

Dr. John Oswalt, Exodus, Session 9, Exodus 16-18 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Exodus, Session 9, Exodus 16-18, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This is a transcript of a lecture by Dr. John Oswalt on Exodus chapters 16-18. **Oswalt interprets these chapters as revealing God's providence**, contrasting it with the earlier demonstration of God's power. He **examines the provision of manna and water**, highlighting lessons in trust and dependence on God. **He discusses the battle against the Amalekites**, emphasizing the importance of God's blessing. Finally, **he analyzes Jethro's visit and advice on delegation**, illustrating God's work through human agency and highlighting the development of Israel's faith.

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, Exodus, Session 9 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Pentateuch → Exodus).



Oswalt_Exodus_Session09.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, Exodus, Session 9, Exodus 16-18

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from Dr. John Oswalt's Session 9 on Exodus 16-18:

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Exodus 16-18

Overall Theme: This session focuses on the revelation of Yahweh's **providence** in contrast to the previous focus on His power. It emphasizes God's care, provision, and the process of preparing the Israelites for the covenant at Sinai. The lecture also explores themes of trust, obedience, and the dangers of idolatry and reliance on mechanisms instead of relationship with God.

Key Themes & Ideas:

1. Yahweh's Providence (Exodus 15:22-18:27):

- The focus shifts from God's powerful acts (plagues, Red Sea crossing) to his ongoing care and provision in the wilderness.
- Oswalt highlights the change, stating: "In chapters 1 through 15, we had a revelation of Yahweh's power, but now we have a revelation of his providence".
- This providence is demonstrated through provision of water, manna, and protection.

1. The Grumbling Israelites (Exodus 16):

- Despite witnessing God's power, the Israelites grumble against Moses and Aaron, longing for the perceived comfort of Egypt. They say, "would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full."
- This highlights their lack of trust and their short memories, despite experiencing God's deliverance.
- Moses and Aaron emphasize that Yahweh, not they, was the one who brought the Israelites out of Egypt.
- Moses points out that the purpose of the manna, as outlined in verse four, was to test whether they will walk in his Torah: "I'm going to test them, whether they will walk in my Torah"

1. The Manna and its Lessons (Exodus 16):

- The manna is not just a food source; it is designed to teach several important lessons.
- **Greed is futile:** They were only to gather enough for one day (except for Friday), as excess would spoil. As Oswalt notes: "There is just enough for today... and what happens if you collect too much? It rots, doesn't it?"
- **God provides:** The manna is proof that God will provide for their needs.
- **Trust in God:** The daily provision was a test of their faith and dependence on God. The manna is described by Oswalt as a device "that will get you ready to say yes when the critical moment comes"
- **Sabbath observance:** The double portion on Friday and the rest on the Sabbath are a gift and an opportunity for trust and rest from labor. He points out, "The Lord has given you the Sabbath."
- **Remembrance:** Keeping a jar of manna was a physical reminder of God's faithfulness, tying the physical and spiritual together as Oswalt says "You cannot separate the spiritual and the physical. They go together."

1. The Dangers of Idolatry (Exodus 16):

- Oswalt warns against turning reminders of God's power and grace into objects of worship, creating idols or relying on them as magical talismans rather than seeing them as reminders. As he states, "the attempt to control the divine through the manipulation of this world."
- He gives the example of the Ark of the Covenant, pointing out that the Hebrews viewed it as a "magic" item instead of a symbol of their relationship with God.
- He specifically points out that a proper view of the Lord's supper is about remembrance, not magic.
- Oswalt states "we are inveterate idolaters" and cautions against only defining idols as physical statues, saying, "We think because we don't have any little statues in our houses, we don't have any idols. But what we're talking about is the attempt to control the divine through the manipulation of this world. And that happens all the time."

1. **Water from the Rock (Exodus 17):**

- The Israelites again complain about lack of water at Rephidim.
- Moses prays to the Lord for help. This emphasizes the importance of prayer as a first resort and not just as a last option. Oswalt observes, "For all too many of us, prayer is the last resort"
- God tells Moses to strike the rock with his staff, resulting in water flowing out.
- This is a lesson in God's ability to provide, but also a foreshadowing of Moses' sin at Meribah in Numbers 20.

