

EXODUS

A NEW HUMANITY



EXODUS INTRODUCTION

Exodus is one of the most popular books in the Old Testament. Its gripping story has generated 15 international movies—the only narrative that has garnered more screenplays is the Flood Narrative in Genesis 6–9.

The reason why I think Exodus captures the imagination is because it is a story full of murder, redemption, existential dread, and loyal love. It's an intense and dramatic story!

I love the book of Exodus. It picks up where Genesis left off: Joseph was in the land of Egypt and God's people were prospering. But Joseph and his family were soon forgotten by those in political power. They went from being favoured in the land to being “a stench in the nostrils of the Egyptians”. A new Pharaoh oppressed them with forced labour and they entered 400 years of slavery in a land not their own. But God saw the oppression of his people, and was moved by love to take action to release them from the despotic rule of Pharaoh and bring them into a loving relationship with Yahweh.

Our hope and prayer through this teaching series is that you would encounter the God and Father of Messiah Jesus in a fresh way; that you would understand and see the ways that Yahweh has moved through history to emancipate his people; and that you would wake up to both the Exodus that Moses led, but in a deeper way the true Exodus it points to that Jesus invites us into.

“Yahweh, Yahweh, a god merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generation.” Exodus 34:6–7

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TIPS FOR ENGAGING DISCUSSION

1. You are an Air Traffic Controller, not the Pilot

Your main role is facilitating discussion, not preaching or lecturing. The less you speak the better! You want to create a safe space and trusting environment in which everyone feels like they can contribute.

2. Establish Group Norms

Discuss expectations, especially around listening to one another and respecting each other's perspective. We want this to be a safe environment for people to be real with one another and explore faith.

3. Know Your Group

Consider the different personalities and learning styles in your group. Be aware of who dominates discussion, and who doesn't contribute. Understand people's barriers for learning and work out strategies to include everyone.

4. Foster Inclusivity

Invite, but don't force participation. Don't put people on the spot. Cater for different learning styles: use a whiteboard, ask people to draw something from the passage, do a role play, split into smaller groups, time for personal reflection, etc. Be creative!

5. Ask Open-Ended Questions

Simple questions get simple answers (Yes/No). If you want better answers, you need to ask better questions! Example: What struck you from the passage? What did you notice? Why do you say that? Tell me more about that.

6. Silence is your Friend

Don't be afraid of awkward silences. People need time to reflect and gather their thoughts, so leave space and time for this! Avoid answering your own questions. Rather, simply repeat the question, or ask: 'Any thoughts?'

7. Affirm People's Input

Acknowledge and thank people for their contributions. Never reject an answer. If it's clearly in the wrong direction, then ask a follow up question: What makes you say that? What verse did you get that from? What do others think?

8. Dig for More

Don't be content with just one answer from one person (even if it's a good answer!). Ask follow up questions: What do other people think? Why is that? Tell me more!

9. Be Flexible

The goal isn't to get through all the questions in this Study Guide, but to facilitate an open discussion to help people understand God's Word and apply it to their lives. Allow tangents, disagreements, and debates. Separate disagreements from conflict—trust is the basis for robust conversations.

10. Keep the Group on Track

Don't be afraid of tabling/parking tangents around periphery issues: "This is really important. Let's come back to this another night where we can give it the attention it deserves!" Keep bringing the group back to the main point or big idea (this obviously assumes that you've prepared and know what the main point of the text is!). Summarise where you've been and what you've found.

11. Drive Towards Application

We don't study the Bible to simply learn facts about God, but to know him relationally and be transformed by him to live a life of worship and love. What does this mean for you? What will you do? Who will you tell?

12. Respect People's Time

Plan the structure of the night. Start on time, so you can finish on time!



EXODUS

GOD SAW, GOD KNEW

Exodus 1–2

Pray for God to use this series to help you understand the richness of the Bible's story of redemption.

Exodus tells the story of the birth of the nation of Israel as God rescues them out of slavery in Egypt. What are the formative events that have shaped our national identity (or your home country)?

Read Exodus 1:1–7.

What is the setting and background of the book of Exodus?¹

Read God's promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3 and 15:5. How are God's promises going in Exodus 1? What is being fulfilled? What threatens God's promises?

¹ Advanced question: How would you summarise the book of Genesis in 30 seconds? How does Genesis provide the historical and theological background to Exodus?

Read Exodus 1:8–22.

