

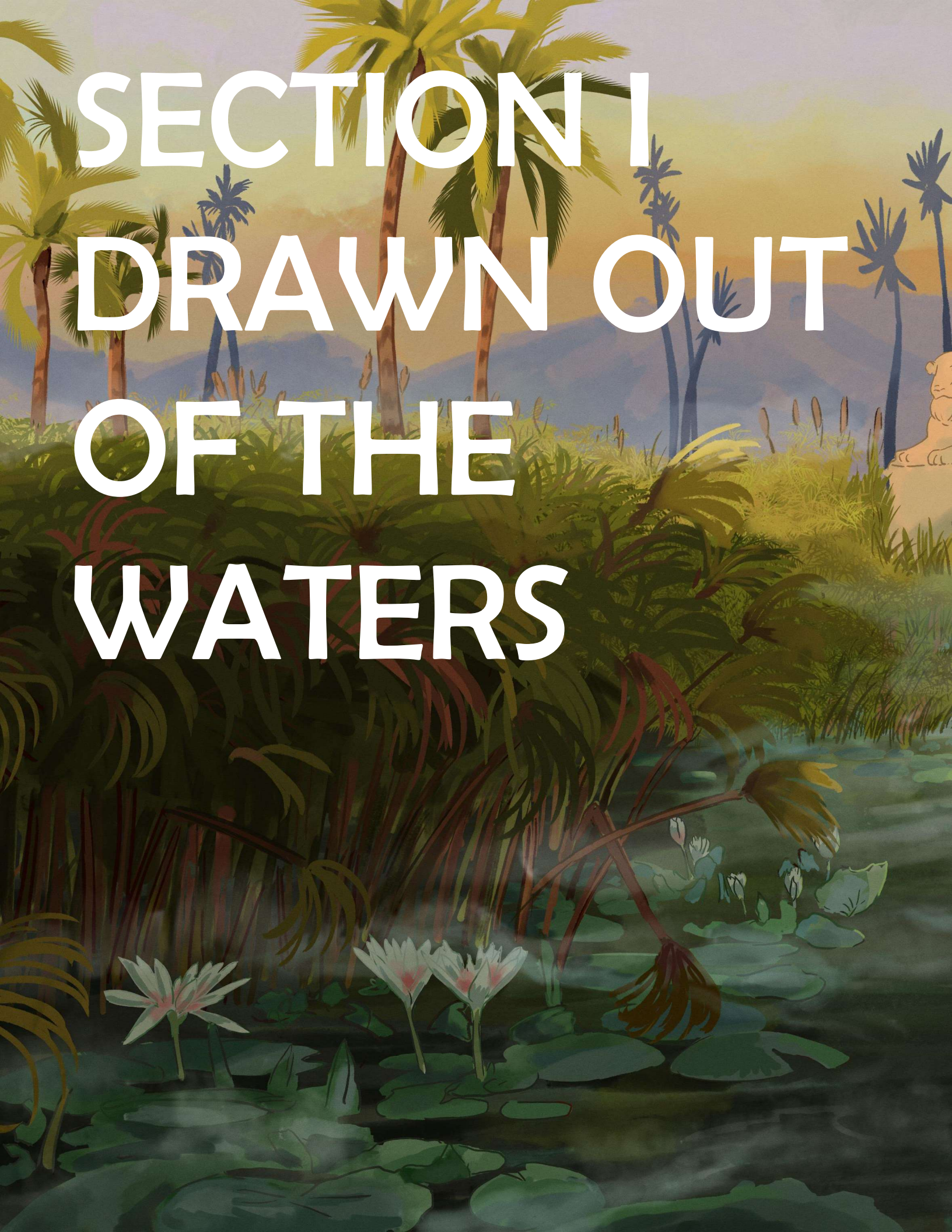
EXODUS

SO YOU MAY KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD



VOLUME I

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SECTION I DRAWN OUT OF THE WATERS



LESSON ONE

EXODUS 1

**There is a GOD
above the waters**



There is a God above the waters

If there was ever a time in Israel's history when it felt like God did not care for them - this was it. Enslaved to a cruel master, worked to the bone, and then forced to watch their children die in the waters of the Nile. Had God forgotten about them? Hope must have been a scarce commodity indeed. But even then, at the darkest hour, God was working toward a redemption so great they would scarcely believe it if you told them. God can and does work in the darkest of times and He does so through the courageous faith of those who fear Him.

