

I AM

a series in the book of Exodus

January & February Studies



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I AM

Exodus is a book where we meet the real God. Today, a lot of people like to define God for themselves. They might say: "I'm not religious, but I'm spiritual," or "I like to think of God as..." But the God of Exodus assures us that he can't be defined by anyone but himself.

In Exodus we meet the God who is a reality—the ultimate reality. And he comes to us saying "I AM WHO I AM" (3:14). When confronted with the real God, we discover

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In Exodus we meet the God who is a reality—the ultimate reality.

a God who is more terrifying and more loving than we could ever have imagined or dreamed up. Throughout Exodus, we meet a God who saves his people through judgement: he saves them from slavery through plagues, he saves them from a Passover because of a lamb's blood, and he saves them from war through parting a sea which destroys their enemies.

These are confronting scenes, but they show us again and again that in order to live with God, we need to be changed. In order to live with God we need to be purified, by water and blood, if we're going to be able to approach the fire of God's presence.

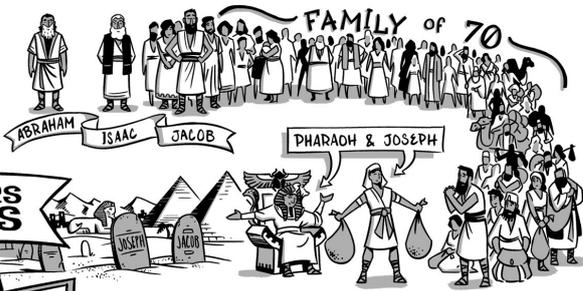
Throughout Exodus, God always takes the initiative, revealing himself not only through words, but also through signs and wonders, showing the world his sovereignty, his holiness, his power, his awesome glory, his righteousness, and his compassion.

"Aslan is a lion—the Lion, the great Lion."
"Ooh" said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he—quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"
"Safe?" said Mr Beaver. "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good."

*From The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe,
by C. S. Lewis*

Christian Standard Bible (CSB) is used in these studies.
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All the sweet little drawings were very graciously done by Lauren Fung.

BLESSING
 • HUMANITY (GENESIS 1: 28)
 • ABRAHAM (GENESIS 17: 1-6)



EXODUS

400 YEARS PASS

ISRAEL WAS **FRUITFUL** AND **MULTIPLIED** AND **FILLED** THE LAND (1:7)

1-18 EXODUS FROM EGYPT

TELL PHARAOH TO LET MY PEOPLE GO. I KNOW HE WILL RESIST, SO I WILL BRING PLAGUES AND HARDEN HIS HEART.



CONFRONTATION BETWEEN 5-15 GOD & PHARAOH



GOD VS PHARAOH



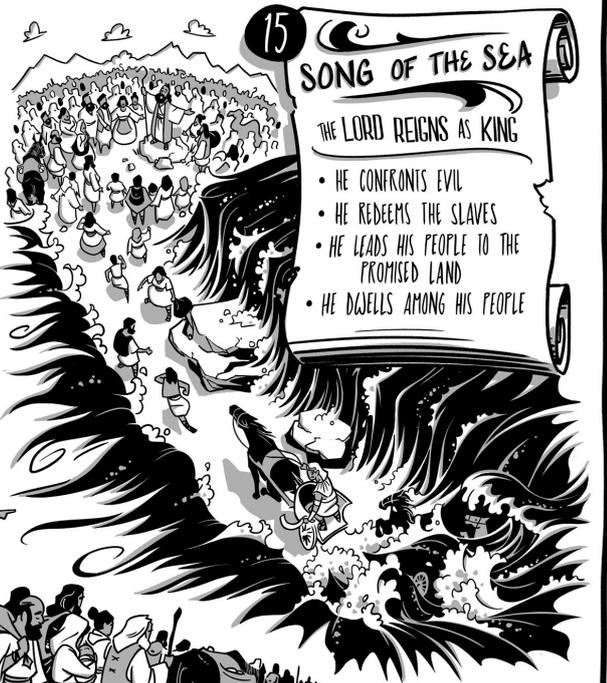
"PHARAOH HARDENED HIS HEART" OR "HIS HEART GREW HARD"
 "GOD HARDENED PHARAOH'S HEART"

