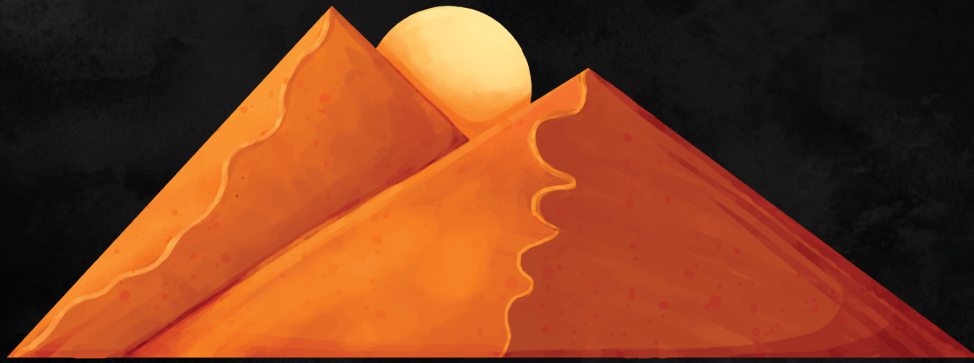


TERM 1 2024



# EXODUS

God's Faithfulness, Our Freedom





# CONTENTS

SERIES OVERVIEW.....	4
1. FEAR AND FAITH.....	6
Exodus 1	
2. AN IMPERFECT DELIVERER.....	10
Exodus 2	
3. IN THE NAME OF GOD.....	14
Exodus 3	
4. SIGNS AND WONDERS.....	18
Exodus 4	
5. FACING THE HATERS.....	22
Exodus 5:1–6:27	
6. A PLAGUE ON YOUR HOUSE.....	26
Exodus 6:28–10:29	
7. THE FIRSTBORN.....	31
Exodus 11	
8. PASSOVER AND POSTERITY.....	34
Exodus 12:1–13:16	
9. DIVINE DELIVERANCE.....	37
Exodus 13:17–14:31	
10. THE GOD WHO PROVIDES.....	43
Exodus 15:22–18:27	

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# SERIES OVERVIEW

Exodus recounts God's supernatural rescue of the Israelites from Egypt and the beginning of their serving him as his chosen people. There is no shortage of dramatic moments in the book of Exodus, and its story of deliverance from oppression has inspired liberation movements in the centuries since. The people, events and theology of this book saturate the rest of the Bible. Exodus isn't just foundational to understanding the rest of the Old Testament better, but for properly understanding the New Testament as well.

## AUTHOR

Traditionally authorship of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament, which includes Exodus) is ascribed to Moses. Although the final product is undoubtedly later than Moses, there is no reason why the overall content and general thrust does not go back to him. Of course, more important than its human authority is its divine inspiration: it is *God's word*.

## GENRE

Exodus is an *historical* narrative – it recounts events that took place in human time and space. It is also a *theological* narrative – it recounts these events in order to reveal something about God. And Exodus is also a *story*. This isn't to say that its 'stories' are fictitious, but because they are, in the words of Andrew Reid, 'often very carefully crafted literary work of art that include developed theological explorations' (*Exodus: Saved For Service*).

## THEMES

**Liberation:** The Israelites are rescued from slavery in Egypt through a series of miraculous encounters and spectacular miracles. But it's a liberation that points to a greater liberation: of God's people from slavery to sin.

**Sacrifice:** Redemption through sacrifice is key to Israel's liberation. God's people are saved by the blood of the Passover lamb. Redemption through sacrifice is then built into the rhythms of Israel's life.

**God's Presence:** God's presence plays a key part in the Exodus story; they are not only liberated *from* slavery, they are liberated *for* God's presence.

**Servitude and Worship:** The movement in the book of Exodus is really from 'slavery to slavery' (the word used to describe Israel's 'slavery' is the same used to describe Israel's 'worship'). But serving God is completely different to serving Pharaoh. Indeed, God's service is true freedom.

**Revelation and Mission:** At key moments in the exodus story, God reveals his name to Moses – and so starts to reveal his name to the whole world (9:16): God's people are called to bear his name in a worthy manner (20:7) and, shaped by God's law, to display his character to the world (19:4–6).

**Jesus and Us:** Exodus is *our* story. The exodus sets God's story on a trajectory that comes to a climax with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus sets us free from slavery to sin; he is our Passover Lamb, whose sacrifice rescues us from judgement and death. He is God's presence on earth; we have seen God's glory in the face of Jesus. And his resurrection is the beginning of a new creation.

