

MEET YOUR MAKER

DISCOVERING GOD IN THE FIRST FIVE
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE



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Meet Your Maker

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Introduction

The Bible isn't just a religious book—it's a revelation. It's not a disconnected collection of ancient laws and strange stories; it's the unfolding of a God who wants to be known. From Genesis to Revelation, every book whispers His name, reveals His heart, and shows us who we really are in light of Him.

This booklet is a preview of a larger work in progress: *Meet Your Maker: Discovering God in Every Book of the Bible*. It's not a theology textbook. It's not a commentary. It's a conversation. One designed for anyone who's ever opened the Bible and thought, “Where do I even start?” Or maybe, “Does this actually matter to my life right now?” Here's the good news: it does. Every single book of the Bible tells us something essential about who God is, what He expects from us, how He responds to our failures, and where Jesus shows up in it all.

This free booklet walks through the first five books of the Bible—Genesis through Deuteronomy. These are some of the most misunderstood and most avoided books in all of Scripture. They're also the foundation for everything that comes next. If you can learn to see God here, in the dust, in the drama, in the delays, you'll begin to understand just how consistent and compassionate He's always been.

The full book will explore all sixty-six books of the Bible, in this same tone and format. Thoughtful. Engaging. Honest. With depth, clarity, and the occasional well-placed laugh. Because honestly, some of this stuff is just plain weird. But that's part of what makes the Bible beautiful. It's messy. It's mysterious. And it's all about a God who meets us on every page.

So, if you've ever felt too new, too distant, or too overwhelmed to really connect with Scripture, take some time to read what it's all about. You don't have to be a Bible scholar. You just need a little curiosity, a little faith, and maybe a strong cup of coffee (or two).

So, come on, let's meet your Maker—one book at a time.

Genesis: The God of Promise

Genesis is where everything starts. And I mean everything—the universe, the earth, humanity, sin, redemption, and, most importantly, God’s relationship with us. Traditionally attributed to Moses, Genesis opens the story of God’s promise to mankind.

The very first words of the Bible introduce a God who speaks, and things happen. No struggle, no battle, no rival force pushing back against Him. He simply says, “Let there be light,” and there is. That’s the kind of power we’re dealing with.

But Genesis doesn’t just introduce us to creation, it introduces us to a relational God. This isn’t some distant deity who sets the universe in motion and then leaves. This is a God who forms humanity with His hands, breathes life into them, walks in the garden with them, speaks directly to them.

And yet, right from the beginning, humanity gets it wrong. Adam and Eve make a choice that fractures their connection to God. Cain kills his brother in jealousy. The world becomes so corrupt that God sends a flood. People build a tower to make a name for themselves instead of glorifying God. The pattern repeats: God creates, people rebel, God restores.

But here’s the most important part: God never gives up. Instead of abandoning humanity, He launches a rescue plan. He calls Abraham. A man with no status, no land, and no children, and makes him a promise: Through you, all nations will be blessed. This isn’t just about giving Abraham a family. This is about God’s long-term plan to redeem the world. This is about Jesus, but no one knows that quite yet. That takes a few thousand years and a lot of crazy humans doing a lot of crazy things.

WHO IS GOD IN GENESIS?

Before the first breath of creation, before time had meaning, before light had ever touched the void, God was.

Genesis doesn't introduce us to a god who had to fight for power or rise to authority. There was no battle for the universe, no struggle for control. He simply speaks, and everything that exists bends to His voice. "Let there be light." And there was.

This is a God whose power is effortless, whose authority is absolute. There is no hesitation, no resistance, no question of whether His will shall be done. It simply... *is*.

And yet, Genesis reveals something even more astonishing: this all-powerful Creator is also deeply personal.

He doesn't shape the world from a distance, He kneels in the dust to form humanity with His own hands. The same hands that hung the stars in place now press into the earth, molding flesh from clay. The breath that spoke galaxies into being now fills the lungs of mankind. This is not an indifferent force setting life in motion, this is a God who gets His hands dirty for us.

And this isn't the last time He kneels in the dust.

Centuries later, in the heat of an angry crowd, those same hands push into the dirt again. But this time, He isn't shaping a man from clay, He is shielding a woman from condemnation. The fingers that traced the first human form now write something unknown in the soil as Jesus kneels before the Pharisees and a woman they are ready to stone. The same God, the same knee, the same dust now stands between a sinner and the condemnation of other sinners.

The first time, His hands lifted humanity from the ground and gave them life. Now, they press into the dirt again, not to create—but to save.

Genesis reveals a Creator whose power is unmatched, a Judge whose justice is perfect, and a Redeemer whose mercy is relentless.

God is—the One who forms.

God is—the One who calls.

God is—The One who never forgets His promises.

Everything begins with Him. And everything belongs to Him.

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT FROM HUMANS IN GENESIS?

Before there were commandments, before there was a written law, before prophets stood before kings declaring “Thus says the Lord,” there was one expectation: trust.

God calls people to trust Him, even when the path ahead makes no sense.

Noah is told to build an ark before there is rain. There’s no storm on the horizon, no dark clouds forming just a command from God and the choice to believe Him.

Abraham is told to leave everything familiar: his home, his land, his father’s household, to follow a promise he can’t yet see. He is asked to trust not just in what God will do, but in who God is, and who he is in God.

Joseph is given dreams of greatness, then betrayed, enslaved, falsely accused, and imprisoned for years. Every moment seems to drag him further from God’s promises until the day he stands second-in-command over Egypt and realizes God’s hand was on him all along.

Genesis shows us that trust isn’t passive, it’s an act of faith that moves forward even when the destination is unknown. It is believing that God is still writing the story, even when you’re stuck in the middle of a chapter that makes no sense. Honestly, I know those chapters.

I've been stuck in more than one. But it's worth hanging in there and, with just a little patience, waiting on God to do His thing. And make no mistake, God can and will do a great thing.

But trust alone is not enough. Obedience matters. God's commands aren't arbitrary they are the boundary lines of life and death. Adam and Eve ignored one simple instruction, and it shattered everything, literally, everything in this world. Cain was warned that sin was crouching at his door, and instead of mastering it, he let it consume him. Lot's wife was told not to look back, and in her hesitation, she lost everything.

Genesis is filled with people who thought their way was better than God's way. Every time, the result was pain, loss, and separation from the very One who formed them.

But obedience was never about control, it was always about relationship. Walking with God is not about earning His love it is about living in the reality that we were made for Him. From the beginning, humanity was created to walk with God, to know Him, to trust Him completely. Every act of disobedience in Genesis isn't just a violation of a rule, it's a fracture in relationship. And every act of trust brings people back to the place they were always meant to be.

God's expectation is not just that we follow orders, but that we walk with Him. That we trust our Creator, who formed the deepest part of us while we were still in our mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). That we surrender to God in Heaven who sees the whole story.

Because when we do, we find that His way was better all along.

TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT GENESIS

Genesis doesn't shy away from life's hardest questions. It raises them. It forces us to ask things we might rather avoid. And if we're honest, some of those questions still haunt us today.

One of the biggest is this: *If God is good, why did He allow sin in the first place?* If God knew Adam and Eve would fall, if He knew the world would be broken by sin, that suffering and death would enter the picture, why create us at all? It's the question underneath every tragedy, every loss, every moment we look at the world and think, This isn't how it should be. He allowed it because He knows that love isn't love without choice.

God didn't create robots. He didn't form a world where people would mechanically obey Him because they had no other option. He created humanity in His image which means He gave us the ability to choose. To love Him or reject Him. To trust Him or turn away. Real love requires free will. And free will means the possibility of rebellion.

But here's what Genesis also teaches: God wasn't caught off guard. The fall wasn't a mistake in the plan, it was a part of the rescue story He was already writing. Before the first sin was committed, God had already set redemption in motion. Genesis 3:15 holds the first promise of Jesus, the first whisper that one day, the serpent's head would be crushed. Sin was allowed. But it was never the end of the story.

And that brings us to another tough question: *If humanity kept failing, why didn't God just start over?* Think about it: He could have wiped everything clean, erased every rebellion, restarted with people who wouldn't fail. But He didn't. Instead, He chose to redeem rather than replace. When Adam and Eve sinned, God covered them and made a promise. When Cain murdered his brother, God marked him and let him live. When the world became so wicked that a flood wiped it out, God preserved a remnant. When humanity tried to build their way to heaven at Babel, God scattered them, but He never abandoned them.

Genesis teaches us that God is a Redeemer by nature. He does not discard His creation. He does not wipe the slate clean and pretend we never existed. He steps into the mess and brings restoration. That is the heart of Genesis. And, essentially, that is the heart of the entire Bible.

Faith isn't about having all the answers the moment we have the questions. It's about not being afraid to dive deeper into the Scriptures to understand who this God is who created us, loves us, and has redeemed us with His own blood. And the more you search, the more you realize, the God who created this massive universe is not threatened by our questions. He invites them.

