FOUR MOUNTAINS STUDY GUIDE

ENCOUNTERING GOD
IN THE BIBLE FROM
EDEN TO ZION



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Your symbols, Lord, are everywhere.

-Ephrem the Syrian

READINGS

• Four Mountains chapter one

CHAPTER ONE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- I. What are some of the most common symbols that you see repeated throughout the Bible? What do you think these symbols teach us about Jesus?
- 2. This chapter claims that the Bible is a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. But it also argues that it is more than a story. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages to reading the Bible as purely a story?
- 3. Consider a passage or two from the Old Testament that you find difficult or confusing. Do you see any symbols in those passages? Discuss how we might see Christ in those passages through those symbols.



Do you see the excellent distinction and the wonderful craftsmanship, surpassing all comment, happening by a single word and command?

—John Chrysostom

READINGS

- Four Mountains chapters two and three
- Genesis 1 and 2
- Psalms 104:1-24; 139:1-17

CHAPTER TWO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- I. What are the key symbols introduced in this chapter, and where else do you see these symbols in later portions of the Bible?
- 2. This chapter argues that God creates the world in a similar way that an artist creates a work of art. Have you ever done any creative activities that are related to your hobbies or passions? What was that experience like?
- 3. How are human beings different from the rest of God's creation? What does it mean for human beings to be created in God's image?
- 4. Why is the observance of the Sabbath day so important? What are ways that you observe (or aspire to observe) the Sabbath?

CHAPTER THREE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I.	What are the key symbols introduced in this chapter, and where else do you see these symbols in later portions of the Bible?
2.	Adam and Eve were without sin but were still growing. How does this change our conception of what it is like to be with God in eternity?
3.	How would you describe glory, and what does it mean to encounter God's glory?



Notice how the human race, instead of managing to keep to their own boundaries, always longs for more and reaches out for greater things.

This is what the human race has lost in particular, not being able to recognize the limitations of their own condition but always lusting after more and entertaining ambitions beyond their capacity

—John Chrysostom

READINGS

- Four Mountains chapters four and five
- Genesis 3-11
- Psalms 2; 51

CHAPTER FOUR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- I. What symbols of judgment and mercy do you see in Genesis 3? Where else have you encountered these symbols in scripture?
- 2. There are many ways to understand the nature of Adam and Eve's sins. What do you think was the root cause of their sin?
- 3. This chapter describes the relationship between the outer and inner senses. Have you "spiritually" heard, seen, smelled, or tasted? How would you describe these experiences?

4.	How would you describe the difference between temptation and sinning			
I.	CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS After Adam and Eve were cast off of the mountain, the effects of sin grew in both quantity and severity. How are the damaging effects of sin magnified in Genesis 4-10?			
2.	Babel is a tower built to glorify human greatness. Can you think of any buildings today that are similarly built to boast of the glory of humankind?			
3.	How is Babel a false mountain, and how is it the opposite of Mount Eden?			
4.	How is sin ironic?			



Abraham offered God a mortal son who was not put to death; God delivered to death an immortal Son for humanity. —Origen

READ

- Four Mountains chapter six
- Genesis 11–25
- Psalm 105:1–15

	CHAPTER SIX DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
I.	What are the key symbols introduced in this chapter, and where else do you see these symbols in later portions of the Bible?

- 2. How would you define the word "faith," and how is Abraham an exemplar of faith?
- 3. This chapter describes the difference between sacred and secular time. How would you describe this difference? Have you had moments in which you have encountered God in sacred time?
- 4. Abraham and Melchizedek's celebration is sometimes called the first eucharist, or first communion service. Why?

5. This chapter argues Abraham learned about the sacrifice of Jesus through the sacrifice of Isaac. What other explanations have you heard for this story? How does this new understanding add to your understanding of the cross of Christ?

Week 4 OUT OF SLAVERY AND INTO THE WILDERNESS and LIFE AND LAW ON MOUNT SINAI

No one who hears this should be ignorant of the mystery of the water. He who has gone down into it with the army of the enemy emerges alone, leavin gthe enemy's army dorwning in the water.