1. **Moses' Disobedience at Meribah:**

- Oswalt makes note that in Numbers 20, Moses strikes a rock instead of speaking to it. In doing so, Moses made himself look good instead of making God look good, and this was an act of rebellion. Oswalt says, "Moses, you had a marvelous opportunity to make God look good. And what did you do? You used it to make yourself look good"
- He explains that Moses had learned "how to do it" and that this is often the danger in ministry and in life: "You learn how to appear prayerful without ever really praying. You learn how to give an invitation that'll get people out of their seats. You learn how to preach a sermon that'll have the ladies reaching for their handkerchiefs."
- God hates to do the same thing twice, and we should not seek for God to operate as a mechanism.

1. **Battle with the Amalekites (Exodus 17):**

- The Amalekites attack Israel, demonstrating their opposition to God's plan of salvation. Oswalt says, "This is God preparing the way for Jesus Christ through these people, and the Amalekites are doing their dead-level best to wipe it out. You don't want to do that."
- The Israelites win when Moses' hands are raised (supported by Aaron and Hur), highlighting the dependence on God's blessing. Oswalt says, "Winning depends on God's blessing."
- This shows the principle of seeking God's blessing in all undertakings, not just looking for magical signs.

- God commands the destruction of the Amalekites, highlighting the serious nature of their opposition to God's plan.

1. **Jethro's Visit and Conversion (Exodus 18):**

- Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, hears of God's acts on behalf of Israel and comes to visit them. He rejoices at what God has done.
- Jethro's conversion is significant because it is based on the testimony of God's historical acts. Oswalt says "This is the first example in the Bible of somebody being converted, converted through a testimony."
- This conversion demonstrates that faith comes from seeing and hearing what God has done. Oswalt also says "Here is the impact of history. It's not just that Moses says, you know what? I was sitting up on the mountain one day, and I got to thinking about God, and I decided that God is love."
- This is the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, "in you, all the nations of the world will be blessed".

1. **Jethro's Counsel on Leadership (Exodus 18):**

- Jethro observes Moses judging all the people and provides counsel for delegating leadership. Oswalt says that this is important because it also demonstrates that God works through ordinary people in ordinary situations in order to accomplish his purposes.
- Moses is following the Egyptian way of doing things, where Pharaoh is "god" and rules all.
- He suggests appointing capable leaders with specific qualities: they must be capable, fear God, be honest, and hate bribes. Oswalt remarks "that's a pretty good list, I'd like that to be said of me."
- This organizational structure represents God's provision not only through miracles but also through human wisdom.
- Oswalt says this shows that "Yahweh is the miracle worker, but at the same time, He is the one who works through His human children to accomplish His good purposes."

1. **Moving Towards Sinai:**

- Oswalt concludes that the Israelites have now witnessed God's power and providence.
- The next step is the revelation of His nature and character at Sinai. Oswalt asks, "What sort of a God is He?"
- The lecture concludes by discussing that the book of Exodus is "the way out of theological darkness" as the Israelites are learning who God is.

Key Quotes:

- "In chapters 1 through 15, we had a revelation of Yahweh's power, but now we have a revelation of his providence."
- "I'm going to test them, whether they will walk in my Torah"
- "There is just enough for today... and what happens if you collect too much? It rots, doesn't it?"
- "The Lord has given you the Sabbath."
- "You cannot separate the spiritual and the physical. They go together."
- "we are inveterate idolaters"
- "the attempt to control the divine through the manipulation of this world."
- "For all too many of us, prayer is the last resort"
- "Moses, you had a marvelous opportunity to make God look good. And what did you do? You used it to make yourself look good"
- "Winning depends on God's blessing."
- "This is God preparing the way for Jesus Christ through these people, and the Amalekites are doing their dead-level best to wipe it out. You don't want to do that."
- "This is the first example in the Bible of somebody being converted, converted through a testimony."
- "Here is the impact of history. It's not just that Moses says, you know what? I was sitting up on the mountain one day, and I got to thinking about God, and I decided that God is love."

- "Yahweh is the miracle worker, but at the same time, He is the one who works through His human children to accomplish His good purposes."

