

TEACHING SERIES // JANUARY 2021

Founding Fathers: Patriarchs, Promises, and the People of God

January 3 / *Walking With God* / Genesis 6:9

Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation, and he walked with God. What does this mean? Is it possible to listen, trust, and obey God in a time when it seems everyone else is corrupt, violent, and in rebellion against God? Yes! It is—by God’s grace!

January 10 / *Faith of Our Fathers* / Genesis 12:1-3

From all the scattered peoples of Babel—all the tribes, clans, and eventual nations—God chose one imperfect man and his imperfect clan to be the people through whom His plan of salvation would be revealed to the world. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not just random nomads wandering aimlessly through what would become a highly contested territory. They are a family entrusted with promises from God, chosen and changed by God, to eventually change the world!

January 17 / *Good for Evil* / Genesis 50:15-21

God’s “detours” don’t always make sense to us, especially when they appear to be taking us further away from what He has promised us! But what if the detours in our lives turn out to be paths of protection we could never have seen? God is good—so good he gives us glimpses of how he “sees ahead to provide” (the very essence and meaning of providence). Jacob’s trouble (losing his beloved son Joseph) opened up a “table of bread” for him and his family in the presence of those who would later become their enemies—enemies from whom God would eventually rescue and redeem the entire nation of Israel!

January 24 / *Introducing . . . God!* / Exodus 3:13-15

“Who are You, God? What is Your name? How do You choose to identify Yourself or be known?” These all seem like reasonable requests to us, but then we don’t tend to see names connected with nature quite like the ancient Near Eastern people did.

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, He was revealing Himself in the midst of a cultural milieu swarming with gods and goddesses—each of them identified with nature in one form or another—such as a sun god, or a frog god, etc. So how does the one true God distinguish Himself from the very “nature” He brought into existence? He introduces Himself as “being” itself! And this One—not any of the nature gods of Egypt—is the One by Whose goodness, strength, and mighty arm (attributes the sun and frogs don’t possess!) the children of Israel are delivered from their slavery.

January 31 / *Your People, Your Glory* / Exodus 33:12-23

When Moses asked to see God’s glory or presence, what could he possibly have meant? “Glory” is certainly not an everyday word in our world (even though church people have tossed it around and used it in varieties of ways—often unmindful of its weightiness). In the context of the request to see God’s glory, it is important to note Moses has been pleading with God to accompany Israel to the Promised Land. Given the disobedience and unruly nature of God’s people, however, God has been reluctant and even suggests a “replacement guide” to lead them on their journey. As far as Moses is concerned, this would be intolerable. After all, what distinguishes God’s people from all others is that in some way God is with them—with them in a way that changes them! Could it be that Moses is looking for what all of us want and desperately need? Could it be that he longs for that which displays the nature of God most exquisitely—His love? And that this, more than anything else, anticipates what God will display for us on the cross—the highlight of His glory?