

Change

Facing the Unexpected

Beth Seversen

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CONTENTS

GETTING STARTED

How to Use this Discussion Guide	5
What Is a Q Place?	6
Q Place Guidelines	6
Q Place Discussion Tips	7
Tools for Studying the Bible in a Q Place	7
When You Are the Question-Asker	8

CHANGE: Facing the Unexpected

Introduction	9
1. Facing Change – God’s Provision	
Exodus 23:20-33	11
2. A Cure for Isolation – God’s Presence	
1 Kings 19	17
3. A Comfort for Loss – God’s Sovereignty	
Genesis 45	23
4. A Remedy When You Are Overwhelmed – God’s Strength	
Psalm 18	29
5. Support in Discouragement – God’s Loving-kindness	
Ruth 1–2	35
6. The Reality in the Midst of Disruption – God’s Plan	
Jeremiah 29:1-14	41
7. A Route Out of Temptation – God’s Faithfulness	
1 Peter 5:1-11.....	47
8. A Cause for Celebration – God’s Blessing	
Ezra 3.....	53

1

Exodus 23:20-33

Facing Change – God's Provision

The director of an Irish mission was planning to retire in four years, and he had already started praying for his replacement. The mission wanted to identify the new director within the following year so that this individual could be adequately mentored for the position. Why so soon? Change is challenging, and a smooth transition would benefit both parties and prevent the work of the ministry from being hindered.

When change enters our lives, we often feel insecure and inadequate.

1. Recall a major change in your life. How did God prepare you? How did he provide for you in the change?

Read Exodus 23:20-33

Note: Through God's intervention, the Israelites have escaped from slavery in Egypt and are camped near the desert of Mt. Sinai.

2. What do you learn about the setting for this episode in Israel's history from Exodus 19:1-6?

3. List all that God will do according to Exodus 23:20-33.

What do you learn about God from this narrative?

What are God's specific instructions to the Israelites and his expectations?

4. How does God prepare Israel for the next part of his plan for them?
5. What will God do through his angel (verses 20-23)?
6. Name the nations listed in Exodus 23:23.

11. Why doesn't God act to accomplish his intentions all at once?

12. Reread this story and identify the cause and effect relationships.

13. What is God's purpose here, and what are his plans?

How will they be accomplished?

What rules and schedule must Israel adhere to in order to achieve success?

REFLECTION / SUMMARY

1. When facing a change, adversity, or an enemy, why is it important to follow God's guidelines for life?

2. If you had been one of the Israelites hearing the message of this passage, how would you have responded?

How do you respond to God's commands and promises today?

CONCLUSION

It is a comfort to know that God had an extensive plan in mind for Israel, and a specific sequential order by which his design was to be fulfilled. God wants to fulfill his purposes in our lives today, and his plans are orderly, specific, personal, and intentional. Just as he intended to bless the Israelites, so he intends to bless us, his children. When we obey his word and follow his instructions, we will enjoy his favor and blessing on our lives.

PRAYER

Lord, my God, please go ahead of me and prepare my way. Guard me along my way and bring me to the place you have prepared for me on earth and ultimately in eternity. Help me listen to you, pay attention to your words, and not rebel against you. Prepare a place for me where I can flourish and be a blessing to others, a place where I may turn the hearts of your enemies to you.

May I worship you alone, not things or money or people or praise; but only you. Bless my food and water. May what I eat and drink not cause my body harm or disease or death. If it pleases you, may I live a full life span.

Guide me to help others to know you and honor your name. Help me not to be influenced by evildoers nor become trapped by sin, evil, or your enemies. Thank you that you have a plan and a purpose for my life. I give you my insecurities and choose to trust you. Amen.