

Exodus - God Present

If God moved in to your house, what would you want to know about him?

'A deafening wind made it difficult to hear what was being called out across the sprawling line of nomads. Shivering mothers held their newborns tight to their body as they kept their head down, following the feet in front. Many of the Hebrews dare not look up, the stories high wall of water was bewildering. Even the young men who flanked the emerging nation were shaken by the forces at work.

But each of the newly freed slaves had one name on their lips: Yahweh. The LORD.

Their minds knew that on one side of the sea was slavery to cruel Pharaoh, on the other freedom to be their own nation. Turning back meant they were just a large family owned by Egypt, going forward, a nation under God. Giving into their fear would see a return to a life of uncertain allegiance to mysterious spiritual forces. Moving forward through the see would lead to a life in the presence of God.'

Such drama makes Exodus a famous part of the Old Testament. Over the next 5 weeks in Latechurch and Village Church we're taking a look at the history of the birth of God's people Israel. In chapter 1 they are a family, by chapter 40 a nation. From a world of gods, to one supreme God. Exodus is about preparing Israel or life in the presence of God.

We'll take a look at the book in 5 sections. This big picture will save us from getting lost in detail. In Exodus, God does the following, (and it almost looks like the word rapids!):

Remembers	1:1-7:7
Acts	7:8-15:21
Provides	15:22-18:27
Descends	19:1-24:18
Stays	25:1-40:38

The studies for our Growth Groups will be followed by a Sermon on the same section on Sunday evenings. Each of the studies has:

Personal Prep Study	Over 3 days for you to spend time with God in Exodus before Growth Group Done with your Growth Group, with lots of room for you to take a look at what interests your group
Resource	A recommended resource for you to find out more about an issue from Exodus

Our challenge is to read the entire book! It's big, and gets repetitive at the end, but the reading guide in Personal Prep will help you get through it.

As we hear God tell us about preparing Israel for life in His presence, we see what it means that His son Jesus Christ has descended to earth. Exodus will challenge our thinking for what it means that God stays with His people by His Spirit. The God who moved in with Israel, is now among those who follow Jesus. Do you want to know what it means that God is in the house?

Mitch Smart

Personal Preparation

Week 1 - Exodus 1:1-7:7 - God Remembers

Day 1 - Read Exodus 1:1-7

Consider

- How big was the family that moved to Egypt?
- Who was Joseph? (See Genesis 46:29-34)
- How was the growth of the family in Egypt?

Reflect

- Why do you think these verses are at the start of Exodus?
- Compare Genesis 1:28 and Exodus 1:7.
 - How well is God's plan going at this stage?
 - Do you think the family in Egypt would have thought the same thing?
- Read Ephesians 3:10-12. God's ultimate plan was to create a one people for himself.
 - How has God accomplished this?
 - What makes it difficult to trust God's plan?

Pray

- Thank God that He has a plan for all of history
- Ask Him to help us trust Him as we live for his purposes in Christ

READING GUIDE: Exodus 1-2:22

Day 2 - Read Exodus 2:23-3:10

Consider

- What was God's covenant (agreement/contract) with the Israelites? (See Genesis 12:1-3)
- What makes God take action here?
- What action is God going to take?

Reflect

- What does God's action tell you about his heart?
- Read John 8:31-36.
 - What action has God taken in Jesus?
 - What slavery does it free from?
- What difference does it make to you that Christ has come to give you a place in God's family?

Pray

- Be Thankful for God's desire to free his people.
- Ask God to help you have a heart as concerned for others as his.

READING GUIDE: Exodus 2:23-4:31

Day 3 - Read Ex 5:22-6:9

Consider

- Who represents the people to God?

- What's wrong with the Israelites?
- What will God do for the Israelites?

Reflect

- What is the difference between the way God will act toward the Egyptians and the Israelites?
- Why do you think he treats them differently?
- Read Matthew 25:31-49.
 - What is the difference between these two groups of people?
 - Why does God treat them differently ?
- What do you think about God putting some under 'mighty acts of Judgement' (Ex 6:6)?

Pray

- That we would understand there is a difference between those who belong to God and those who don't.
- For our friends and family who face 'mighty acts of judgement'.

READING GUIDE: Exodus 5:1-7:7

Week 2 - Exodus 7:8-15:21 - God Acts

Day 1 - Read Exodus 8:16-9:16

Consider

- As the plagues get more powerful, what happens to Pharaoh's magicians?
- What happens to Pharaoh's people?
- What happens to Pharaoh?