## STRUCTURE

Exodus can be broken into four sections:

**PART 1: Rescuer and Rescue | 1:1– 15:21**

**PART 2: Presence and Provision | 15:22–18:27**

**PART 3: Covenant and Commandment | 19:1–24:18**

**PART 4: Sanctuary and Sanction | 25:1–40:38**

This teaching and study series focusses on the first TWO of these sections: the Israelites' rescue from slavery in Egypt, and travel to, and arrival at, Mt Sinai (i.e. **chapters 1 to 18**).

Our hope is that you will experience Exodus as the exciting, historical story that it is – a story of God's faithfulness leading to the great freedom of his people. And that you will not only see how it points to Christ, but you will be inspired in your worship and service of him as our Lord and Saviour.



# FEAR AND FAITH

## Exodus 1

1. Fear is a common human emotion. Who or what can cause you to be afraid?
2. Fear also can lead to two common responses: *fight* or *flight*. Can you think of an example of both in your own experience?

### CONTEXT

The book of Exodus actually begins with the word 'And'. It's missed out in most English translations but it's there in the original Hebrew. This indicates that Exodus is a continuation of a prior story, that it's part of a bigger story, and that the whole book needs to be read in light of what has come before: at the end of Genesis, Joseph's entire family moved to Egypt and settled there. But even further back than that, in Genesis 12, 15 and 17 God made a promise to Abraham, the man he called out of idolatry to know, obey and follow him, and he sealed that promise in a covenant (a binding agreement between two parties). There were **three** principal elements to the promise:

- Abraham would have **land** (the boundaries of which are defined in subsequent chapters)
- Abraham will be made a **great nation** (i.e. he will have a great many descendants)
- Abraham will be **blessed** – and be the source of blessing to the rest of the world.

These three promises frame the rest of the story of the Pentateuch (see *Series Overview*) – indeed, the story of the whole Bible. As we read Exodus and the Pentateuch we find out how these promises are going, and watch and wait for God to bring them to fulfilment.

READ Exodus 1:1–7

3. How is the promise of children/a great nation going?

READ Exodus 1:8–14

4. What do we learn about the 'new king' who came to power? What difference does this make to his view of the Hebrews/Israelites?

5. What is the new Pharaoh's reasons for dealing 'shrewdly' with the Israelites? What is his solution?

- Where do we see Pharaoh's 'solution' played out in our contemporary world?
- How might we be tempted in our own thinking or experience towards similar solutions?

6. How is the promise of being blessed/being a blessing going?

7. And the promise of 'the land'?

READ Exodus 1:15–22

8. The result of Pharaoh's harsh oppression is the opposite of what he desires: the Israelites multiply all the more (v.12). And so Pharaoh's final solution is even more sinister: *kill all baby Hebrew boys*.

The Hebrew midwives do not carry out Pharaoh's orders. Why not?

- Who or what do you find it easy to live in greater fear/awe of than God? Why?

*Many things about the exodus establish a pattern throughout the rest of the Bible and God's dealing with his people, sinful humanity in general, and creation. The themes of 'slavery' and 'freedom' continue to have socio-political ramifications for God's people – from when they are **established** in the Promised Land, to their **exile** from the Promised Land, to when they are **back** in the Promised Land but under the rule of foreign powers. This is the situation by the first century AD – when Jesus comes on the scene.*

**READ** John 8:30–36

9. In an interaction with Jewish leaders, Jesus speaks of their need to be 'set free'. They object and declare that they're not under slavery and so don't need freeing. What is the slavery Jesus is speaking about? What is his point?
10. What is the solution that Jesus gives?



## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

11. How does the failure of Pharaoh's plans to extinguish Israel encourage you as you look at what is happening in the world today?
12. In what ways are you being called to act in courageous obedience by trusting the promises of God?
13. Do you recognise that you are by nature a 'slave to sin'? Have you placed your trust in the Son who alone sets you free?

# AN IMPERFECT DELIVERER

## Exodus 2

1. Have you ever experienced God do something, or answer prayer, in a marvellous or specific way for your good? What happened?

### CONTEXT

Pharaoh's plans to kill the baby Israelite boys at birth was initially thwarted by the 'faithful fear' of the Hebrew midwives (whom God subsequently blessed with their own healthy children). However, chapter 1 ends with Pharaoh's taking it out of the midwives' hands: he commands 'all his people' to 'throw every son born of the Hebrews into the Nile' (v.22). God's people remain enslaved under ruthless oppression.