A seemingly small act of faith can be used by God to bring hope and salvation to many. The waters of that Nile may have claimed many lives but there is a God **above** those waters.

Discussion Goals

This group discussion is aimed at bringing out the following principles



God can and does operate in times of intense suffering



God often calls human beings to be His hands and feet in those difficult times.



It can be very fearful to be called by God in that way, but our God is greater than the powers of this world.


Leader Notes

From the first lines of this book, we see that Israel is heading into the darkest time in all their long history as a nation. That darkness will culminate in their very children being cast into the Nile River as if they were so much refuse to be discarded. Can you even imagine an evil greater than that? And Pharaoh has the gall to call this course of action shrewd (v10). It shows you how rampant human evil can become when left unchecked. But even though so much evil is visited on them, there are still two brave women who trust in the God of their fathers. Even when the world is at its darkest, especially when it is at its darkest, God calls his people to trust Him and be light. A seemingly small act of faith can be used by God to bring hope and salvation to many. The waters of that Nile may have claimed many lives but there is a God above those waters. There is one who works even in the darkest of times. His Spirit was there in Genesis 1 hovering over the surface of the deep, ready to make beautiful things out of darkness and chaos and He is still there in the darkness today.

Scripture Reading


This discussion will draw from all of chapter 1 of Exodus with special focus on Exodus 1:15-22.


Discussion Questions

-  1. Describe a situation where you saw evil or darkness in the world and felt powerless to do anything about it.

Read Exodus 1:15-22

2. Observe the text: Why did the midwives defy Pharaoh? What motivated them?

-  3. Give some reasons why it would have been difficult for the midwives to fear God over Pharaoh.

-  4. Is it ever difficult for you to fear God more than the powers and influences in your life? If so, how? What are some things that you might fear more than God?


5. Observe the text: what evidence is there that God is at work? (Verses 20-21)

6. If you are a follower of Jesus, God is at work in your life. Sometimes it is difficult to see His working because the world can be so dark. If you can, take some time to share personal examples of a time when you knew that God was working in spite of the darkness around you.

7. The chapter ends on a dark note: Pharaoh decrees a policy of infanticide. After their act of courageous faith, imagine how discouraging that would be for the midwives to hear. Was their courage all for nothing? How might God still use their courage, despite Pharaoh's evil decree?

8. Recall your answer to question 1. How can God use even the darkest times in order to further His goals?

CALL TO ACTION

-  What is something you CAN do in the power of God to combat the darkness in this world (even if it only affects one life)?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Genesis 1:1-10**

2

Food For Thought

Over the Face of the Waters. "And darkness was on the face of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." What was He doing there I wonder? What function did it serve in the process of creation to have the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the deep? Surely it would have been easier for Him to work from a distance. He could have created from the comfort of His throne in heaven, He did not have to come all the way down here. That also begs the question, why start the process of creation with such a dreary lump of clay in the first place? Formless and void and darkness and deep waters does not sound like a nice place to be. It sounds like a place of chaos.

I think from this we can learn two very important truths. One is that the natural state of this earth without the direct intervention of God is darkness and chaos. The second is that it is in the fundamental purpose of God to enter into that darkness and chaos. And when God enters the darkness and chaos the inevitable result is that light and order come forth. From the very first sentences of the Bible, we learn that we have a God who is not content to keep His distance but is determined to enter into this world and make something beautiful out of it. That was the case before it was even made and, praise God, it is the case now. No matter how much of a mess we make of this world, no matter how much darkness and chaos we humans bring to this earth, no matter how much evil we perpetrate on each other, He is near, and He is determined to set things right.