Conclusion:

This session of Oswalt's Exodus series emphasizes that God is not just a powerful force but also a caring provider who seeks a genuine relationship with His people. The trials of the Israelites in the wilderness provide a context for learning about dependence, obedience, the dangers of idolatry, and the importance of trust in God's timing. The narrative prepares the way for the significant revelation at Mount Sinai, where God's character and nature will be further revealed.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, Exodus, Session 9, Exodus 16-18

Exodus Study Guide: Chapters 16-18

Quiz

1. What was the initial complaint of the Israelites in the wilderness, and how did it contrast with their earlier experiences in Egypt?
2. According to the lecture, what was the primary purpose of God providing manna to the Israelites?
3. What were the two key aspects of the manna's collection, and what were the positive and negative lessons associated with those two?
4. Why did God instruct the Israelites to preserve some of the manna in a jar before the Lord, and what was the potential danger associated with this act?
5. What was the major lesson that the Israelites had failed to learn, leading them to complain about water at Rephidim, and how was this connected to the idea of trust?
6. What was Moses told to do in response to the lack of water, and how does it compare to what occurs in Numbers 20?
7. Describe the battle with the Amalekites, explaining the significance of Moses' raised hands and the lesson it taught about God's blessing.
8. Why was the battle against the Amalekites considered to be of unique significance in the history of Israel, and what did God vow to do to them?
9. How did Jethro's arrival and his subsequent conversation with Moses highlight the importance of God's actions and their impact on surrounding nations?
10. What problem did Jethro identify in Moses' leadership, and what qualities did Jethro suggest for appointed officials?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The Israelites complained about hunger and wished they had died in Egypt where they had meat and bread. This contrasts sharply with their earlier desire to be freed from slavery in Egypt, displaying their short memories and lack of faith.
2. The primary purpose of manna was to test the Israelites' obedience to God's Torah, preparing them to enter into a covenantal relationship with Him at Sinai.

3. The two aspects were collecting only enough for one day, which showed God's provision and trust in Him, and collecting a double portion on Friday, which taught them to honor the Sabbath. Greed, as demonstrated by collecting too much manna, resulted in spoilage.
4. Preserving the manna was intended as a visible reminder of God's faithfulness and provision. However, the danger was that they could fall into the trap of worshipping the object itself, instead of God.
5. They had failed to learn to trust in God's timing and provision, instead focusing on their own needs and desires, which undermined their ability to trust God's character and faithfulness.
6. Moses was told to strike the rock with his staff. In Numbers 20, however, Moses was told to speak to the rock, but instead, he struck it. This act caused him not to sanctify God's name, as it seemed that he, rather than God, was providing for the people.
7. The Amalekites attacked Israel, and the battle was won when Moses' hands were raised. This taught them that victory depends on God's blessing and that without it, they will fail.
8. The battle with the Amalekites was unique because it was a direct attempt to destroy God's chosen people, jeopardizing the future messianic line. God vowed to utterly blot out the memory of the Amalekites from under heaven, showing the unique danger of opposing His purposes.
9. Jethro's arrival and his conversion was a demonstration of the word spreading about God's actions. This showed that the difficulties experienced by the Israelites were opportunities for God to show his power.
10. Jethro identified that Moses was overworking himself and the people were overly reliant on him, acting as if Moses was God, thus they needed to delegate the people's disputes. Jethro suggested they appoint capable, God-fearing, honest leaders who would hate bribes.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the various ways the Israelites demonstrated a lack of faith and trust in God throughout Exodus chapters 16-18. How did God respond to their complaints and murmuring, and what lessons was he trying to teach them through these experiences?
2. Discuss the significance of both the manna and water from the rock in the context of God's providence for the Israelites. In what ways do these two acts differ, and how do they each contribute to the broader themes of the book of Exodus?
3. Explore the importance of the battle against the Amalekites, as described in Exodus 17, and how it illustrates the relationship between divine power and human participation. How does this narrative connect with the idea of a "unique" conflict in God's plan?
4. Evaluate the role of Jethro in Exodus 18 and explain the importance of his advice to Moses. How does this episode demonstrate both the importance of wise human counsel and God's working through human instrumentality?
5. Considering all the themes covered in Exodus 16-18, what does it reveal about God's nature and character? How does this section of Exodus further illuminate God's plan for the Israelites, beyond their physical deliverance from Egypt?

Glossary

- **Yahweh:** The personal name of God in the Old Testament, emphasizing his self-existence and active involvement in history.
- **Providence:** God's care and provision for his people, particularly in times of need, as demonstrated through manna, water, and victory in battle.
- **Manna:** The food miraculously provided by God to the Israelites during their time in the wilderness, serving as a test of their obedience and trust.
- **Torah:** God's law, instruction, or teachings, which were to be given to the Israelites at Mount Sinai, and a covenantal relationship they were to enter into.
- **Sabbath:** A day of rest set apart by God for the Israelites, intended as a gift, a remembrance, and an opportunity to stop and give thanks to Him.
- **Rephidim:** A location in the wilderness where the Israelites faced a lack of water, testing their faith in God's provision.
- **Amalekites:** A tribe that attacked the Israelites, becoming a symbol of opposition to God's chosen people and his plan for them.
- **Jethro:** Moses' father-in-law, a priest of Midian, who advised Moses on leadership and organization. Jethro was also converted through his testimony of God's works.
- **Covenant:** An agreement or promise, particularly between God and His people, which includes stipulations of both blessings and responsibilities.
- **Idolatry:** The act of worshipping something or someone other than the true God, often an object of man's creation.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Exodus, Session 9, Exodus 16-18, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Exodus Chapters 16-18

