

FROM EXODUS TO EASTER

2022 Spring Bible Study
Small Group Study

KEY TEXTS

- Genesis 39:19-23
- Genesis 50:14-21
- Romans 8:28-39

Week One: PROLOGUE

BIG IDEA: *Our stories can be filled with ups and downs. The rollercoaster nature of life can leave us wondering if there is a plan and purpose for any of this. Yet, Joseph's story — and the story of the Exodus — reminds us that there is a God at work in our stories. While we might not always see the full picture, we can trust that He is at work for our good and His glory.*

1. As you get started, spend some time talking about this week's reading plan/discussion video. What have been some key takeaways from this week's study? Ask each group member to share something that resonated with them from the video study.
2. When you think back over Joseph's life, what were some of the high points? What were some of the low points? If you could graph his life like a rollercoaster track, what would it look like? Use the following events as a starting point:
 - Jacob's favorite son
 - Sold into slavery
 - Head of Potiphar's house
 - In prison
 - Interpreter of dreams
 - Pharaoh's chief advisor
3. As you think back over your own life, what were some of the high points? What were some of the low points? If you could graph your life like a rollercoaster track, what would it look like? How is it similar/different from Joseph's life trajectory?
4. Read Genesis 39:19-23. Who was with Joseph during his time in prison? Do you think Joseph recognized God's presence in that moment or was it something he could only see in hindsight? When you think about your own experiences, how can you see God's presence with you throughout your story?
5. How do you think God's presence with Joseph changed the way he viewed his circumstances? How did it affect the choices he made? In what ways should God's presence with us change the way we view difficulty (or handle success)?
6. Read Genesis 50:14-21. What assurance did Joseph have about his life? How had God used even the bad things for good? How did this affect Joseph's outlook on life? How did it change the way he treated his brothers?
7. Read Romans 8:28-39. As you look at all the promises in these verses, which speaks to you the most? Why? How does this passage give us the same assurances that Joseph had? How should these promises transform the way we live?

As you end your time together, encourage your group members to remember God's presence with them this week. What's one practical reminder they can build into their day to help remind them that God is with them? Share some ideas that will help each other remember these promises on a daily basis.

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- Exodus 1:8-22
- Romans 6:16-23
- Exodus 3:4-15

Week Two: SLAVERY

BIG IDEA: *The Israelites' story began in slavery and oppression in a land far from their home. Their misery and groaning grew to the point where only God could intervene to save them. Like the Israelites, we were born into a land where we don't belong — a world dominated by the oppression of sin. We, too, find ourselves in need of a salvation only God can bring.*

1. Talk about some of your takeaways from the weekly video discussion. What has God been teaching you as you've walked through this Exodus study so far? Thinking back to last week's lesson, what reminder did you use this week to help you focus on God's continual presence with you?
2. Read Exodus 1:8-22. Ask your group to pick out all the words and phrases that describe the different ways the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites. What kind of cumulative effect — emotional, physical, and mental — do you think this had on the people of Israel?
3. Read John 8:34 and Romans 6:16-23. The New Testament describes sin as a kind of slavery. In what ways is sin similar to the Israelites' oppression? In what ways is it different? Has there ever been a moment in your life when your eyes were opened to what sin is really like?
4. Exodus 2:23-25 says that when the Israelites cried out to Him, **“God heard... He remembered... He saw... and God knew...”** How do those four verbs encourage us with how God views our suffering? How has He done these same things for us in our slavery to sin?
5. Read Exodus 3:4-15. God called Moses to go back into Egypt to free His people. What does this tell us about God's concern for the oppressed and marginalized? How can we be His emissaries to people in those situations today?
6. How did God answer Moses' objections to this mission? How were Moses' shortcomings an opportunity for God to show His true character and nature? When we are tempted to focus on what we are not, how can we keep our focus on the God whose name is “I AM”?

