# Cursed to Bless

# God Blesses his People Israel

Episode: 4

Passage: “Exodus 19:1-6, 20:1-3”

Characters: - Host - Sam - Pastor - Ben - Pete - Ruth - Kate - Boss # full\_only

Authors: - Martin Olmos - Richard Utber

Language: en-AU

### Intro

**ATMOS**: Theme music 5 sec, Host background music below host’s volume

**HOST**: Hello, this is Mary, your host. Welcome to Cursed to Bless, the show that asks a big question: Why is life so hard, when God is so good? We hear God blesses us, but how? Money, health, happiness? The answers are found in *Jesus*, in who he is and what he’s done. We see this when we read the Bible as *one big story*, with Jesus as the hero from start to finish.

**HOST**: In this episode, we learn how God creates his own new people, Israel, by rescuing them.

**HOST**: Remember to pause, read the passage, and answer the questions when you hear the sound. Our first question is: Have you ever needed someone to rescue you? Pause and discuss now.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: Thank you.

### Bible Study

**FX**: Flasback Outro

**ATMOS**: Host background

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s listen to the friends’ Bible study. They were all sitting at Pastor’s house…

**FX**: Flashback Intro.

**ATMOS**: House living room

**PASTOR**: Welcome everyone. Let’s pray first: “Dear Father please help us listen carefully to your Word now, and learn together. In Jesus name …”

**ALL**: Amen.

**PASTOR**: Let’s review our memory verse from last time: John chapter 10, verse 10b. I will read it out loud. When I pause, say the word that comes next, without looking at your Bible:

**FX**: In each ‘…’ gap below, Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence

**PASTOR**: (Leave a 2 second pause where you see ‘…’ and say the answer word with emphasis.)
“I have come that they may have … *life*, and have it to the … *full*.”

**TRANSLATOR**: Replace this with text from the local Bible translation. Pick the same significant words for the gaps, as much as possible.

**PASTOR**: Today, we’ll read from Exodus, when God rescues Israel from Egypt and makes them his own people.

**SAM**: Wow, last week it was just Abraham and Sarah. Now they’ve grown into a whole nation!

**PASTOR**: Yes, a lot has happened since Genesis chapter 12. Who can remember what has happened since?

**KATE**: Uhmm, Abraham and Sarah have a child - even though they were very old!

**RUTH**: Yes. And that child grows and has more children. Jacob is Abraham’s grandson, and he has 12 sons. They end up in Egypt.

**PETE**: Oh, Joseph is the one with the really cool coat! He was really powerful in Egypt!

**BEN**: And God used him to save many from a famine.

**RUTH**: Yes. And they have more and more children! There are so many of them, and the Pharaoh gets scared of them, and turns them into slaves.

**BEN**: Wait, that means God is already keeping one of his promises to Abraham. They’re a great people now with a name: Israel!

**PASTOR**: That’s right, from Genesis 12.

**KATE**: But they’re living as slaves in another nation’s land, and don’t feel blessed.

**RUTH**: They call out to God, and God uses Moses to do great miracles and rescue his people out of Egypt. He is bringing them to a land of their own, where they won’t be slaves.

**BEN**: And that was the other promise to Abraham - Land!

**PASTOR**: That’s right, well done. I love how you’re starting to see the big story in the Bible. We’re now ready to read our passage: Exodus chapter 19, verses one to six. Let’s read it together now.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then page flicking for 3 seconds.

**PASTOR**: Kate, what do you think are the main ideas in this passage?

**KATE**: They are out of Egypt, but they’re in the desert. God talks to Moses, and tells him Israel will be special.

**PETE**: I don’t think they felt very special stuck in the desert.

**PASTOR**: Ah, but God has better plans for them. Who can tell me what God promises to make them?

**SAM**: A treasured possession, in verse 5.

**BEN**: Also a ‘kingdom of priests’ and a ‘holy nation’, in verse 6.

**PETE**: If God already owns the whole world, why does he say Israel will be God’s people?

**PASTOR**: You’re right Pete, everything belongs to God. But God is talking about a *special* relationship with his people. Who can remember the last thing that God promised Abraham? It is about blessing…

**RUTH**: Oh! Something about blessing others - right?

**PASTOR**: Yes! God said ‘all peoples on earth will be blessed through you’.

**BEN**: Wait, so will God use Israel, Abraham’s descendants, to bless other peoples in the world?

**PASTOR**: Yes! By being God’s treasured possession and a holy nation of priests, they would show the other nations what God was like - and bless them.

