

# **Exodus 1-20**

## **Bible Study**



**TRINITY**  
CHURCH

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## **Introduction**

Over the next 9 weeks we are going to be studying the first half of Exodus together. So, what do we know about it?

Exodus is the second book of the Bible, following Genesis. The exact timing and authorship of the book is unknown. It is part of the Pentateuch or Torah - the first 5 books of the Bible, which describe the origins of Israel, from the beginning of creation to the death of Moses. Exodus, in particular, describes and follows the relationship between God and His people.

The title 'Exodus' comes from the Greek word *exodos*, meaning 'going out', referring to a main event in the book where the Israelites are freed from slavery in Egypt, and are brought through the wilderness into Canaan. This event stems from Genesis, fulfilling the promises God made to His people that God Himself would bring them into the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession (which we will look at more in our studies).

As we go through Exodus there are many stories and interactions to read. There are many highs and lows. My hope is that in all of this, we would see that God is the highs and His people are sadly the lows. But praise be to Him, because throughout Exodus we read how God graciously pursues a relationship with His people. We see that despite our unfaithfulness, God is still faithful, gracious and compassionate towards us.

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

When has there been a time in your life someone has shown great care or concern for you?

### **Read Exodus 1:1-14**

The very opening verse of this book implies there is a backstory to what is going on. In fact, in the Hebrew, Exodus begins with the word 'and'. So, before we get into Exodus, what is the backstory?

- What do you know about Israel/Jacob? Where did they come from and why did they go to Egypt?
  
- In verse 7 we get a direct link back to Genesis – what is it? (Hint: Genesis 1:28 and 15:4-6)

What is going on for the Israelites now in these chapters? Do you think the Israelites expected this? (Hint: Genesis 3:17-19 and 15:13-16)

### **Read Exodus 1:15-2:25**

How do the Hebrew midwives react and respond to Pharaoh's authority in verses 15-19?

What is the relationship between the midwives and God?

In verses 1-10 of chapter 2 we have the story of the very start of Moses' life. How do the events of this story relate to Pharaoh's commands?

In verses 11-22 we see another snippet of Moses' life. What do we see of his character here and in Numbers 20:6-11?

*\*Spoiler alert\** Moses goes on to become the great leader of Israel. He is used by God to bring blessing amongst God's people. What does this show about the types of people God uses?

In verses 23-25 the author of Exodus provides a great summary of what we have just read. We read that God hears the Israelites. He looks on them and is concerned for them. How have we seen this in the story so far? Read back over the different sections of the passage and note your observations down:

- God and the Israelites in Egypt
  
- God and the Egyptian midwives
  
- God and Moses

What do you think this looks like for us today? Does God hear us and have concern for us?

After discussing it as a group, reflect on your own for a few minutes. How have you seen God's concern or care in your life?

Maybe you don't feel like God is concerned for you. Maybe that is how the Israelites felt at points as well. But this side of the cross we have proof that He cares! You might like to read Romans 8:28-39.

**Pray**

Praise God that He hears his people and that He has concern for them. Thank God for the example we see of this in the beginning of Exodus. Thank God for how He has done this in your own life and in the life of others.

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

What has been a strange or memorable way someone has introduced themselves to you?

After learning a little bit about Moses last week in chapter 2, we now jump straight into the story of God revealing Himself and interacting with Moses.

### Read Exodus 3:1-10

How does Moses become aware of God? What stands out to you in this story?

How does God reveal Himself in verses 5-6?

As we continue reading through Exodus there is a repeated phrase – that God is the “God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob”. What do you think of when you hear God described this way?

Like we did last week, let’s turn back to Genesis to see what’s going on here. Have a look at the passages below:

| Bible verse      | Who is God speaking to? | What does God promise? |
|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Genesis 1:28     |                         |                        |
| Genesis 17:2,6-8 |                         |                        |
| Genesis 22:17-18 |                         |                        |
| Genesis 26:4     |                         |                        |
| Genesis 28:14-15 |                         |                        |

|                  |  |  |
|------------------|--|--|
| Genesis 35:11-12 |  |  |
| Genesis 50:24    |  |  |

What do we learn about God and His promises in these verses?

Why do you think God uses the phrase “God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob” when He reveals Himself to Moses?

Why does God say He has revealed himself in verses 7-10?

**Read Exodus 3:11-4:17**

How does Moses first respond to God in verse 11?

What is God’s reply in 3:12-22? (There is a lot, list it all!)

What comfort and assurance should this give Moses?

What are Moses’ next three objections across 4:1-13?

How does God respond to Moses’ objections?

What do we learn about God from His interactions with Moses?