### READ Exodus 2:1–10

2. In v.1 we read of a boy born to a Levite couple. The boy's mother sees that he's 'beautiful' (i.e. a natural, maternal instinct). She understandably cannot bring herself to harm him.

When she can no longer hide him, what does she do? What do you make of her actions?

3. What ends up happening to the child?

4. What does the 'fate' of baby Moses suggest about these events (especially knowing what grown-up Moses will go on to do)?
- How does this encourage you as one of God's people today?

READ Exodus 2:11–22

5. What does Moses see? What is his response?
6. What do you make of Moses' actions? Were they justifiable? Why/why not?
7. What are the consequences of Moses' actions?

*Where **verse 10** left Moses with a foot in both Israelite and Egyptian camps, **verse 15** leaves him nowhere. He is shunned by his natural people and isolated from his adopted people. As a man without a home, he flees to neutral territory – the land of Midian, east of Egypt in the region of the Sinai Peninsula.*

8. What does Moses do once in Midian? What are the consequences of his actions this time?

*Each situation we have seen in this chapter so far has had a rescue: Moses was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, the Hebrew slave was rescued by Moses, Moses rescued the daughters of Reuel, and Reuel rescued Moses by giving him a home and a people – although perhaps not the ones for which he longed (cf. Gershom's name, v.22).*

*In some sense, these smaller scenarios are about the very same thing that the whole book is about: people who need rescue being rescued or having attempts at rescue made for them. This prepares us for the final three verses of chapter 2 – and the unfolding story of rescue throughout the Bible.*

### READ Exodus 2:23–25

9. The king of Egypt dies, but the Israelites' oppression continues unabated (v.23), and so they 'cry out' to God.

What do you think it means that 'God *heard* their groaning', that he *remembered* his covenant' and 'took *notice*' of the Israelites?

### READ Romans 5:6–11

10. The need of the Israelites for rescue is a *type* (a precursive pattern) of the greater need for rescue of all people. According to the passage, in what sense are we all needy?



11. What has God done to meet this need? How is Jesus different to Moses?

- What is the appropriate response to what God has done?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

12. When we see injustice and hostility – in the world in general, and against God’s people particularly – what are some godly ways and ungodly ways we can respond to it? What might help us to respond in godly ways?

13. Consider what we learn of God’s character from **Exodus 2** (and from **Romans 5**). How does this help you to trust him in the face of difficult and uncertain times?

# IN THE NAME OF GOD

## Exodus 3

1. A friend asks you to convince them that God is real. What might you say in response?

### CONTEXT

Chapter 3 begins with 'meanwhile'. As God in his timing was 'hearing' the groans of his people and preparing to respond, Moses was continuing to live his new life in Midian, tending sheep for his father-in law Jethro (this seems to be his first name, and 'Reuel' his last name/clan name). About 40 years have passed and Moses is 80 years old. (cf. Exodus 7:7 and Acts 7:23,30).

### READ Exodus 3:1–12

2. What does Moses see? What does the narrator tell us is happening?
3. Who does God identify himself as in v.6? How is this significant?

*This would have been a truly 'awesome' experience (in the pure sense of the word). Moses must take off his sandals because of God's radiating holiness – and he can't even bring himself to look at the raw power of God manifest in the burning bush.*

4. Consider v.8. What two actions *has* God done or *will* do? What does this tell us about God?

5. What is God's plan? What is Moses' response?

- What are some times/ways in which you feel unsuitable or ill-equipped for your service to God?

*God responds with an incredible promise: **I will be with you.** But even that assurance is not enough for Moses: he anticipates the Israelites' doubting who is sending him. This leads to an even more profound revelation by God.*

**READ** Exodus 3:13–22

6. What is God's response to Moses? What do you think it means?

- What aspect of God's nature as 'I Am Who I Am' most thrills you? Does it change your view of who he is in any way? Why/why not?

*The rest of the Bible is, in part, a record of God's progressive revelation of himself. As we move from Old Testament to New we learn that God's revelation is even more personal than revealed in Exodus 3.*

READ Hebrews 1:1–4

7. How does God reveal himself to us?

READ John 8:54–58

8. What do you notice about Jesus' answer? What do you think Jesus is claiming in his words (cf. v.59)?

- What sort of response does God want from this revelation?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

9. What causes you to doubt God's promises? How might his 'name' help you to counter those doubts?



10. Imagine you had three sentences in which to explain who God is to someone. Basing your answer on Exodus 3, what would you say?
  
