kingdom – God living with His people

Connections

- God’s Kingdom – God has come to live with His people again, just like in Eden

Summary

God the King lives with His people in the desert, but because He is holy, He is separate from His people. God rescues His people so that He can live with them, and rule them as their King. God is restoring His Kingdom.
God’s home (Exodus 25:8-9, 22)
God tells Moses and His people to make a home for Him in the desert. The word “sanctuary” or “dwelling” means a place to live, like a home. God is coming to live with His people in the desert. God asks them to build Him a big tent. In the Bible this is sometimes called the “Tabernacle” or “Tent of Meeting”. It is inside this tent that God will meet with His people and rule over them as King. The diagrams below show what God’s tent looked like from the outside and inside.
There are various pieces of furniture that God instructs to be built. These are to be placed inside the tent and inside the courtyard surrounding the tent.

**THE MOST HOLY PLACE (Holy of Holies)**
The Most Holy Place has equal dimensions in length, breadth, and height symbolising God’s perfection. It is in this place that God will live and meet with His people, and rule them as King. In the very middle of the Most Holy place is one piece of furniture – the Ark of the Covenant.

1. Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat  
*(Exodus 25:10-11, 16, 21-22)*
The picture on the next page shows a model of the Ark of the Covenant. The golden lid of the Ark is called the “Mercy Seat”. There is an angel at each end of the Mercy Seat, with wings spread out, looking down on the lid of the Ark. It is from the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat that God will have a relationship with His people:
The two copies of God’s 10 instructions are placed inside the Ark of the Covenant. God is King of His people and His throne is the Ark of the Covenant. The Most Holy Place is God’s throne room, where He meets with His people.

THE HOLY PLACE
The second room in the tent is called the Holy place. There are various pieces of furniture in this room.

2. Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1, 6-8)
The altar of incense symbolises the people’s prayers going up to heaven. This is placed in front of the curtain that separates the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place.
3. The Table with Bread of the Presence  
(Exodus 25:23-24, 30)  
This table reminds the people of God’s presence with them in the desert. It is there that He supplied bread for them when they were hungry. There are 12 loaves of bread, symbolising the 12 tribes of Israel.

4. The Golden Lampstand  
(Exodus 25:31-32, 37)  
There are seven candles altogether. The lampstand is also the shape of a tree and this will remind the people of creation and rest, where the tree of life symbolised what life meant – a relationship with God. Again the people are reminded that without God they would not have life.
COURTYARD
The courtyard that surrounds the Tabernacle also contains important objects.

The Bronze Altar (Exodus 27:1-8)
This is the place where the animal sacrifices are burned. The animals die as innocent substitutes in the place of the guilty Israelites.
The Basin (Exodus 30:17-21)
The basin is a large bowl made of bronze and filled with water. The priests have to wash themselves when they approach God. This is to teach them that they need to be clean to come into God’s presence.

What does it all mean?
A copy of God’s real home
(Exodus 25:9, 40; Hebrews 8:5)
God gives Moses very specific instructions of how to build this tent. He tells the people what materials to use, what pattern to make it, and gives exact measurements. The people have to make the tent exactly as God tells them, because it is an exact copy of God’s home in heaven.

God is holy
The word “holy” in the Bible can mean “pure” or “clean”. But its first meaning is “separate”, “different” and “other”. God is separated from human beings, he is different to them, and he is other than they are. In other words, God is holy. This is made very clear with the Tabernacle. God is living with His people, but He is also very separate from them. There are 3 main signs from the Tabernacle that show us that God is holy:
1. God is holy – we see this from the barriers that are present. There are curtains that separate God and the people (Exodus 26:1-14).

2. God is holy – the materials that are used to make the Tabernacle become more expensive the closer to the Most Holy Place. Bronze is used in the outer parts; gold is used in the inner parts (Exodus 25:10-40; 27:9-19).

3. God is holy – we see this from the types of people that are allowed to get close to where God lives. Only appointed people from the tribe of Levi are allowed to be in God’s tent. They are called priests, and they come from the family of Aaron, from the tribe of Levi. Aaron is the first high priest and his sons also serve as priests. So only specifically appointed people can enter God’s tent. A priest is someone who represented the people to God (Exodus 28-29).

God the King lives with His people in the desert, but because He is holy, He is separate from His people.

God’s Kingdom (Exodus 29:44-46)
God rescues His people for the purpose of living with them. This theme connects with the main story of the Bible – God’s Kingdom. Remember in the beginning of the Bible God lived with His people in the Garden of Eden? Then they disobeyed God and were removed from His presence. Later in the Bible God promised to rebuild the Kingdom through Abraham. He promised him a land, a people and a blessing. Many years later God rescued Abraham’s children Israel from slavery in Egypt so that He might live with them again. The story of God’s tent is the story of God rebuilding His Kingdom, where His people live with Him under His rule and blessing. God has come to live with His people again in the tent, and from the Most Holy Place He rules over them as their King. Israel is also being restored to worship God, like Adam was supposed to do in Eden.