NO WAY THE BIBLE SAID THAT - GENESIS EDITION

If you think reality TV is dramatic, wait until you hear about Tamar and Judah. Here's the setup: Judah (one of Jacob's sons) has three sons. Tamar marries the oldest one, but he dies. She then marries the second son, but he dies too. The third son is supposed to marry her when he grows up, but Judah delays things.

Tamar, tired of waiting, takes matters into her own hands. She disguises herself as a prostitute, waits by the side of the road, and Judah (her father-in-law) sleeps with her without realizing who she is.

A few months later, Tamar turns up pregnant. Judah, being a man of deep integrity (note the sarcasm), calls for her to be burned alive until she reveals that he's the father. And here's the kicker: Tamar ends up in the family line of Jesus. One thing you can be certain of, the Bible doesn't sugarcoat the messiness of humanity.

HOW GENESIS SHAPES OUR LIVES TODAY

Genesis doesn't just tell us where the world came from, it tells us who we are, and more importantly, who God is. It reminds us that we were created on purpose, not by chance. Our existence isn't an accident or the result of randomness it's the result of divine intention. God didn't just speak mankind into being; He formed humanity with His own hands. That means our lives matter. From the very beginning, we were made to reflect the image of a God who is both powerful and personal.

But Genesis doesn't sugarcoat the human experience. It shows what happens when we step outside the boundaries of God's design. Sin enters, and it shatters everything; relationships, creation, identity. And yet, even then, God doesn't walk away. Every time humanity fails, He moves toward us, not away from us. He clothes Adam and Eve. He marks Cain. He remembers Noah. He calls Abraham. He raises Joseph. God is always finding a way to restore what we break.

Genesis also shapes how we understand waiting. The story of faith isn't a sprint it's more often a slow walk through uncertainty. Abraham waited 25 years for his promised son. Joseph endured betrayal, false accusations, and prison before he saw how God was working through it all. Their stories remind us that delay is not denial. God's silence is not absence. And His timeline, while rarely comfortable, is always perfect.

So when life feels messy, unpredictable, or painfully slow, Genesis gives us a firm place to stand. We are created, called, and known by a God who never gives up, not on His world, and not on us.

KEY THEMES IN GENESIS

Genesis is more than the first chapter of the Bible, it's the blueprint. Everything that comes after it rests on the foundation it lays. This is where we first encounter the power of God's voice, the depth of His love, the weight of human rebellion, and the unstoppable force of His redemptive plan.

The first theme that leaps off the page is **creation**. Genesis shows us a God who doesn't just command the universe into being, He crafts it with care. From galaxies to garden soil, everything exists because God spoke it into being. But when it comes to humanity, He slows down. He gets close. He forms Adam from the dust and breathes life into his lungs. Creation isn't just a backdrop to the story it's the beginning of our relationship.

Then there's **covenant**. God doesn't give up when people fail, He makes promises. He enters into a covenant with Abraham, not because Abraham is the perfect example of the best of humanity, but because God is faithful. That covenant becomes the thread that weaves through all of Scripture. It's God saying, "Even when you mess this up, I'm not letting go."

Sin and **judgment** are also major themes. Genesis doesn't gloss over the consequences of rebellion. From the garden to the flood to Babel, it's clear that sin breaks things and people. But in every moment of judgment, we also see that glimpse of grace. That covering for Adam and Eve. That mark to protect Cain. And that rainbow after the storm.

Finally, Genesis is a story of **faith** and **redemption**. We see God work through deeply flawed people to accomplish His purpose. Abraham doubted. Jacob deceived. Joseph was sold, forgotten, and sat in prison for years. But God was never absent. He was always writing a bigger story one of redemption, rescue, and restoration.

Every page of Genesis whispers what the rest of the Bible will shout: God is faithful, even when we are not.

WHAT GENESIS TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

You might not expect to find Jesus in Genesis, but He's there, quietly woven into the very fabric of the story. From the opening chapters, the groundwork for redemption is already being laid. The more you read, the more you realize: Genesis isn't just the beginning of the world, it's the beginning of the gospel.

The very first words of Genesis, "In the beginning, God created..." are echoed in the opening of John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1 makes it unmistakably clear that Jesus was there from the start. Not only was He present at creation, but He was also the agent through whom all things were made. The Word who spoke light into the darkness is the same Word who became flesh and dwelled among us (John 1:14).

In the garden, right after sin enters the story, God makes a promise. He speaks to the serpent and says that one day, the offspring of the woman will crush his head (Genesis 3:15). That's not just a poetic line, it's the first prophecy of Jesus. Long before Bethlehem, God was already speaking of a Savior who would come to defeat evil at its root.

We see another glimpse of Jesus in the story of Abraham and Isaac. When Abraham is told to sacrifice his only son, he obeys in faith, but at the last moment, God provides a ram caught in the thicket. That moment foreshadows a much greater sacrifice: another Son, carrying wood on His back, walking toward His own death. But this time, there would be no substitute because He was the substitute. Jesus is the Lamb that God provided for us.

And then there's Joseph. Betrayed by his brothers, sold for silver, falsely accused, and imprisoned. His life mirrors the injustice Jesus endured. But just like Joseph, Jesus is ultimately exalted and becomes the source of salvation for those who rejected Him. What others meant for evil, God used for good.

Genesis isn't just about Adam and Eve, Abraham, or Joseph. It's about a God who already had a rescue plan in motion, a plan that would find its fulfillment in Jesus. The story starts in Eden, but it points all the way to the cross. From the first chapter to the last, Scripture is telling one story and Jesus is at the center of it.

THE MESSAGE OF GENESIS

Genesis is more than a history of beginnings. It's the foundation beneath every other book of the Bible. It shows us a God who speaks life into chaos, who calls people out of obscurity, and who stays faithful even when they fail. This is the God who creates, calls, judges, redeems, and blesses, not because we deserve it, but because that's just who He is.

This book introduces the pattern we see throughout the rest of Scripture: God acts first. He creates before we ask. He calls before we understand. He provides before we realize what we need. And when humanity falls short again and again, He never walks away. His promises don't expire just because we mess things up.

Genesis shows us the roots of both human brokenness and divine mercy. It helps us understand why the world is the way it is and why we still long for something more. It points to a Creator who is also a covenant-maker. A God who can form planets out of nothing, but who also kneels in the dust to form us with His hands. A God who judges sin, but always makes a way forward.

The message of Genesis is that God has been writing a redemptive story from the very beginning and the ink hasn't run out yet. That story includes us. And He's not finished yet.

Exodus: The God Who Delivers

If Genesis introduces us to a God who creates, Exodus reveals a God who intervenes. Written by Moses, this book continues the journey of promise, deliverance, and identity. The story opens with silence. Generations have passed since Joseph's family arrived in Egypt, and the descendants of Abraham now find themselves enslaved, oppressed, and forgotten by the nation they once helped save. But while Egypt has forgotten them, God has not.

Exodus shows us a God who hears the cries of His people and responds by stepping directly into the story. He reveals His name, His character, and His power, not to show off, but to rescue. He doesn't just break chains; He redefines identity. God doesn't deliver the Israelites just so they can be free. He delivers them so they can know Him. He forms them into a people who belong to Him, marked by His covenant, shaped by His law, and drawn into relationship through worship.

This isn't a book about escape, it's a book about formation. Exodus is where God moves from being the God of their ancestors who came before them, to becoming their God. He splits seas, descends in fire, and speaks from the mountain, not for spectacle, but for covenant. He is not content to be a rescuer from afar. He comes close. He chooses to dwell among them.

Exodus is not just the story of a people being led out. It's the story of a God who refuses to leave them behind.

WHO IS GOD IN EXODUS?

In Genesis, we meet the God of promise. In Exodus, we meet the God who keeps those promises, not through quiet assurances, but through unmistakable action. After centuries of

silence, God breaks in to fully reveal Himself to His people. For the first time in Scripture, God tells us His name. He doesn't simply act, He introduces Himself. And when He does, He doesn't begin with a title of power or dominion. He starts with relationship: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

This is not a distant deity. This is a personal God, one who ties His name to flawed men and fragile promises. And when Moses asks, "What should I tell them your name is?" God answers with something even more profound: "I AM WHO I AM."

Talk about a mic-drop moment. What a name this is. It's a name that speaks of timelessness, unchangeability, and presence. He is not the God who was, or who will be—He is the God who is. Always. Now. With us.

But Exodus also reveals a God who is holy. He is not to be handled casually or approached flippantly. When He appears to Moses in the burning bush, He tells him to take off his sandals, "for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Ex. 3:5). Later, when He descends on Mount Sinai in fire and thunder, the people tremble, not out of superstition, but because they are standing before a God whose presence shakes the earth.

Yet, for all His holiness, God is also deeply compassionate. He hears the groaning of Jewish slaves. He remembers His covenant. He is moved, not by their goodness, but by their suffering. And He acts, not because they deserve it, but because He is faithful.

This is the God who sends plagues, parts seas, and leads His people by cloud and fire. But more than that, this is the God who dwells in a tent so He can be close to the people He rescued. He does not deliver from a distance. He comes near, stays near, and makes His home in their midst.