1. **What is the primary shift in focus from Exodus chapters 1-15 to chapters 16-18?**
While chapters 1-15 demonstrate God's power through the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea, chapters 16-18 shift to reveal God's *providence*—His care and provision for His people. This includes providing for their daily needs like food (manna) and water, protection from enemies (the Amalekites), and even organizational wisdom through Jethro's advice. The emphasis moves from dramatic displays of power to consistent, daily acts of care.
2. **Why did the Israelites grumble against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness despite witnessing God's miracles?** The Israelites' grumbling stemmed from a lack of trust and short memories. They quickly forgot God's powerful deliverance from Egypt and focused on their immediate physical discomfort (hunger and thirst). They longed for the perceived security of their former lives in Egypt, even in slavery, demonstrating a preference for their own immediate desires over faith in God's provision. They had not yet learned that God can be trusted to provide in His time, not theirs.
3. **What was the purpose of the manna, beyond simply providing food?** The manna served several purposes. It was a test of their obedience, specifically their willingness to follow God's instructions related to collecting only what they needed each day and resting on the Sabbath. It was also a daily lesson in trust. The manna forced the Israelites to rely on God's provision each day, preventing them from accumulating wealth or relying on their own efforts. Additionally, the extra manna given on Fridays for the Sabbath also demonstrated God's gift of rest. It was also a visible reminder of what God had done for them and its preservation in a jar before the Lord served as a tangible reminder.

4. **What is the significance of the Sabbath in the context of the manna and God's provision?** The Sabbath is presented not as a burden but as a gift from God. The double portion of manna on Friday eliminates the need to gather food on the Sabbath, which provides an opportunity for rest. This is meant to teach the Israelites about their dependence on God not just for daily sustenance but for all aspects of their lives, including rest. The Sabbath also becomes an opportunity for the Israelites to enter into a relationship with the creator God who has given it to them.
5. **How does the incident of Moses striking the rock to produce water demonstrate a key lesson about God's way of doing things?** While God initially commanded Moses to strike the rock, the second time he was commanded to speak to the rock. By striking the rock a second time when God commanded to speak, Moses failed to sanctify God's name. This demonstrates that God does not want to be understood as being manipulated through a formula. He is not a vending machine we can interact with. Instead, God desires to be honored as the source of all provisions, not simply as a process that man can duplicate. The lesson highlights the danger of the ministry to fall in the trap of repeating learned practices instead of having a genuine relationship with God.
6. **Why is the battle against the Amalekites significant, and what does it teach about relying on God's blessing?** The Amalekites were uniquely aggressive in their attacks against the Israelites, and this attack was viewed as an act against God's plan of salvation and God's people. The battle reveals that victory depends not on military might but on God's blessing. The raising of Moses' hands, supported by Aaron and Hur, serves as a visible reminder that victory comes from God and his power. It's not a magical formula of keeping hands up, but the necessity of God's blessing.
7. **How does Jethro's conversion illustrate the importance of historical witness and testimony?** Jethro's conversion is significant because it is the first example in the Bible where someone converts based on testimony. He wasn't present for the miracles but hears accounts of what God did for Israel and recognizes that God is more powerful than all other gods. This reinforces the value of historical events as the basis for belief, moving from a personal experience to acceptance through the weight of the historical witness and the accounts of what the true God has done in human history.

8. **What practical advice does Jethro give to Moses and why is it important?** Jethro advises Moses to delegate his responsibilities to capable, God-fearing, honest officials who hate bribes. This is important because it reveals that God also uses human wisdom and organizational skills. Jethro recognized that Moses could not handle all the disputes of the people on his own and would become exhausted, and it was necessary to use others so that decisions could be made in a way that would take the local concerns and contexts into consideration. This highlights that God's work is often accomplished through natural means and not always through miracles and it also stresses the need to use gifted and capable people in leadership.