11. To what extent do you allow your identity – what gives you confidence and how you feel about yourself – to be founded on the truth that God says, 'I am with you'?

When is believing this truth hardest for you? How might remembering God's 'I am with you' help you in those times or circumstances?

*'In Jesus, God has come down – just as he said he would in Exodus 3:8 [...] God is self-defining, and his ultimate definition is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. At the cross and the empty tomb we see the holiness of God in his judgement on Jesus; we see the power of God in his defeat of Satan and his raising of his Son; and we see the grace of God because Jesus was judged in our place and rose to give us life. God defines himself – and his definition is Jesus.'*

Tim Chester, *Exodus For You*

# SIGNS AND WONDERS

## Exodus 4

1. We can all experience doubts and have questions about God's plan for our lives. In what areas of life do you have the most questions or doubt the goodness and plan of God?

### CONTEXT

Chapter 4 is a continuation of the LORD's revelation of himself to Moses and his calling of Moses to lead his people to freedom that began in chapter 3 with the burning bush. Moses continues to doubt the LORD's plan, and so the LORD gives Moses signs.

READ Exodus 4:1–9

2. What is Moses' objection?
3. The LORD responds with supernatural signs. What are the signs? What do they tell Moses (and us)?

READ Exodus 4:10–17

4. What is Moses' objection now and what is the LORD's response?

- Do Moses' doubts about his ability resonate with you in any way?

5. Why does 'the LORD's anger burn against Moses' (v.14)?

- Consider the LORD's solution (to provide Moses' brother, Aaron, as his spokesman). Does it comfort you about how God works in, through and for us? Why/why not?

READ Exodus 4:18–31

6. Consider God's description of Israel in v.22. What does this signify?

7. What significance does this description have for (a) the Exodus story, and (b) the whole Bible story?

8. What response can Moses expect to receive from Pharaoh? What else do we learn about this response?

- What sort of reception do you think we ought to expect if we live godly lives and speak God's truth to an unbelieving world?

*These instructions from God are followed by a strange episode: the hurried circumcision of Moses' son, Gershom, by Moses' wife, Zipporah. 3000 years later there's much that we don't know about what's going on here.*

*However, we do know that circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with his people. Within the covenant are grace and life. Outside are judgement and death. This is the 'line' in vv.22–23 between God's firstborn (who will receive grace and life) and those of Egypt (who face judgement and death) – There is no middle ground. By failing to circumcise his son it seems Moses has acted like an Egyptian rather than one of God's covenant people. The only hope is to cross the line – which Zipporah does when she circumcises Gershom.*

*While membership of God's covenant of grace is by faith (as it always was) the **sign** of covenant membership has changed: baptism has replaced circumcision because the picture of cleansing through shed blood has been fulfilled in the cleansing blood of Jesus (cf. **Colossians 2:11–12**). Safety is found in Christ, who fulfils the covenant perfectly on our behalf, and baptism is a sign of that wonderful truth.*



## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

9. As God's new covenant people, what are the signs God has given us of his reality and his character?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. How should the signs of the cross and the empty tomb shape the way we:
  - serve God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - share our faith with those who don't believe in God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. God gives us mouths and helps us to speak. How will this change the way you think about sharing your faith, and the regularity with which you actually do it?

# FACING THE HATERS

Exodus 5:1 – 6:27

1. When life is hard, where do your friends or family turn to for comfort, peace or relief? How effective are these?

## CONTEXT

Chapter 4 ends with Moses and Aaron with the elders of Israel. They tell them everything God has said, they perform the signs God instructed them to perform, and the elders believe. Indeed, 'when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshipped' (4:31). And so, armed with God's weapons, Moses appears in the mighty Pharaoh's court. He isn't a magician or a visionary but a prophet, a messenger of the living God – as we see by his first words: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says..."

READ Exodus 5:1–5

2. What does 'the LORD, the God Israel' say to Pharaoh?
3. What are the first words Pharaoh uses in response to the words of Moses? What do these words and the following actions tell us about Pharaoh's attitude to the LORD?

