

# **Exodus 1-20**

## **Bible Study Leaders' Notes**



## **Exodus – Leaders’ notes**

Thank you so much in advance for all of your work in leading our church members as we study God’s word together. My aim in these leaders’ notes is not to provide you with all of the answers to the questions, but rather, to help you see the aim of the studies and provide insight on trickier points where needed.

The overarching theme of all of these studies is that despite our unfaithfulness, God is graciously and abundantly faithful to His people. My prayer is that we would see this as we study Exodus together.

Through 9 studies, we will be looking at the first 20 chapters of Exodus. Simultaneously, Geoff will be preaching through Exodus over 8 weeks on Sundays here at Trinity Church Adelaide, with 6 of these based in the first 20 chapters, but the final 2 pulling from events later in the book. These studies have been written to compliment the sermons, looking at similar passages and allowing a chance for further discussions on the events and ideas presented.

As we study Exodus, I would like to highlight a couple of things about my studies in particular to you as leaders. Firstly, we are covering a lot of ground! This means there can be a large amount of verses to read in the studies. Please allow time to read the passages in your groups. Secondly, sometimes the studies are broken up with prayer in the middle. This is to respond with praise or application before moving on to the rest of the study.

## **Study 1 Exodus 1:1-2:25**

**Big idea: God is concerned for the Israelites. God is concerned for us.**

### **Background of Exodus**

As we jump in to Exodus it's helpful to familiarize ourselves with the story that comes before. You might like to watch the Bible Project's overview of Exodus that touches on this and describes the flow and main events in Exodus.

### **God's involvement in the birth of Moses**

Already in Exodus we can see Pharaoh's oppression of the Israelites – he inflicts harsh labour (1:11-14), commands the Hebrew midwives to kill their baby boys (1:15-21) and then extends that command for all Egyptians to kill Israelite boys (1:22). But, what also shows in these stories is Pharaoh's failure in his plan. The Israelites just continue to multiply and spread. Despite the commands made by Pharaoh, Moses is not only kept alive at birth, he is even brought up in Pharaoh's household, and Pharaoh's money is used to pay for Moses to be cared for! We can see that God is committed to His plans and promises, even in the face of opposition from worldly authorities.

### **Moses' character**

In Exodus, and Numbers, we see flaws in Moses' character. But we also see that God uses Moses. And we see this example many times in the Bible. The leaders we see of God's people throughout history are not perfect heroes, they are sinful and flawed people like the rest of humanity, like us. But God in His sovereignty works with and through broken people. He is sovereign over all and can still use Moses, and us, to bring about His will.

### **God remembers**

In verses 23-25 the author writes that God heard and had concern for the Israelites. I have not specifically addressed that God 'remembers His covenant'. If you would like to, you can address this in your groups. However, my aim, particularly as you conclude the study, is to highlight God's concern for His people.

## **Study 2 Exodus 3:1-4:17**

### **Big idea: Yahweh is the same faithful God**

#### **Looking back at Genesis**

You might like to do this in pairs/smaller groups to allow you to go through these verses more quickly.

#### **Listing God's reply in 3:12-22**

There are a lot of things God says in these verses. It would be helpful to make sure you have prepared a list yourself before leading the study.

In these verses God addresses Moses' concerns and comforts him. God reminds Moses "of His sovereign power. With God nothing is impossible, and it is therefore ridiculous to suggest that God would send someone on a task which they could not perform with God's help"<sup>1</sup>

#### **What's not addressed in this study**

The Bible reading stops at 4:17 for this study. As we read the rest of chapter 4, particularly verses 24-26, it can seem a bit strange. To be honest, I'm not sure what to do with these verses! If your group members do read on and have questions, or if you are curious yourself, here are some resources that address these verses:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/moses-zipporah-strangest-circumcision-story-exodus/>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/moses-maximus-and-a-bloody-valentine/>

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<sup>1</sup> *Getting to Know God. Pathway Bible Guides: Exodus 1-20*, Kingsford, Matthias Media, 2006, page 49

## **Study 3 Exodus 5:1-7:7**

### **Big idea: God promises deliverance**

#### **Bible reading**

This is a long chunk of reading! One suggestion is to split up into characters for the reading.