Reflect

- Read Rom 9:16-18. If those who are Christian are God's sovereign choice, what does that say about our input into being Christian?
- Do you find God's sovereign choice a challenge or a comfort?

Pray

- That we would recognise God as the sovereign controller of all things.
- Thank God that no matter the battle, he ultimately controls it.

READING GUIDE: Exodus 7:8-10:29

Day 2 - Read Exodus 11

Consider

- How would you describe the magnitude of the last plague?
- What do you notice about who the Egyptians side with?

Reflect

- Why do you think the people abandoned Pharaoh?
- Read Luke 10:16-22. Why do people oppose those who are Christian?
- What does Jesus say about opposition?

Pray

- Thank God that nothing can harm those who belong to Jesus
- Ask God to help you to trust him in the face of opposition

READING GUIDE: Exodus: 11:1-13:16

Day 3 - Read Exodus 14:1-18

Consider

- Why did Pharaoh go after the Israelites?
- Why did God cause him to go after the Israelites?
- What will be the end result in v18?

Reflect

- Are there any good reasons for the Israelites to want to serve Pharaoh?
- Read John 8:21-30. How is it that people know Jesus is who he claims to be?

Pray

- Thank God that he has shown himself powerfully in Christ
- Ask God that many would know Jesus as the true Lord.

READING GUIDE: Exodus 14:1-15:21

Week 3 - Exodus 15:22-18:27 God Provides

Day 1 - Read Exodus 15:22-27

Consider

- Why do you think the Israelites grumbled?
- How did the LORD respond to their grumbling?

Reflect

- How would your response be in the same situation as the Israelites?
- Are there times when your material needs make you dissatisfied with God?
- Read Philippians 3:17-4:1. How does Christ promise to change our perspective on what we need?

Pray

- Thank God for his patience at your own dissatisfaction
- Ask him to transform you to have your mind on heavenly citizenship

READING GUIDE: Exodus 15:22-17:7

Day 2 - Read Psalm 78:17-25

Consider

- How would you describe God's emotions here?
- How would you describe his actions?

Reflect

- What do God's actions tell you about his character?
- Read 1 Peter 2:21-25. What do Christ's actions tell you about his Character?
- Is your character similar to the God who saved you?

Pray

- Thank God that while we were still enemies Christ died for us.
- Ask God to give you a heart that wants good for Christ's enemies.

READING GUIDE: Psalm 78

Day 3 - Read Exodus 17:8-16

Consider

- What is significant about what was in Moses' hands?
- What is it that the LORD wants remembered?

Reflect

- What do you think the Israelites would have thought as they saw Moses on the hill?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. How is God acting towards his enemies now?
- What is the role of a Christian in God's current battle?

Pray

- Ask God to help us be mindful of his victory over sin in Christ.
- Ask God to help us keep our eyes on Christ as we seek the reconciliation of others.

READING GUIDE: Exodus 17:8-18:27

Week 4 - Exodus 19 -24:18 God Descends

Day 1 - Read Exodus 19:1-8

Consider

- What has the LORD done for Israel?
- What should Israel do for the LORD?

Reflect

- Why is it significant that Israel has already been carried out on "eagles' wings"?
- Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How is it that people become followers of Jesus?
- How important is it to understand the order of being saved and doing good works?

Pray

- Ask God to help you accept that you are saved by grace and not of your own effort.
- Thank God that belonging to him isn't about being 'good enough.'

READING GUIDE: Exodus 19:1-25

Day 2 - Read Exodus 20:1-21

Consider

- What has God done?
- List the ten commandments in your own words.

Reflect

- What do the commandments tell you about the LORD?
- What do you think about the Israelite's fearing the LORD?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-15. What drives Christians' fear of the Lord?

Pray

- Ask God to help you understand what the commandments say about him.
- Thank God for fully revealing himself in the person and actions of Jesus Christ.

READING GUIDE: Exodus 20:1-22:15

Day 3 - Read Exodus 24:1-48

Consider

- What did Moses get from the LORD and how did he give it to the people?
- How was the covenant (agreement) between the people and the LORD completed?
- What difference did this make to the way they could approach the LORD?

Reflect

- Why do you think the sprinkling of blood was part of the covenant?
- Read Hebrews 12:18-24. How is the 'mountain' that followers of Jesus come to different?