3

Meditations for the Day

- How has it affected your life personally that God is a God who comes near?
- What does it say about the nature of our God that His presence brings light and order?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Psalm 18:16-19**

2

Food For Thought

Saved from Many Waters. Society has a way of telling us that we are the hero of our own story. A famous athlete has a slogan: "be your own hero." It is an inspiring message, until you face a foe that you cannot beat. The Psalmist found himself in just that position. He depicts himself in deep waters, surrounded by foes on what he calls "the day of my disaster." This is not a time when he wants to be his own hero, this is a time when he needs someone to rescue him!

In biblical poetry like the Psalms and the prophets, 'waters' or 'many waters' are often used as a metaphor for chaos. They are used to depict a lack of control, or that the author is feeling overwhelmed. Deep waters are a good metaphor for that feeling. In water we are out of our element. I picture a man overboard in stormy seas; he may be able to tread water for a while, but it is certain that he cannot survive like that for long. Those deep, mysterious depths will claim him eventually. Surely, that must be how the Israelites felt in Egypt as their slave masters threw their children into the waters of the Nile. They must have felt overwhelmed, like the psalmist, or like a man overboard in stormy seas. How welcome would it be, in a time like that, for a hand to reach out and take hold?

We can identify with the Psalmist because we face an enemy against whom we have no hope. Sin and death reign on this earth. Sin, like those deep waters, will take away our control; it will rob us of freedom. Once you're in, there is no foothold to use to get yourself back out. It soaks us through and drags us down until it's all we can do to keep our heads above the surface. We may be able to tread those waters for a while, but it is certain we cannot survive like that for long. Death will eventually claim you. These are enemies that are "too strong for me" (vs 17).

The good news is, you don't have to be your own hero. There is a Champion to fight on your behalf. There is a God above the waters, who can reach down and pull you out. "He brought me out into a broad place" (vs 19). Our God is mighty to save and though the enemies we face may be too strong for us, they are not too strong for Him. When we feel like the Psalmist - that we are surrounded by many waters, instead of swimming harder and trying to save yourself, try calling for help. In the end, this is not really a story about you - it's a story about Him. There is so much rest in that reality.

3

Meditations for the Day

-What have you been trying to take on yourself that you should entrust to the God who rescues?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is II Timothy 1:6-12

2

Food For Thought

Slaves to Fear. Pharaoh thought to crush the people of Israel because of his own fear (Exodus 1:12). That's what fear often does – it seeks to create fear in others. Sometimes it's because misery loves company and other times it's because the feeling of exerting control over others lessens one's own fear. The rulers of the kingdoms of this earth wield fear as a weapon, inspiring fear in the lowly and the innocent to try to keep them in line. That is what Rome sought to accomplish by putting Paul in prison – they wanted to scare his contemporaries into silence. How strange it is then to see Paul, a prisoner, not warning his friend of the very real danger, but instead telling him to be even more bold! To be even more courageous and outspoken, to use his gifts to even greater effect. How can Paul be so confident in the face of such dire circumstances?

He has been given a different Spirit. Not one of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. He can see that even as the powers of this world rage and struggle, God is at work. A God who rescues and saves and intervenes on behalf of the lowly. There is a God above the waters. The same Spirit who hovered over the waters before creation, the same Spirit who could bring light out of darkness and order out of chaos, is still at work in the world and even more importantly, is at work in Paul and Timothy. With that in mind, Paul can see that even the sufferings of the gospel are “according to the power” of the one who rules over all (2 Tim 1:8).

There is another reason for Paul's confidence. The greatest weapon of fear has always been death. Death gives fear its sting and the fear accompanying death has allowed so many evil kingdoms to maintain their power. Well, Paul knows a Savior who can take away the sting of death. Paul serves a Master who has abolished death. Only life and light and immortality await the believer in Jesus, so he can rightly say “whom then shall I fear?”