THE POINT

GOD **KNIEW** PHARAOH WOULD RESIST, BUT STILL GAVE HIM **MANY CHANCES**
 PHARAOH'S **EVIL** REACHES A POINT OF **NO RETURN**
 GOD **BENDS** PHARAOH'S EVIL TO HIS PURPOSES & **LURES** HIM INTO HIS OWN **DESTRUCTION**

15 SONG OF THE SEA

THE LORD REIGNS AS KING
 • HE CONFRONTS EVIL
 • HE REDEEMS THE SLAVES
 • HE LEADS HIS PEOPLE TO THE PROMISED LAND
 • HE DWELLS AMONG HIS PEOPLE



16-18 IN THE WILDERNESS



STORIES

GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES

ABRAHAM (GENESIS 12, 15, 17): GOD'S BLESSING TO ALL NATIONS

ISRAEL (EXODUS 19: 1-6)

- KINGDOM OF PRIESTS TO THE NATIONS
- RESTORATION OF GOD'S PRESENCE

19-40 COVENANT AT MT. SINAI

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

19-24

TERMS OF THE COVENANT: (CHS 20-23)

- THE 10 COMMANDMENTS
- 52 MORE COMMANDS ABOUT WORSHIP & SOCIAL JUSTICE

SIGN US UP!

MAKE A SANCTUARY FOR ME AND I WILL DWELL AMONG MY PEOPLE. (25: 8)

LOTS OF SYMBOLISM

TABERNACLE BLUEPRINT

25-31

MOST HOLY SPACE

HOT SPOT OF GOD'S PRESENCE

ARK OF THE COVENANT

32-34 ISRAEL BREAKS THE COVENANT

LEAVE ME ALONE THAT I MAY DESTROY THEM.

MAKE US A GOD!

HERE ARE YOUR GODS WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT.

REMEMBER YOUR COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAHAM!

35-40

MOSES BUILDS THE TABERNACLE

"THE LORD IS MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER, ABUNDING IN COVENANT FAITHFULNESS. HE FORGIVES SIN, BUT WILL NOT LEAVE THE WICKED UNPUNISHED." (34: 6-7)

MOSES CAN'T ENTER



WEEK 1

THE GOD WHO IS FAITHFUL

Exodus 1-2

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She got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with asphalt and pitch. She placed the child in it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile.

STUDY QUESTIONS

"And." We can't see it in our translations, but the book of Exodus starts with the word "and." This is telling us straight away that this book is a part of a bigger story. The book of Exodus is chapter two of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament). And so the whole book needs to be read in light of what's gone before.

Read Genesis 12:1–3 (on the right). What does God promise to Abraham?

Read Exodus 1

How are these promises tracking at the moment?

Exodus 1:7, in the original Hebrew language, literally says: "As for the Israelites, they grew, they were fruitful, they swarmed, they increased, they got powerful, more and more, and the land was filled with them." How does God fulfill his promises to Abraham here?

Pharaoh is intimidated by how fast the Israelites are increasing. How does he try to slow them down?

Look at 1:15–22. The acts of these two midwives were so revered that their names were recorded in this book for all of history. Neither Pharaoh, nor his magicians, nor the names of the Israelite elders are named in the first five chapters of Exodus. Why do you think these women get this special honour?

As chapter 1 comes to a close, what's the real hope the Israelites have?

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord said to Abram:

"Go out from your land, your relatives, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Exodus 2:1-10

How is God at work in Exodus 2:1–10?

Assuming you knew nothing about Moses or Israel's history after this point, what might you assume the role of this little Levite baby would be?

Read 2:11–15.

"We know Moses will liberate God's people from Egyptian slavery. But here he behaves like an Egyptian slave-master. He needs to un-learn the ways of the Egyptian court."
Tim Chester.

What does this teach us about how God works?

What can we see about God's character from these chapters?

Read verses 24–25 slowly. What are the four verbs telling us about what God does?

Read Hebrews 11:23–27. What do we learn about Moses' motivations from these verses?

Every Christian is in the same situation as Moses. As soon as we become a Christian, the land of our birth and upbringing become a foreign land to us. We have to choose. Which home will set our priorities? Which home will shape our behaviour? Which home will define our standard of living? Because we're heading for the promised land, the home kept in heaven for us, secured by the work of Christ.

How do you need prayer in light of this?

DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTION



These devotions are written to help you go a little bit deeper into personally applying the text. If you're keen to give them a go, catch up with someone over coffee this week, and have a chat through it together.