*Moses and Aaron make a counteroffer: a three-day journey for the Israelites to go and worship their God appropriately (v.3). Pharaoh's response is the same: no. This time he specifies that such a journey would be a massive disruption to Egypt's labour – indeed that Moses and Aaron are already disrupting their work (vv.4–5).*

## READ Exodus 5:6–21

4. What does Pharaoh do in response? Why is it bad for the Israelites?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What similarity is there between the words of Moses and Aaron in v.1 and that of the slave drivers in v.10? What point do you think is being made through this similarity?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What effect do Pharaoh's actions have on the relation between Moses and Aaron and the people (vv.20–21) and between Moses and God (vv.22–23)?
  - When you obey God and things get harder, not better, how do you tend to react?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - What might your reaction suggest about (a) your view of God, and (b) your affections?

## READ Exodus 6:1–13

7. What do you notice about how God begins his response to Moses in v.1?
8. In his response God reiterates his promises to Israel and his plans for Israel. Throughout is a continuous and emphatic “I”. What point is being made to Moses (and us)?

## READ 1 Corinthians 1:18–21

9. What is Paul’s point to the Corinthian church (and us today)? How does it connect to what we learn from Exodus 5 and 6?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

10. What is the experience of Moses in being God’s spokesman? What was the experience of Jesus in speaking and acting for God? How should this inform our witness for God?



# A PLAGUE ON YOUR HOUSE

Exodus 6:28 – 10:29

1. Think of one of the worst moments you have experienced in life (e.g. natural disaster, pain, grief, loss)? What words would you have used to describe that situation?

## CONTEXT

This section of Exodus recounts Moses' and Aaron's back-and-forth confrontations with Pharaoh. The first encounter saw Pharaoh dismiss them (and by extension, the LORD) as unworthy of attention – indeed, to **increase** his persecution of their people. The following encounters show who's really in control.

## READ Exodus 6:28–7:7

2. These verses are both a summary of *what's come before* (**Exodus 3–6**) and a prediction of *what will happen* (**Exodus 7–11**). There are two descriptions here of Moses (**7:1** and **7:6**). What two things are we told about Moses?

## READ Exodus 7:8–13

3. The LORD instructs Moses and Aaron to throw down Aaron's staff and it becomes a snake (the same miraculous sign Moses showed the Israelite elders, cf. **4:1–5**).

What happens when they do this?



What is the point of this?

READ Exodus 7:14–11:10

Obviously, this is a *massive* amount of text to cover. As a group, divide up the plague passages and read them as individuals or as pairs (depending on numbers, one or two plagues per group).

4. Consider each plague account. How does each plague begin? What does this show?

*As we've seen, there are similarities and differences throughout the plagues. The mixture of warning and no warning, of giving an option to repent before judgement and simply responding to judgement, is echoed in the mixture of language around Pharaoh's hardened heart: we're told sometimes that Pharaoh hardened his own heart and other times, that the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart. This isn't simply a 'literary feature'. It points to a profound theological/spiritual reality— namely, that because God is God of course he is sovereign over all things (including human hearts); yet, at the same time, because we are human of course we freely choose. Or as Tim Chester puts it: **Pharaoh freely chooses to do what God had freely chosen that he would do.***

5. Using the table on the following page, compile some details about the plagues. Take note of the commonalities across all ten and the differences – natural and supernatural; material and spiritual; Egyptian and Israelite.

PASSAGE	PLAGUE	WARNING?	ORIGIN OF PLAGUE	ISRAEL SPARED?	PHARAOH'S HEART
7:14–24					
7:25–8:15					
8:16–19					
8:20–32					
9:1–7					
9:8–12					
9:13–35					
10:1–20					
10:21–29					
11:1–10					

*There are some similarities between the plague narrative and the creation narrative of Genesis 1. In each, God affects things in his creation by his word; in each, the physical world undergoes dramatic change. But there are also significant differences, namely: the plagues of Exodus 7–11 represent an **upheaval** of creation – indeed, represent a degree of **uncreation**.*

6. What does this tell us about God's desire for his creation, and the nature of his just judgement?

- Knowing that God does judge human wickedness, how does that make you feel?

READ Mark 15:33–34

7. What event does Mark record happening as Jesus died on the cross. With **Exodus 10:21–29** in mind, what are meant to conclude about the nature of Jesus' death? How is this different to what happened in Egypt?

READ Romans 9:14–24

8. Paul comments on this episode. He takes seriously the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. What is his conclusion? Why is this God's way of operating?