The God of Exodus is not a God who rescues and retreats. He is a God who delivers in order to be close to those He loves.

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT FROM HUMANS IN EXODUS?

By the time Exodus begins, God's people have forgotten what it means to live in freedom. They've spent generations under Pharaoh's rule, where identity is tied to productivity and value is determined by how many bricks you can make in a day. When God rescues them, He doesn't just deliver their bodies, He begins the long process of restoring their souls. But freedom comes with a learning curve.

God doesn't pull the Israelites out of Egypt just so they can wander aimlessly. He brings them into covenant. He gives them laws. These laws are not chains to bind them, but as boundaries to protect them. And at the heart of these commands is something deeper than obedience: trust.

God asks His people to trust Him when He leads them into the wilderness. To trust Him when their food supply runs out. To trust Him when water is scarce, when enemies rise, when directions seem unclear. And again and again, they struggle. They grumble. They question. They long for Egypt, not because it was good, but because it was familiar.

God doesn't just want rule-followers. He wants followers who know His heart. He wants people who don't just obey out of fear, but who obey out of relationship, who understand that the law is not a punishment but a gift. The Ten Commandments aren't given to restrict their lives but to reflect God's character. The instructions for the Tabernacle aren't just religious rituals, they're about making space for God to be with His people.

What God expects is not just outward obedience but inward alignment. A heart that says, “If You’re going with us, we’ll go wherever You lead. But if You’re not going, we’re not moving.” (see Exodus 33:15). He doesn’t expect us to be perfect. But He does expect participation. This is what Exodus tells us about God’s expectations for humanity: Freedom requires trust. Covenant requires commitment. And faith requires action.

TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT EXODUS

Exodus is filled with awe-inspiring moments: burning bushes, parted seas, God meeting with Moses on a mountain. But it also raises some deeply uncomfortable questions.

One of the hardest is this: *Why did God harden Pharaoh’s heart?* It feels unfair at first glance. If Pharaoh didn’t have a choice, how could he be held accountable? But the text tells us something more layered and nuanced. Pharaoh hardened his own heart multiple times before God confirmed him in his own rebellion. God didn’t override Pharaoh’s will, He gave Pharaoh over to what Pharaoh had already chosen. I’m afraid I’ve been guilty of that very same sin and suffered the same consequence. Not as deadly, of course. But certainly rebellious.

This is less about God denying Pharaoh a chance, and more about Pharaoh repeatedly resisting the chances he was already given. God’s judgment wasn’t impulsive. It was consistent with Pharaoh’s long-standing pride and cruelty.

Another question Exodus raises is: *Why did God let His people suffer for so long before stepping in?* The Israelites were enslaved for generations. They cried out for deliverance, and the silence from heaven must have felt unbearable. Where was God? Why didn’t He act sooner?

But Exodus tells us He was not absent. “God heard their groaning... God saw... God knew” (Exodus 2:24–25). His silence wasn’t apathy, it was preparation. He was calling Moses,

unfolding a plan, and remembering His covenant. He was moving. But it wasn't just about circumstances falling into place. It was about hearts being prepared.

Even after the miracles, after the plagues, the sea parting, the fire on the mountain, the people still turned away. When Moses lingered too long on Mount Sinai, they built a golden calf. And Aaron, Moses' own brother, pointed to that lifeless idol and said, "This is your god, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt" (Exodus 32:4). His own brother! The one who would later become the chief priest of the Tabernacle. Talk about the forgiveness of God. It wasn't just Pharaoh's heart that was hard. The Jewish people needed transformation, too.

Sometimes, God waits because the timing isn't ready. But sometimes, He waits because we aren't. His timing is never random. His delays are never wasted. Even in the silence, God is preparing a deliverance that goes deeper than escape, it's a deliverance that changes hearts.

But perhaps the most haunting question in all of Exodus is this: *Why did God kill the firstborn in Egypt?* The tenth plague isn't a flannel board story. It's heavy. It's devastating. And it's one of the most morally difficult moments in the Old Testament. But it didn't come without warning and it didn't come out of nowhere.

Egypt had enslaved, oppressed, and brutalized Israel for centuries. When Moses was a baby, the Pharaoh had ordered the execution of the Hebrew baby boys, drowning them in the Nile as if their lives meant nothing. This plague was not a random act of violence it was justice in response to generations of bloodshed. In response to what had been done to the Jews.

Still, even here, mercy was offered. Nine plagues came before the tenth. Pharaoh was given chance after chance to release the people, and he refused every one. Judgment came, yes, but only after his rebellion had become a pattern.

And for those who would receive it, God provided a way out. The blood of a lamb on the doorpost became a sign of shelter. That invitation wasn't just for Israelites, it was for anyone inside the house. It was a picture of what would come later, when another Lamb's blood would shield us, not from physical death, but from eternal separation from God.

The tenth plague is hard. But it isn't careless. It's justice with a door wide open for mercy.

The hard questions are still valid, and they're worth asking. But so are the answers if we're willing to look for them.

NO WAY THE BIBLE SAID THAT - EXODUS EDITION

So, Moses is on his way back to Egypt, right? God just appeared to him in a burning bush, commissioned him to deliver an entire nation, and gave him a crash course in signs and wonders. It's a big moment. You'd think everything's set.

And then, out of nowhere, God tries to kill him.

No, really. Exodus 4:24 says, "At a lodging place on the way, the Lord met Moses and was about to kill him." That's the whole setup. No explanation. Just boom—God's about to take him out.

Enter Zipporah, Moses' Midianite wife. With zero introduction or dialogue, she grabs a flint knife, circumcises their son (again, we don't know how old he is, but he's definitely old enough for this to be a very bad day), and then touches Moses' feet with the foreskin.

Her exact words? "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me." (Exodus 4:25)

And then... God lets Moses live.

That's it. Scene over.

No context. No explanation. No debrief. Just a surprise circumcision, a bloody foot, and a wife with the sharpest reflexes in the Bible.

To this day, scholars are still scratching their heads. But if you've ever thought the Bible was boring, this is your reminder: it gets weird and it doesn't apologize for it.

HOW EXODUS SHAPES OUR LIVES TODAY

Exodus isn't just a story about a nomadic group of former slaves with sandals and tents, it's about us. It's about what it means to be freed from something and called to something greater.

It reminds us that God doesn't just pull us out of our mess; He walks with us through the wilderness afterward. He's not only there for the moment of rescue. He's in the daily grind that comes after it. He doesn't deliver me and disappear. He stays. He leads. He lives with me.

This book teaches me that freedom is more than escape. It's about becoming someone new. Israel didn't know how to live without Pharaoh, and let's be honest, neither do we sometimes. We get so used to the voices that enslave us that God's voice can feel unfamiliar at first. We get so used to talking a certain way that doesn't honor God. We get so used to hanging around a crowd that leads us down temptation's path. We have been so comfortable watching, listening, absorbing culture that we don't even think about the idol that it's become, distracting us from God. But Exodus assures me that He's patient. If we let Him, He guides us step by step. He feeds. He provides. He forgives. He moves us on to a better place.

It also shows us that deliverance isn't always instant. Sometimes God leads through the wilderness on purpose not because He's lost, but because He's forming something in me that couldn't grow in Egypt. He's teaching us through the testing. He's allowing us to prove that we

understand what He is trying to tell us. And, He's allowing us to understand that He is faithful in all circumstances.

And when I'm tempted to think God is distant, Exodus reminds me that He comes close. He reveals Himself by name. He sets up camp in the middle of the mess. He brings fire by night, a cloud by day, and a presence that doesn't leave—even when we rebel.

God is not just the God who got me out. He's the God who stays in it with me until I'm changed.

KEY THEMES IN EXODUS

As I mentioned earlier Exodus isn't about escape, it's about formation. God doesn't just get Israel out of Egypt; He gets Egypt out of Israel. Along the way, several core themes rise to the surface, and they still shape how we understand God today.

One major theme is **deliverance**. God responds to the cries of His people and rescues them from slavery, not because they've earned it, not because they have been faithful to Him, but because He is faithful to His promises. This rescue sets the tone for the rest of Scripture. Salvation is always God-initiated, grace-driven, undeserved, and grounded in relationship.

Another theme is **presence**. God doesn't just lead from afar, He descends. He speaks from a bush, from a mountain, and eventually from the Tabernacle. His goal was never just to liberate His people, but to live among them. That is what He does today through the Holy Spirit. He dwells within us from the moment of our salvation. God has always desired to be close to us. From the Garden of Eden to the Wilderness to the Cross, God has always made a way to be near His people.

Covenant is also central to Exodus. At Sinai, God formalizes His relationship with Israel. He gives them commands that reflect His character and set them apart from the nations. The law isn't about restriction, it's about identity. It teaches the people how to live as those who belong to God.

Finally, Exodus highlights **formation** through testing. The wilderness isn't punishment—it's preparation. God uses dry places and hard days to shape His people's faith, to teach them how to depend on Him, and to show them that He is trustworthy even when the path doesn't make sense.

These themes: deliverance, presence, covenant, and formation, they don't just define Israel's story. They define ours, too.

