



Jan. 22nd - Jan. 28th

WEEK 4 ISRAEL'S LIBERATION | EXODUS 1-18

The Exodus story is the foundational story of the Jewish people and the entire Old Testament. It is so miraculous that it established the paradigm upon which Jewish identity and theology has been shaped ever since. Later books of the Old Testament, written during future tough times in Israel's history, drew consistently upon this story of a God-orchestrated exodus out of slavery and oppression and into freedom in the promised land, as a model for what was needed and what to hope for. During their many hundreds of years in exile, under various oppressive empires, Israel longed for God to send another Moses...a leader of another exodus. This is what they were hoping for when Jesus arrived and they were living under brutal Roman rule. And so it shouldn't surprise us that the New Testament is full of references to Moses and the Exodus. The Exodus story is the lens through which the early church interpreted Christ's life and death; the paradigm they believed Christ fulfilled. Jesus was a new Moses leading a new liberation, bringing a new judgment upon an evil empire. And for Israel to be spared this judgment, as with the plagues, they would need to identify themselves under the blood of a Passover Lamb that would "cover over them."

In other words, most of the things we are told about Christ are in direct reference to this 4,000 year-old story about God freeing a nation of slaves. If we don't understand the story and its language, then we will be very confused about what it means for Jesus to be a "passover lamb" who "atones for our sins." Without understanding the Exodus story in particular, we'll end up totally corrupting and misconstruing what the New Testament is saying about Christ. This story, above all others from Israel's long history, is one we absolutely must be familiar with in order to know Jesus. It is foundational for every Christian. That said, the goal of this lesson will be to dive into the Exodus story - to understand why it happened, what it meant, and how it relates to our own readiness for freedom.

Group Resources

Read: Exodus 1:6-22; 2:23-25; 3:6; 3:15-16; 4:5; 5:1; 6:1-8; 7:13-24;

Ch. 8 - 15; 16:2-3; 16:13-15; 17:1-7

Video: [The Exodus - Part 1](#)

Sermon: Rescue from the Wrath of God | The Lamb and the Destroyer

Proposed Group Agenda (2 hrs):

Fellowship/Connection Time (30 min.)

Welcome & Opening Prayer (5 min.)

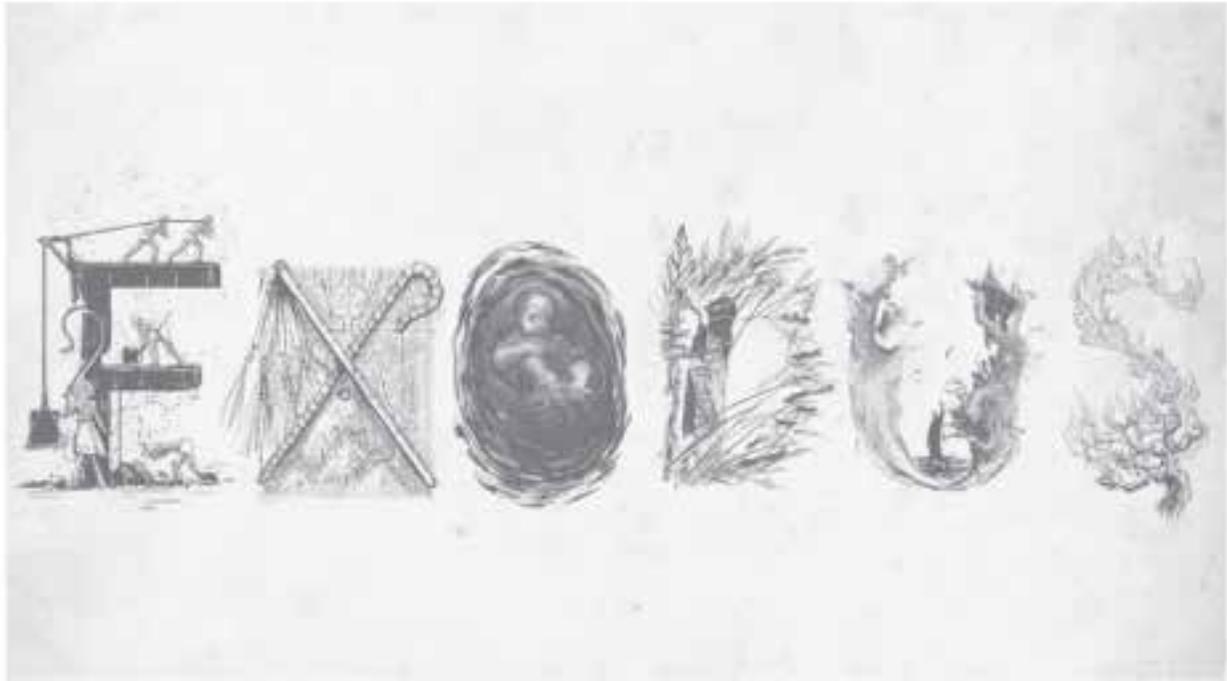
Warm Up (10 min.)