We have the same Spirit that was in Paul and we can have the same confidence that he had. Paul starts the passage by encouraging Timothy to stir up his gift and he ends the passage by saying that he is not ashamed to preach the gospel of Christ. Rather than cowering in fear, Paul focuses on the work that Jesus gave him to do. He tells Timothy that we were not only saved but we were called to a special purpose (vs. 9), and Paul's focus is on how to best carry out the mission God gave him. Instead of being afraid about what the world might do to him, he is excited about what God might do to the world through him. He continues to preach the gospel without being ashamed, because the one in whom he put his trust is more than worthy of that trust. That is a Spirit of power!

3

Meditations for the Day

- How has it affected your life personally that God is a God who comes near?
- What does it say about the nature of our God that His presence brings light and order?

LESSON TWO

EXODUS 2

**There is a GOD
who sees His people**



SERMON NOTES

There is a God who sees His people

The weight of suffering is far heavier when you think that no one sees you. If no one understands what you're going through, there is no possibility for help to come – no one to help share the burden. The people of Israel must have often felt that their cries were falling on deaf ears – that there was no God to acknowledge their suffering and no hope of redemption. They could not have been more wrong – God looked on Israel and He knew them.

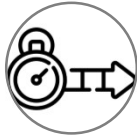
We are told that God sees and hears his people. His plan is already in progress.

Discussion Goals

This group discussion is aimed at bringing out the following principles



God's plans are always in progress, even if it is hard to see



God works according to His own timeline, not ours



God sees, hears, and knows His people

Leader Notes

Last week we saw that God is always working, even in the darkest of times. But it can be difficult to see what He is doing. The Hebrews were slaves for a long time, yet God always had a plan to save them and lead them to the Promised Land. This week, we are introduced to Moses, who is saved at birth from an evil dictator and raised in Pharaoh's daughter's household as her son; who as an adult tries his hand at saving the Hebrews by killing an oppressive Egyptian in secrecy. This was the man God would use to deliver them, but this wasn't the moment. He flees Egypt knowing his upbringing does not allow him to kill as he wishes, and God's savior tends sheep for 40 years. Yet we are told that God sees and hears His people. His plan is already in progress, but will the Hebrews understand it?

Scripture Reading


This discussion will draw from all of chapter 2 of Exodus with special focus on Exodus 2:11-15. It will also be helpful to read Acts 7:20-30.

Discussion Questions

Read Exodus 2:11-15

1. Put yourself in the place of the Hebrew people as slaves. Every living relative has been born into slavery. What kind of impact do you think this had on their perspective? Do you think they still hoped for freedom or thought of it as a possibility?

2. For those who still had hope for freedom, how do you think they expected to be freed from the Egyptians?


 3. What do people think is going to be the solution to the world's problems today? Do they think these solutions are even possible?


Read Acts 7:20-30

4. What information does Stephen add in his recounting of the story of Exodus 2?

5. How did Moses initially think he could help the Hebrews?

6. God's plan for Moses included him fleeing Egypt and spending 40 years away from Egypt, including starting a family and shepherding his father-in-law's sheep. What do you think those 40 years were like for him, considering where he came from? What do you think God was accomplishing in Moses' life at this time?

 7. Just as the Hebrews did not understand that Moses was to be their savior (Acts 7:25, 35), the Israelites in Jesus' time did not understand He was to be their Savior (Acts 7:51-53). Why was it difficult for them to understand what God was doing? What kept them from seeing it?

 8. Do Christians sometimes miss what God is doing in our lives today? In what ways do we miss it?

CALL TO ACTION

How can we be more open to the ways God is working in our lives that we do not yet understand?

Consider how you have been praying recently. Have you been focusing on HOW you would like God to answer you or are you willing to let Him answer with His plans?

1 Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Exodus 2:23-25, Psalm 22:1-5**

2 Food For Thought

Why Won't God Answer? Sometimes it can be difficult to truly comprehend what people in the Bible were experiencing when we read their stories. We are told of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt in the first chapter of Exodus, but it can be easy to pass over their suffering without much consideration. God told Abraham in Genesis 15:13 that "your descendants will be... enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years." FOUR HUNDRED YEARS! And here we are reading the story of their suffering in a couple of chapters, from what is most likely a comfortable chair. We don't know what all 400 years were like for the people of Israel, but we do know that it got way worse around the time of Moses' birth. Increased labor, infanticidal Pharaohs – how many times did God's people cry out to Him over this period alone? Perhaps enough time had passed that some had simply stopped asking God to save them. From their perspective, there hadn't been any answer in so long.