#### **Drawing a comic strip**

Bring paper for drawing a comic strip! You might like each member to have their own piece of paper to draw on, or use some butchers paper to draw as a group.

#### **Comforting Bible passages**

Come prepared with Bible passages you find comforting. Be vulnerable in sharing with your groups. One passage in particular that you can share is Romans 5:1-11.

#### **Mini-genealogy in 6:14-27**

This genealogy is not a picture of the whole story up until now, but rather shows the line from Moses and Aaron back to Levi. Levi was the son of Jacob, who was the son of Isaac, who was the son of Abraham. These are all sons of the covenants we have looked in the previous studies. This mini-genealogy, therefore shapes our expectations of the rest of the story as we look to see how God will fulfil His promises.

#### **Understanding God and Pharoah's heart**

As mentioned in your studies, we are going to have a night specifically to look at this topic! It's a big and hard topic to comprehend, so don't feel like you need to provide all of the answers yourself! There are further comments in Study 4 on this topic.

Please do encourage your group members to come to our Deep Dive night and wrestle with this topic, and do plan on coming yourself. The invitation is open to members from all of our gatherings and will be a great time to dive deeper into Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility.

## Study 4 Exodus 7:8-10:29

### Big idea: God's power makes Him known

#### Bible Reading

Again, this is a long passage to read through, but I do think it is helpful to read in full to see patterns amongst the plagues. My suggestion is to read this once together in your group, then to split into smaller groups to look at each plague specifically.

#### Patterns in the plagues

I have provided a table in the booklets to identify particular things about each plague. If available, you might like to draw it out together on a whiteboard or on butchers paper in your group.

One pattern you will see is Pharaoh's heart becoming hard vs Pharaoh hardening his heart vs God hardening Pharaoh's heart. As you continue your discussions around Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility, the following points are useful to keep in mind.

- a) God's sovereign control over every situation is never questioned in the Bible.
- b) Human responsibility is also stressed in the Bible and, in particular, God's sovereignty is never used as an excuse for a person's sin.
- c) It is significant that, prior to 9:12, the emphasis has been on Pharaoh hardening his heart. The text wants us to see that God is not forcing Pharaoh into anything - that Pharaoh himself is not wanting to do. God's sovereignty does not override human responsibility.
- d) At its core, the Bible is a pastoral book (2 Tim 3:6). Depending on the particular pastoral situation, the Bible may stress one truth over another. For example, here in Exodus the emphasis of the narrative falls on the complete and utter dependability of God's faithfulness to His promises. The text is therefore keen to tell us that even when Pharaoh is doing his worst to stop God, he still does not fall outside the scope of God's sovereign power."<sup>2</sup>

If you or your group members have questions around the plagues as real events, a starting place could be this article:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/oss/article/ten-plagues-environmental-disasters-or-religious-interference>

#### Application

As we look at our similarities and dissimilarities to Pharaoh, one major difference is that we have the Spirit working in us! Make sure to use this in your responses as we look at applying the passage to ourselves.

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<sup>2</sup> *Getting to Know God. Pathway Bible Guides: Exodus 1-20*, Kingsford, Matthias Media, 2006, page 55-56

## **Study 5 Exodus 11:1-12:42**

### **Big idea: Jesus is our new Passover lamb**

#### **Instructions for the Passover**

There are lots of instructions for the Passover that can be drawn out in this passage. As you think through the significance of these, what stands out to you? What do they tell you about God's character or about humans?

There are further Passover restrictions in 12:43-51 and instructions on the consecration of the firstborn listed in 13:1-16. Your group members may like to read these outside of the study and think about the significance of them, similar to how we will look at verses 1-11 in this study.

#### **Re-reading Exodus 12:31-42**

As you read these verses again, you might like to have a printed passage for your group members to highlight or underline God's actions and provisions. As the big ideas have highlighted in previous chapters, God has great concern and care for the Israelites, which will be highlighted again here.

#### **Matthew 26**

Jesus is our Passover lamb! This side of the cross, this is the application for us. Do make sure you allow enough time to study these verses together!

## **Study 6 Exodus 13:17-14:31**

### **Big idea: God leads the Israelites**

#### **Looking Back**

The start of this passage tells the event of the Exodus that has been foretold throughout the story so far. You might like to use the first few questions, particularly as you look at 13:17 and 14:4 to summarize and reflect on what you have looked at in previous weeks.