We finished off the last study thinking about God's concern for His people. In 4:31 we get another comment from the author about God's concern. How do the elders of the Israelites respond to God's concern for them and what they know of His character?

We can be a bit like Moses when it comes to obedience. We've not been commanded to be the king of Egypt, but Jesus calls us to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). Do you ever think/feel/act "God, please send someone else. I'm not good with my words. What if they don't believe me?"

### **Pray**

Spend some time now responding like the Israelites. Praise God for who He is and that He has revealed Himself to us. Pray that our knowledge of God wouldn't just be knowledge, but that we too would bow down and worship Him in our lives.

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

When is a time you have felt that you have been worked hard in your life?

#### **Read Exodus 5:1-6:12**

What is the sequence of events in this story? As a group draw a comic strip detailing what happens in these verses.

How would you respond to Pharaoh: "who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" (Hint: look back at the last 2 studies)

What do you think Pharaoh hopes to gain by scattering the Israelites and inflicting harsher labour?

What do you think the Israelites were thinking about God and His promises to their forefathers in this situation?

What comfort could the Israelites have taken from what God said to Moses in 6:6-12?

Can you think of a time, or situations when we are similar to the Israelites and do not listen to God because of our hard circumstances (6:9)?

What comforts does God give us? What passages do you think of about God's comfort and assurances today?

**Pray**

Thank God for His comforts and promises to the Israelites and to us. Spend some time reflecting on how you might better hold firm to these comforts and promises in times of hardship and pray that God would help you to do so.

**Read Exodus 6:13-7:7**

Why do you think the author includes this mini-genealogy for us?

When the Lord speaks to Moses in 6:29-7:7, what does He say will happen next?

What is God's involvement in these actions?

In these verses we see that in judgment, God hardens Pharaoh's heart, but we also know that God is compassionate and gracious (Exodus 34:6). How do you feel about these two characteristics of God? How do they hold together?

It's okay if you can't comprehend it all together. We have human minds trying to understand the God of the universe! As theologian Herman Bavinck says "The knowledge of God... is so rich, so broad and so deep that it can never be wholly absorbed in the consciousness of any rational creature."<sup>1</sup>

However, it is important that we uphold all of the characteristics of God that we learn about in the Bible. God is loving and compassionate, He rescues His people out of Egypt. He is loving and compassionate towards us. But God is also ruler over His creation. He rightly judges those who turn from Him. And here in Exodus we see that He has the power and authority to harden hearts.

### **Pray**

Continue to praise God for His character. Pray that God would continue revealing His character to us through His word and ask him for help to understand the things we don't.

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

Want to dive deeper into the nature of God hardening Pharaoh's heart? On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August come along to Trinity Church Adelaide's 'Deep Dive' night where we will hear from Luke Wisely on Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility. It'll be an opportunity to hear teaching on this topic and a chance to ask your questions!

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> H. Bavinck, *The Wonderful Works of God: Instruction in the Christian Religion according to the Reformed Confession*, Pennsylvania, Westminster Seminary Press, 2019, page 20

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

If you got to ask God for a sign, what would you ask for?

We now get to one of the most famous and chaotic parts of Exodus – the plagues. In previous chapters, what has God told us about what will happen? (Hint: look at the previous study and 6:28-7:7)

### **Read Exodus 7:8-13**

These verses act as an introduction for the plagues. What happens in this story?

### **Read Exodus 7:17-10:29**

This is a long section to read. To help you split it up, go around your group and each read a plague until you get to the end.

As you read it aloud together, highlight any repeated phrases you notice. What did you find?

Now, let's look a bit closer.

Split up into pairs/small groups and cover the plagues in more detail.

In your pairs/smaller groups read the passage of the plagues again and use this table to document what you find.

| Plague number  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of plague   |   |   |   |   |   |
| What does God say the people will know from this plague? |   |   |   |   |   |
| Is it different for God's people?                        |   |   |   |   |   |
| How do the people around Pharaoh respond?                |   |   |   |   |   |
| How does Pharaoh respond?                                |   |   |   |   |   |
| What happens to Pharaoh's heart?                         |   |   |   |   |   |

| Plague number  | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Type of plague   |   |   |   |   |
| What does God say the people will know from this plague? |   |   |   |   |
| Is it different for God's people?                        |   |   |   |   |
| How do the people around Pharaoh respond?                |   |   |   |   |
| How does Pharaoh respond?                                |   |   |   |   |
| What happens to Pharaoh's heart?                         |   |   |   |   |

Share your findings with the whole group.

What stands out to you as you go through this? Do you have any lingering questions?

In 9:16 God says to Pharaoh "I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." How is this accomplished in the plagues we have looked at?