Pray

- Thank God that Jesus' blood means we can approach Him with confidence.
- Ask God that we wouldn't cut Him out of our lives because we feel unworthy.

TO READ: All of Exodus 22:16-24:18

Week 5 - Exodus 25:1-40:38 God Stays

Day 1 - Read Exodus 25:1-9

Consider

- Who is to be involved in making this tabernacle?
- How will they know what to build?
- What will happen when it's done?

Reflect

- Why do you think there's a connection between following God's pattern and God dwelling with them?
- Read John 1:10-14. How has God finally dwelt (literally tabernacled - v.14) among people?
- What do you think this means for Holy buildings and religious 'things'?

Pray

- Thank God for dwelling among us in Jesus Christ.
- Ask God that you would look to experience Him in Christ and not religious things.

READING GUIDE: Exodus 25:1-31:18

Day 2 - Read Exodus 34:29-35

Consider

- What caused Moses to put a veil over his face?
- What made Moses' face like this?

Reflect

- Why do you think Moses had to wear a veil?
- Read 2 Corinthians 3:13-4:2. How is the veil removed that allows us to see the Lord?
- Why do you think being transformed to Christ-likeness is described as ever-increasing glory?

Pray

- Thank God that turning to the Lord means we can freely talk with Him.
- Ask God to help you embrace the plain truth that brings a clear conscience.

READING GUIDE: Exodus 32:1-34:35

Day 3 - Read Exodus 40:18-34

Consider

- What is Moses doing here?
- How does the work compare to what the LORD instructed?
- What happens when the work is finished?

Reflect

- Why do you think the LORD came into the Tabernacle?
- Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. What kind of temple does God dwell in today?
- How does God's Spirit affect your attitude to sin?

Pray

- Thank God for dwelling in followers of Jesus by His Spirit
- Ask God to use the Spirit to honour Him with all of your life.

READING GUIDE: Exodus 35:1-40:38

Study 1 - Exodus 1:1-7:7 God Remembers

To start: The Exodus story begun with the creation of the world. More particularly, it's developing the story of Abraham's family who were chosen by God for a special role in His plans...

Have you ever had one of those conversations with a mum or dad who can't stop telling you about their child's achievements? What does this tell you about the parents and the kids?

Read Exodus 1:8-22

How do the Hebrew people cope with Pharaoh's challenge?

What caused Pharaoh to worry?

How did he try to oppress them?

Why do you think God supported the midwives?

Read Exodus 3:1-17

What makes the Israelite rescue so certain?

Describe what Moses sees and hears...someone could draw it

What are the ways God identifies himself?¹

Look for every time God uses 'I'. what does it tell you?

Read Exodus 4:18-31

Why is God rescuing the Israelites?

How does Moses feel about the Israelites?

How does God think about them?

How do the Israelites respond?

Bringing it home

What does God's attitude to his people tell you about the kind of God he is? How do you see this in Jesus?

Read 1 Peter 2:4-12. God's people are now those made acceptable through Jesus Christ. How are they described?

What do you think your response should be to being one of God's people?

Resource: The Prince of Egypt on DVD, or starting at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixE5ar11cZ4

¹ 'I AM' is from the Hebrew word for 'to be'. As a name it means that God is 'existence', or in other words he is self-defining, his name and nature come from no one but himself. The Wikipedia article 'I AM that I AM' is helpful or for greater depth <http://www.koinoniablog.net/2009/02/i-am-who-i-am.html>

Study 2 - Exodus 7:9-15:27 - God Acts

To Start: Whatever you know about the plagues, try and put it aside so we can see what, or more importantly who, is behind these powerful actions. The powerful actions of God seem to demand allegiance...

Why is treason such a serious (in fact capital in many) offense in many countries?

Read Exodus 7:14-8:15

What are the plagues about?

- What is meant to happen to Israelites as a result?
- What will they know about the LORD?
- How does Pharaoh treat the LORD at this point?²

Read Exodus 12:21-12:30

How does the final plague show the victor?

- How and Why are the Israelites protected?
- How does the plague impact the Egyptians?
- What do the Israelites do?

Read Exodus 15:1-21

How is God the victor praised in this song?

- Who among the god's is like the LORD?
- What are the character traits of the LORD?
- Why might the nations behave this way?

