



KNOWING GOD

Studies in Exodus 1-20

Bathurst Presbyterian Church 2017



Exodus tells the dramatic story of God's commitment to keep his promises to Abraham (Gen 12). As the book unfolds we meet the true and living God who is faithful to his word, who judges, saves and triumphs, who provides for his people and who teaches them his holy ways. As such it's a wonderful book for giving us a clear picture of **God's character** and how we should respond.

These studies cover the early and momentous chapters of Exodus 1-20. As with any study, you'll get the most out of them if you're able to read the relevant passage and answer the questions before your group meets. That will also equip you to best encourage the others in your group with what you say. However, if some weeks you don't get to prepare, please don't use that as an excuse to not go along. Just being there is a great way of showing the group that they're important to you. Plus, the studies are designed to be useful even if you're thinking about them for the first time at group.

The studies are slightly more straightforward than the previous Hebrews series. **Their aim is to help develop observational skills into the text.** This is because Exodus is a narrative book and therefore needs to be read in an appropriately sensitive way. We need to read large slabs of text and be carried along by the issues and questions that develop in the story line. **Yes, Exodus is God's word but it's also a well crafted story.** So we need to read it in the same way we read a novel. We need to be sensitive to issues of plot and character development, tension, irony, humor and other writing techniques. If there's a note of confusion, uncertainty or ambiguity, chances are it's there on purpose. We simply need to keep reading and look for answers in the text itself rather than outside. We need to let hanging questions hang and not try and resolve things too soon. We need to be sensitive to expectations raised in a passage and any associated climax in the narrative.

Put simply, these studies will help us to **read like a reader** and allow the narrative to carry us along and answer our questions at its own pace. In so doing we'll get to know God as well as more fully appreciate Jesus Christ, in whom all God's promises find their fulfillment (2 Cor 1:20).

*These studies formed the basis of a publication entitled "Getting to Know God" by Matthias Media (Pathways Bible Guide series). They are reproduced here with their permission.
front page and above photo: Mt Sinai*

Exodus 1-2

Getting started

Starting to read Exodus can be a bit like starting to watch a movie when its already half way through. Certain things have already happened which we need to be aware of. If we aren't aware of them we may not be able to make full sense of what's going on in Exodus. In particular we need to be aware of some promises that God has made to a person named Abram. Read Genesis 12:1-9. What sorts of things has God promised Abram (later on in Genesis God gives Abram the name Abraham). How do you think Abram would have felt about these promises?

Investigate

Read Exodus 1:1-7

1 What do these verses tell us about Abraham's descendants? (The Israel mentioned in Exodus 1:1 is the grandson of Abraham)

2. Why shouldn't Exodus 1:7 surprise us, in the light of what we discovered in our "Getting Started" question?

Read Exodus 1:8-22

3. Why does Pharaoh become concerned about the Israelites? (Exodus 1:10)

4. What sorts of things does Pharaoh do to try and stop the Israelites from increasing? (Exodus 1:11,15-16,22)

5. How successful is Pharaoh in his plans? (Exodus 1:12,17,20-21)

6. Why shouldn't the previous answer surprise us, in the light of what we discovered in our "Getting Started" question?

7. In what ways are the mid-wives good example for us?

Read Exodus 2:1-25

8. This chapter opens and closes with someone crying out for help - Moses (Exodus 2:6) and Israel (Exodus 2:23). What happens to Moses when his crying is heard? (Exodus 2:7-10)

9. In what way does Moses' rescue show that Pharaoh can't possibly stop God from keeping his promises to Abraham?

10. Given what happens to Moses, what do you think might be going to happen to Israel? (Exodus 2:23-25)

To finish

Pick one characteristic of God that you've learnt from these verses. In what ways do you see this characteristic of God also revealed in Jesus? (The New Testament tells us that Jesus is the fullest revelation of God - Col 1:15-20, Heb 1:1-3). In what ways should this characteristic of God shape the way we live.

Exodus 3:1-4:17

Getting started

"This universe is so big and I am so small by comparison. I can't believe that God could possibly be interested in me." How might you answer a comment like this?

Investigate

Read Exodus 3:1-10

1. In what way does God get Moses' attention? Should we expect similar experiences?

2. How does God introduce himself to Moses and what reaction does this produce in Moses? (Exodus 3:5-6)

3. What does God say he has done and will do? (Exodus 3:7-10)

Read Exodus 3:11-4:17

4. List the excuses which Moses gives to God. In each case how does God respond?

Moses excuse

God's response

Exodus 3:11-12

Exodus 3:13-22

Moses excuse

God's response

Exodus 4:1-9

Exodus 4:10-12

Exodus 4:13-17

5. What sorts of excuses do you come up with for not doing what God wants you to do?

6. What impression do you get of Moses from these verses?

7. What impression do you get of God from these verses?

To finish

Pick one characteristic of God that you've learnt from these verses. In what ways do you see this characteristic revealed in Jesus? In what ways should this characteristic shape the way we live.

Exodus 4:18-7:7

Getting started

Is God an extrovert? What do you think?

Investigate

Read Exodus 4:18-31

1. In these verses Moses tells Jethro, Aaron and the Israelite elders about God's plan to rescue Israel from Egypt. In each case what is the reaction to the news?

2. Verses 24-25 are difficult to understand and different people have different views about them. It seems that God is angry with Moses because his son is not circumcised. Given that circumcision was a sign of God's covenant with Abraham, why do you think God might be angry about Moses' son not being circumcised?

