

EX

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US

Getting to Know Our Rescuing God

Exodus is an astonishing story. The events recorded here were remembered and celebrated by God's people, the Israelites, for thousands of years after they happened. They are still some of the most well known stories in the bible, even inspiring multiple Hollywood movies.

But the burning bush, the plagues, the rescues, and the ten commandments are more than just a story. Through these events **God gives his people insight into what he is like**. He shows his people that he loves them, he hears them, he is powerful. He makes promises and he keeps them. He is determined, and nothing will stand in his way. He is gracious and merciful. He is holy. And he rescues.

Through getting to know their rescuing God, Israel discover their identity and purpose as his people.

This same God loves us, keeps his promises to us, is with us, and has powerfully rescued us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. So **the whole Exodus story is mirrored and amplified in the story of Jesus**. Just as the Exodus rescue was the defining moment for Israel as God's people, Jesus' rescue is our defining moment. It's the story that reveals God to us, and shows us our identity and purpose as his people.

The story of Exodus is told in two main parts.

Part 1: Knowing God Exodus 1-18

Part 1 tells the story of God rescuing the enslaved Israelites by defeating Pharaoh, while offering a way of escape for his people.

Through these events God introduces himself to Israel, showing them his power and determination, his grace and mercy, his holiness and rescue. He even tells them his name.

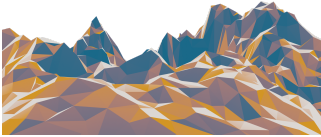
Part 2: Belonging to God Exodus 19-40

In part 2 God meets with his people on Mount Sinai. God tells Israel he has rescued them for a purpose, and invites them into relationship with him.

Through this long conversation between God and his people, Israel learn what it means for them to belong to God, and relate to God.

"I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

Exodus 20.2 (ESV)



study 1

Exodus 1-2

Starting Exodus is a bit like starting a TV series at episode 2. We've missed the introduction of some key characters and plot lines.

The story started in Genesis. Genesis is all about beginnings, and the story of God's people begins with promises.

Read Genesis 12.1-3

What three things does God promise to Abram in these three verses?

Read Genesis 1.27-31 & 6.5-6

What happened previously that has led to God making these promises?

Read Exodus 1.1-7

How are the promises going? (Israel is the grandson of Abram.)

Read Exodus 1.8-22

What is threatening God's promises?

What does Pharaoh do to stop the Israelites multiplying?

Why don't Pharaoh's plans work?

Read Exodus 2

The story here zooms in on the first of many showdowns between Pharaoh's plans and God's plans. In what ways does God completely override Pharaoh's plans?

Look again at chapter 2 verses 16-19. What hints might these verses give us about God's plans for Moses?

Compare verses 5 and 6 with verses 23 to 25. What hints might these verses give us about God's plans and promises?

Think it over

From this story, what do we learn about God as a promise keeper?

How else would you describe God's character in this story? Jot down a list of descriptive words.

How has God kept his promises through Jesus? Check out Matthew 1.21 or Romans 5.6 as an example. Can you think of others?

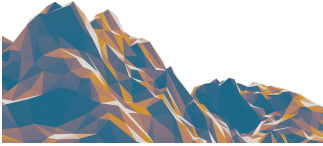
What promises has God made to us through Christ? Check out Romans 8.38-39 or Hebrews 2.18 as an example. Can you think of others?

How should knowing God keeps his promises be a comfort to us?

Prayer ideas

Give thanks to God for keeping his promises.

Ask God to help us always trust him to do as he says, and ask God to help us look to Jesus to see all his promises fulfilled.



study 2

Exodus 3-4

Summarise what we learnt in Exodus 1-2 in one sentence.

Read Exodus 3.1-8

How does God reveal himself to Moses in verses 1-6?

List four things God says he has done in verses 7-8.

List two things God says he will do in verses 7-8.

Read Exodus 3.9-4.17

How many excuses does Moses come up with?

How does God respond to each excuse?

What do God's responses reveal about him?*

Think it over

See if you can find at least one piece of evidence in these chapters for each of the following characteristics of God.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| • formidable | • powerful |
| • majestic | • patient |
| • awe-inspiring | • faithful |

- compassionate
- personal
- gracious
- relational
- present

God was clearly eager to be involved in the life of his people in Moses' time, and eager to help them. Do you think the same is true now? Why?

Read John 8.58 and Romans 8.14-17. How do these verses help us see how God is present and involved in our lives?

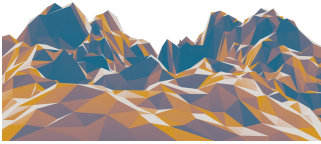
How should we respond to God who wants to be present and involved in our lives?

Prayer ideas

Give thanks that God desires to be present and involved in the lives of his people.

Ask God to help you know him and know what he is like, and ask that this would make a real difference to your day-to-day life.

**Note: The words "I am" in God's response in verse 14 use the same Hebrew consonants as God's personal name, Yahweh. Whenever capitalisation is used to refer to God (eg; the LORD), the Hebrew is using the name Yahweh.*



Exodus 4.18-7.7

Summarise the story of Exodus so far.

Read Exodus 4.18-31

What do we learn about what is going to happen (21-23)?

How do Jethro, Aaron, and the Israelites respond to Moses being sent back to Egypt by God?

Read Exodus 5

What are Moses' first words to Pharaoh?

What are Pharaoh's first words in response?

What are the taskmasters' first words to the Israelites (verse 10)?

How do the Israelites react to their situation in verses 20-21?

How does Moses react to the situation in verses 22-23?