-Gregory of Nyssa

READ

- Four Mountains chapters seven and eight
- Exodus 1; 14–20
- Leviticus 19
- Psalms 1; 68:1–20

CHAPTER SEVEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- I. What are the key symbols introduced in this chapter, and where else do you see these symbols in later portions of the Bible?
- 2. How is the first Passover meal a communion meal, and how is our Sunday celebration of communion a Passover meal?
- 3. In I Corinthians 10, Paul says that Israel was baptized in the cloud and the sea. How is the crossing through the Red Sea a baptism, and how is our baptism a crossing of the Red Sea?

CHAPTER EIGHT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I.	What are the key symbols introduced in this chapter, and where else do you see these symbols in later portions of the Bible?
2.	Why is Israel prevented from climbing to the top of Mount Sinai? Why does God impose these limits?
3.	In your opinion, why does God give Israel the Ten Commandments?
4.	This chapter ends with Moses asking to see the face of God. What is your most vibrant memory of looking into the eyes of a loved one? How did it feel?
5.	What is the ultimate goal of human beings?



Isaiah should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet, because he describes all the mysteries of Christ and the church so clearly that one would think he is composing a history of what has already happened rather than prophesying what is to come.

-Gregory of Nyssa

READ

- Four Mountains chapters nine and ten
- Exodus 40
- Leviticus 1–9
- Daniel 7
- Isaiah 11; 53
- Ezekiel 36–37
- Psalms 66; 126

CHAPTER NINE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- I. What are the key symbols introduced in this chapter, and where else do you see these symbols in later portions of the Bible?
- 2. How is the tabernacle structured like Mount Sinai? In what ways do our churches today resemble the tabernacle? In what ways are they different?
- 3. Have you ever had a time in which you needed to sacrifice in order to forgive someone? What did you have to sacrifice?

4.	Why did God direct Israel to sacrifice animals for their sin? What are the limits of these animal sacrifices?
5.	In what ways are Christians sacrifices today similar to the fire and blood sacrifices in Leviticus? In what ways are they different?
I.	CHAPTER TEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS What are the main differences between the tabernacle and the temple?
2.	How does our imagination effect our actions in the present? Can you think of a time in which your vision for the future motivated you in the present?
3.	Early Christians often called the book of Isaiah the "Fifth Gospel." What have you learned about Jesus through your reading of Isaiah?
4.	What are some of the qualities of life on Mount Zion?
5.	What has been accomplished through Israel in the Old Testament? What must God still do in the New Testament to bring salvation?



Our own cause was the occasion of his descent and that our own transgression evoked the Word's love for human beings, so that the Lord both came to us and appeared among human beings. For we were the purpose of his embodiment, and for our salvation he so loved human beings as to come to be and appear in a human body.

—Athanasius

READ

- Four Mountains chapter eleven
- Psalm 89
- Matthew 3–4
- John 6; 9

CHAPTER ELEVEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How does Jesus fulfill the symbols of water, oil, and snakes?
- 2. Why does God rescue humankind from the inside out? Why does he become a person?
- 3. How is Jesus's temptation similar to the temptation of Adam and Eve? How does Jesus conquer the serpent?
- 4. Why does Jesus heal, and how are his healings related to his teaching? Have you or a loved one experienced healing through Jesus?



Christ today is the one who reveals this divine light, and shines forth ineffably.

Let us shine along with him, transfigured, as far as possible, by the light of God.

Christ, on the mountain, makes the glory that is inaccessible available to the disciples.

Let us be lifted up to the height of contemplation, and let us join them

in gazing on the Mystery

—Leo the Great

READ

- Four Mountains chapter twelve
- Psalm 27
- Matthew 5–7; 17:1–13
- John 2:13–22

CHAPTER TWELVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How does Jesus fulfill the symbols of trumpet, garments, and the sun?
- 2. How does Jesus elaborate and expand on the Ten Commandments? What are some specific teachings from the sermon on the mount that are related to specific Old Testament commands?
- 3. How is God's glory revealed on Mount Tabor?
- 4. Why is Moses on Mount Tabor?
- 5. What is the relationship between Jesus's body and the temple? How do you think this relates to the church as the body of Christ?