Describe the difficulties the Israelites are facing. Why do you think the Egyptian king is so threatened by them?

Discuss the courage and cunning of the Hebrew midwives. What does it take to resist such oppression?

How does God respond to the challenge of Pharaoh (1:20–21)?

Read Exodus 2:1–22.

What do we learn about Moses's family of origin and early years? What might it have been like to grow up between two worlds?

How does Moses respond? How is this a healthy/unhealthy response?

Read Exodus 2:23–25.

Suffering can be a major catalyst for deconstruction and doubt. Why? How has suffering impacted your faith?

What do we learn about the character of God? How does this help us in our troubles?

How is the Israelites response to suffering instructive for us?

Invite people to share their current troubles. Cry out to the God who hears our groans and is concerned for his people.



EXODUS

YAHWEH

Exodus 3–4

Pray for God to give you a deeper knowledge of his character.

How would you describe the character of the God of the Bible?

Moses is in the wilderness of Midian for a long period (2:23) having run away from home and family. Imagine what Moses's experiences in this season might have been. How might God have been using these wilderness years to prepare him for what was to come?

Read Exodus 3:2–10.

What do we learn about who God is in these verses?

How does the blazing holiness of God affect how Moses relates to him, and how we relate to him?

What does God think about the situation of his people? What will he do about it?

Moses has five objections to God's plan, and God responds five times. List each one. You might like to do this activity on a whiteboard or butcher's paper.

Verses	Objection by Moses	Response by God

What is the significance of God revealing his name to Moses (3:14–15)? What does God's name reveal about him?

What do we learn about what will happen in the conflict between Pharaoh and God (4:21–23)?

The tension between Pharaoh hardening his own heart and God hardening his heart is introduced here. This will reappear throughout the narrative. How should we think about the relationship between the two?

How do the Israelites respond to Moses (4:29–31)?

How does God's nature and character shape how we relate to him?

Pray that your lives will be shaped by God's character.



EXODUS

I WILL REDEEM YOU

Exodus 5–6

Pray for God to enable you to trust his promises, even in the middle of your troubles and difficulties.

How do you respond to suffering and difficulty? Invite people to share a time of trouble in their life and how it impacted their view of God.

Read Exodus 5:1–5.

Describe this first encounter between Pharaoh and Moses and Aaron. What does Pharaoh's response reveal about his attitude to God?

Who is the battle ultimately between in the conflict to follow?²

² Pharaoh was not only king of Egypt, but considered divine. The Exodus narrative is framed as a divine confrontation, a battle for who is the true God.

Read Exodus 5:6–14.

Describe what Pharaoh does in response to Moses and Aaron's request. What do you think his strategy is?

If you were in the Israelites' shoes, what might you be thinking? How do the Israelite leaders respond (5:15–21)? What impact does the increased labour have on the relationship between the Israelites and Moses and Aaron?

Who seems to be more powerful after this first encounter between Pharaoh and Yahweh?

Read Exodus 5:22–6:8.

Moses takes the people's complaint to God, accusing *him* of wrongdoing! How does God respond? What has God's purpose been through this first encounter (6:1)?

How does God want Moses to reassure his people? What does he promise to do?

Why didn't the people listen to God's word through Moses (6:9)? Why is it so difficult to trust God's promises in the face of suffering?

God often uses difficulties in our lives to deeply shape us (Romans 5:3–5, James 1:2–4). How can we open ourselves up to the gifts God might have for us in our troubles?

Pray for one another in the troubles you're currently facing, that God would enable you to keep trusting Jesus, and even use your suffering to make you more like Jesus.



EXODUS

TEN PANDEMICS

Exodus 7–12

How have you seen the power of God in your life?

Read Exodus 7:1–5.

What is God's purpose in the plagues to come (see also 7:17, 8:10, 9:14–16, 10:2, 12:12)?

What is the point of the first standoff in 7:8–13? What does 7:12 reveal before the battle even begins?

Split into groups and complete the table below. It may be beneficial to use a whiteboard or butcher's paper.

Plague	Pharaoh's response	Officials/Magicians	Result	Things to Note
1. Blood 7:14-24				
2. Frogs 8:1-15				
3. Gnats 8:16-19				
4. Flies 8:20-32				
5. Livestock 9:1-7				
6. Boils 9:8-12				
7. Hail 9:13-35				
8. Locusts 10:1-20				
9. Darkness 10:21-29				
10. Firstborn ³ 11:1-10, 12:29-32				

Read Exodus 12:1-28.