Read Exodus 5:1-21

3. What is Pharaoh's reaction to Moses' request?

4. How does Pharaoh's reaction in fact confirm that God is in control (look back at 3:18-19)

5. What effect does Pharaoh's reaction have on the Israelites?

6. How do you handle the hardships of life? In what ways have you been like Israel and/or Moses in your reactions to:

a) other people?

b) God?

Read Exodus 5:22-7:7

7. In these verses God reaffirms his intentions. What will this mean for

a) Israel (6:6-8)

b) Pharaoh (7:2-5)

To finish

Pick one characteristic of God that you've learnt from these verses. In what ways do you see this characteristic revealed in Jesus? In what ways should this characteristic shape the way we live.

Exodus 7:8-10:29

Getting started

"I don't think God ever gets angry or punishes people. The God who Jesus taught about is a God of love."

Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Investigate

Read Exodus 7:8-8:19

1. What plagues does God perform in order to try and force Pharaoh to free the Israelites?

2. How do these verses describe Pharaoh's response?

3. What does the competition between Moses & the magicians show us about God?

Read Exodus 8:20-9:12

4. What further plagues does God perform in order to try and force Pharaoh to free the Israelites?

5. How do these verses describe Pharaoh's response?

6. Do you think it's fair for God to punish Pharaoh since it's God who is hardening his heart? (9:12)

7. What happens to the Israelites during these plagues? What does this show about God?

Read Exodus 9:13-10:29

8. What further plagues does God perform in order to try and force Pharaoh to free the Israelites?

9. How do these verses describe Pharaoh's response?

10. What are some of the reasons that we "hardened our heart" against God?

To finish

Pick one characteristic of God that you've learnt from these verses. In what ways do you see this characteristic revealed in Jesus? In what ways should this characteristic shape the way we live.

Exodus 11-12

Getting started

Have you had an especially important event in your life? What was it and what made it so important?

Investigate

Read Exodus 11

1. What final plague is God going to bring on Egypt?

2. What effect will this plague have on

a) Pharaoh

b) Israel

Read Exodus 12

3. Why do you think God wants the Passover to be the start of each year? (v1)

4. According to 12:21-23 what caused God's judgment to "pass over" a house?

5. In what way does your answer to Question 4 remind you of what happened when Jesus died on the cross?

6. As well as being set free what else happened to the Israelites in 12:33-36?

7. Why do you think its important for foreigners to become Jews in order to share in the celebration of the Exodus?

Skim through Exodus 13-15

8. What main things happen to Israel in these verses? How do the Israelites react?

To finish

Pick one characteristic of God that you've learnt from these verses. In what ways do you see this characteristic revealed in Jesus? In what ways should this characteristic shape the way we live.

Exodus 13-15

Getting started

Apart from church meetings, at what other times do people sing? Why do they sing at these times?

Investigate

Read Exodus 13:1-16

1. "Consecrate" isn't a word we often use nowadays. Look up its meaning in a dictionary.

2. Why do you think God wants the first born consecrated to him? (13:14-16)

Read Exodus 13:17-14:14

3. List all the ways in which God is seen to be in command in these verses?

4. In what way is Joseph a good example to us? (13:19 & Heb 11:22)

5. In what way is Israel a poor example to us? (14:10-12)

Read Exodus 14:15-31

6. How does God ultimately triumph over Pharaoh and his army?

7. What effect does God's victory have on Israel? (14:29-31)

Read Exodus 15

8. After the LORD's stunning victory, Israel erupt into jubilant song - a song about what God has done (v1-12) and what he will do (v13-18). It's a great song! Pick a verse which especially encourages you and explain why.

9. In what ways can we as christians also look back on what God has done in order to fill us with enthusiasm about what He will do?

To finish

Pick one characteristic of God that you've learnt from these verses. In what ways do you see this characteristic revealed in Jesus? In what ways should this characteristic shape the way we live.

Exodus 16-18

Getting started

"Of all the things in life, contentment is the most elusive." Do you agree or disagree with this statement. Why?

Investigate

Read Exodus 16

1. What does Israel complain about in these verse?

2. What does God do in response?

3. Why do you think God solved Israel's problem the way he does?

Read Exodus 17:1-7

4 What does Israel complain about in these verse?

5. What does God do in response?

6. Why do you think God solved Israel's problem the way he does?

Read Exodus 17:8-18:27

7. What 2 things threaten Israel in these verses?

Threat 1 (17:8)

Threat 2 (17:17-18)

8. How are these 2 threats solved?

9. How is God involved in the solutions?

To finish

Pick one characteristic of God that you've learnt from these verses. In what ways do you see this characteristic revealed in Jesus? In what ways should this characteristic shape the way we live.

Getting started

In what ways can we be too casual in how we treat God? What is the danger of this?

Investigate

Read Exodus 19

1. What HAS God done for Israel?

2. What does God expect of Israel?

3. What is God's plan for Israel?

4. How is the holiness of God reflected in v9-25?

5. What special role is Moses to have for Israel?

Read Exodus 20

6. Why do you think its significant that God says v2 before he starts to give his commandments?

7. In the 10 commandments, what things are said about

a) how Israel are to treat God

b) how Israel are to treat each other.

8. "The 10 commandments are irrelevant to us nowadays. They were given to Israel but we don't have to become an Israel to be one of God's people anymore." What is true and what is false about this statement?

To finish

Pick one characteristic of God that you've learnt from these verses. In what ways do you see this characteristic revealed in Jesus? In what ways should this characteristic shape the way we live.