Who seems more confident and self-assured, Moses and Aaron and Israel, or Pharaoh?

Read Exodus 6.1-7.7*

What will God do for Israel (chapter 6)?

What will God do to Pharaoh (7.1-7)?

How does this compare with 4.21 and 4.30-31?

Think it over

There is a sense in which it is understandable that Israel despaired at their harsh treatment and suffering. Are there times in your life when you find it hard, or even impossible, to see how God could possibly have your best interests at heart?

In what ways is Jesus a much better rescuer than Moses?

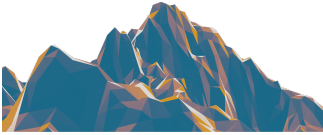
Read Romans 8.31-39. How does this passage help us see God's determination to do what is good for us?

Prayer ideas

Give thanks for God's determination to rescue his people.

Ask God to give you confidence in Christ Jesus and in God's goodness.

**If your group is pressed for time you may want to read just 6.1-13 and 7.1-7.*



Summarise what we learnt in Exodus 4.18-7.7 in one sentence.

Read Exodus 7.8-13

As the contest starts, do God and Pharaoh appear to be evenly matched?

Fill out the following table.

	Plague	Magician's response	Pharaoh's reaction to the plague	Effect of the plague on Israel	Pharaoh's reaction at the end
Exodus 7.14-25					
Exodus 8.1-15					
Exodus 8.16-19					
Exodus 8.20-32					
Exodus 9.1-7					
Exodus 9.8-12					
Exodus 9.13-35					
Exodus 10.1-20					
Exodus 10.21-29					

At the end of the ninth plague, do God and Pharaoh appear to be evenly matched?

What patterns do you see? What does this teach us about God?

When do you see the pattern change or break? What does this show us about God's intentions?

Think it over

When are we likely to harden our hearts toward God?

How does Exodus show us it is foolish not to humble ourselves in obedience to God?

In what areas of your life do you need to humbly submit to God's authority?

Read Romans 8.1. What judgement do God's people fear?

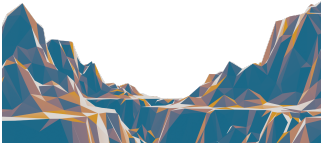
Read 2 Peter 3.10-14. What is the right way to live before our all-powerful God?

Prayer ideas

Give thanks for God's power without equal and greatness beyond comparison.

Ask God that being secure in Christ would lead us to live humbly for God, never hardening our hearts against his work in our lives.

As next week's section is quite long it will be helpful to read Exodus 11-18 in preparation.



Exodus 11-18

Summarise the story of Exodus so far.

Read Exodus 11

What will the final plague mean for Pharaoh and Egypt?

What will the final plague mean for Israel?

Read Exodus 12.1-13.16

What was required for God to 'pass over' a house?

How are the Israelites to teach their families (12.26), outsiders (12.48-49), and community (13.3) about this rescue?

In what ways does this rescue remind us of the way Jesus has rescued us?

How can we teach our families, our church community, and outsiders, about Jesus' rescue?

Read Exodus 13.17-15.27

What does Israel's reaction to their situation teach us about ourselves?

What does this rescue add to the picture of our rescuing God?

How is the completeness of God's victory seen here reflected in Jesus?

Read Exodus 16-18

In what sense does God rescue Israel from themselves in these chapters?

What does this rescue add to the picture of our rescuing God?

How is God's provision for people seen here reflected in Jesus?

Think it over

Read John 1.29. How is Jesus' rescue even better than the Passover rescue?

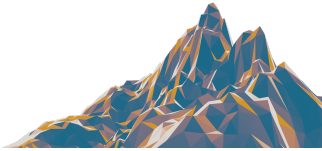
For Israel, this rescue out of Egypt is the great defining moment of their story and identity. Their whole lives were re-oriented around this rescue (see chapter 12 verses 1-2). What will it mean for our whole lives to be oriented around our rescue through Jesus?

What are the things we can do together that most effectively help us 'remember' God's rescue of us?

Prayer ideas

Give thanks for Jesus' blood that saves us from God's judgement.

Ask God to help us find our identity in Jesus, and keep Jesus' rescue central in our families, our church, and our interactions with outsiders.



Exodus 19-20

Summarise what we learnt in Exodus 11-18 in a couple of sentences.

Read Exodus 19.1-6

What has God done for Israel?

How are Israel to respond to what God has done for them?

What is God's purpose for Israel (verses 5-6)?

Read Exodus 19.7-25

How is God's holiness revealed in this chapter?

Why is God doing this (verse 9)?

In light of all we've read in Exodus so far, how would you evaluate Israel's promise in verse 8?

Read Exodus 20

What is significant about the way God introduces this list of laws (verse 2)?

What do the ten commandments teach Israel about how they should relate to God?

What do the ten commandments teach Israel about how they should relate to one another?

Take a quick excursion to Matthew 22.34-40. How does Jesus summarise the law? Why do you think he summarises it this way?

How do God's *commands* for Israel in chapter 20 fulfil his *purposes* for Israel in chapter 19?

Think it over

How has God rescued us?

Read Hebrews 12.18-24. How is our situation different to that of Israel?

Read 1 Peter 2.9-10. How is God's purpose for Israel similar to his purpose for us?

How are we to respond to what God has done for us?

What is the danger of applying the ten commandments as if they were written as laws for us?

What is the danger of ignoring the ten commandments altogether?

Prayer ideas

Give thanks for Jesus who has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light, that we might be God's treasured possession.

Ask God that our holiness would reflect the fact he has made us holy.