"The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labour; and they cried out; and their cry for help because of the difficult labour ascended to God. And God heard their groaning; and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; and God saw the Israelites; and God knew."

Exodus 2:23–25

Have you ever felt like God was absent in your suffering? Like he didn't hear you or know what was going on in your life?

Maybe the hardest experience in the Christian life is to suffer and feel that God doesn't hear. You can go through what feels like death itself, and you wonder, "Where is God? How could he be silent, distant or idly watching when this is happening?" This question—where was God?—is so hard and so important.

And we all have to deal with the question. If we haven't already asked it, we will. So how would you answer it? How did you answer it?

In Exodus 2 we can see that the Israelites weren't speaking long, eloquent prayers to God (they were "groaning"). But God still heard them. He saw them, he heard them, he remembered his promises, "and God knew." How does this give you comfort in difficult times?

This is one promise to take to heart this week: "In just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay'" (Heb. 10:37). A time is coming when we will tell parts of our stories differently. What is now: "wait," will someday be: "for the briefest of moments." What is now suffering will somehow be replaced with glory.

Spend some time together bringing these thoughts to the God who hears.



WEEK 2

THE GOD WHO IS KNOWN

EXODUS 3-4

“

Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire within a bush. As Moses looked, he saw that the bush was on fire but was not consumed.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Exodus 3:1–18

We don't hear the personal name of God (Yahweh) in Exodus until this verse (3:2), even though it is used 175 times in Genesis. Why might that be?

Read verses 4–5. God seems to be sending mixed messages: Come near, but be careful about coming near. How does this set us up for the rest of the book?

"Horeb" is another name for Mount Sinai. In verse 12 God tells Moses that he will bring the people out of Egypt and worship him at this mountain. What needs to happen before the Israelites can come back here?

Moses asks three questions of God:

1. Who am I? (v. 11–12)
2. Who are you? (v. 13–22)
3. What if they don't believe? (4:1–17)

Moses says "Who am I?" (v. 11) and God replies with "I will be with you" (v. 12). It might sound like a jarring response at first, but how might this be the best answer for Moses?

Israelites believed that a person's nature was reflected in their name. What does God's name reveal about him (v. 14–15)?

"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Read Matthew 22:23–32. What does Jesus say that God reveals in these

STUDY QUESTIONS

words?

Grab a piece of paper and a pen. Imagine you had three sentences to explain who God is to someone. Basing your answer on Exodus 3, what would you say? Write it down and share with the group.

In John's gospel, Jesus controversially uses God's name to reveal himself to the world. He says "I AM" seven times to reveal himself in different ways:

I am the bread of life (6:35)

I am the light of the world (8:12)

I am the gate (10:7)

I am the good shepherd (10:11)

I am the resurrection and the life (11:25)

I am the way, the truth and the life (14:6)

I am the true vine (15:1).

Jesus also says "I am" alone a number of times (8:24, 28, 58; 13:19).

What is Jesus saying in these words?

DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTION



These devotions are written to help you go a little bit deeper into personally applying the text. If you're keen to give them a go, catch up with someone over coffee this week, and have a chat through it together.

Moses asked God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He answered "I will certainly be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I am the one who sent you: when you bring the people out of Egypt, and will all worship God at this mountain." (3:11–12)

Moses says "Who am I?" (v. 11) and God replies with "I will be with you" (v. 12). It might sound like a jarring response at first, but this is the best answer Moses could have hoped for. God is the One who will make the difference. Moses doesn't need higher self-esteem; he needs a greater sense of God's presence.

How do you allow your identity—what gives you confidence, and how you feel about yourself—to rest on God's words "I am with you"?

When is it hardest for you to believe this truth?

How might believing God's words "I am with you" help you in those moments?

At the end of Matthew's gospel we read:

The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Jesus came near and said to them: "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:16–20)

Just like Moses, we have each been given a mission by God: to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything he commanded. And just like God promises Moses that he will be with him, Jesus promises us that he'll be with us the whole way.

How does this help you as you seek to follow Jesus?

Spend some time praying together for those in your life who might need discipling.



WEEK 3
THE GOD WHO IS IN CONTROL
Exodus 7:8-10:29

“

For this time I am about to send all my plagues against you, your officials, and your people. Then you will know there is no one like me on the whole earth.