*As you end your time together, spend some time reminding your group that God did not leave us without our own Deliverer. He has given us Jesus — a “better Moses,” as the writer of Hebrews tells us. Jesus has released us from sin's oppression. He has freed us from our slavery. His mission, as summed up in Luke 4:18, was to **“bring Good News to the poor... to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come.”** That same message is ours to carry to the world today!*

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- Exodus 5:1-2
- Exodus 6:1-9

Week Three: MIRACLES

BIG IDEA: *When Moses went back into Egypt, he found a Pharaoh who was unwilling to part with his Israelite workforce. Worse, the king of Egypt refused to even recognize the Israelite God. So, God used a series of ten plagues to both reveal His identity and relax Pharaoh's grip on His people. When His people needed Him, God showed up in some miraculous ways.*

1. Talk about some of your takeaways from the weekly video. What resonated with you the most from this week's discussion? How did it change the way you view the ten plagues?
2. Read Exodus 5:1-2, 6:1-9. These texts set up the reasons for the plagues. They happened because of Pharaoh's defiance and for Israelites deliverance. How did the plagues show Pharaoh God's true identity?
3. What promises did God make to Israel in Exodus 6? How did the plagues fulfill those promises? Why did the Israelites have such trouble believing God (Exodus 6:9)? Has there ever been a moment in your life where circumstances made it difficult for you to hold onto God's promises? How do we hold onto hope in moments like these?
4. Exodus 7-10 tells us the story of the first nine plagues: Blood, Frogs, Gnats, Flies, Livestock, Boils, Hail, Locusts, and Darkness. When you think about the plagues, which of the first nine would have been the most annoying to you? How do you think these plagues affected daily life in Egypt?
5. The plagues were a direct attack on the idols of Egypt. What are some of the idols of our day? How does God attack those idols and show us that our trust in them has been misplaced? How has God shaken up the idols in your life? What did that process look like?
6. Earlier, we saw the four promises God made to the Israelites in Exodus 6:6-7: **"I will bring you out... I will free you... I will redeem you...I will take you as my own."** How has He made and fulfilled these same promises to us in Christ? What does it look like for us to live in the reality of those promises?
7. What do the miracles teach us about God's power? What do they show us about the lengths He's willing to go to in order to save His people? What comfort can we take away from that?

In order to free His people from their slavery, God did some incredible things. He turned the Nile to blood and brought swarms of locusts, flies, and gnats down on the Egyptian people. His actions showed not only His great judgment on Egypt, but His great love for Israel. As we look to the cross of Christ today, we see the same characteristics of God revealed. He poured out His judgment and justice on Jesus — the true Firstborn. He did that in order to show His great love for us. Though our hearts are prone to chase after other so-called 'gods,' we would do well to remember how passionately the real God has chased after us.

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- Exodus 12:21-33
- Exodus 14:5-12, 21-28
- Exodus 15:1-18

Week Four: DEPARTURE

BIG IDEA: *While the first nine plagues had hardened Pharaoh's heart, the tenth would finally break it. With the death of the firstborn, the time had come for the Israelites to leave the land of their slavery. As they prepared to go, God commanded them to celebrate a special meal. This Passover feast would serve as a generational reminder of how the blood of a Lamb had saved their lives.*

1. What were some of the key ideas you walked away with from the video session? How has the story of the Passover and the parting of the Red Sea resonated with you throughout this week?
2. Read Exodus 12:21-33. What instructions did Moses give the people? How was putting the blood on the doorframe an act of faith? Do you think you would have been nervous in this moment? Why or why not?
3. How would the celebration of the Passover Feast give the Israelites a chance to teach their children? Why was it so important for them to have these generational moments of sharing? What are some ways we can share our faith with our children/grandchildren?
4. How does our weekly celebration of communion give us a chance to remember our own "Passover Lamb" in Christ? What are some practices/habits that have helped you in your remembrance of the Lord's Supper?
5. Read Exodus 14:5-12, 21-28. Why do you think Pharaoh changed his mind and pursued Israel? How did this shake the Israelites' confidence in God? Why do our difficulties often cause us to long for destructive things (i.e., the Israelites' longing to return to Egypt)?
6. What do you imagine the parting of the Red Sea to have been like? How do you think this event changed the Israelites' perception of who God was? When we think back to our own experience of meeting God in the water (in baptism), what changed for you then?
7. If you have time, look at Exodus 15:1-18. It's a song of praise the Israelites sing on the other side of the Red Sea. What do they praise God for in these verses? How are our praises today similar? How are they different?

Standing on the banks of the Red Sea, the Israelites let out a triumphant shout of praise to their God. Only hours before, it had looked like their deliverance story was about to come to a deadly end. And yet, God had shown up with one more astounding miracle, parting the sea so they could walk through on dry ground. Their worry melted into worship. Their thankfulness overflowed into thanksgiving. When they considered all God had done for them, all they could do was worship. As we think about all God has done for us in Christ, how much greater should our praise be?