*In Acts 3 a lame man (i.e. someone who can't walk) begs Peter and John for money, and in Jesus' name they miraculously heal him instead. Their fellow Jews who see this are astonished, leading to Peter's declaring how this shows that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and urging them to turn to him in faith. This, however, does not go unnoticed by the religious authorities...*

9. What is the Jewish Council's question? What is Peter's response?
10. The following verses (**vv.13–22**) record the religious leaders' response – they can't deny the miracle, but they refuse to acknowledge the name behind it, and they order the apostles 'not to preach or teach at all in the name of Jesus' (**v.18**).

What similarities are there between this episode and what happens between Moses and Pharaoh in Exodus 7–11?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

11. Do you ever find yourself thinking, in effect, 'Who is the LORD, that I should obey him?' When, and with what consequences?
12. Pharaoh is a case study in sin's deceit. Do you recognise the same deceit working in your life? Do you need to get help, and what steps will you take to get it?

# THE FIRSTBORN

## Exodus 11

1. Where have you experienced stubbornness (either in yourself or someone or something else)? What have you seen work to break that attitude?

### CONTEXT

After nine plagues of varying severity, Pharaoh initially relents and lets the Israelites go – but without their livestock. Moses responds that they need their livestock in order to have ‘sacrifices and burnt offerings to prepare for Yahweh our God’ (10:25). This causes Pharaoh’s heart to be hardened again: he refuses to let the Israelites go and sends Moses from his presence for good. The stage is set for one final showdown.

### READ Exodus 11:1–4

2. What does God promise Moses about this tenth plague?
3. In **verse 4** Moses’ follows the LORD’s instructions and announces the plague to Pharaoh (cf. v.8c). According to Moses/the LORD:

What will be the *content* of this plague (*how* will it happen)?

What will be the *outcome* of this plague (what will happen as a *result* of it)?

4. What does Moses/the LORD say that Pharaoh will 'know' after this plague? Why is this an important thing to know?

- What do you find confronting about this?
  
- What do you find comforting?

*The death of 'every firstborn son in Egypt' is a truly terrible consequence of Pharaoh's brutal, ongoing oppression of God's people. However, chapter 11 isn't the first mention of a 'firstborn son' and the terrible tenth plague in the book of Exodus.*

5. Where in Exodus have we previously heard of a 'firstborn son'?

6. How does this help us understand the nature of this tenth and final plague?

*Exodus 11 is also not the last mention of the 'firstborn' Son of God; we see it in several places in the New Testament – most notably in **Romans 8:29** and **Colossians 1:15, 18**.*





# PASSOVER AND POSTERITY

Exodus 12:1 – 13:16

1. What are some past events that our community and you personally remember each year. What does that look like? What value is there in such activities?

## CONTEXT

The previous chapter outlined what would happen in the tenth plague and relates Moses' warning of it to Pharaoh. What follows is the terrible effect and dramatic consequences of the plague itself – and what God will do to protect and save his people.

## READ Exodus 12:1–13

2. What are the *instructions* Moses conveys regarding the Passover (what are its *details*)?
3. Consider v.11. Why *this* detail/instruction?
4. What does God say will happen on the night of the plague?

5. What does this tell us about God's power and holiness?

*There are more instructions that follow in vv.14–28, all of which speak to the holiness of God, the seriousness of his judgment on sin, and the mercy with which he spares his people. And so this 'moment' of his 'passing over' is rightly to be instituted as 'a memorial': you must celebrate it as a festival to the LORD. You are to celebrate it throughout your generations as a permanent statute (v.14). To this end 12:43–13:16 contain more Passover instructions.*

*Then the moment comes: at midnight the LORD strikes down every firstborn male in the Egypt, 'from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and every firstborn of the livestock' (v.29). And everything unfolds as the LORD promised it would: Pharaoh and his official demand the Israelites leave; the departing Israelites ask the Egyptians for silver and gold and, just as the LORD said, they're given it. Then they leave – after 430 years, 'on the same day, all the LORD's divisions went out from the land of Egypt' (v.41).*

6. In the Jewish religious calendar, the Passover is the most important date because it celebrates God's greatest redeeming act on Israel's behalf. What is the greatest redeeming event for Christians?
7. What are the similarities and differences between the redemptive event Christians celebrate and God's redemption of his people in the exodus?

- Do you think Christians should celebrate the Passover today? Why/Why Not?

READ Luke 22:7–20

8. The Lord's Supper/Communion is one place where we remember God's redemption. What similarities and differences are there between the Passover and the Lord's Supper? For example:

What *actually* happens in the Lord's Supper?