STUDY QUESTIONS

God talks about the purpose of the plagues in 7:5, and 9:14–16. What do you think of these purpose statements?

Read 5:2. How are the plagues an answer to this question?

Pharaoh was the most powerful man in the world. In fact, the Egyptians looked to him as a living god. How do you think he felt being told what to do by these two 80-year-old men (7:7)?

Before every sign we see the phrase “the Lord said to Moses.” Why should Pharaoh listen to Moses? (hint: 7:1)

Read Genesis 1:9–15 (on the right). How might the plagues be a kind of ‘uncreation’?

Many of these plagues are attacks on specific Egyptian gods—the god of the Nile, the healing god, the sky god, the sun god, etc. These plagues show that only the true, Creator God has the power to create and uncreate in miraculous ways. By using the elements of nature in his judgement, God is proving that he is Lord over all creation.

Although the Egyptian magicians can keep up for a while, they soon reach their limit and say: “This is the finger of God” (8:19). Compare Exodus 8:19 with Luke 11:20. What do you see?

Genesis 1:9-15

Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry land “earth,” and the gathering of the water he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” And it was so. 12 The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 Evening came and then morning: the third day.

14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons and for days and years. 15 They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.” And it was so.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read 9:15–16. How are the plagues intended to save?

Skip a little ahead to 12:37–38. If there were no other nations other than Israel and Egypt mentioned in the narrative, what does this mean for the “mixed crowd”?

These chapters of Exodus and John’s gospel share a similar interest in signs. But while the signs of Exodus were showing God’s judgement, the signs of John’s gospel were signs of hope. Instead of turning water into blood, Jesus turned water into wine (2:2–11). Instead of the firstborns dying, Jesus raised a firstborn from death (11:1–44).

What does this show us about following Jesus?

Read Matthew 27:45–50. The three days of darkness over Egypt was mirrored by the three hours of darkness over Jesus, followed by his death. At the cross, the plagues fell on Jesus, the Son of God. At the cross, the Maker came to be unmade, so that we can be remade! When Jesus rose to life, it was the promise and beginning of all re-creation. The promise of our re-creation.

How does this give hope to you this week?

DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTION



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“Encourage each another daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin’s deception.” Hebrews 3:13

Pharaoh’s heart is hardened because he refuses to listen to God’s words to him (spoken through Moses). Pharaoh is like a case study in the deceitfulness of sin.

The hardening of our hearts overthrows reason. We find excuses for our sinful and proud desires. We find reasons for doing what we want to do. When it all unravels, we wade further into sin, rather than accepting our terrible mistake and backing away from it. By nature, we go on, deeper and deeper. That’s what Pharaoh did. And that’s why we need others to encourage us to fight sin, and expose for us the deceit of sin when we can’t see it ourselves.

Do you recognise the same deceit working in your own life in some way?

Do you need to get help, and what steps will you take to get it?

How can you pray for one another in this?

The background of the slide is a dark, starry space. In the upper left, there are two reddish-orange spheres, possibly representing Mars or other planets. In the lower right, there are two white, cratered spheres, representing the moon. The text is centered on a white rectangular box.

WEEK 4

THE GOD WHO IS LIFE

Exodus 11-13:16

“

It is the Passover sacrifice
to the Lord, for he passed
over the houses of the
Israelites in Egypt when
he struck the Egyptians
and spared our homes.

STUDY QUESTIONS

After the series of signs and plagues, God's final sign to Pharaoh and the Egyptians is the death of the male firstborns.

Read 11:1–10

Go back and read 1:22. How might this shed light on God's final sign against Pharaoh?

Read 4:22. How might this shed light on God's final sign against Pharaoh?

For the first time out of all the plagues, God says "I will go out" (11:4) and do this. Instead of working through creation, God says that he will personally appear for this final sign. He will redeem his firstborn son Israel through the death of the Egyptian firstborns. What does this say about this final sign?

Read 12:1–27

Exodus 12 has two speeches in it about the Passover: God speaking to Moses (1–20), and Moses to the Israelites (21–27). What is the main point of each speech?

Hyssop (12:22) was used in rituals to make things pure (Leviticus 14:6; Numbers 19:6). What do you think this means for the Passover ritual?

Why do you think God told the Israelites to re-enact this same scenario every single year?

Read John 19:28–36. The hyssop branch, the "Day of Preparation" (for Passover week), and none of his bones being broken are all connections with the Passover. What do you think these connections are saying about Jesus?