Blessed be the Merciful One who saw the sword beside Paradise, barring the way to the Tree of Life; He came and took to Himself a body which was wounded so that, by the opening of His side,

He might open up a way to paradise.

—Ephrem the Syrian

READ

- Four Mountains chapter thirteen
- Psalm 22
- Matthew 21:1–11; 26–27
- John 19:21–37
- Hebrews 9–12

CHAPTER THIRTEEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- I. How does Jesus fulfill the symbols of wine, blood, and sword?
- 2. Why did the Pharisees want to kill Jesus?
- 3. Who lines up to condemn Jesus, and how many different ways is he rejected? How do you see your own sin in the actions of the Pharisees, Pilate, or Peter?
- 4. How is Jesus's sacrifice different from the tabernacle sacrifices in the Old Testament? How does it fulfill these sacrifices?

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5. Why does blood and water pour out of Jesus's side when it is pierced?



Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia
—Charles Wesley

READ

- Four Mountains chapter fourteen
- Psalm 118:14-29
- Luke 24:13-35
- John 19:38–42; John 20
- Acts 1–2

CHAPTER FOURTEEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How does Jesus fulfill the symbol of bread on the road to Emmaus?
- 2. What is the difference between speaking to a friend over the phone and speaking to them in person? Why do we prefer to be physically present with our friends?
- 3. Why does Mary Magdalene think that Jesus is a gardener?

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4.	Thomas is often ref	ferred to as do	ubting Thomas.	Is this a fai	r name for
	Thomas? How is Th	omas similar to	o Abraham?		

5. Jesus's encounter with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is sometimes called the first Christian church service. How is this encounter similar to our experience in church today?



Not gold and silver, jewels and fine linen, and skill of man to use them, make the House of God, but worshippers, the souls and bodies of men whom He has redeemed.

—John Henry Newman

READ

- Four Mountains chapters fifteen and sixteen
- Psalm 28; 104:25-37
- Luke 24:50-53
- John 16
- Acts 1–2
- 2 Corinthians 5–7
- 1 Peter 1-2

CHAPTER FIFTEEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. How does the ascended Christ aid our prayers?
- 2. Why does Jesus leave behind his followers? Why doesn't he bring about a complete end to sin on earth shortly after his resurrection?
- 3. What is the relationship between Jesus's ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost?

4.	What do clouds signify for us in light of Jesus's ascension?		
ı.	CHAPTER SIXTEEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS How is Pentecost a reversal of Babel? What is different about these two events?		
2.	What are the differences between the tabernacle, temple, and the New Testament church?		
3.	Why does Peter call Christians living stones? Why is it important for Christians to gather together as living stones in the church?		
4.	Have you experienced a decline in any of your physical senses? Have you seen growth in any of your spiritual senses?		



On my head has the Bridegroom placed His hand, and look, His right arm embraces me.

Through the touch of His hand have I been reborn from the baptismal womb.

—Anonymous Hymn

READ

- Four Mountains chapter seventeen
- Psalm 87
- Isaiah 2; 25–27; 60
- Revelation 19–22

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Why does the second coming of Jesus begin with judgment?
- 2. How is Mount Zion similar to Mount Eden? In what ways is it different?
- 3. What symbols from Mount Eden make an appearance on Mount Zion? How has your understanding of these symbols changed now that you have encountered Mount Zion?

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4.	How does our encounter with Jesus on Mount Zion resemble a wedding?
5.	Will we continue to grow on Mount Zion? Why?



Who is capable of comprehending the extent of what is to be discovered in a single utterance of Yours? For we leave behind in it far more than we can take from it, like thirsty people drinking from a fountain.