We see in this story that despite all God does, Pharaoh still hardens his heart. A warning is given to us in Hebrews 3:12-14 to not harden our own hearts and turn away from the living God. In what ways are you similar to Pharaoh? When are you tempted to or guilty of hardening your heart?

In what ways are you dissimilar to Pharaoh? What comfort and encouragement do we have in times of temptation?

How can we "encourage one another daily"?

### **Pray**

Thank God that He is powerful. Thank Him that through His power He can be known. Ask for forgiveness for the times we don't respect God's power and pray that we would respond accordingly. Pray that we would help people in all the earth to respond accordingly as well.

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

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

If you had to quickly leave the house and you could only take 3 things what would they be?

### Read Exodus 11:1-10

We now get to the final plague in Egypt. What does God say will happen?

Verse 7 tells us that this plague serves as a sign that God made a distinction between Egypt and Israel. How do you think the plague(s) achieve this?

How do you think you would react/respond if you were an Egyptian?

### Read Exodus 12:1-42

Using the table below, list out the instructions given in verses 1-11 for the Passover.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| When?  |  |
| Who?   |  |
| What kind of animal?                         |  |
| What specific actions are they told to take? |  |
| What is their posture/clothing meant to be?  |  |

What do you think is the significance of each of these instructions?

In verses 14-28 the Lord instructs the Israelites that this is to be “a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord - a lasting ordinance”. Why are the Israelites celebrating the plague?

Do you think the lasting ordinance for generations to come extends to us?

How have you seen God at work in today’s passage?

Read Exodus 12:31-42 again and note how God provides for and protects the Israelites.

What comfort do you find in this?

**Read Matthew 26:17-19, 26-29**

What is the connection between this passage and what we have read in Exodus?

The Passover Lamb was the atonement for Israel's sin. Where the punishment for sin is death, a lamb was provided to spare Israel from God's wrath. For us, Jesus is our Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7)! Jesus died on the cross for us, drinking the cup of God's wrath as the punishment for our sins. In Jesus, we are forgiven!

### **Pray**

Thank God for His presence and guidance with the Israelites. Thank God for His presence and guidance in our own lives. Thank Him for the comfort that brings.

Praise God that Jesus is the ultimate Passover lamb. Praise God that Jesus is the one true sacrifice for sin. Thank Him that in Jesus we are forgiven.

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

We are about to read the story of Israel's exile from Egypt. It's a tense situation, full of emotions. If you were directing filming of this scene, what music, lighting and effects would you use?

### **Read Exodus 13:17-14:31**

What is significant about the statement 'when Pharaoh let the people go' in verse 17? (Hint: did we know this was going to happen?)

How is God involved in 13:17-22?

What does this teach us about God?

In 14:4 God restates His plan that we heard throughout the plagues. What is the goal? How is this being achieved?

With everything going on, how do the Israelites respond in 14:10-12?

What is your reaction to their response? Do you think you would respond differently?

Moses responds with a common memory verse in verses 13-14

a. What commands does Moses give?

What do each of these responses practically look like? Take some time to unpack them.

b. What are God's actions in this?

How is this a comfort to the Israelites?

The instructions in verses 13-14 are given to the Israelites in the face of opposition from Pharaoh and his army. What opposition do we face that might be similar?

How do we apply these verses amid opposition?

What similarities do you notice in 14:16-28 compared to earlier in the chapter?

(Hint...

- Look at 14:1-4 and 4:17-18
- How is God involved in these verses?

What difference do we see in the Israelites response in verse 31 compared to earlier in the chapter?

Why do you think the Israelites responded differently this time?

How can we make sure we respond by fearing the Lord and putting our trust in Him? Get practical!

**Pray**

Thank God for the example of His character and actions seen in this story. Pray that, like the Israelites (the second time), we would respond to God with fear and trust.

## Study 7 Exodus 15:1-27

What do you do when you are really happy? Dance, jump up and down, sing?

### Read Exodus 15:1-21

In chapter 15, Moses and Miriam sing a song of God. It is the first song recorded in the Bible! Why are they singing?

(Hint: look back at previous studies and Exodus 15:19)

What stands out to you or what questions do you have from the song?

What description is given to God and what is comforting about this?

| <b>Verse</b> | <b>Description</b> | <b>Comfort</b> |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|
| v2a          |                    |                |
| v2b          |                    |                |
| v3           |                    |                |
| v6           |                    |                |

Reading through the song, highlight or underline the actions of God. What do you notice?

How does God relate to His enemies?

How does God relate to His people?

What is the overall tone of the song? How do you think Moses and Miriam (and the Israelites) were feeling when they wrote this?

Do you feel joy in God?

What do you do to express your joy in God?