WHAT EXODUS TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

You might not expect to see Jesus in a story filled with plagues, pillars of fire, and stone tablets, but He's there. Not just in the shadows, but in the structure of the whole story.

Jesus is the greater Moses, the one who not only delivers His people from slavery, but who stands before God on their behalf. Moses went up the mountain alone to receive the covenant; Jesus went up a hill alone to fulfill it.

The Passover lamb, whose blood covered the doorways and protected God's people from death, points directly to Christ. The New Testament calls Jesus our Passover lamb. Not a symbolic reference, but a theological anchor. Just as Israel was spared because of the blood of a lamb, we are saved because of the blood of Christ. It is His death that shields us from judgment and sets us free.

Even the Tabernacle whispers His name. God gave specific instructions for the Tabernacle because it was the place where His presence would dwell. And every detail, from the mercy seat to the veil, finds its fulfillment in Jesus. He is the place where God meets man. He is the high priest, the sacrifice, and the way into the presence of God.

Exodus isn't just about a nation being set free. It's about a Savior who would one day come to free us all from the power of sin and death. It's the beginning of a greater rescue story. A story that leads all the way to a cross, an empty tomb, and a Savior who came to bring His people out of this land and lead them to their eternal home.

THE MESSAGE OF EXODUS

Exodus is the story of a God who hears, a God who sees, and a God who moves. He does not stand at a distance, indifferent to human suffering. He steps into the story, calls people by name, and sets captives free.

But deliverance is only the beginning. The deeper message of Exodus is that freedom is not the end goal—relationship is. God doesn't just bring His people out of slavery. He brings them into covenant. He teaches them what it means to live as those who are chosen, known, and set apart.

Exodus reminds us that salvation is not about escaping hardship. It's about being formed in the wilderness, learning to follow when the path is unclear, and trusting that the God who brought us out will also bring us through.

This is the God who keeps His promises. The God who rescues. The God who stays.

Leviticus: The God of Holiness

Let's just say it: Leviticus has a reputation. It's the book most people skip, skim, or survive. Sacrifices, skin diseases, mold inspections, and enough ceremonial law to make your head spin. On the surface, it feels like the opposite of inspirational. But if we only see rules, we miss the point. Because Leviticus isn't primarily about regulation, God continues His story with us about relationship. Moses records the details of a holy God forming a holy people.

God had just rescued His people from slavery. He'd guided them through the wilderness and taken up residence in the middle of their camp, in the Tabernacle, right at the heart of their lives. But how does a holy God live among sinful people without consuming them? That's the tension Leviticus confronts. It's not about control; it's about closeness. Holiness isn't a barrier; it's the bridge.

This book is God's invitation to come near. Every offering, every law, every ritual was a way to restore what sin had broken. Even if it seems like it, God wasn't asking for perfection. He was teaching His people how to live in His presence, how to be set apart as His. And that's what holiness really is. Not piety for the sake of performance, but a life that reflects the One we belong to. A life marked by wholeness, reverence, and alignment with God's character. Holiness touches everything, not just our worship, but our relationships, our justice, our compassion, and even our ordinary routines. Leviticus shows us a God who isn't content to remain distant. He wants to dwell with His people, and He makes a way to do it.

WHO IS GOD IN LEVITICUS?

Leviticus doesn't give us sweeping narratives or dramatic miracles. What it gives us instead is a glimpse of God's holiness and it doesn't blink. This is the first time in Scripture where holiness isn't just something we see in God's actions, it's something He names as central to His character. Over and over, He says, "Be holy, because I am holy."

This is not the holiness of distance, cold, or domineering perfection. It's the holiness of a God who wants to live with His people, but won't compromise His nature to do it. It's the holiness that consumes impurity but makes a way for mercy. It's fire and forgiveness side by side.

Leviticus reveals that God is not casual about sin, not because He's harsh, but because He's just. Sin brings death. God is life. It fractures creation. It breaks communion. And God, in His holiness, confronts humanity's sin head-on. But He doesn't stop there. He offers a way back. That's what the sacrifices were all about. It wasn't appeasement, but atonement. It may not make for a great read, but God was teaching His people how seriously He takes sin and how far He's willing to go to restore His relationship with us.

We also see God as the One who provides access. He gives Israel priests, rituals, and rhythms of worship. He builds a path so that the unclean can be made clean, the guilty can be forgiven, and the outsider can be brought near. This isn't just about ceremony. It's about identity. God isn't calling Israel to be different for the sake of being different. He's calling them to be holy because He is. He's shaping them to reflect His character in the world, to live differently so that the world will see who He is.

The God of Leviticus is not detached or distant. He is deeply present but His presence is never ordinary. It is sacred, it is weighty, and it is good.

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT FROM HUMANS IN LEVITICUS?

If Genesis teaches us to trust, and Exodus teaches us to follow, then Leviticus teaches us how to live with a holy God. And that's not just a theological question, it's a deeply personal one. What kind of life does God want from the people He has rescued?

The answer isn't about performance. It's about proximity. God expects His people to live in a way that honors His presence. He isn't asking for empty rituals or perfect behavior. He's asking for hearts that recognize His holiness and respond with obedience.

Leviticus shows us that God cares about the details, not because He's nitpicky, but because He's near. When the Holy One lives in your camp, nothing is secular. Every aspect of life: what you eat, how you worship, how you treat your neighbor, is sacred. Holiness wasn't just for the priests. It was a way of life for the whole community.

God also expects us to take sin seriously. Not because He wants us to live in shame, but because sin destroys what He loves. The sacrifices in Leviticus weren't busywork, they were constant reminders that sin costs something. And yet, every offering also pointed to something deeper: a God who is willing to make a way back from our sinful natures.

But holiness isn't just about avoiding the wrong things. It's about pursuing the right ones. It's about caring for the poor, showing mercy to the outsider, honoring God in both public and private life. It's about living different because we belong to a different kind of kingdom.

God's expectations of humans in Leviticus is the same today: live like you belong to Him. Not the law, that was settled. But by letting His holiness shape your life, not out of fear, but out of love.

TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT LEVITICUS

Let's be honest: if any book of the Bible raises questions, it's Leviticus. It can be gross, if I'm honest. It can feel like a confusing maze of rituals and rules. But when we stop and dig into the purpose behind the commands, something starts to shift. The questions don't go away but the meaning becomes clearer.

One of the biggest questions is this: *Why all the sacrifices? Why all the killing of innocent animals and the blood?* To modern readers, it can feel primitive—even brutal. But in the ancient world, the idea of sacrifice wasn't new. What made Israel's sacrificial system different was what it said about God. He didn't demand sacrifices to be fed or appeased like pagan gods. He gave sacrifices as a way for His people to be cleansed, to draw near, to start again.

Leviticus teaches that sin is serious. It causes separation between us and God, us and those we love, us and community. And something has to bridge that gap. Blood, in this context, represents life. And life is what's required to repair what sin breaks. Every sacrifice was a visual reminder that reconciliation with a holy God costs something. But it also foreshadowed the day when one final sacrifice would be made, once and for all.

Another question that often comes up is this: *Do these laws still apply to us today?* The short answer is no—and yes. We are not bound by the ceremonial or civil laws given to Israel as a nation. Jesus fulfilled those requirements (see Matthew 5:17), and through His death and resurrection, we no longer approach God through animal sacrifices or priestly rituals. But the heart of the law, the call to holiness, justice, mercy, and love, that still stands. Those aren't just ancient customs. They're reflections of God's character, and we're still called to live in a way that reflects who He is. As Christians, we don't do that through the laws of the Torah (the first

five books of the Bible), we do that through living a holy life surrendered to Christ. The laws are still there to remind us that God's not playing games.

Here's the truth: Leviticus is strange, especially from a modern point of view. But it's strange because holiness is strange. We're used to blending in, but God calls His people to stand out. That's always going to feel uncomfortable because it's supposed to.

NO WAY THE BIBLE SAID THAT - LEVITICUS EDITION

Let's talk about Nadab and Abihu—and the original *Burning Man*. No, seriously. These two were the sons of Aaron, freshly appointed priests, decked out in their priestly garments, standing in the desert Tabernacle, serving the Lord. And for reasons we're not totally clear on, they decided to freelance the worship service.

Leviticus 10:1 says they brought “unauthorized fire” before the Lord, which He had not commanded them to bring. Sounds vague enough, right? But God wasn't vague in His response. Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and, well, they died. Instantly. On the spot. In the Tabernacle. One minute they're lighting incense, the next minute they are the incense.

And if that wasn't uncomfortable enough, Moses turns to Aaron and basically says, “This is what happens when people treat God casually.” Aaron, to his credit (and maybe his horror), says nothing. Then, as if things couldn't get more awkward, they're told not to mourn too publicly or disrupt the rest of the ceremony. You cannot make this up.

Was the fire unauthorized? Yes. Were the consequences extreme? Also yes. Did it permanently raise the stakes for worship in Leviticus? Absolutely.

So the next time someone calls Leviticus boring, feel free to remind them, it literally opens with a divine fireball and a private funeral, with the rest of the priests quietly giving Aaron the side-eye.