**PETE**: But they’re just a bunch of slaves stuck in the desert.

**PASTOR**: God isn’t finished yet! Let’s read Exodus chapter 20, verses one to three now.

**FX**: Pause prompt, then page flicking for 3 seconds.

**PASTOR**: Pete, what can you tell us about this passage?

**PETE**: Well, this is the bit where God gives the ten commandments. I think the idea is that if they follow these rules, God will save them from trouble.

**PASTOR**: But look carefully at the text. When does God give Israel his Law - *before* or *after* he rescues them?

**SAM**: Oh yeah! It’s *after*. I hadn’t noticed that before. So… Israel is already saved when God gives them his Law!

**PASTOR**: That’s right. In verse two, God reminds his people that he is their rescuer - *before* he talks about his commands. God has already rescued them - God says he carried them on eagles’ wings! They didn’t have to obey the law to be rescued. They had to trust God’s word to be rescued. Now that they are rescued as God’s people, God is explaining what that looks like. These rules come from someone that has been very kind to them.

**PETE**: Maybe God needs to feel more appreciated by Israel.

**PASTOR**: Actually, God doesn’t *need* anything. God didn’t rescue them and then leave them alone. God saves Israel *from* Egypt, *into* a special community, and *for* a special mission.

**RUTH**: I wonder if they realised just how much God was blessing them.

**PASTOR**: God is reminding them of why they are his people. It’s the basis for their relationship. Their identity as a nation is based on God’s character, promises and actions.

**RUTH**: Oh! So obeying the Law was not how they were *saved*. It’s how they live *after* being saved. They’re a new people now, with a new purpose. It’s one of the ways God *blesses* his people. Think about it, God wants to live *with them*! That’s so good of God.

**BEN**: It’s a bit like Genesis chapters one and two. God is creating a new people, in a new place. He speaks to them about how to live. Will they trust him? Or will they be like Adam and Eve?

**PASTOR**: The Law showed the people how to live a life of love for God and others. By obeying, Israel could show the other nations what God is like.

**BEN**: That would be a big blessing to the nations.

**PASTOR**: That’s right. Look at verse 3. What does God actually command them?

**SAM**: To have no other gods.

**PASTOR**: Yes. God goes on to give the other nine commandments, but they all hang on this one.

**PASTOR**: God keeps blessing Israel, because he keeps speaking to them. He reminds them, warns them, and commands them. Israel will continue to be blessed by *listening* to and *trusting* God’s word.

**SAM**: The Israelites got to see God’s miracles when God rescued them. But I haven’t seen any great miracles like that.

**PASTOR**: Oh. There is a miracle that comes much later that rescues all of us from our last enemies – sin and death! We’ll talk about that soon.

**RUTH**: It’s so good to see God keep his promises, loving and rescuing his people. It makes me want to live a life of love, obeying God.

**BEN**: Yes! When you’re so thankful to God, it’s easy to trust him!

### Questions to Pastor and Application

**PASTOR**: OK, what questions would *you* like to ask?

**PETE**: Pastor, it sounds good that God wants to live with the people, but they’re still in the desert! How long will God keep them before he keeps his promise of a land?

**PASTOR**: They were in the desert for 40 years and God protected them and gave them food and water. But he also punished them for always complaining and for not trusting him. Even so, God was true to his promise and led them into the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. He used Joshua, the assistant to Moses, to lead them. The book of Joshua tells us how the Israelites defeated their enemies. And it tells us how they started to live in the land. But they were still rebellious and came under God’s judgment. The next book in the Bible, the book of Judges, tells us about that. But Judges also tells us that because God is gracious and compassionate, he continued to save his people.

**SAM** Pastor, how can God do that?! How can he both punish and save?

**PASTOR**: Great question! Throughout the Old Testament, we see that God does both. He cannot let wickedness go unpunished, but he wants to save people from that punishment also! These stories point us to Jesus. In coming weeks we’ll see how Jesus answers the question you’ve just asked.