Imagine you are an Israelite living generations later explaining the Passover Festival to your children. How would you simply explain its meaning and significance?

How does the Passover provide important foundations for our understanding of the cross (Matthew 26:17-29, 1 Corinthians 5:7)?

What are the similarities and differences between God's redemption of Israel from Exodus and our redemption at the cross?

What rhythms and rituals do we have as a community to remember and celebrate our redemption?

Share the Lord's Supper to remember and celebrate God's great redemption at the cross.

³ Exodus 1:15-22 provides important background to the Plague of the Firstborn. Just as Pharaoh killed all the firstborn sons of Israel, Yahweh is now returning that same judgement on Egypt.



EXODUS

THE GREAT LIBERATION

Exodus 12–14

Describe a time in your life when you've felt cornered—you've been stuck, and there doesn't seem to be any clear way out.

Read Exodus 12:33–42.

How does this passage compare to Genesis 15:12–14? How do we see God's promises to Abraham being fulfilled?

Read Exodus 13:17–22.

As the people leave Egypt, how do we see God's provision and kindness?

What's the significance of Joseph's bones (cf. Genesis 50:22–26)?

Read Exodus 14:1-9.

The battle between Yahweh and Pharaoh has not finished—in fact it's coming to its dramatic conclusion. What does Yahweh say he'll do? And how does Pharaoh change his mind?

Read Exodus 14:10-18.

How do the people of Israel respond as they see Pharaoh's army approaching? How can we be like the Israelites?

How do Moses and Yahweh respond to the fear of the people?

Read Exodus 14:19-31.

What strikes you about this final battle scene?

Yahweh is repeatedly depicted as a divine warrior who leads his people into battle and fights for them (13:21, 14:14, 14:25). How is this part of God's character good news for you?

How does the New Testament portray Jesus as our warrior king (Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14, 1 John 3:8, Revelation 19:11-16), and describe the Christian life as a battle (Ephesians 6:10-20, 1 Timothy 1:18)? How should this impact our everyday lives?

Celebrate the victory of the cross, and pray for one another in our spiritual battle.



EXODUS

A POETIC CELEBRATION

Exodus 15

Pray for God to fill you with thankfulness as you reflect on his grace.

How do you practice praise and worship in your everyday life?

Read Exodus 15:1–21.

What is the reason for Moses and the people of Israel singing this song (15:19–20)?

What do we learn about who God is—his character and nature?

What does the song celebrate about what God has done?

How does God treat his people? And his enemies?

The Exodus narrative is in many ways framed as a divine contest between Pharaoh and Yahweh. How do you see this theme in the song? How does it celebrate Yahweh's victory?

How might the reality of Yahweh as a victorious warrior have impacted the mindset of the Israelites?

What does the song look forward to (15:13–17)?

The refrain of this song (15:1, 21) is featured in Israel's hymn book (Psalm 76:6). How might this refrain have impacted future generations?

Why is singing so important for us as God's people (Colossians 3:16–17)? How does it shape us?

What place does creativity have in the Christian life, and in our response to what God has done for us?

Two Ideas for Response

A. Creativity: Give people time to respond to God's grace through a creative medium (write a poem/song, drawing, etc). Come prepared with materials, and perhaps suitable Bible passages to inspire creative praise.

B. Singing: Lead a time worshipping God together in song, giving thanks to God for his grace.

EXODUS

GRUMBLING PEOPLE,
GRACIOUS GOD

Exodus 15–17

Pray for God to grow you in gratitude as people who have received grace.

What are some of the things you find yourself complaining about?

Read Exodus 15:22–24, 16:1–3, 17:1–3.

What were the people of Israel grumbling about? What was reasonable about their complaints?

What do you think is the difference between godly lament and sinful grumbling?

What are some of the unhealthy heart attitudes and beliefs that may be behind our grumbling?

Read Exodus 15:25–26, 16:4–5, 17:4–7.

How does God respond to their grumbling? What does this reveal about God's character?

Read Psalm 78:15–39.

How does the psalmist reflect on and interpret these wilderness episodes?

Read John 6:41–66.

How was the response of the people to Jesus similar to the Israelites in the wilderness?

What is an appropriate faith-filled response to the difficulties and disappointments we experience in life?

Gratitude and remembrance are antidotes for grumbling. How can we build practices of gratefulness and remembering into our lives and communities?

Spend time remembering God's grace and giving thanks together.