Although I have not addressed it in this study, we read again in 14:4 of God hardening Pharaoh's heart. If your group members attended the Deep Dive night, invite them to share reflections in the group.

#### **Application**

In verse 14, Moses encourages the Israelites that "The Lord will fight for you, you need only to be still". It's important to note that as the Israelites face Pharaoh's opposition, they depend on Him to save them and deal with their opposition. But in their response, there is an activeness in following God's provision and guidance. As they trust and are 'still', they had to actively follow God as they walked through the Red Sea. Their trust is not passive, but active.

As we look at responding by fearing the Lord and putting our trust in Him, you might like to think through practical examples that are relevant for your group. For example:

- A family member is diagnosed with cancer.
- You find out you're going to be made redundant at work.
- You are struggling to find accommodation in the coming months.
- Your work colleagues are putting you down for being a Christian.
- You get offered a higher paying job that requires working in the evenings and weekends.



## **Study 7 Exodus 15:1-27**

### **Big idea: Rejoice in the Lord and His works**

#### **Moses' and Miriam's song**

For your groups to highlight and underline different things in the song please print a copy of these verses for your group members.

#### **Application**

Come prepared with your own ideas of how you can better rejoice in God!

As you brainstorm reasons for rejoicing together, you might like to write a list on a whiteboard/butchers paper.

This song is full of joy, and the study emulates this. As we look through the song, it is important to consider where your group members are at. Will they be feeling joyful in God? How can you encourage them to be joyful as you answer these questions? Use the brainstorming time to lift one another up and encourage one another. For anyone in your group who may find it hard to feel joyful, you might like to prepare a Bible verse for them to reflect on that may encourage them.

#### **Homework**

I have encouraged and challenged you and your group members to be practical in the week ahead in your rejoicing. There is an opportunity in next week's study to follow up on this homework.

## **Study 8 Exodus 16:1-18:12**

### **Big idea: Trust in God's providence**

#### **Application from last week**

I have intentionally started this study looking back at last week's homework. Please encourage your groups to continue rejoicing in God and work at growing in this together.

#### **1 Corinthians 10:3-4**

In the New Testament, Paul comments on this story we have read in Exodus and relates it to Christ. He describes that the Spiritual rock they drank from was Christ. This highlights just how gracious God is in providing for His people.

#### **God's providence**

As we read through these chapters, we see that God provides for the Israelites even when they are ungrateful and do not trust Him. God's love for us and provision in our lives is graciously unconditional. As you think of ways or situations where trusting in God's providence is hard, you might like to list or discuss the ways you see God's providence in your own lives.

## **Study 9 Exodus 19:1-20:21**

### **Big idea: Do we follow God's commands?**

#### **God's promise in verses 5-6**

As we looked at the unconditional nature of God's providence last week, we saw that God's promises here are also unconditional. Whilst the Israelites, and we, fail at keeping our promises to God, He remains faithful to His promises.

#### **The motivations of the 10 Commandments**

As we look through the 10 Commandments, I have provided space for you to look at the motivations behind each of the commands. My aim is to identify the summary Jesus makes in Matthew 22, that the greatest commands are to 'love the Lord' and 'love our neighbour'.

#### **Obedience to the commandments**

The Israelites were given the law in the Old Testament to show their sin and to be consecrated as God's holy nation. This side of the cross, Jesus has fulfilled the law for us. As we look at Jesus' commands to us, we are no longer bound to the 10 Commandments, nor are we bound to any law. Our salvation is secure in Jesus' death on the cross. Our obedience to Jesus' commands are an outworking of our faith (Philippians 2:12-13). We do not continue in our old ways of life and keep on sinning (Romans 6:1-14), rather, we live in response to God's faithfulness in the way that we love Him and love others.

## **Reflecting on Exodus**

If you have time in your groups, it would be great to reflect on these last 9 studies together. If you don't have time to do it together, please encourage your group members to do this at home. Maybe even share your responses over a group message! We want to reflect on the big picture of Exodus together, to see God's faithfulness throughout all these stories. And as we read in 1 Corinthians, we want to reflect on the examples provided in Exodus to keep ourselves from setting our hearts on evil things as the Israelites did.