**BEN:** Pastor, I understand that obeying God’s Law comes after being saved, but what if we disobey it? I do that often!

**PASTOR**: When a person becomes a Christian by trusting what Jesus has done for them, they become children of God, and God is their loving heavenly Father. And like any good father, when we break his rules, God will discipline us for our good. He helps us turn away from the wrong ways that will hurt us and turns us to his good and perfect way. God’s purpose is to finally make us just like his perfect Son, Jesus.

**BEN**: Thank you, I’m glad God is making me more like Jesus.

**PASTOR:** So, let’s summarise. Today we learnt that God saved the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, rescuing them from their enemies. He then told them that they would be a special people to show the world what he is like. He gave them his good law so that they can live lives of love for others. And if they did that he would always live with them. So we see that God is dealing with the problems created by Adam and Eve’s rebellion. They were exiled from the garden, out of God’s presence. Now, God is gathering people to himself and living with them.

**RUTH**: So he is continuing to fulfil his promises to Abraham.

**PASTOR**: Yes. OK, let’s talk about our own lives now. What are some things in your life that you can praise and thank God for?

**SAM**: I love that his big promises in the Bible are for *me* too. It seems too good to be true, actually.

**KATE**: I thank God that he’s a loving rescuer.

**RUTH**: Yes! The biggest thing for me is that Jesus has saved me from sin and death. They’re our biggest enemies, if you think about it. I know I’m powerless against them, and I certainly don’t deserve his help.

**BEN**: Thinking about that makes me want to live a life of love.

**PASTOR**: Thank you everyone. Let’s read our memory verse on the whiteboard: 1 Peter chapter 2, verses 9-10. Let’s read it together now.

**ALL**: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

**PASTOR**: Let’s memorise that for our next lesson. Let me pray. Good Father, thank you for creating Israel, your own new people, and for rescuing them and giving them your Law. We praise you for Jesus, who saved us to become your people. Please help us, by your Holy Spirit, to live lives of love. In Jesus’ name…

**ALL**: Amen.

**PASTOR**: Thank you everyone, see you next time.

**ALL**: Goodbye pastor.

### Interactive Questions

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, let’s answer some questions now. Say your answer aloud. **HOST**: Which of God’s promises to Abraham has he already kept? Is it *People* or *Land*?

**FX**: Response prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: People. Abraham has so many descendants that Pharaoh was afraid of them.

**HOST**: When did God give Israel his Law? Was it *before* or *after* he rescued them?

**FX**: Response prompt, then 5 seconds silence

**HOST**: After. Israel received the Law when they were already saved from Egypt.

**HOST**: What did the Law show Israel? Say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ after each of these sentences:
How to love God and people.[FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.
How to gain God’s love.[FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] No.
The goodness and kindness of God.[FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.
That God wants to live with Israel, his people.[FX: Response prompt, then 2 seconds silence] Yes.

**HOST**: Discuss this question: How does Israel’s story remind you of Jesus’ work for us?

**FX**: Pause prompt, then 5 seconds silence

### Outro

**FX**: Flashback outro

**HOST**: Listeners, now we’ve heard about Sam’s day, listen to what he prayed before going to sleep…

**ATMOS**: Soft prayer background effect (e.g. chimes) fade in

**SAM**: Dear God, This Bible study is opening my eyes to just how wonderful you are. You are a promise keeper, a loving rescuer. Lord Jesus, thank you for saving me from my biggest enemies: sin and death. I want to live my life the way *you* want me to - please help me. Amen. ::: {custom-style=“Instruction”} **ATMOS**: Prayer background fade out :::

**HOST**: Thank you for completing this lesson. We learnt that God creates his own new people, Israel, by rescuing them. Will you join me for our next lesson? We will learn how God establishes his people in his promised land, gives them his King, and blesses them and the world. Please read 1 Kings chapter 10, verses 1 to 13 before then. Now you can discuss how this lesson matters in your life: What are some things in your life that you can praise and thank God for? Goodbye.

**FX**: Theme music fade out.