EXODUS

BURNED-OUT DELIVERER

Exodus 18

Share your experiences of burn out, or being stretched beyond your limits. What did it feel like? What symptoms did you notice in your life?

What are the dangers of consistently working beyond capacity?

Why do you think we are prone to living beyond our limits and doing too much?

Read Exodus 18:1–12.

Who is Jethro? What do we know about him from Exodus 3:1?

How does Jethro respond to Moses's report of Yahweh's deliverance from Egypt?

Read Exodus 18:13–27.

What problem does Jethro observe in Moses's leadership? How might we be prone to similar issues in our leadership?

Why do we often prefer to "do it ourselves"?

What solution does Jethro suggest? What leadership principles do we learn?

How do these principles impact our life together as the body of Christ (cf Ephesians 4:11–16)?

How can we guard against burn out in our lives and community?

Pray for humility to accept our limits and live within them.



EXODUS

TEN WORDS

Exodus 19–20

What is the place of God’s law in the Christian life? How is the Old Testament law still relevant for us today?⁴

A common misunderstanding is that the Old Testament is a religion of law, whereas the New Testament is about grace. But throughout the Story of God, from start to end, we see the same dynamic—God’s grace leads to our obedience. How do you see this dynamic on display here (Exodus 19:4–6, 20:2ff)?

Read Exodus 19:10–25.

What do the restrictions and the signs on the mountain reveal about God’s character? How does this shape how we relate to him (cf 20:18–21)?

⁴ This is one of the most contested questions in New Testament scholarship. Many Christians make a sharp distinction between the Old and New Testaments, between law and grace. But the reality is much more nuanced. Suffice it to say that God’s covenant with Israel was predicated on grace, and that God’s commands remain ethically normative as we live out our life in Christ.

Read Exodus 20:1–17.

Jesus summed up the Old Testament law with the two great commands: love God and love neighbour (Matthew 22:36–40). How would you divide the 10 commandments under those two great commands?

Behind every “No” in these laws is a bigger “Yes”. What is the full extent and aim of each of these laws (cf Matthew 5:17–30)? How would you positively reframe each command?

How do these commands reveal the heart and character of God?

Jesus sums up the law as being about LOVE. Is this how you view God’s commands? Why might our perspective be askew? How do these commands help us live a life of love?

None of us can perfectly keep the law. In fact, God’s law reveals our sin (Romans 3:20). What hope is there for lawbreakers like us (Romans 3:21ff)?

What place should these commands have in our lives? What areas of your life have you been convicted to walk in obedience?

Pray for God’s help to love him and our neighbours wholeheartedly.



EXODUS

A JUST SOCIETY

Exodus 21–24

What factors contribute to (or undermine) peace, justice, and equality in our society?

A noticeable emphasis of the Old Testament law codes is their emphasis on caring for the welfare of the weak and marginalised. Which groups of people are the following laws concerned with protecting (Exodus 21:1–11, 22:21–27, 23:6–9)? What does this reveal about the heart of God?

In the patriarchal context of the Ancient Near East, how might these laws have been radically counter-cultural? How might they have critiqued the surrounding nations and cultures?

How should this concern for the welfare of “the least of these” be reflected in our lives and community?

What principles undergird the laws about loss of life, injury, and damage to property (Exodus 21:12–22:15)?

How does Jesus reinterpret this principle (Matthew 5:38–48)?

How do we balance justice and mercy as God’s people?

What principles undergird the laws about worship (Exodus 23:10–19)? How might this apply to our worship?

How do the people respond to God’s law (Exodus 24:3, 7)? What promises does God attach to their obedience (Exodus 19:4–6)?

What is the relationship between gospel and law, between good news and good works?

What part does right living have in our relationship with God (cf 1 Peter 1:13–15), and our mission to the world as a “kingdom of priests” (cf 1 Peter 2:9–12)?

Pray for God to shape us into a holy, distinct community, that embodies God’s love and justice to the world.



EXODUS

ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER

Exodus 32

Share a time you had to wait for something and grew impatient. Why do we find it so difficult to wait?

Read Exodus 32.

Where was Moses, and for how long (Exodus 24:15–18)?

What did the people do? What commands did they break (Exodus 20:3–6)? Why do you think they so quickly turned away from their covenant with Yahweh?

John Calvin famously said that the human heart is an “idol factory”. In what ways are we like the people of Israel? What are some of the “idols” our hearts are prone to worship, and why?