Video (15 min.)

Dig In (45 min.)

Grow (10 min.)

Closing Prayer (5 min.)



* The individual reading plan for this week covers Exodus 16 - 34 and Psalms 22-28



Warm Up

Discussion Value - Humility

Take a minute to think about your first couple of weeks together as a group and how you have individually participated in the discussion time. The practice of humility for you may look like intellectual humility - resisting the notion that you have a better or purer perspective than others. It may look like speaking less and listening more - resisting the behavior of believing your words are more valuable than someone else's. Or it may mean speaking up a bit more - resisting false humility, or seeing yourself as "less valuable" or worthy to contribute than the other group members. This week, make a commitment to be humble and put the needs of the group above your own.

Opening Question (choose one or more):

What, if anything, has the Exodus story meant to you in the past?

If someone asked you to tell the story of Israel's exodus in your own words, how would you tell it?

What do you find beautiful and/or disconcerting about the Exodus story?

Dig In

Q. What main themes and ideas did you notice in Exodus chapters 1 - 18 as you read? Can you point to any particular passages where you found them? (Note to Leaders: All the major themes and ideas are listed on the pages that follow)

Q. The book of Exodus begins with Israel's divinely-blessed multiplication and later enslavement by Pharaoh. How do God's promises to Abraham give a wider perspective on the problem of Israel's slavery? What's at stake if God doesn't redeem Israel?

Key Theme

1 God remains faithful to His promises to Abraham as the family grows and suffers from slavery to Egypt.

- A** THE FAMILY BECOMES A LARGE TRIBE AS A RESULT OF GOD'S BLESSING. COMPARE EXODUS 1:6-7 WITH GENESIS 12:2; 15:5; AND 17:2

- B** GOD RESPONDS TO ISRAEL'S CRIES BECAUSE OF HIS PROMISE TO ABRAHAM. SEE EXODUS 2:23-25

- C** GOD RAISES UP MOSES AS ISRAEL'S DELIVERER, AND SENDS HIM IN THE NAME OF "THE GOD OF ABRAHAM"..
...WHO WILL FULFILL THE PROMISES MADE TO ABRAHAM. EXODUS 3:6; 3:15-16; 4:5
EXODUS 6:1-8



Q. Look through all the passages about Pharaoh's hard heart and God's power below. What perspective does the story offer us on human moral freedom when its in conflict with God's will? How does God demonstrate his patience in this account? When does Pharaoh reach a point of no return?

Key
Theme

2

Pharaoh emerges as an archetypal "bad-guy" who resists God and oppresses His people.

Pharaoh's oppression of Israel is a politically motivated policy of economic exploitation and ethnic cleansing.

EXODUS 1:8-10; 1:11-14; 1:15-22

THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART

This key repeated phrase illustrates the dynamic between Pharaoh's own choice to resist and God's response to such monstrous evil.

A

THROUGH MOSES, GOD REPEATEDLY GIVES PHARAOH THE CHANCE TO HUMBLE HIMSELF AND RELEASE THE ISRAELITES.

EXODUS 5:1; 7:16; 8:1; 8:20; 9:1, 13; 10:3

B

MULTIPLE TIME PHARAOH HARDENS HIS OWN HEART OR HIS HEART BECOMES HARD.

EXODUS 7:14; 8:15; 7:13, 22; 8:19; 9:7

C

THREE TIMES PHARAOH RELENTS AND ALLOWS ISRAEL TO GO, BUT SUDDENLY HAS A CHANGE OF HEART AND RESISTS.

EXODUS 8:8, 25-28; 9:27-28; 8:15; 8:32; 9:34

D

AFTER REPEATED ATTEMPTS TO COMPEL PHARAOH, GOD HARDENS HIS HEART, BY THE REPEATED CALL TO REPENT AND LET ISRAEL GO.

EXODUS 9:12; 10:1,20; 11:10; 14:4,8

THE POINT

God does not cause or predetermine Pharaoh's evil, but rather anticipates and responds to it by luring Pharaoh into his own destruction.

EXODUS 14

Q. Name as many of the 10 plagues as you can remember from your reading and the corresponding consequences the Egyptians suffered as a result of each one. What divine purpose did they serve? What attribute(s) of God's character do they display?

Key
Theme

3

The ten plagues demonstrate God's power over all creation, in contrast to the feeble gods of Egypt.

The ten plagues are acts of divine justice meant to compel Pharaoh to humble himself and let Israel go free.