What is the *focus* on in the Lord's Supper: the past, the present, or the future?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

9. How will the Passover in Exodus deepen your appreciation of your Passover Lamb?
10. How will the Passover in Exodus shape how you approach the Lord's Supper, and where you focus your mind as you eat and drink?
11. What are some other things Christians can do together that might enable us to help each other remember God's redemption of us?

# DIVINE DELIVERANCE

Exodus 13:17 – 14:31

1. Christians can sometimes talk a lot about being 'saved'. How would you explain to a friend what being 'saved' means why it is so important to you?

## CONTEXT

The devastating effect of the tenth plague – the death of all firstborn males throughout Egypt, and the preservation of the Israelites in the Passover – has compelled Pharaoh and his officials to eject them from the land. The Israelites hurriedly pack and depart *en masse*, suddenly out in the wilderness and needing direction and care. Yet, once the dust settles in Egypt (literally and figuratively) Pharaoh has a familiar change of heart...

READ Exodus 13:17–22

2. In directing his people toward to the Red Sea, why does God lead them away from the Philistine lands?
3. The narrator includes two other key details about the Israelites' exodus and travel. What are they, and what do they each tell the Israelites/us?
4. God doesn't lead his people today by pillars of cloud and fire. How are we led by God?

- What excites you to think that the God of the pillar of fire still guides us today through his Spirit?

READ Exodus 14:1–4

5. The second stage of the story begins with God's giving instructions about where they were to set up camp (vv.1–2), followed by the reasons for those instructions (vv.3–4).

What are the reasons God gives for the Israelites camping where they do?

What does it show the Israelites (and us) about God?

- God led Israel into a 'trap' in order to show his own glory. How does this give us a helpful perspective on the difficulties of our own churches and lives?

READ Exodus 14:5–14

*When Pharaoh is told that the Israelites have all left he changes his mind (again). He assembles a formidable army of chariots and troops and with hardened heart sets out to recapture his former slaves.*



6. What is the response of the Israelites when they see the Egyptian army pursuing them? What does this tell us about the Israelites' trust?
  
7. In response to the Israelites' terror and anguish Moses gives five exhortations. What are they (vv.13–14)? What message do they send?
  - Think of some times when you've needed to hear these exhortations about relying on God. What do you find easy to embrace about them? What do you find difficult?

**READ Exodus 14:15–31**

8. Using the table below, summarise how the LORD acts to save his people (vv.19–28), taking note of the *natural* and *supernatural* phenomena described.

NATURAL	SUPERNATURAL

*It's telling that the LORD uses natural phenomena as he acts to save his people – it's part of his providential interaction with his world. But make no mistake: it is God's interaction; that is made crystal clear by the fact that even amid the 'natural' phenomena of the Red Sea crossing are clearly supernatural acts. Whether we see God working in the mundane or the miraculous, it is always God who is working.*

9. When the Israelites first saw Pharaoh's army in pursuit their response was terror, anger and deep doubt. What is their response to seeing the Egyptian army now?

*The miraculous event that is the crossing of the Red Sea is the climactic moment of the exodus experience: the Passover got the exodus underway; the Red Sea crossing made it complete. It is also an event that both looks back and points forward. It looks back to the very beginning, to the creation, where God divides the land from the sea (**Gen 1:9–10**). The God of all creation is also the one who has made promises to bless the descendants of Abraham, and here those blessings start to be realised anew. But the Red Sea crossing also points forward to the salvation of all God's people and the ultimate fulfilment of his promises to Abraham.*

**READ** Romans 5:6–10

10. What are some similarities between the salvation of Jesus here and the salvation of Israel at the Red Sea? What are some of the differences?

*Tim Chester connects the waters crashing in on the Egyptians as the judgement Jesus stepped into on the cross: 'Jesus plunged into the chaos of the waters of judgement so that we can walk through on dry ground.' Chester then invites us to imagine the people of God standing, safe on the shore, watching God's judgement unfold before their eyes, and points out that this is what we are doing as we watch, with the eyes of faith, God's Son hanging on the cross.*

- Consider the response of the Israelites to the salvation they'd witnessed. How is this instructive for us in light of the salvation we've witnessed?
- How does imagining the walls of water collapsing in, and seeing that this is what Jesus stepped into at the cross, make you feel about him?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

11. Think back to the reason God allowed Israel to be 'trapped' (*Then I will receive glory . . . and the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh; v.14:4b*). Why is it good that God acts for the sake of his name, rather than in response to our merit?
12. *Do not be afraid . . . Stand firm . . . be still*. Which of these exhortations particularly speaks to you today?