HOW LEVITICUS SHAPES OUR LIVES TODAY

We may not be offering grain on altars or inspecting mildew with a priest, but Leviticus still speaks to us today if we're willing to listen.

It reminds us that holiness isn't optional. It's not just for the ultra-religious or the "professional Christians." Holiness is God's expectation for all of His people, not as a burden, but as a response. He's the one who rescued us. He's the one who called us out. And now, He's the one inviting us to live differently because we belong to Him.

Leviticus also teaches us that worship isn't just something we do on a stage or in a sanctuary. Worship is how we live, how we treat others, how we manage our time, how we handle what's broken in us and around us. If God cares about skin conditions and contaminated walls, then He absolutely cares about the condition of our hearts.

It also reminds us that access to God is a gift, not a right. We don't get to define the terms of our relationship with God—He does. And those terms always begin with reverence, not convenience. We love to talk about God's closeness (and rightly so), but Leviticus won't let us forget His holiness. Both are true. It's not about us, it's about Him. He is near and He is not to be treated lightly.

And maybe most surprising of all, Leviticus shows us that God wants to be involved in every part of our lives. Nothing is too small, too messy, or too human. The God of the

Tabernacle still wants to dwell with His people. And not just in our churches, but in our homes, our habits, our conversations, and even our discomfort.

Holiness isn't about having it all together. It's about surrendering every part of who we are to the God who already gave everything to be near us.

KEY THEMES IN LEVITICUS

Let's not sugarcoat it, Leviticus reads like more than just a manual. It's bloody, graphic, and often uncomfortable. It talks about sacrifices in vivid detail. It lays out laws for what to do after childbirth, during menstruation, and in response to bodily discharges. It covers mold, mildew, and what to do if someone's beard starts looking suspiciously infected. And it does it all without flinching.

But underneath the strict rules and uncomfortable specifics is something sacred: a God who refuses to stay distant from His people, and a people learning what it means to live with a holy God in their midst.

One of the most repeated themes is **holiness**. God says it again and again: be holy, because He is holy. This isn't about religious performance, it's about alignment. Holiness means being set apart, not just in ritual but in identity. It's about seeing every part of life, our worship, our relationships, our routines, as belonging to God.

Another major theme is **sacrifice**. The blood and the fire weren't theatrics. They were a way of showing that sin is real, it costs something, and that something, or someone as we see later in the New Testament, has to stand in the gap. Every burnt offering, every guilt sacrifice was a shadow of a deeper reality: God was making a way for the guilty to come close without being destroyed.

Leviticus also centers on **access**. God was no longer just speaking from a mountaintop—He was living right there in the middle of their camp. But proximity came with responsibility. Access to God’s presence required cleansing, preparation, reverence. Not because God is distant, but because He is holy. The rituals weren’t about exclusion, they were about protecting what is sacred.

And finally, woven through all the blood and boundaries is the theme of **restoration**. God doesn’t just want rules, He wants a relationship with His people. From the Day of Atonement to the Year of Jubilee, Leviticus reminds us that holiness isn’t about keeping people away. It’s about creating a space where broken people can be made whole again.

Leviticus may be hard to read, but it’s even harder to ignore. It shows us that God is not just approachable, He’s transformational. But only on His terms. And those terms are holy.

WHAT LEVITICUS TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

You wouldn’t expect one of the bloodiest books of the Bible to point so clearly to Jesus but Leviticus does. Almost every page drips with foreshadowing. Every offering, every ritual, every priestly duty was a placeholder for something greater, someone greater, who was coming to fulfill it all.

The sacrificial system sits at the heart of Leviticus, and at the heart of the sacrificial system is the idea of substitution. The animal takes the place of the sinner. Its blood is shed so the guilty can go free. It’s intense. It’s graphic. And it’s meant to be. Because when Jesus steps onto the scene centuries later, He isn’t just a teacher or a healer—He’s the Lamb. The final sacrifice. The one who fulfills what every burnt offering and sin offering was pointing toward.

The Day of Atonement, one of the most sacred moments in Israel's calendar, gives us one of the clearest images of Christ. One goat was sacrificed for the sins of the people. The other, the scapegoat, had the sins of the nation symbolically placed on its head and was then sent into the wilderness, carrying their guilt away. Jesus did both. He was the sacrifice who paid the price, and the one who removed our guilt completely.

Leviticus also prepares us for the role of Christ as our High Priest. The priests in this book stood between the people and God. They offered sacrifices, carried blood, burned incense, and made intercession. But they were flawed. They had to offer sacrifices for themselves before they could help anyone else. Jesus, by contrast, is the sinless High Priest who doesn't just offer a sacrifice, He offers Himself. And He does it once, for all.

Even the laws about purity and cleanliness whisper His name. Jesus didn't avoid the unclean. He touched them and made them whole. He fulfilled the law, not by avoiding brokenness, but by restoring it. Leviticus sets the stage for a Messiah who wouldn't be defiled by the world but who would make the world clean by His presence.

Leviticus doesn't just point to Jesus, it builds the theological scaffolding that makes the cross make sense. Without it, we wouldn't understand the weight of sacrifice, the cost of sin, or the power of a God who makes a way back to perfect fellowship with Him.

THE MESSAGE OF LEVITICUS

Leviticus is the book we didn't know we needed. It's not flashy. It's not easy. In fact, it's a really hard read. But it's holy and it's honest. This is the book that dares to ask, "What does it take for a holy God to dwell with unholy people?" And then, step by step, sacrifice by sacrifice, it gives the answer: it takes cleansing. It takes reverence. It takes substitution. It takes a God who

is willing to come near without lowering His standard and a people willing to be set apart, not just in name, but in every part of life.

The message of Leviticus isn't "try harder" or "follow the rules." It's this: God wants to be with you, but His presence must change everything about you. Holiness isn't a burden—it's a gift. It's the beautiful, sometimes painful process of being reshaped into the image of God, the way we were intended to be.

Leviticus doesn't give us a list of boxes to check. It gives us a vision of life lived in the presence of God. A life where nothing is too small to matter to the Creator of the Universe. A life where worship isn't confined to a temple, but seeps into our conversations, our decisions, our relationships, our everything.

And in the end, it's not really about sacrifice. It's about access. It's about a God who didn't stay far off but came down, settled in, and said, "I will be your God, and you will be My people." Leviticus shows us what it costs to be close to God and it prepares us to meet our Savior, who paid the price in full.

Numbers: The God Who Leads

The Book of Numbers should be called “the Book of Delays.” What should have been a fairly direct journey from Egypt to the Promised Land becomes a forty-year walk in circles. It’s the biblical version of “Are we there yet?” except the answer is always no. Not because God wasn’t ready, but because the people weren’t. And, boy, were they *not* ready.

Penned by Moses during Israel’s wilderness years, Numbers opens with hope and structure. God organizes the tribes, sets up the camp, gives marching orders, and even outlines how the people should move when the cloud of His presence lifts and leads them. Everything is in place. God is ready to go. The land is waiting.

And then... everything unravels.

The people complain. They doubt. They rebel. Over and over again, they reject the very God who led them out of Egypt. It was frustrating for me to read until I realized how often I do the same thing. You too, I’d bet. We want God’s promises, but not always His processes. We trust Him to save us, but not always to lead us.

Yet even in their rebellion, God doesn’t abandon them. He disciplines, yes. But He keeps showing up. The cloud still moves. The manna still falls. The water still flows. And the promise—delayed, but not revoked, still stands.

Numbers isn’t just about wandering. It’s about what happens in the wilderness. It’s about how God forms His people when the path is unclear and the delays feel endless. It’s about learning to follow, even when we don’t like where we’re headed.

Because the truth is, God doesn’t just lead us out of something, He leads us through.

WHO IS GOD IN NUMBERS?

Numbers introduces us to a God who goes beyond rescuing his people. He doesn't drop His people at the edge of salvation and say, "Good luck." He goes with them. He stays in the middle of the camp. He gives instructions for every step. He doesn't just deliver His people from slavery, He walks with them into freedom.

But here's the hard truth: freedom doesn't feel like freedom when it's slow, unfamiliar, or uncomfortable. And that's when the people start to question God's leadership. They grumble about the food. They long for the predictability of Egypt. They accuse Moses. They accuse God. And each time, God responds with clarity. Sometimes mercy. Sometimes judgment. But always with purpose.

In Numbers, we see that God is not a passive observer. He's actively shaping His people, testing their hearts, and teaching them how to follow. He leads them by a cloud during the day and fire at night. When He moves, they move. When He stays, they stay. It seemingly wasn't always efficient, but it was always intentional.

We also see a God who takes disobedience seriously. Not because He's petty, but because trust matters. When the people refuse to enter the Promised Land out of fear, God doesn't force them. He lets them wander. Not as punishment alone, but as formation. He waits until a new generation rises, one that knows how to trust, not just follow.

God in Numbers is both present and patient. He is holy, yes, but also astonishingly near. He sets the pace, carries the burden, and stays faithful even when His people don't. He is not in a hurry. He is in the business of preparing hearts, not just reaching destinations.