God rescues His people so that He can live with them, and rule them as their King.
# The travelling King (Exodus 40:34-38)

During this period of history, whenever a king travelled with his people he always walked in front and then when they stopped for the night, his tent would be in the middle. It is the same with God’s tent. When the Israelites travel, God will go in front and the Ark of the Covenant will lead them. But when they stop to live in the desert for a time, God’s tent will be in the middle. God the King has come to live and travel with His people on the way to the Promised Land – Canaan.
Think it through & discuss

1. Why does God want the people to build Him a tent?

2. What do the Most Holy Place and the Ark of the Covenant symbolise?

3. What things about God’s tent highlight that He is holy?

4. What does God’s tent teach us about access into God’s presence in heaven?

5. How is this part of the Bible connected to God’s Kingdom?
At Mount Sinai God instructed the people to build Him a tent. God’s plan was to rescue back a people for Himself so that He could live with them. God was restoring His Kingdom – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing.

Objectives

- To understand the consequences for breaking the contract
- To show how God overcomes the problems of sin and separation
- To explain how the contract can continue because of God’s grace

Connections

- Pattern of God’s covenants – grace – law -- grace

Summary

The sacrifice and the priest solve the problem of sin and separation. God’s contract can continue.
The Law is a contract (Exodus 19:5-6b)
God the King makes a contract with His people at Mount Sinai. That is why there are two copies of the 10 rules. If God’s people keep the contract of the 10 rules then God will bless them. Remember - with privilege comes responsibility. By God’s grace they have been rescued out of Egypt. If they want to receive God’s continued blessing as His people then they must keep the covenant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRACE</th>
<th>LAW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with God is established by grace.</td>
<td>Obedience is the way of life for those in a relationship with God.</td>
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</table>

‘I will be their God, they will be my people’

The contract is broken (Exodus 32:1-4, 7-8)
Soon after Israel receives God’s rules they disobey their King. While Moses is up the mountain receiving more instructions from God, the people break the first two rules:
1. You shall not worship other gods
2. You shall not make idols
When the people make the golden calf they break the contract with God. Their disobedience must be punished. Death is the punishment for breaking God’s rules.
Some questions

• If God punishes the people with death, then how can He keep His promises to Abraham?
• How can the people remain in God’s contract if they have disobeyed Him?
• How can God punish their sin and keep the contract going?

More grace
In order for God’s contract to continue the people need more grace. To keep them in the contract God needs to forgive them, which they don’t deserve.

The problems of sin and separation
God the King has come to live with His people. This is good, but it is not perfect. There are two reasons why it is not perfect:

1. God's people have disobeyed Him and therefore He has to punish them because He is a good, holy King. This is the problem of sin.
2. God's people are still separated from Him by various barriers. God has been separated from human beings ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed His rule and He threw them out of the garden. God's people cannot live where He lives. This is the problem of separation.

The problems of sin and separation need to be overcome. The solution is found in the third book of the Bible called Leviticus. The question is how can God still live with His people and deal with these two problems of sin and separation?

Remembrance Day
There is a special day in the Israelite calendar that highlights God's solution to the problem of sin and separation. It is called ‘The Day of Atonement’ and it is a festival performed only once a year. The Day of Atonement is the day in the year when God the King makes a review of His people's sins. He brings to remembrance all the sins they have committed in the last year. If found guilty, then there has to be a punishment. But the Day of Atonement is a day of forgiveness as well as judgement. It is also the only day of the year that the people are allowed into God's presence.
The High priest (Leviticus 16:1-5)

Only the high priest is allowed into God’s presence once a year as a representative for the people. The high priest has to have a sacrifice to enter the Holy of Holies (Leviticus 16:1-3).

Sacrifice for the high priest (Leviticus 16:11-14)

Aaron kills an animal as a sacrifice. He then takes some burning coals and some incense (perfume) behind the curtain, so that he will not be able to see God. If Aaron sees God he will die (v13). He will also bring some of the blood from the sacrifice of the animal and put it on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. He does all this for his own sin and the sin of his family.

Sacrifice for the people (Leviticus 16:15-16)

Aaron then comes out again and offers another sacrifice, this time for the people. He repeats the same procedure by going into the Holy of Holies and sprinkling the blood on the top of the Ark in God’s presence. Aaron presents this sacrifice on behalf of the Israelites. The procedure is repeated once a year, year after year.
The escape-goat (Leviticus 16:20-22)
On the Day of Atonement Aaron also places his hands on a live goat and confesses all the sins of the people. Then he sends the goat away into the desert to a place where no one can see it. The goat will never be seen again, and this symbolises that the people’s sins of the last year are put out of God’s sight.

What does all this mean?

1. The Sacrifice
The sacrifice is the substitute for the person. God's punishment for disobeying Him is death. The innocent animal dies in the place of the guilty person. We have seen this principle throughout the Bible. Think of the sacrifice of an animal in the place of Abel and Isaac. Think of the Passover Lamb in Egypt, which died instead of the firstborn sons of the Israelites. Here the sacrifice makes atonement for the people's sins. This word “atonement” means, to “cover a debt”. The sacrifice of the animal covers the debt of the people's sins. The sacrifice deals with the problem of sin.
2. The Priest
The priest represents the people to God. The priest’s job is to offer the sacrifices to God. If there is no priest then no sacrifice can be offered to God. The priests are part of God's solution to turn His anger away from the people when they disobey Him. The priests have to be appointed by God (Exodus 28:1). Only Aaron and his sons can serve as priests. Aaron's family are from the tribe of Levi, known as Levites. The priest deals with the problem of separation – through the priest the Israelites are able to make contact with God in the Most Holy Place.