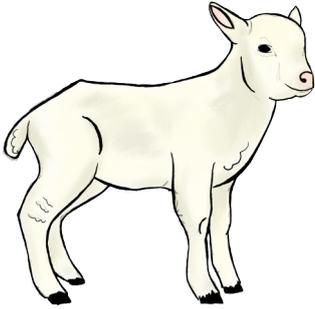
STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Hebrews 10:4–14. How does this help us understand the Passover sacrifice?

One of the biggest ideas of the Bible is that there has to be a penalty for sin. These passages tell us that Jesus has paid this whole penalty for us, so that we can live with God.

How does this change the way you see your life?

DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTION



These devotions are written to help you go a little bit deeper into personally applying the text. If you're keen to give them a go, catch up with someone over coffee this week, and have a chat through it together.

"Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed."
1 Corinthians 5:7

Jesus died on the cross, bearing the full weight of God's wrath so that we can be accepted by God. When we try and prove ourselves by our goodness, we're saying, in effect, that the cross wasn't enough. Just as Israel was called to remember their Passover, we're called to remember our Passover lamb of Christ, who's already died for the sins of the world.

"You will cleanse no sin from your life that you have not first recognized as being pardoned through the cross." Tim Chester, *You Can Change*

What do you think of this quote?

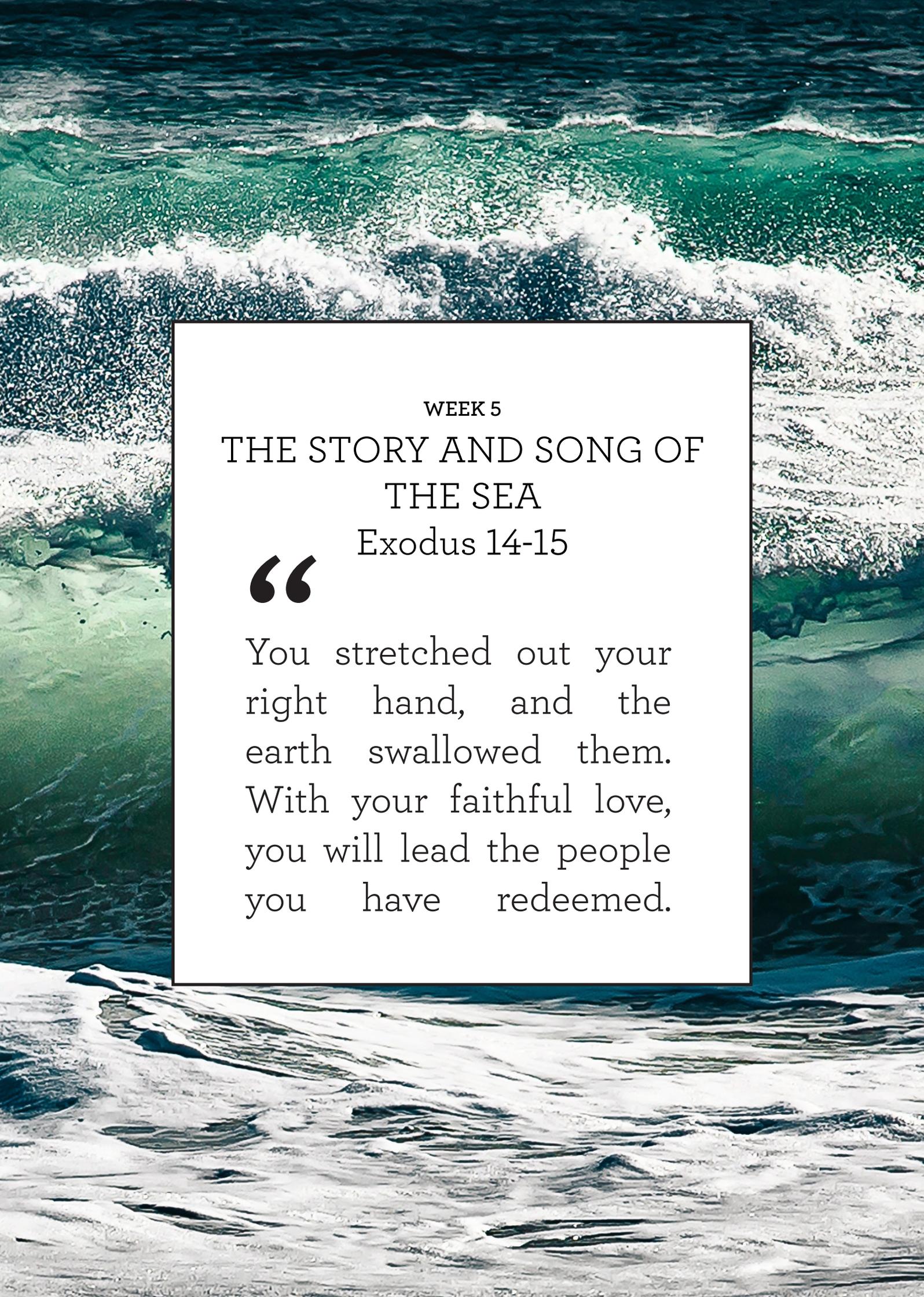
Imagine a day when you've been really good.

