

# **EPIC – Week 8**

**December 9, 2009 Teaching Outline  
by Mark Howard**

## **EPIC SERIES RECAP:**

**The Bible as an epic story involving the whole world...**

- It's real, it is happening still, it involves you, and it changes who we are

## **CREATION & INNOCENCE:**

**God has an intended design for life – we see it in the Garden of Eden**

- Beauty and peace in their truest forms
- Completely innocent – no sin, no pain, no knowledge of evil
- Fellowship with God – complete access
- Fellowship with each other – Adam and Eve
- Total peace, total joy – no sin like selfishness, jealousy, shame, etc.

**This was God's intended design and it was AMAZING.**

**But something happened...Satan, God's enemy, creates MISTRUST of God**

- Satan twists God's words & lies to Adam and Eve
- Satan convinced them they couldn't TRUST God's rule

**The choice of Sin – Adam and Eve eat from the tree**

- Refuse GOD'S RULE & decide for THEMSELVES what was good or evil

**At that moment, everything changed. For then on... Sin ruins everything.**

## **THE CURSE & THE PROMISE:**

**The consequences of sin...then and still today**

- Pain, hard labor, death, broken relationships between man and woman
- **Banished from God's presence / banished from the Garden**

***The story could have just ended here, but God had a plan to rescue mankind.***

**Generations later...God makes an UNBREAKABLE promise to Abram:**

- To be his God & make him into a great nation and bless all peoples through him

**Through Israel, God promises to rescue mankind from the curse of sin.**

- God promises to restore life to how it was intended to be
- When God promises, it's so certain that we can bet our life on it.

## **THE LAW:**

### **Fast forward from Abraham to Moses...**

- Abraham's descendents become a great nation, but they are enslaved in Egypt
- God sends Moses to RESCUE the new nation of Israel
- They escape (the exodus)...and travel through the desert to Mt. Siani
- Here God gives Moses the Law

### **The law isn't a bad thing...it makes life BETTER**

- The laws given to Moses were rules to govern their nation, moral laws about how to live, and religious law about how to worship God.
- Like the Garden, when God is making the rules...life is BEST.

### **Purposes of the Law:**

1. Guides us to the holy life God intended
2. Reveals our sin
3. Reveals our need for a Savior
4. Reveals God's character – His holiness
5. Restores God's presence in the tabernacle with his people

## **LAST WEEK- The Tabernacle & Sacrifices (Dec. 2)**

### *(Image of the tabernacle & priests clothing)*

### **In the law, God gave Moses precise directions for the tabernacle & sacrifices**

- Why so precise? It symbolized **God's perfection** – HIS HOLINESS
- **The tabernacle shows the separation of Holy God from unholy people.**

### **But God provided a way to bridge that gap through a system of sacrifices.**

- Provided a means of worship, dedication to God, and temporary forgiveness
- Provided a covering of sins – allowing limited access into God's presence

### **Day of Atonement – Yom Kippur – Once a year**

- Priest would provide forgiveness for the whole nation's sins
- We experienced together the *Priest's process of cleansing and preparation*

### **This was the point:**

- Being in God's presence is the life God intended for us, just like the Garden
- Our sin ruins everything and separates us from God presence.
- The tabernacle & sacrifices clearly show that separation

### **Only Christ could remove our sin completely and give us complete access to God.**

#### **Hebrews 7:27**

Unlike the other high priests, [Jesus] does not need to offer sacrifices...He sacrificed for [our] sins once and for all when he offered himself.

#### **Hebrews 10:19, 21**

Therefore, brothers, since we have the confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart...

Last week we closed with that awesome time of worship and prayer in the Journey Room...just being in God's presence together, experiencing the access given by Christ.

### **TO RECAP THE WHOLE STORY:**

- God has an intended design for our lives...and it's good. It's the best.
- Sin ruins everything.
- God promises rescue.
- The law given to Moses begins God's rescue by restoring His presence & rule.

## **THIS WEEK- The Law Part 3: The Prophets**

**So we've seen how God has given his law to restore His rule and His presence**

**But for the rest of the Old Testament we see this continuing pattern...**

- God gives his law, and his people disobey it

### **Example - Story of the golden calf**

- While Moses is up on the mountain receiving God's law...the people make a golden calf to worship!

#### **Exodus 32**

When the people saw how long it was taking Moses to come back down the mountain, they gathered around Aaron. "Come on," they said, "make us some gods who can lead us. We don't know what happened to this fellow Moses..." Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and molded it into the shape of a calf. When the people saw it, they exclaimed, "O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

The LORD told Moses, "Quick! Go down the mountain! Your people have corrupted themselves. How quickly they have turned away from the way I commanded them to live! They have melted down gold and made a calf, & they have bowed down and sacrificed to it."