What could you do to better rejoice in God? Be practical!

We're going to get practical together.

As a group, write down the reasons you have to rejoice in God and His work in our lives. (If you're feeling extra creative, write them in the form of a song or psalm)

Let's join Moses and Miriam in rejoicing in song. We have so many things to be thankful for.! As a small group listen and sing along to "10,000 Reasons" by Matt Redman and rejoice together.

### **Pray**

Thank God for who He is and all He has done for us. Thank Him that we have many reasons to rejoice. Ask that He would help us to be joyful and thankful people.

### **Homework**

Each day this week be practical in your rejoicing. In the study we looked at ways we could be better at rejoicing in God. Commit to doing one of these things each day this week.



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

How did you go with your rejoicing in the past week?

Are you spontaneous or a planner?

### **Read Exodus 16:1-17:7**

What stands out to you from this passage? What questions do you have?

What has happened for the Israelites prior to this story?  
(Hint: look back at your previous studies)

How do the Israelites respond to being in the desert in 16:3?

What do you find surprising about their response?

What is God's response in 16:4-6?

Do you think the Israelites deserved God responding in this way?

What commands did God set in verses 16-35 for the food He was providing?

How well did the Israelites go at obeying these commands?

In verses 31-34 God commands the Israelites to keep the manna for the next generations. Why do you think they were to do this?

In 17:1-7 we read the next journey the Israelites take out of the Desert of Sin. How does this compare to the story in chapter 16?

How does Paul reflect on this story in 1 Corinthians 10:3-4?

How would you respond to the Israelites' question in verse 7?

What do these accounts teach us about humans and about God?

**Read Exodus 18:1-12**

What is the significance of the names Moses gives his children?

What does Moses do when he meets his father-in-law?

How does Jethro respond to "*everything God has done for Moses and for his people Israel*"?

Do you think your response to God's work in your own life is more like the Israelites or Jethro?

Part of the problem for the Israelites is that they didn't trust in God's providence. In what ways or situations do you find it hard to trust Him?

How can you encourage each other to trust God?

**Pray**

Thank God for His providence in our lives. Ask Him to help us respond with delight and praise like Jethro. Ask that He would help you trust in Him in all of life's circumstances.

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

What is the strangest or quirkiest law you have heard of?

### Read Exodus 19

How does God summarize the events of Exodus so far in verses 3-4?

What is the promise He offers to the Israelites in verses 5-6?

What do the Israelites promise in response in verse 8?

How well are these promises kept?

| God's promise (v5-6)<br>(Hint: 1 Peter 2:9-10) | Israelite's promise (v8)<br>(Hint: Romans 3:23) |
|--|---|
|  |   |

Like the Israelites, we make promises to God, but we too fall short of keeping them and of His glory. But, we have the hope of Christ, who, unlike us, obeyed God and kept His covenant fully! And because of Christ, we no longer have to keep the law. Instead, we are heirs to the promise through our faith in Him (Galatians 3:23-29). Praise God!

Verses 9-25 create a great scene of anticipation as the Lord prepares to descend on Mt. Sinai, and verses 16-19 in particular describe a glorious image. Why do you think there was so much build up?

**Read Exodus 20:1-21**

How does God introduce Himself in verse 2? Why is this important to come before the 10 Commandments?

Use the table below to write out the commandments. As you write them down, what do you think is the motivation behind them?

Do you think there is a common theme/s amongst the motivations?

|     | Commandment | Motivation |
|-----|-------------|------------|
| 1.  |             |            |
| 2.  |             |            |
| 3.  |             |            |
| 4.  |             |            |
| 5.  |             |            |
| 6.  |             |            |
| 7.  |             |            |
| 8.  |             |            |
| 9.  |             |            |
| 10. |             |            |

How does Jesus describe the commandments in Matthew 22:34-40?

Reflecting for yourself, how do you think you go with the two greatest commandments?

### **Pray**

On your own, ask God for forgiveness for the times we don't follow His commands. Praise Him that despite our failures, in Christ He has shown us mercy. He has chosen us to be His special possession. You might like to reflect on the passages read earlier in our study.

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Romans 3:23-24

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once we were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

1 Peter 2:9-10

### **Reflecting on Exodus**

What has stood out to you as we have gone through Exodus?

What have you learnt or been reminded of about humans?

What have you learnt or been reminded of about God?

In 1 Corinthians 10:6 we read that *“These things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did”*. This is my prayer for you as we have studied Exodus together.

### **Pray**

Thank God for what you have learnt. Pray that He would continue to shape your heart to trust and rejoice in Him. Pray that you would be challenged and encouraged to keep from setting your heart on evil things as we have read in these stories.