13. While we didn't look at this section, one tangible way God's people expressed their thanks and praise to God for his deliverance is the song of Moses and Miriam (vv.15:1–21).

- What is one tangible way you can express your thanks and praise to God for his deliverance?
  
- How and what will you sing today, and when will you most need to sing it?

# THE GOD WHO PROVIDES

Exodus 15:22 – 18:27

1. Think about the popular social media voices (e.g. influencers, etc.). What do they tell us are our society's dominant interests and 'needs'?

## CONTEXT

The Israelites have been rescued from Egyptian slavery in the most dramatic fashion. They have seen the hand of God parting the Red Sea and defeating the Egyptian army. They have sung praise and trust in the LORD. But all that was three days ago. Now they are thirsty and hungry...

## OVERVIEW OF EXODUS 1–18

OVERVIEW OF EXODUS 1–18		
<b>GOD'S SAVING ACT: Deliverance out of Distress in Egypt</b> (Exodus 1–14)	<b>HUMAN RESPONSE: Praise</b> (Exodus 15:1–21)	<b>GOD'S PRESERVING ACT: Provision and Protection in the Wilderness</b> (Exodus 15:22–18:27)
<p><i>God meets the existential and spiritual needs of his people.</i></p> <p><b>Distress (1–11)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oppression in Egypt (1)</li> <li>• The call/commissioning of Moses (2–6)</li> <li>• God's promise (3)</li> <li>• Moses, Pharaoh and the plagues (7–11)</li> </ul> <p><b>Deliverance (12–14)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Passover and departure from Egypt (12:1–13:6)</li> <li>• March through the wilderness; deliverance at the sea (13:17–14:31)</li> </ul>		<p><i>God meets the elementary needs of human existence.</i></p> <p><b>Thirst (15:22–27; 17:1–7)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God supplies drinkable water</li> <li>• God supplies water from a rock</li> </ul> <p><b>Hunger (16)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God supplies food</li> </ul> <p><b>Threat (17:8–18:27)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God supplies victory from external threat</li> <li>• God supplies relief from domestic problems</li> </ul>

*In each of the incidents we are going to look at in this section there is a revealing pattern of what happens and how God responds.*

## THE PROBLEM OF WATER: Incident 1

READ Exodus 15:22–27

2. What problem arises and how do the people react?
3. What does Moses do and how does God respond?

## THE PROBLEM OF WATER: Incident 2

READ Exodus 17:1–7

4. What problem arises and how do the people react?
5. What does Moses do and how does God respond?

*Like at **Marah** the location is given a name based on the experience. However, this time Moses names the place **Massah** and **Meribah** (**testing** and **arguing**) ‘because the Israelites tested the LORD’ and questioned whether he was among them.’ In between these two ‘water incidents’ is a ‘food incident’.*

## THE PROBLEM OF FOOD

### READ Exodus 16

6. What problem arises and how do the people react?
7. What does Moses do and how does God respond?

*The second halves of chapters 17 and 18 relate two further incidents that reveal a third problem – **The Problem of Threats**. We won't look at them, but in each incident the threat to Israel's safety and stability as a community – whether external through the Amalekites or internal through domestic problems – is neutralised by God's provision (upholding Moses during battle and providing Jethro and other judges to relieve Moses of unnecessary burdens).*

8. Consider all these incidents together. What should God's people learn from each of them?



*The beginning of John chapter 6 records Jesus miraculously meeting the 'elemental needs' of people: he takes a small amount of bread and fish and multiplies it to feed a massive crowd of followers (John 6:1–15). The next day many of the crowd seek Jesus out for more of the same miraculous bread, and when Jesus declines they invoke the Exodus provision of manna and demand Jesus do the same – they too show allegiance to the 'everyday things'. Jesus responds that God's ultimate provision is spiritual, and that it's all about belief in him as 'the Bread of Life', v.29, 35–40, 47–51).*

**READ** John 6:60–66

9. How do Jesus' followers respond to his teaching about believing in him for true provision? How is it similar to that of the Israelites in Exodus? How is it different?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

10. When do you grumble, and why? What might it say about your view of, and faith in, God?
11. How have you experienced Jesus being 'enough' for you in the past? To which parts of your life do you need to apply this experience now? (Hint: think about what you grumble about!).
12. Think of your discipleship group/church community. How can we help each other not to have hard hearts like the Israelites?