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT FROM HUMANS IN NUMBERS?

By the time we reach Numbers, God has already rescued His people and revealed His law. He's provided water from rocks, bread from heaven, and a fiery pillar to guide them. He's shown up in visible, undeniable ways. So what does He expect in return?

Trust. And obedience rooted in that trust.

But that's where Israel keeps falling apart. They don't stop believing that God exists—they just stop believing that He's good, or that His plan is better than theirs. Over and over, they doubt His intentions, grumble about His provisions, and test His patience. And every time they do, the consequences are real. Not because God is cruel, but because trust is the foundation of relationship. Without it, everything else crumbles.

God expects His people to take Him at His word, even when it doesn't make sense. When He says to go into the land and He will take care of the big, scary people who live there, He expects them to go. When He says He'll provide, He expects them to stop looking back at Egypt like it was some kind of all-inclusive resort. He's not asking for blind faith. He's asking for responsive hearts.

But here's what's beautiful: even in their failure, God doesn't walk away. He keeps leading them. He keeps providing for them. And He keeps teaching them what it means to be *His* people. Sometimes that looks like discipline. Sometimes it looks like unexpected grace. Either way, He's shaping a people who know how to follow, not just when the road is clear, but when it's not.

What God expects from humans in Numbers is what He expects from us today: trust when the path winds, obedience when it's costly, and faith that doesn't demand full understanding before taking the next step.

TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT NUMBERS

Numbers raises some big questions about ancient Israel and about how we see God today. It's a book filled with dramatic turns, divine judgments, and a lot of waiting.

Woven through it all is a question most of us have asked in our own wilderness seasons: *If God is leading, why does he lead them in circles until an entire generation dies?* Forty years in the wandering in the wilderness wasn't just a timeout. It was a refining fire. God wasn't pacing around, waiting for the clock to run out. He was shaping a generation that had never known anything but slavery and fear into a people who could walk confidently in freedom and faith.

The question isn't just why the older generation died in the wilderness, it's what the next generation was learning as they buried them. They were being raised in tents, taught to follow the cloud, to eat what God provided, to live in rhythm with His voice. They were watching faith be built day by day. The wilderness wasn't a detour or a NASCAR track. It was discipleship.

Another hard question is this: *Why so much harsh judgment?* The earth swallows people up. Plagues break out. A man gathers firewood on the Sabbath and ends up stoned to death. These stories can feel distant, even disturbing, until we understand what's really at stake. God wasn't just forming a nation. He was revealing His character to His people. Holiness, trust, obedience—these weren't suggestions. They were the conditions of a relationship with the God who had chosen them.

And maybe the hardest question of all: *Why didn't Moses get to enter the Promised Land?* After everything he endured, all it took was one moment of frustration, striking the rock instead of speaking to it the way God told him to do, and God says he can't go into the Promised Land. It feels unfair. But Moses was Israel's leader, and with that calling came accountability.

His disobedience misrepresented God's holiness before the people and even the greatest leader wasn't exempt from accountability before God. It also lays out the higher expectations God has for those who claim any kind of leadership position in His Kingdom. If you are going to lead, you'd better be willing to live up to that calling because God doesn't play when it comes to His people.

The wilderness is never just about the scenery. It's about the soul. Numbers gives us some hard questions, without a doubt. Because it's in the questions that we start to understand just how much God is willing to work with us, wait for us, and lead us—even when we resist Him. It also reminds us that there are consequences for our actions. What we do matters. What we say matters. How we treat the holiness of God matters.

NO WAY THE BIBLE SAID THAT - NUMBERS EDITION

There's a man named Balaam, and he is, how do I put this, a "prophet for profit." Not exactly a faithful servant of God, more like a spiritual mercenary with decent name recognition, some regional clout, and a speaking fee.

When a pagan king named Balak wants to curse Israel, he calls Balaam and flashes some gold. Balaam pretends to check in with God but clearly likes the paycheck. God says don't go, Balaam stalls for a second, then says, Okay but what if I go anyway?

So Balaam saddles up his donkey and hits the road in a hurry because hey, there's money to be made and curses to sell.

Now, this is where things get weird. Balaam is riding along, probably rehearsing his best dramatic "curse voice," when God sends an angel with a flaming sword to block the path. Balaam, the great man of spiritual insight, does not see the angel. But the donkey does.

And the donkey's like, "Nope."

First she swerves into a field. Balaam beats her.

Then she crushes his foot against a wall. Balaam beats her again.

Finally, she just lies down in the middle of the road like she's had it. Balaam, whose prophet-o-meter is clearly broken, beats her a third time.

And then, because God has a wild sense of humor, the donkey opens her mouth and says, "What did I ever do to you?" (Numbers 22:28).

Let's pause for a second. This is a full-blown conversation between a prophet and a donkey, and Balaam just answers her. No pause. No scream. No "Wait, why is my donkey speaking fluent Hebrew?" He just snaps back, "You made me look stupid! If I had a sword, I'd kill you!"

And the donkey, probably rolling her eyes at this point, basically says, "Have I ever acted like this before? Maybe use that prophet brain of yours and take a hint."

Right then, God opens Balaam's eyes, and he finally sees the angel with the sword, standing there like, "Yeah, you were almost donkey meat, buddy."

So yes. The Bible contains a story where a greedy prophet gets outsmarted by his own donkey, loses a verbal argument to her, and is only saved because she has more spiritual awareness than he does.

Lesson? If God can speak through a donkey, He can absolutely speak through you. But maybe don't make Him use an ass to prove it.

HOW NUMBERS SHAPES OUR LIVES TODAY

All of the Old Testament up to this point is about God doing amazing things to show His people who He is. Numbers slows that down a bit. It shows us what it's like to walk with God when the journey gets long, frustrating, and nothing goes as planned.

Numbers reminds us that faith isn't tested in the highlight reel, it's tested in the waiting. In the wilderness. In the disappointments, the delays, and the detours we didn't choose. The Israelites knew God was real. They'd seen the Red Sea part, watched manna fall from the sky, and followed His presence by cloud and fire. But when things got slow, when the miracles turned into routine, when the road stretched out longer than expected—they forgot.

We do that too. Numbers teaches us that obedience doesn't always feel rewarding at first. Sometimes it feels like circling the same mountain again and again, wondering if you're making any progress. Sometimes God says "go," and sometimes He says "wait," but both are forms of leading. The cloud doesn't always move fast. But it always moves with purpose.

This book also reminds us that our words matter. Complaining, gossip, slander, defiance, they all show up in Numbers, and none of them end well. Not because God's watching with a lightning bolt in hand, but because our words shape our mindset. They expose our hearts. And in the wilderness, every attitude gets amplified.

But most of all, Numbers teaches us that God is still leading, even when we're still learning. He doesn't abandon us in the desert. He doesn't cancel the promise. He walks with us, disciplines us, reshapes us, and prepares us, even if it takes longer than we hoped. The wilderness may feel like a waste of time, but in God's hands, it becomes a place of formation.

So if life feels like wandering, take heart. You're not off course. You're just in the part of the story where God's building something in you that you'll need for the next place. So that when He moves, you'll be ready to follow.

KEY THEMES IN NUMBERS

Numbers may read like a dusty travel journal complete with census data, camp arrangements, and a lot of repetition. But buried in all that structure are themes that shape the heart of what it means to follow God.

One major theme is **leadership** and **rebellion**. We see it in Moses, burdened and stretched. We see it in Aaron and Miriam, who question his authority. We see it in Korah, who leads a mutiny and ends up swallowed by the earth. Numbers reminds us that leadership under God isn't about power, it's about humility, accountability, and obedience. And rebellion, even when it's dressed up as "we just have questions," still has consequences.

Another theme is **trust versus fear**. The twelve spies all saw the same land. Ten saw giants; two saw God's promise. Same facts, different faith. The people's fear outweighed their trust and it cost them forty years in the wilderness. Numbers doesn't simply tell us that fear is a natural response. It tells us that fear unchecked will rob us of the very thing God wants to give us.

Then there's the theme of God's **presence** and **guidance**. The cloud by day and fire by night are more than divine GPS, they're a picture of God's patience. He doesn't abandon the people, even when they stall, stumble, or grumble. He moves at a pace that forces them to look up, slow down, and wait for Him.

We also see the theme of **formation in the wilderness**. God wasn't just moving a crowd through the desert, He was shaping a people who had never known freedom into a nation that could carry His presence into the Promised Land. The wilderness wasn't wasted time. It was a classroom. A crucible. A place where God stripped away old identities and built something new. Every delay, every detour, every dust-covered step was forming them into a people who could walk into the promise with faith, not fear. Numbers isn't just about travel. It's about transformation. And sometimes, the longest roads build the strongest faith.

WHAT NUMBERS TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

At first glance, Numbers feels about as far from the Gospels as you can get. But look closer, and the wilderness starts to whisper His name. Jesus appears here, not in robes and sandals, but in shadows and symbols.