Bringing it home

Why do you think it might have been so important to show the LORD as superior at this time in history?

Read Mark 14:12-26. Jesus deliberately goes to his death at the time of remembering the passover. What does this tell you about his death?

How does the death and resurrection show Christ as superior to all things in history?

How would you describe your allegiance to Christ?

Resource: "How to Read Exodus" by Tremper Longman III, IVP Press.

² See a brief article by Don Carson on 'Hardening Pharaoh's Heart' at salvationbygrace.net/tag/heart/

Study 3 - Exodus 15:22-18:27 God Provides

To Start: As the Israelites wandered through the wilderness, their hunger, thirst and fights became a more pressing matter than anything spiritual. Quickly forgetting the whole Red Sea thing, they start with the tantrums...

What are your most pressing needs 1) today, 2) this week) and 3) this year?

Read Exodus 16

How would you describe the Israelite attitude to the LORD?

What causes them to grumble?

What are there solutions?

Are they always disobedient?

Read Exodus 17:1-8

What is behind Israel's complaints?

What is their fear?

Is Moses any help?

How does the LORD try to answer their ultimate question?

Read Exodus 18:1-12

What is the lesson from Jethro's reaction?

What are his nation and religion?

What was Jethro told?

How does Jethro differ from the Israelites?

Bringing it home

What kinds of material needs do you have? How do they affect your relationship with God?

Read Matthew 6:25-34. Why can we have confidence that follower's of Jesus won't be left needy?

Often our 'needs' are just us wanting something 'a little nicer'. What role does the media play in making us dissatisfied with God?

**Resource: "Beyond Greed Brian Rosner", Matthias Media.
"God is Enough Ray Galea", Matthias Media.**

Study 4 - Exodus 19:1-24:18 God Descends

To Start: These chapters seem like a list of rules, but is that all they are? And why shouldn't Israel cook a goat in its mother's milk? These famous words that came down from God have rippled through society to this very day...

What do the Ten Commandments make people think about God?

Read Exodus 19:1-8

How is the job of Israel in history different to other nations?

What's the difference between God's actions to Israel and other nations?

Why did God act differently toward Israel?

How do you think each Israelite might have felt about their nation's job?

Read Exodus 20:1-21

What is the role of the Ten Commandments in the life of Israel as God's people?

Why might v2 be important?

Can you divide the commandments into a) relating to God and b) relating to others?

See v20. How would 'sinning' (or falling short of the commandments) affect Israel's job?

Read Exodus 22:16-31

How might these instructions have made the Israelite community look?

How do these instructions affect the strong and weak?

How do you think each Israelite would have felt about being a nation like this?

What kind of impact does this have on your understanding of Holiness (v31)?

Bringing it home

- What do you think God wants the world to see when it looks at His people?
- Read 1 John 4:7-12. What is the difference between God's actions in Exodus and his actions in Jesus?
- How does Christian love show people what God is like?
- What does the way you love others say about God and his love?

**Resources: "Jesus transforms the Ten Commandments" by Edmund Clowney.
"Or How to read the bible for all its Worth" by Gordon Fee and Douglass Stuart. Chapter 9 'The Law'.**

Study 5 - Exodus 25:1-40:38 God Stays

To Start: Disastrous and fragile. That's what seems to be going on in the Israel-God relationship. The Golden Calf incident is spectacular, and even though the book ends on somewhat of a high, you can't help but feel God's not going to hang around...

Why do you think people like to feel that someone else is with them?

Read Exodus 29

What would allow God to dwell among Israel?

What does consecrate mean?

Describe the different types of sacrifices.

Why do you think there is so much sacrifice?

Read Exodus 32:1-33:6

How does sin affect God's presence?

What is the Israelite's sin?

What is God's attitude to them now?

How does Israel respond?

Read Exodus 34:1-10

What is God's reason for persevering with Israel?

What does Moses do?

How does God describe himself?

Do you think God's aim will be achieved?

Bringing it home

- What makes you think God is or isn't present in this world or in your life?
- Read 1 John 2:1-6. How does Jesus guarantee we can have God's presence?
- What kinds of things make people feel unacceptable to God?
- Is there something you need forgiveness for and help with?

**Resource: "A Foot in two worlds: The joy and struggle of the normal Christian life" John Chapman
"Gospel and Kingdom" in The Goldsworthy Trilogy by Graeme Goldsworthy, Send The Light.**