**This cycle of disobedience is repeated through the rest of the Old Testament:**

- Conquest of the Promised Land – destroy all the people...they didn't
- Kings of Israel – many did not honor God's law and worshipped other gods
- Exile – eventually God allows Israel to be completely destroyed by Babylon
- Israel lives again enslaved, because of their disobedience, for the next 70 years

**During all this...God continually sent prophets to return Israel to God's rule**

### **The prophet's purpose:**

- Warning Israel of the consequences of their sin
- Restoring God's people to Him – calling them to confession & repentance
- Pointing to the needed, coming Savior, Jesus

**Back to our story...after the Exile, Israel is allowed to return to Jerusalem**

- Books of Ezra & Nehemiah and the prophets Haggai and Zachariah
- Israel finally begins to return to God
- They rebuild the city walls, rebuild the temple
- And separate from the sinful nations living around them and their false gods
- **Through the prophets, Israel finally repents of it's sin**

### **Nehemiah 9:1-4**

On October 31 the people assembled again, and this time they fasted and...separated themselves from all foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. They remained standing in place for three hours while the Book of the Law of the LORD their God was read aloud to them. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the LORD their God.

**What an amazing picture of a nation confessing TOGETHER and returning to God!**

### **What did God say to Israel through the prophets?**

- A glimpse from Isaiah 1: (Just close your eyes and listen)

#### **Isaiah 1**

Pay attention, earth! This is what the LORD says: "The children I raised and cared for have rebelled against me. Even an ox knows its owner, but Israel doesn't know its master. My people don't recognize my care for them." Oh, what a sinful nation they are - loaded down with a burden of guilt. They are evil people, corrupt children who have rejected the LORD.

Why do you continue to invite punishment? Must you rebel forever? Your head is injured, and your heart is sick. You are battered from head to foot covered with bruises. What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?" says the LORD. "I am sick of your burnt offerings of rams. I get no pleasure from the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts the incense of your offerings disgusts me! As for your celebrations and your special days for fasting - they are all sinful and false. I hate your celebrations and your annual festivals. I cannot stand them! When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will not look. Though you offer many prayers, I will not listen for your hands are covered with the blood of innocent victims.

Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways. Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. "Come now, let's settle this," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool.

### **Do you see it? WE ARE ISRAEL!**

- Like Israel, we are called to be a holy nation of God, but we are far from God.
- Peake Youth Mission – "To glorify God by raising up a holy generation..."
- That's you! A holy generation! But continually, we fail to live the life of obedience
- God has an intended design for our life, it's good, and He shown us how to live it and offered us rescue from our sin through the forgiveness of Christ.

***We are just like Israel. We have been called to be holy, but we are so far from God.***

**(VIDEO 1)**

### ***Brandon Larson***

My name is Brandon, and I am a junior. This year I transferred from a Christian school to public school. During that first week in school, right away I couldn't help but see just how lost we are as teenagers.

Mark's been teaching us during this "EPIC" series about the design that God has for life, and I've got to be honest...I think we are so far from it. **Life in our world is so broken.**

- Girls are pressured to do things they don't want to do with their boyfriends.
- Guys brag about what they did at the party last weekend.
- People brag about sports, or the letter they got from a college.
- For guys especially, everything is a competition instead of real friendships.
- We totally judge people just on how they dress.
- People are defined by what they do or how they look.
- You can't just skate and not be a "skater" or dress like a skater.
- A lot of people are just lost...not happy, lonely, not social at all.

So many people try everything, except God, to find fulfillment or love or satisfaction or happiness. We are not looking for the wrong things...love and satisfaction and meaning are all good things. But we are looking in all the wrong places.

Some of us are blind to it...don't realize we are looking in the wrong places. But some of us choose it again and again...choosing what seems fun in the moment, but we regret it later and it's never really satisfying. Or we just don't have the courage to do what we know is right or better.

Life in our world is so broken. We are so far from the design that God intended for us.

A few minutes ago, Mark read a passage from the prophet Isaiah. Maybe those words meant nothing to you, or you didn't understand them. Let me read them again, but in words I think you will understand and will really hit home and challenge you. Close your eyes again and listen...

### **Isaiah 1**

Pay attention, teenagers! This is what the LORD says: "I created you, raised you, and cared for you but you have turned your back on me." Even a dog knows it's owner is boss, but you don't have any idea who is your master is. You've totally forgotten how much I have cared for you. What a sinful generation we are - loaded down with a burden of guilt...corrupt children who have rejected God.

Aren't you tired of making the same mistakes again and again? Isn't your heart sick and discouraged and unsatisfied? Aren't you beat up with guilt and shame and regret? Don't you want something more? How long will you keep living like this, rebelling against God?

What makes you think just showing up at church is good enough? I'm sick of you just going through the motions, coming to Journey, not paying attention, texting your friends during worship and thinking you've honored me by showing up. I get no pleasure in that. As for your ski trips and weekend retreats and mission trips...they are all a fake if you don't live any different when you come home. I hate those events if your heart isn't really changed.

When you lift up your hands in prayers, I will not listen, for those same hands were sinning against me last weekend. Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways. Learn to do good. Put someone else before yourself. Help out someone who has less than you. Become a friend to someone who has no friends.

Come and sit down, let's settle this, God says. Your sins are blood-red, but they will be as white as snow. If you are willing to obey, I'll give you a life better than you ever dreamed.

## **(VIDEO 2)**

(Brandon – Inspiring words about returning to God, asking forgiveness, and changing our schools and our world by living for God.)

(MARK – Explain washing in the water basins at the front of the auditorium and confessing our sin to God together during a time of worship...our time to return to God.)

**Closing:** Even this tonight, on our own, is still not enough. We need a Savior to take away our sins for good. We must confess our sin, but Christ must take it away. And next week, we will conclude the EPIC series by better understanding, and celebrating, what Christ has done for us. I hope you will be here.