He is the greater intercessor. When the people rebel and judgment falls, Moses stands in the gap, pleading with God for mercy. And God listens. But Moses was only a dusty reflection in an old mirror, a hint of the Savior to come. Jesus doesn't beg for mercy, He becomes the literal and physical means of it. He doesn't carry incense into a tent, He sheds His own blood to pay the price for our sins, once and for all.

He is the greater source of life. When the people are dying of thirst in the wilderness, Moses strikes the rock and water pours out. Paul later tells us, "That rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). Even in their disobedience, God gave grace through a symbol of His Son. Jesus is the Rock who was struck for our salvation, not to quench physical thirst, but to satisfy the deepest thirst of the soul.

And He doesn't just provide water, He is the water. In John 4:14, Jesus says, "Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." In the wilderness, God gave water from a rock for a time. Christ is the living water that never runs dry.

And then there's the bronze serpent, one of the most mysterious and vivid scenes in the entire Old Testament. After another wave of rebellion, God sends venomous snakes. But when the people cry out, God provides a strange solution: He tells Moses to make a bronze serpent, put it on a pole, lift it up, and anyone who looks will live. It made no logical sense until Jesus quoted it.

In John 3:14–15, He says, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him." That pole in the desert was always pointing to a cross on a hill. Salvation, not through effort, but through faith. Healing, not through ritual, but through belief in the One who was lifted up for us all.

Numbers reminds us that we don't just need rescue, we need redemption. Not just direction—but transformation. Jesus is the greater Moses, the true Rock, and the lifted Healer. He is everything the wilderness was preparing us to see.

THE MESSAGE OF NUMBERS

Numbers isn't just a travel log or a record of wanderings. It's a mirror. One that shows us how easy it is to forget God's faithfulness when the journey feels long and the destination looks distant. But it's also a testimony. A record of a God who keeps leading, even when His people keep circling.

This book is a story of rebellion and mercy, of failure and faithfulness, of people who couldn't see past the dust in front of them, and a God who never took His eyes off His promises to them. It shows us what happens when fear gets louder than faith, and what grace looks like when it shows up anyway.

God doesn't just let His people wander without aim. He walks them through the wilderness, disciplines them when necessary, and doesn't give up when they fall apart. He shapes them into something new, not in spite of the delays, but through them. The wilderness was part of the making of a nation, and a people, that still stand today.

And that's the message of Numbers: God leads. Even when we grumble. Even when we resist. Even when we're stuck in the same place for what feels like too long. His presence doesn't pack up and leave when we get it wrong. He stays. He corrects. He provides. He moves when it's time to move. And He waits when it's time to grow.

Numbers is a book about people who couldn't stay faithful and a God who never stopped leading them.

Deuteronomy: The God Who Remembers

By the time we reach Deuteronomy, an entire generation has come and gone. The wilderness is behind them, the Promised Land lies ahead. Moses is standing with their children, preparing them to take the step their parents were too afraid to take. And as he nears the end of his life, he delivers this final call to remember and obey. It is considered the last of the books written by Moses and make up the Torah for the Jewish people today.

So, here the Jews are, about to enter the Promised Land, but before they move forward, Moses makes them pause. The entire book of Deuteronomy is one long reminder. One long sermon. One last call from a leader who knows he won't be crossing the river with them.

And it starts with this message: Don't forget. Don't forget what God has done. Don't forget where you came from. Don't forget how you got here. It wasn't by strength or strategy, but by grace.

Deuteronomy is a book of memory but not just human memory. It reveals a God who remembers His promises, His people, and His covenant. A God who recalls every word He spoke to Abraham, every step He led through the wilderness, and every moment He waited for hearts to soften and trust to grow.

It's also a book that reminds us what memory is for. Not nostalgia. Not guilt. But obedience. Moses isn't just telling them to look back, he's showing them how remembering rightly shapes the way we move forward.

Because the past wasn't perfect. It was full of rebellion and regret. But God's faithfulness never wavered. And as Moses reminds the people of everything they've been through, he's really

reminding them of who God has always been—and still is. Deuteronomy is a call to remember. Not because God forgot but because we so easily do.

WHO IS GOD IN DEUTERONOMY?

In Deuteronomy, God is not just throwing out commands. He is reminding the people of who He is and who they are to Him. This isn't a new God with a new agenda. This is the same God who called Abraham, walked with Moses, thundered at Sinai, and carried Israel through the wilderness. But now, as the people stand at the edge of the Promised Land, God doesn't just restate the law, He reaffirms the relationship. And that begins with memory.

Over and over, Moses reminds the people: “The Lord your God...” Not a distant deity. Not a tribal mascot. Your *God*. The One who brought you out. The One who stayed. The One who made a covenant and never once forgot it. Even when you did.

God in Deuteronomy is deeply personal. He remembers His promises, yes, but He also remembers His people. Their weakness. Their rebellion. Their need. And He doesn't turn away. Instead, He calls them to remember, too. Not so they'll feel ashamed but so they'll walk into the future with humility, gratitude, and dependence on Him.

This is a God who desires the heart, not just the ritual. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5) isn't just a rule, it's a revelation. It's God saying, I want more than your obedience. I want your affection. I want your love. I want your whole life.

God in Deuteronomy is also a God of blessing and consequence. Not because He's moody, but because covenant love is a two-way street. He says this through Moses: “This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death,

blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). This isn’t a threat. It’s a plea.

He’s not trying to trap them in failure. He’s offering them fullness. He’s not the God who waits for them to mess up. He’s the God who invites them back, again and again, with mercy in His hands and memory in His heart.

Deuteronomy shows us a God who remembers everything and still loves us anyway.

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT FROM HUMANS IN DEUTERONOMY?

God’s expectations in Deuteronomy aren’t new but they are personal. And they are costly. This Book isn’t just about obeying laws carved in stone. It’s about surrendering hearts carved by experience. Hearts prone to forget, wander, and justify almost anything when the pressure’s on. God doesn’t want part-time reverence. He wants loyalty that holds when the desert dries you out and when the blessings start to make you comfortable.

And that’s the test. Not just whether Israel would listen but whether they would remember. Would they keep choosing God when the manna stopped falling and the land flowed with milk and honey instead? Would they cling to His words when no one was chasing them anymore? Would they trust Him when they were no longer desperate? Would they still give Him the credit when they toiled the land with their own hands? Because it’s one thing to cry out in the wilderness. It’s another to stay faithful in the Promised Land.

God expects remembrance, yes, but not the sentimental kind. He calls His people to live every day like they know who rescued them. To teach their children why they walk this way. To guard their hearts when the world offers easier gods and faster paths.

And He doesn't sugarcoat the stakes. He says, "I set before you life and death." Not metaphorical choices. Real ones. And then He pleads, not because He needs anything, but because He knows us.

God expects more than worship songs and shallow promises. He expects persistence. Faithfulness that doesn't flinch. Trust that doesn't demand to see the whole plan before saying yes. A heart that wakes up every morning and says, "I still choose You." Because in the end, obedience isn't about rule-following. It's about staying close to our God who's been faithful through it all.

TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT DEUTERONOMY

By the time we reach Deuteronomy, we've seen miracles, judgment, deliverance, and disaster. And now, as Moses recounts everything to a new generation, the book raises a set of questions that hit a little closer to home. Questions that have as much to do with our hearts as with our theology.

One of the biggest is this: *If God already knows His people will fail, why call them to such high standards in the first place?* Throughout Deuteronomy, God makes it clear that obedience leads to blessing and disobedience leads to consequences. He spells it out in detail down to the land, the weather, the legacy. But He also makes it painfully clear that Israel won't get it right. Moses says outright, "You are not going to remain faithful." God even tells Moses before he dies that the people will turn away (Deuteronomy 31:16).

So why ask for faithfulness from people who are guaranteed to fail? Because love still calls for covenant. And covenant always invites choice.

God doesn't lower the standard just because the people are weak. He offers the standard as a mirror. One that reveals their need, exposes their patterns, and calls them to return. He gives them the law, not as a trap, but as a pathway, a way of living that leads to life, if they will walk it. And when they don't, He doesn't cancel the relationship. He keeps calling them back. Again and again.

Another question that arises in Deuteronomy is this: *If God is loving, why so many curses? Why the vivid descriptions of judgment?* Because covenant love isn't sentimental. It's serious. God isn't playing games. He's forming a nation to reflect His holiness. These aren't random threats, they're real-world consequences for breaking trust with the very God who rescued them. The blessings and curses laid out in Deuteronomy don't reveal a cruel God. They do reveal a committed One. A God who takes His relationship with His people seriously enough to say, "Your choices matter. Your actions carry weight. And I won't pretend otherwise."

And for us, maybe the most piercing question is this: *What do we do when we've already failed the way Israel did?* The answer in Deuteronomy isn't "Try harder." It's "Choose Me. Love Me. Return to Me." God says, "Even if you've been scattered... even if you're in exile... even if you've broken every command—I will bring you back if you return to Me."

Deuteronomy 30 doesn't end with shame. It ends with hope. A promise that restoration is always on the table for those who will remember, repent, and come home.