How does God respond to the idolatry of his people (32:7–10)? Why is he so angry?

As Moses intercedes for the people, on what grounds does he appeal (32:11–14)?

Why is Jesus's ongoing intercession for us such good news (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25)?

How does Aaron respond when confronted by Moses (32:19–24)? How do you see this same pattern in Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:11–13), and in your own life?

We struggle with the violent judgement of God. How can we make sense of what happens in Exodus 32:27–29?⁵

How does God respond to the sins of his people (Exodus 32:30–35)? What is the basis for our assurance that our sins are forgiven (1 John 1:8–2:2, Romans 3:21ff, 8:1)?

The New Testament writers are clear that the Christian life involves “turning to God from idols” and “keeping yourself from idols” (1 John 5:21). What will that look like in practice for you?

Pray that God would renew your hearts to offer him true worship.

⁵ One of the heresies of the early church was Marcionism, which made a rigid distinction between the “violent and vindictive” God of the Old Testament, and the God of love and mercy revealed in Jesus Christ, effectively rejecting the Old Testament from the canon of Scripture. We need to be careful not to be Marcionites in our approach to Scripture. The God revealed in Jesus is Yahweh himself.

E X O D U S

HESED

Exodus 33–34

How do you think of your relationship to God? Or to what other relationship would you compare it?

Read Exodus 33:7–11.

What are the dynamics of Moses's relationship with God?

Jesus withdrew from the crowds to go to solitary places to pray (Mark 1:35). Moses had a “tent of meeting ... outside the camp some distance away” to meet with Yahweh. How do you meet with God? Why is the place and space important?

Read Exodus 33:12–22.

What does Moses request of God? How does God respond?

What does this episode reveal about God's character? And how we relate to him?

Read Exodus 34:1–14.

What is the purpose of Moses going back up Mount Sinai? What happened to the “first edition” stone tablets (cf Exodus 32:15–20)?

When he “proclaims his name” to Moses, what does God reveal about himself? What do we learn about Yahweh's character? And how we relate to him?

What are the promises and conditions attached to the covenant God makes with Moses and Israel?

Read Exodus 34:29–35.

What does this episode reveal about the access that the people of Israel had to God? What access do we now have to God in Christ (cf 2 Corinthians 3:13–18)?

Jesus invites us to be his friends, and indeed to be friends of God (John 15:13–15). How could this reality impact how you experience your relationship with God?

Pray for a growing intimacy in our friendship with God.



EXODUS

BUILDING A NEW EDEN

Exodus 25–40

How do you experience the presence of God?

Scan through the section headings of Exodus 25–40 (physical Bibles would be helpful here). What is the structure of this section of Exodus? What is it about?

What is the purpose of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:8–9, 29:44–46, 40:34–38)?

How is it possible for a holy God to dwell among a sinful people?

How does the tabernacle fit into the Bible's bigger story of God dwelling with his people?⁶

Commentators note the parallels between the tabernacle and the creation narrative in Genesis 1–2.⁷ How does this help you understand the significance of the tabernacle?

The tabernacle (and later Israel's temple) is central to their worship of Yahweh.⁸ What does this progression of redemption from slavery to worship reveal about our life of faith?

Read Hebrews 9:1–15 and John 1:14.⁹

What were the limitations of Israel's tabernacle?

How does the tabernacle help us understand what Jesus has done for us?

As we come to the end of our series through Exodus, take some time to reflect: what has God impressed upon you?

Pray for an increasing appreciation and appropriation of Yahweh's presence with us in Christ and by the Spirit.

⁶ cf Genesis 1–3, 1 Kings 8:10–13, Ezekiel 10:18ff, Ezekiel 43:1ff, John 1:14, John 2:18–22, Acts 2, Ephesians 2:21–22, 1 Peter 2:5, Revelation 21.

⁷ The parallels with creation can be seen, for example, in God's instructions for the tabernacle, he gives 6 addresses, plus a final 7th to keep the Sabbath; God dwelling among his people. Commentators also note the significance of the Exodus being a new creation event—just as in the beginning Yahweh brought order out of chaos, Yahweh now brings his people out of the chaos of Egypt to form them into a new nation.

⁸ The language of “to serve” throughout Exodus is significant in this regard—God rescues his people from “serving” Pharaoh as slaves to now “serve” him as his Son (note: Exodus 4:22).

⁹ John 1:14 literally reads “The Word became flesh and *tabernacled* among us.”