

Study Series: The God Who Is There

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Lesson Title: “The God Who Legislates” (pp. 50-63)

Session 4

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The main point of this lesson is: God establishes standards for behavior—and the means for forgiveness when those standards are not met.

Focus on this goal: To help adults understand the significance of certain laws God has given

Key Bible Passage: Exodus 20; 32–34; Leviticus 16

Before the Session

1. Do an Internet search for weird laws in the U.S. Be prepared to share some of those laws. (Step 1)

2. Read and be prepared to summarize Exodus 32–33. (Step 6)

3. You probably will not have time in the session to read and discuss every Bible passage referenced. Plan to leave time for the New Testament passages that indicate the significance of the laws under the old covenant.

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Relate some strange laws still in effect. Ask: What are laws that are less strange than these, but that you prefer to disregard as significant for you? (i.e., speed limits) Why might people consider the laws in the Bible as strange or insignificant? Are they? Explain. State that as the group continues to navigate through Scripture you will discover that the God who is there is the God who legislates standards for behavior.

Step 2. Bigoted Christians?

Read John 8:32. Analyze how that verse is often quoted out of context. Request a volunteer read John 8:31-36. Ask: How does this passage indicate that truth is not relative? How does it indicate that God’s words and requirements are significant?

Read the Day One Note (p. 51). Invite responses to Day One, activity 1 (p. 51).

Read or summarize the first two paragraphs (p. 51) under “From the Patriarchs to the Law.” Discuss Day One, activity 2 (pp. 51-52).

Ask: Why might people be more likely to accept God’s standards of behavior if they accept God’s name is I Am Who I Am? As a means of summarizing Exodus 3–18 invite volunteers to share what I Am revealed about Himself to the enslaved Israelites through the plagues and exodus from Egypt. Read Exodus 19:1-5. Use remarks in Day One (p. 52) to elaborate on this covenant.

Step 3. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), Part 1

Encourage adults who have physical copies of a Bible to hold Exodus 20 through the book of Deuteronomy in one hand. Display that with your own Bible and state these books contain specific requirements of the Mosaic covenant.

Invite a volunteer to read Exodus 20:1-19. Consider reasons these ten requirements came first and were written on tablets of stone. Analyze the difference between the first two commandments. Explore the reasons given for those commands. Discuss the first question of Day Two, activity 2 (p. 54).

Step 4. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20), Part 2

Ask how the third commandment (Ex. 20:7) could be stated in a positive manner. Consider how believers can live out the significance of that command.

Determine what God reveals about Himself and humanity in the fourth command (Ex. 20:8-11). Ask: Is “Remember the Sabbath” a legalistic or loving command? Explain. What are ways believers can keep the Sabbath? How might that bring freedom?

Invite a volunteer to read the last paragraph of Day Three (p. 56). Discuss Day Three, activity 2 (p. 56). If time permits, use Romans 3:20; 7:7-12; and Galatians 3:19-25 to add to that discussion.

Step 5. The Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16)

Ask a volunteer to read Hebrews 9:1-7. Explain the one day a year that the high priest entered the Most Holy Place was the Day of Atonement. Leviticus 16 contains God’s requirements for that day. Discuss Day Four, activity 1 (p. 57).

Request two volunteers read Leviticus 16:6-10 and 16:15-19. Ask why God requires so much bloodshed. Read Hebrews 9:22 and guide the group to explore why that is so.

Invite another volunteer to read Leviticus 16:20-22. Analyze what this scapegoat signifies. Read the Day Four paragraph (p. 58) that begins “All of these details are picked up later . . . .”

Emphasize these laws that may seem odd to us were providing a way for the Israelites to get back into the presence of God. They would need that means of forgiveness time and again because they were a sinful rebellious people.

Step 6. Exodus 32–34

Summarize from Exodus 32–33 the people’s sin, Moses’s response, and his request for God’s presence. Guide the group to discuss the Day Five Note (p. 59).

Invite a volunteer to read Exodus 34:5-7. Ask: What tension do you see in God’s revelation of Himself? How did the Day of Atonement address that tension under the old covenant?

Declare the great news for us is that we can live under a new covenant where the tension between God’s desire to forgive and His insistence that sin be punished is fully resolved. Read Hebrews 9:23-26. Invite someone to read the next to last paragraph of Day Five (p. 60).

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Ask: How are God’s requirements, even the strange ones from the Old Testament, significant to us today? [Sample: they reveal God’s character and anticipate the coming of Jesus.]

Discuss Day Five, activity 2 (p. 60).

Close in prayer.