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- Exodus 20:1-17
- Exodus 23:1-9
- Exodus 40:34-38

Week Five: DEPARTURE

BIG IDEA: *After the miracle at the Red Sea, God brought the Israelites to the base of Mount Sinai, the mountain where God had first revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush. Whereas God had previously revealed His name to Moses, this trip to the mountain would reveal His character. Through the giving of the Law, God would show the Israelites what He was like and what He expected them to be. More than that, He would reveal His true heart towards them and His great desire to dwell alongside His people.*

1. What were some of your takeaways from the video teaching? Was there anything that made you think differently about the Old Testament covenant or the Law?
2. The Ten Commandments are among some of the most influential and important laws in history. How many of the Commandments can your Group remember without looking them up? (*The list is found in Exodus 20:1-17 if you need help!*) What stands out to you about these laws? Why do you think they've been so important in the course of civilization?
3. What do the Ten Commandments teach us about who God is? What do they teach us about what God values? How do these commands encourage us to mimic God's character? How do they show us what it means to live as creatures created "in God's image"?
4. In what ways do the Ten Commandments show our inability to keep God's Laws? How have we fallen short even with these ten? What does this show us about our need for something or Someone greater than the Law to save us?
5. Read Exodus 23:1-9. What do Laws like these teach us about God's desire for justice and righteousness in our relationships with one another? How would laws like these benefit the community? How would they protect the rights and lives of all the Israelite people?
6. As Matt said in the video, the Law helps us to understand the things "we should do and not do that makes us who we are." In what ways did the Law establish a new identity for the Israelites? How did it set them apart from the people around them? How does God expect us to be set apart in our own culture?
7. Read Exodus 40:34-38. The instructions for the Tabernacle fill up much of the back half of Exodus. Why was the Tabernacle so important? How did it represent God's presence to His people? How does it make you feel to know that God wants to have this kind of relationship with us?

"The Law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith" (Galatians 3:24). Though parts of the Law might seem confusing and even old-fashioned to our modern sensibilities, we have to remember why the Law was given to us in the first place. It was given to us to protect the community. It was given to us to reveal God's character and righteousness. More importantly, it was given to us so that we might see our desperate need for a Savior. Every time we read the Law, we recognize our own sin and shortcomings, and the incredible grace of the One who came to save us anyway.

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- Exodus 32:1-8
- Exodus 33:12-17
- John 14:1-7

Week Six: KINGDOM

BIG IDEA: *Mount Sinai was both the best of times and the worst of times for the Israelites. It was there that they received the Law and discovered what it meant to be God's chosen people. It was also there that they had their first big failure, constructing a golden calf to worship. Unfortunately, this failure would not be their last. Then the time came for them to claim the Promised Land, they became full of fear and doubt. Their disobedience and distrust of God would ultimately sentence them to 40 years of wandering and waiting.*

1. What were some of your takeaways from the video teaching? As you think back through the entire study, what's the most significant thing you've learned about the Exodus story?
2. Read Exodus 32:1-8. What happened while Moses was up on Mount Sinai receiving the Law? Why do you think the Israelites did these things? How does our impatience with God sometimes lead us into disobedience? How can we remind ourselves to be patient as we wait on His timing?
3. The Israelites used the gold they were given by the Egyptians (Exodus 12:35-36) to construct the golden calf. In what ways do we take the gifts God has given us and turn them into gods? What are the dangers of worshipping the gift rather than the Giver?
4. Read Exodus 33:12-17. Why did Moses want God to go with His people to the Promised Land? How did the presence of God differentiate them from all other people? As God's people today, how does God's presence with us make us different? In what ways does the Spirit make us stand out? (see *Galatians 5:22-23* for some ideas!)
5. How desperate was Moses for God's presence to go with the people? What would it look like for us to live with this same kind of passion and concern for God's presence? How would that transform our lives?
6. Read John 14:1-7. What did Jesus promise His disciples in these verses? Why is it significant that Jesus offers us a place in the Father's "home"? What does a home give us? How are these needs ultimately met in God?
7. *"The Bible is the story of God bringing us home."* How does this change the way you read the Bible? How does it change the way you live? What difference does it make to know that you have a home waiting for you?

"When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be where I am" (John 14:3). *Like the Israelites in the desert, we are longing to get home. Though we've been set free from our slavery, we're still waiting for our own Joshua (Jesus) to bring us into the land of promise. As we wait and wander, we hold onto the hope of a place far more beautiful than we could ever imagine. Not a land flowing with milk and honey, but a land flowing with the presence and power of God Himself. A land where we can feel safe. A land where we can be free. A land where we belong.*