The gracious King living with His people
God is the holy King who has come to live with His people, but He has to deal with the problem of sin and separation. How can a holy God continue to live with a people who keep breaking His rules? God overcomes these problems through sacrifices and priests. The book of Leviticus shows God's grace in forgiving the people's sins and allowing them to enter into His presence on occasions. The sacrifice of the animal is the punishment for the people's disobedience, and the priest is the one who enters God's presence on behalf of the people. God is therefore able to live with His people and at the same time remain just – He still punishes sin. And we must not miss the fact that it is God Himself who provides this solution – it is an act of grace. The contract can therefore continue because God is able to both punish and forgive the sin of His people.

The sacrifice and the priest solve the problem of sin and separation. God’s contract can continue.
Relationship with God is established by grace.

Obedience is the way of life for those in a relationship with God.

Forgiveness once a year through sacrifices and a priest.

‘I will be their God, they will be my people’
Think it through & discuss

1. What are the two main problems God’s people have?

2. How does God overcome these?

3. How can God be both just and forgiving?

At Mount Sinai God instructed the people to build Him a tent. God’s plan was to rescue back a people for Himself so that He could live with them. God was restoring His Kingdom – God’s people, living in God’s place, under God’s rule and blessing. However, it was not long before Israel disobeyed God and broke the rules of the covenant. But God was able to keep the contract going by graciously providing a sacrifice and a priest to help deal with the problems of sin and separation.

Objectives

- To show the faithfulness of God and the faithlessness of Israel
- To highlight Joshua and Caleb as examples of how to enter God’s place

Connections

- Entering the land God had promised was like returning to Eden. It was in the land that God’s Kingdom would be established.

Summary

God’s contract continues by grace. Israel is a faithless nation, but God remains faithful to His promises.
In the desert (Numbers 2:32-33)
After the Tabernacle is completed God leads His people through the desert to the Promised Land, Canaan. The events of the journey are recorded for us in the book called Numbers. The book is called “Numbers” because in it there are two censuses taken of the people. In other words, God asks Moses to count all the people that have been brought out of Egypt. There are approximately 600,000 men. Near the end of the book God asks Moses to count the people again.

Approaching Canaan
When the people are near the land of Canaan God tells Moses to choose 12 spies to go into the land and check it out. Remember that there are other people living in the land. Moses chooses one person from each of the tribes of Israel – 12 spies altogether. The 12 men go into the land and explore it for 40 days. Then they return and report everything they have seen to Moses.

The report (Numbers 13:26-29, 31-33)
When the 12 spies return 10 of them give a bad report. The people report two main problems:
1. The people are too big to defeat.
2. The cities have big walls and are well protected.

A faithless Israel (Numbers 14:1-4)
The main response is that the people do not want to go into the land God has promised. The people of Israel are showing a complete lack of faith in God’s promises. Did God promise Abraham the land of Canaan? Yes. Did God fight as a warrior for His people to rescue them out of Egypt? Yes. Can God do the same when they enter the land of Canaan? Yes. God is the mighty warrior who defeated the great nation of the Egyptians; the people in Canaan are nothing compared to Egypt. And yet Israel has no faith in God or His promises. Israel is a faithless nation.
Joshua and Caleb’s response (Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9)
However, two spies called Joshua and Caleb give a good report, encouraging the people to go and take the land because God has promised it to them. Joshua and Caleb stand out as men who believe and trust God’s promises in contrast to the faithless Israelites.

God’s response (Numbers 14:26-35)
God responds with punishment for not having faith in His promises. He is going to make the Israelites walk in the desert for 40 years - one year for every day that the spies were in the land. Those people who did not have faith in God and His promises will die in the desert and will not enter the land of promise. But in His grace God promises to bring the children of Israel into the land of Canaan. He also promises to bring Joshua and Caleb into the land because they had faith in His promises. God remains faithful to His promise to Abraham - his descendants will live in the land of Canaan and it will be their home.

A faithful God (Numbers 2:32; 26:51)
In the desert, even the children of Israel start to disobey God. Yet God remains faithful to His promise and in His grace still promises to bring them into the Promised Land. God provides food and water for His people during the 40 years. We also read that during the 40 years their shoes do not even wear out. At the first census there are 603,550 men, but they all die (except three) because of disobedience. Nearly 40 years later a second census is taken and the number is 601,730 men. God keeps the number of Israelites strong despite their disobedience. God is keeping His promises to Abraham.

God’s contract continues by grace. Israel is a faithless nation, but God remains faithful to His promises.
Think it through & discuss

1. In what way is Israel a faithless nation?

2. In what way is God faithful?

3. What do the examples of Joshua and Caleb teach us?