Here is where I imagine the Psalmist's words being said, "I cry by day, but You do not answer; and by night, but I have no rest." But God HAD heard their cries. He DID remember His covenants with their forefathers. He saw them. He knew them. He had a wonderful plan to save them, but He had not yet answered. The Psalmist recounts that "to You they cried out and were delivered; in You they trusted and were not disappointed." God's answers to our cries may not come when we want them to, but we will not be disappointed when we put our trust in Him.

3 Meditations for the Day

- Have you given up on asking God about something because He hasn't answered yet? If so, consider if He may have answered in a way you weren't looking for or wanting.
- Think back over your life and write down some ways God has answered you in the past. Remind yourself that He has already shown you that He sees, hears, and answers you.
- What about God's character gives you encouragement and hope?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Psalm 94:1-14**

2

Food For Thought

He sees them too.

"Yet they say, 'The LORD does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob understand.' Understand, you senseless among the people; And you fools, when will you be wise? He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see?"

God not only sees the hardships that His people face. God also sees the ones who cause those hardships. We might cry out, "How long will the wicked triumph?" The wicked might say, "God does not see me." But the truth is that the wicked are seen by God.

Pharaoh thought there was no one on Israel's side who had any power over him; that no one on their side could judge him. He thought Egypt was his and the fullness thereof. He could not have been more wrong. God saw Pharaoh. God saw his wicked deeds. God saw his unrepentant heart. He was going to act.

The psalmist knew that God saw the wicked. No matter how much they thought they were getting away with it, God saw their wicked deeds. He knew that God would not let their wicked unrepentant ways continue forever. God saw and God would judge.

The unrepentant wicked should take notice. God sees them. He does not only see government officials like Pharaoh either. God sees the wicked spouse. God sees the wicked parent. God sees the wicked boss. God sees the wicked neighbor. God sees all the deeds of the wicked.

Being seen by the Lord is a comfort to the repentant who put their trust in Him. Knowing that the wicked are seen by the Lord should also be a comfort to the believer. As this psalm says, this knowledge can "give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit is dug for the wicked." The believer can know that though it might seem like the wicked are getting away with it now, God will have the final say. The adversity that they cause us will not be forever, but our God's work on our behalf will endure through the ages.

3

Meditations for the Day

-What injustices in the world make you cry out, "Lord, how long will the wicked triumph?"

-How does knowing God sees the deeds of the wicked help us not seek vengeance, but to instead show kindness? (Rom. 12:19-21)

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Gen. 16:1-14**

2

Food For Thought

He sees it ALL. "Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, 'Have I also here seen Him who sees me?'"

Hagar was in a horrible family situation. She was a simple maidservant who had fulfilled her understood duty as a maidservant and had conceived a child in barren Sarah's place. But Hagar started to see herself as more than her position. She started acting less like a maidservant and more like the mother of the heir. So, Sarah put her in her place. She reminded her who was boss. Hagar was not having it and ran away from the family.

But the Angel of the Lord met with Hagar. He talked to her about the family, her son, and her role right now. He acknowledged the situation. He did not deny her hardship. Yet, He asked her to go back to it. Then He promised her future blessings for her son and his descendants if she listened to His voice.

After the encounter, Hagar left with the feeling of being seen. She felt that someone understood her hardships. Someone knew her situation. Someone saw her. And that someone was God. God saw her. This is amazing! Maidservants weren't seen back then. They were not important. They were often not seen by their masters. They were not seen by their master's equals. And they definitely were not seen by their masters' superiors. So, imagine God Himself taking interest in lowly Hagar's situation. Hagar definitely felt seen.

Look at the humility that this brings to her life. She is able to overlook Abraham and Sarah's opinions of her lowliness. She is able to submit to Sarah. She is able to look past the family dynamics and do what God asks. Why? God saw her. God made her promises.