—Ephrem the Syrian

READ

- Four Mountains chapters twenty and twenty-one
- Deuteronomy 31–34
- Psalms 90; 119:105–112
- Isaiah 55:6-11

CHAPTER TWENTY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- I. What are some of the other symbols in the Bible not covered in this book? How do you think Jesus fulfills these symbols?
- 2. How do the Apostles' Creed and Ten Commandments help us to read Scripture well?
- 3. Why is belonging to a church essential for reading the Bible properly?

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4.	How and where do you encounter biblical symbols in your everyday life? How might these simple encounters draw you closer to Jesus?		
I.	CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS How does our walk with God resemble Moses' walk with God?		
2	What is one way you will incorporate symbols into the way you read the		
2.	Bible and live your life?		



For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit.

For as bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.

—Irenaeus

READ

• Four Mountains chapters eighteen and nineteen

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- I. What is the relationship between faith and baptism? Why does God want those who have declared their faith in Christ to also be baptized?
- 2. What does your personal prayer time, or 'quiet time' look like? What does it involve?
- 3. Which of the spiritual senses do you have the hardest time cultivating? Why?
- 4. How does one build Christian virtue? How does our time on the spiritual mountain help us cultivate Christian character?

CHAPTER NINETEEN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I.	Why do we give physical gifts to one another? How do they bond us closer together with our loved ones?
2.	Why do we read the Bible out loud in church, and why do we receive biblical teaching at church?
3.	What do the bread and wine become during the communion service? How do we join alongside Abraham, Melchizedek, Moses, and the disciples when we receive the communion bread and wine?
4.	How does the worship of God in church prepare you for mission?

12-WEEK BIBLE STUDY SCHEDULE

Participants should read the chapters and either the full or condensed readings before each study. The condensed reading can be used as the focal point for discussions during the study.

Week	Book Readings	Full Readings	Condensed Readings
Pre-Study	Chapter 1		
Week 1	Chapters 2 and 3	Genesis 1–2; Psalms 104:1–24; 139:1–17	Genesis 1:26–31; 2
Week 2	Chapters 4 and 5	Genesis 3–11; Psalms 2; 51	Genesis 3; 11
Week 3	Chapter 6	Genesis 11–25; Psalm 105:1–15	Genesis 22:1–19
Week 4	Chapters 7 and 8	Exodus 1; 14–20; Leviticus 19; Psalm 1; 68:1–20	Exodus 12:1–13; 14; 19:9–25; 20:1–21
Week 5	Chapters 9 and 10	Exodus 40; Leviticus 1–9; Daniel 7; Psalm 66; 126; Isaiah 11; 53; Ezekiel 36–37	Leviticus 7:1–10; Daniel 7:1–14; Isaiah 11; 53; Ezekiel 37:1–14
Week 6	Chapter 11	Psalm 89; Matthew 3–4; John 6; 9	Matthew 3–4
Week 7	Chapter 12	Psalm 27; Matthew 5–7; 17:1–13; John 2:13–22	Matthew 5–7; 17:1–13
Week 8	Chapter 13	Psalm 22; Matthew 21:1–11; 26–27; John 19:31–37; Hebrews 9–12	John 19:31–37; Hebrews 9–11
Week 9	Chapter 14	Psalm 118:14–29; Luke 24:13–35; John 19:38–42; 20	Luke 24:13–35; John 20
Week 10	Chapters 15 and 16	Psalm 28; 104:25–37; Luke 24:50–53; John 16; Acts 1–2; 2 Corinthians 5–7; 1 Peter 1–2	Acts 1–2; 1 Peter 2
Week 11	Chapter 17	Psalm 87; Isaiah 2; 25–27; 60; Revelation 19–22	Revelation 21; 22:1–7
Week 12	Chapters 20 and 21	Deuteronomy 31–34; Psalm 90; 119:105–112; Isaiah 55:6–11	Deuteronomy 34; Isaiah 55:6–11
Post-Study	Chapters 18 and 19		