1

WATER BECOMES BLOOD

EXODUS 7:14-24

2

FROGS

EXODUS 8:1-15

3

GNATS

EXODUS 8:16-19

4

FLIES

EXODUS 8:20-39

5

PLAGUE ON LIVESTOCK

EXODUS 9:1-7

6

BOILS

EXODUS 9:8-12

7

HAIL

EXODUS 9:13-35

8

LOCUSTS

EXODUS 10:1-20

9

DARKNESS

EXODUS 10:21-29

10

DEATH OF FIRSTBORN

EXODUS 11:1-10

See JOEL 2:28-32

The plagues become iconic images of God's justice against evil, and are often adopted by Hebrew prophets...

...and in the New Testament to speak to God's future justice.

See the seven trumpets in REVELATION 8:6-9:21

Q. Review Exodus 12-13, try to explain to another member of your group the meaning of the sacrificial lamb in the dinner and the blood-on-the-doorframe ritual. How does this symbolic meal transform your understanding of Jesus' last supper with his disciples?

Key
Theme

4

The Passover festival accomplishes Israel's redemption through the offering of a sacrificial substitute, the spotless lamb.



Jesus used the Passover meal as a way of explaining his impending death to his followers.

LUKE 22:8-20



The image of Jesus as the Passover lamb is used elsewhere in the New Testament.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:7-8
REVELATION 5:6, 9-10



Q. In Exodus 15:2 the word “salvation” is used for the first time in the Bible. What is it describing? What does the word salvation mean to you personally? What have you been delivered from? What have you been delivered to?

Key
Theme

5

Israel’s celebration of God’s power and justice is the first worship song in the Bible, which looks back to the Exodus and forward to Israel’s entry into the promised land.



The word “salvation” is used for the first time in the Bible to describe the Exodus as an act of divine deliverance.

EXODUS 15:2



The song claims the Exodus event shows that Israel’s God is the true God among all others.

EXODUS 15:11



The song looks forward to a future Exodus that will involve God bringing Israel into the promised land, saving them from hostile nations, and settling them in His presence.

EXODUS 15:12-13; 15:14-16; 15:17



Q. How does Israel's grumbling in the wilderness raise questions about their gratefulness to God? Are their complaints reasonable? Why does the attitude of the Israelites seem so ridiculous after reading the Exodus account? What does this story expose about our own grumblings against God's character?

Key
Theme

6

Israel's Wilderness wanderings quickly cause grumbling and complaining against God.



Lack of food and water cause rebellion and anger against Moses and God.

EXODUS 16:2-3; 17:1-2



While God provides Manna (Hebrew mah-nah = "what is that?!"), quail, and water, the grumbling of Israel introduces a dark theme in the story: Will Israel respond properly to the God who has rescued them?

EXODUS 16:13-15; 17:5-7





Where's Jesus?

Q. We've already discussed the image of Jesus as the Passover Lamb (see Key Theme #4). What other connection in the reading, if any, did you make? Compare Exodus Chapter 3:14 to John 8:56-59. What is Jesus saying? What does it mean to you personally?

A. The violent response of the Jews to Jesus' "I AM" statement indicates they clearly understood He was declaring Himself to be the eternal God incarnate.



Grow

These questions are designed to help you look at yourself, be aware and honest about who you are in light of your interaction with Scripture, and consider any appropriate actions.

Q. How do you think it would have felt to be with the Israelites as they stood on the far side of the Red Sea after their miraculous escape?

Q. As you imagine those feelings, read Israel's first worship song aloud (Exodus 15:1-18) remembering the context for their singing: They had just escaped from Egypt after 400 years of slavery and saw the object of their enslavement, the Egyptians, dead on the seashore behind them.

Q. Are you struggling with a sin pattern(s) in your life? Now be brutally honest with yourself. Are you ready and willing to leave that bondage in the metaphorical Egypt behind and participate in God's liberation? Or is it possible you actually prefer slavery to freedom? Does the notion of a complete departure from the sin that enslaves you strike you as good news? Be brutally honest with yourself (and possibly another trustworthy person in the group) about where you are in that struggle.

Q. Take some time to confess honestly to God where you are. Be sober and serious. It does no good to pray to God about deliverance from sin and temptation if you actually desire to hold onto it. Instead, if that's where you're at, confess your desire to hang onto your sin to God. St. Augustine once prayed, "Lord grant me chastity and continence, but not yet." Though his prayer was partly in jest, it makes the point that it is better to make an honest confession to God than to lie to Him and yourself about a piety you don't actually want. If you are ready for freedom, then ask the Lord to reveal the next step of your liberation.

* Study synopsis, information and questions generated directly from materials provided by Reality Church SF - Year of Biblical Literacy and The Bible Project.