NO WAY THE BIBLE SAID THAT - DEUTERONOMY EDITION

So here's one you probably didn't hear in Sunday school: Moses dies and then God buries him in a secret grave so Satan couldn't steal the body. That's right. After 40 years of leading a rebellious, often whiny, sandal-wearing nation through the wilderness... after pleading

with God, striking a rock in frustration, and delivering one of the most impassioned sermons in biblical history... Moses climbs a mountain, gets a private view of the Promised Land, and dies there. Alone. And then, in a plot twist no one saw coming, God Himself buries him.

Deuteronomy 34:5–6 says: “And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. He buried him in Moab... but to this day no one knows where his grave is.”

Let that sink in.

God doesn't let anyone bury Moses. Not Joshua. Not Aaron. Not the priests. Not his sons. Not even some random Levite with a shovel. God buries Moses with His own hands and then keeps the burial site a secret from the people who followed him out of Egypt. Why? The Bible doesn't say. Maybe to keep Israel from turning the grave into a shrine. Maybe to protect Moses from being idolized, taking away from the Word of God he shared. Maybe because, after everything they put him through, Moses deserved a quiet moment that didn't involve someone asking for quail or complaining about sandals.

But there's more: centuries later, in the book of Jude (verse 9), we're told that the archangel Michael and the devil actually fought over Moses' body. That's right: a celestial tug-of-war over a corpse. It's only one verse, and it leaves us with more questions than answers, but still, this quiet little mountain burial had cosmic consequences.

So yes, God personally buried Moses. The devil tried to get the body. A massive MMA fight occurred between Satan and the archangel Michael. Michael won. And nobody knows where all of this happened.

And you thought the talking donkey was weird.

HOW DEUTERONOMY SHAPES OUR LIVES TODAY

Deuteronomy isn't just Moses' final sermon, which was epic, but it's also a soul-check for every generation that follows. It speaks to anyone who's been rescued but still wrestles with forgetfulness. Anyone who's heard the promises but struggles to stay faithful in the waiting.

Because the real challenge of faith isn't the crisis, it's the comfort. It's what happens when the drama dies down, the Red Sea moments are in the rearview mirror, and you're just... living. Paying bills. Folding laundry. Navigating ordinary Tuesdays. That's where we start to drift. And that's what Deuteronomy is fighting against. Drift.

This book reminds me that obedience isn't only about what I avoid, but also what I remember. It's about waking up every day with the awareness that I don't belong to myself. That I've been rescued, led, and loved by a God who hasn't forgotten a single step of my story, even when I have.

It reminds me that God's faithfulness is not up for debate—but mine is. And every choice I make, every word I speak, every priority I set is forming a response to the question: Do I still choose Him?

Deuteronomy won't let me reduce faith to a moment. It insists that faith is a lifestyle formed in patterns, shaped by memory, rooted in love. It reminds me that teaching the next generation matters, not just with words, but by example. Which is why I do what I do each day. That blessing isn't just about what I receive, but about how I live. And that when I mess it up, and I do, God still calls me back.

This Book doesn't try to sugarcoat what happens when we walk away from God. But it also shows us that He doesn't close the door when we do. This Book leaves room for return. It

holds space for restoration. And in a world where forgetting God is easy, Deuteronomy is the sacred nudge that says, “Remember.”

KEY THEMES IN DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy doesn't give us a list of new rules, it calls us to remember the story. A retelling. A reminder. A reckoning. And through it all, a few core themes rise to the surface: loud, clear, and still relevant.

One of the most powerful themes in this book is **covenant renewal**. Again, this Book isn't a new agreement, it's a reminder that the original still stands. God hasn't changed His mind. But now, the children of those who doubted are being called to claim the promise for themselves. They don't get to ride on the faith of their parents. It's their turn to say yes. Their turn to trust. Their turn to follow.

Another major theme is the power of **memory**. Forgetting, in Deuteronomy, isn't just careless, it's dangerous. Forgetting leads to drifting. And drifting leads to disaster. So Moses tells them, again and again, to remember: remember the slavery, remember the rescue, remember the wilderness. Remember how God provided, corrected, forgave, and led. When you're tempted to think you got here on your own, remember who actually carried you.

Obedience is also a central theme but not in a mechanical, rule-following way. God isn't after technical compliance. He's after loyalty. He wants love that starts in the heart and overflows into every corner of life. When He says to love Him with all your heart, soul, and strength, He's not just giving a command, He's giving a vision for what it looks like to live as someone who truly belongs to Him. It's not only about what happens in worship services, it's

about how you live in the land, raise your kids, and order your days. Obedience, in Deuteronomy, is how love gets legs.

One of the harshest themes of the Book is the unmistakably clear **consequences of disobedience**. This isn't a choose-your-own-adventure story. The blessings and curses aren't abstract, they're spelled out in detail. Not because God is eager to punish, but because covenant love is serious. God doesn't play games with holiness. If the people walk away, there will be loss. But that loss is never the end of the story.

Woven through all the commands, all the warnings, all the prophetic foresight, there's still a thread of the last theme of Deuteronomy—**hope**. Even when, not if, but when they fail, God will still be there. And if they return, He will restore. That's who He is. Even in a book filled with consequences, the heart of Deuteronomy is still the heart of God: faithful, patient, and always willing to bring His people home.

WHAT DEUTERONOMY TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Of course, you won't find the name of Jesus in Deuteronomy, but He still reigns over all the pages. This book filled with laws, covenant terms, blessings, and curses points to a Redeemer who would fulfill the law not just with words, but with His life.

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy more than almost any other Old Testament book. When He's tempted in the wilderness by Satan, every response He gives comes from this book. He says, "Man shall not live on bread alone..." (Deuteronomy 8:3), "Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only" (Deuteronomy 6:13), and "Do not put the Lord your God to the test" (Deuteronomy 6:16). He doesn't use philosophy. He doesn't argue. He holds fast to the Word and Deuteronomy is the sword in His hand.

But it's more than His quotations. Deuteronomy reveals the shape of the gospel long before the cross. Moses says there will come a prophet like him, someone who would speak God's words with authority. Jesus is that prophet, but He's also far more. Moses delivered the law. Jesus fulfilled it.

Deuteronomy lays out blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. Jesus, the only one who ever obeyed perfectly, took the curse upon Himself so that we could receive the blessing. Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." That's Deuteronomy—flipped on its head and fulfilled in full.

And when God tells His people to love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength, it isn't just a command, it's a preview of what's to come. Because only one person would ever actually do that perfectly. And that person would lay down His life for a people who didn't.

Jesus is the true covenant-keeper. The faithful Son. The one who remembered every word, fulfilled every command, and chose obedience not out of duty, but out of love. So when we read Deuteronomy, we're not just looking at laws and history. We're looking at shadows taking shape. At echoes growing louder. At a people longing for what only Jesus would become the Word made flesh, the law fulfilled, the mercy we still need today.

THE MESSAGE OF DEUTERONOMY

Deuteronomy is the final stop before the promise becomes reality. It's Moses' last breath of leadership and God's final call to a generation standing on the edge of blessing. And if you listen closely, you can hear both the ache of memory and the urgency of the moment.

This book isn't about getting new information; it's about making a choice. Everything that came before; the miracles, the laws, the wandering, the rescue, all of it leads here. And God,

in His mercy, lays it all out again so the people can't miss the point. He doesn't just want their survival, He wants their hearts.

Deuteronomy is a love letter and a warning wrapped into one. It says, "God brought you out, carried you through, and now He's offering you life. But you have to choose it." And even though God knows they will fail, and they will, He still invites them in. Still calls them His. Still sets the promise before them with open hands.

At its core, Deuteronomy is about a God who refuses to be forgotten, and a people who are invited to remember, not just what He's done, but who He is.

And that's the message that echoes into our lives today: God is faithful. Your choices matter. And grace is never out of reach.

About the Author

Tonya E. Lee is a writer, professor, and Bible teacher who believes that deep truth doesn't have to be delivered with a dull tone. With degrees in psychology, marriage and family therapy, and theology, Tonya spends her days helping people wrestle with the hard questions of life and faith—without losing their sense of humor or their grip on grace.

She's a storyteller at heart, blending biblical depth with real-life messiness in a way that feels more like a coffee conversation than a classroom lecture. Whether she's teaching students, writing blogs, or hosting her podcast *The Thoughtful Christian*, Tonya is passionate about helping people meet God in the pages of Scripture—and in the middle of their everyday lives.

She is the author of *The Thoughtful Christian: Discovering Purpose and Peace in a Chaotic World* and co-author of *Understand the Revelation: A Closer Look at the Bible's Most Mysterious Book* with her father, Dr. Richard Lee. Her upcoming book, *Meet Your Maker: Discovering God in Every Book of the Bible*, invites readers to see the whole Bible not as a distant text from thousands of years ago, but as a divine introduction to an intimate God—one book at a time.

When she's not writing or teaching, you'll find her baking bread, cooking pretty fantastic meals (most of the time), spoiling her poodle Riley, or attempting to hit a golf ball without losing her religion.