What difference do you think it made to:

- God's love for you?
- People's opinion of you?
- How you view yourself?

How should our Passover lamb change our answers to these three questions?

Pray for trust in your Passover lamb.



WEEK 5

THE STORY AND SONG OF
THE SEA

Exodus 14-15

“

You stretched out your
right hand, and the
earth swallowed them.
With your faithful love,
you will lead the people
you have redeemed.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read chapter 14

Read verses 10 and 15 again. The Israelites cried out to God, but God says to Moses: “Why do you cry out to me?” Why do you think that is?

Do you think the things the Israelites were saying were reasonable (v. 11–12)?

“Do not be afraid... stand firm... be still.” Which of these speaks to you most when you’re tempted to doubt God?

There’s a huge, nation-defining miracle in 14:21–28. What is it?

How does it demonstrate the truth of verses 13–14?

What do the Israelites do to achieve this victory?

Finally, in verse 31, the Israelites “feared God.” They finally caught up with the Hebrew midwives of chapter 1! And they would look back at this event to remind themselves of God’s redemption (you can read about it in Psalm 77 and 106 in your own time this week).

Read 15:1–18

Moses and Miriam celebrate by leading the Israelites in song in chapter 15. What’s the main point of the song?

Jesus has entered the waters of death and has passed through to new life. And we passed through with him if we’re “in Christ” by faith. This is what’s symbolized in baptism. And so what happened to Israel at the Red Sea has happened to us in our baptisms.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Read Romans 6:3–4

In the same way, when we look back at God's redemptive acts in the cross and resurrection, we have entered the waters of death and been raised to new life. The exodus, cross and resurrection are the objective demonstrations in history that God is for us, however we feel and whatever is happening. Whatever our circumstances, we can still sing of God's goodness, for we stand on the eastern side of the sea.

How often do you feel like joyously singing about the redemption God has won for you in Christ?

Spend time in prayer. to the "Lord who has become my salvation."

DISCIPLESHIP DEVOTION



These devotions are written to help you go a little bit deeper into personally applying the text. If you're keen to give them a go, catch up with someone over coffee this week, and have a chat through it together.

I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child. Israel, put your hope in the LORD, both now and forever. (Psalm 131:2–3)

Moses' words in Exodus 14:14 are usually translated "you only need to be still." But they could just as easily be translated: "just be quiet!" They aren't words of comfort, but words of rebuke, for the fear and faithlessness of Israel. We might not be standing between a raging sea and a bloodthirsty army. But we all have those moments where our hearts aren't trusting in God, and they're spinning out because of our fear.

What are the loudest noises in your heart at the moment (anxieties that keep your soul from being "quieted")?

David was the greatest king of God's people, but he had to become like a weaned child before God. Why? Because our God is a God of grace. Jesus has already done everything for us, and the only right response is trust and contentment—like a weaned child. But what does it mean to be children sitting in our Father's lap and wanting nothing more than sitting in our Father's lap? To love God without need? It means to put all of the hopes of our heart in Him. And not to scatter our hopes onto anything and everybody all the time.

David's saying: Israel, my people, set your hope on the only place that can satisfy your hearts. Wake up in the morning with hope, because God is your Father. The only thing strong enough to overpower an independent heart and a stormy life is what God promises to do in Jesus: the salvation God's already won for you in Jesus.

Pray for one another and all the loudest noises in your hearts.

PRAYER POINTS

NOTES



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2018