God does not just see whole nations of people. He does not only see the higher ups, the important or the mighty - God sees the lowly in society as well. No matter who you are, He sees you right now. He sees you in whatever situation that you find yourself in. You can call out to the Lord who sees your personal situation right now.

3

Meditations for the Day

-How can knowing that God knows your situation help you obey Him in difficult times?

-How can knowing that God sees your situation help you respond with humility to those involved in your situation?

A painting of a mountainous landscape. The foreground is dominated by dark, jagged rocks and sparse green grass. A pair of brown, worn sandals lies on the ground. In the middle ground, a field of small white flowers stretches across a valley. The background features rolling mountains under a blue sky with soft clouds. The text "SECTION II MEETING GOD ON THE MOUNTAIN" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters.

SECTION II
MEETING
GOD ON THE
MOUNTAIN



LESSON **THREE**

EXODUS 3

**There is a GOD
who remembers His
promises**




There is a God who remembers His promises


God introduces Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The mere fact that God would want to identify Himself by the names of men long dead tells us something about Him: when He says something He means it. He made promises to men to whom He owed nothing; men who had done nothing before or since to merit such loyalty from the God of the universe. Yet here He is, hundreds of years later, standing before Moses ready to make good on those promises. When God speaks a word, it will surely come to pass.


this One will be **I AM** to them: the faithful One, everything they need, their God, who has remembered His promises.

Discussion Goals

This group discussion is aimed at bringing out the following principles

- 

Even though they have forgotten it, the children of Israel belong only to God
- 

God will not forget any of His promises, but will fulfill all of them completely
- 

In His relationship with His people, God will be to them everything they need

Leader Notes

The Hebrew people are in a desperate situation. Enslaved by Pharaoh and his Egyptians, they are the property of a cruel master who wants to destroy them. Or do they belong to Pharaoh? Someone else now asserts ownership of the children of Israel. Appearing to Moses as a non-consuming fire in a simple bush, God declares that He will fulfill His promise, made hundreds of years before, to rescue the Israelites and bring them to a land of their own. And, though Moses is a has-been, only a shepherd now, drained of all self-confidence, and though the children of Israel appear to be firmly in the grasp of someone else, yet this One will be I AM to them: the faithful One, everything they need, their God, who has remembered His promises and will fulfill them exactly as He had said that He would. And, what a fulfillment is promised! Yahweh promises a deliverance to Israel that appears to be absolutely impossible, a redemption that only an all-powerful God could achieve!

Scripture Reading

This discussion will draw from all of chapter 3 of Exodus with special focus on Exodus 3:7-10.

Discussion Questions

1. What things (people, ideologies, identities, etc.) can Christians feel like they belong to instead of to God? What things try to claim ownership of us?

Read Exodus 3: 7-10



2. Moses was at the back of the desert, caring for someone else's sheep. Compare this with the original trajectory of his life. How do you think he might have felt at this point of his life? Have you ever had this experience?

3. What is "holy ground?" Moses is going to learn who God is on this "holy ground." Do Christians ever stand on holy ground in a similar way? In what ways? What should be our response?

4. God calls Himself the God of Moses' ancestors. Why would God use this title at the moment that He introduces Himself to Moses? (Consider the interactions that He has had with those ancestors and the promises that He has made to them.)

5. God declares: "I know their sorrows." How do you think that encouraged the children of Israel when they heard it? How does it encourage you? In what way does a New Testament believer understand this statement more fully than any Old Testament saint ever could have?



6. God introduces Himself as "I AM." Why do you think He chooses this title for Himself? What does it reveal about God? What do you think this name will mean to the people that He is coming to redeem?

7. God promises a sign to Moses that he has been sent by God, but that sign will not be fulfilled until after he has obeyed God. Why do you think God does this? Did the sign have any value at all in Moses's life?



8. God promises incredible redemption to Israel in spite of the overwhelming odds against such a redemption happening. In what specific ways does this parallel the gospel experience of a believer in Christ?

CALL TO ACTION

1 Peter 2:9 says that believers are the Lord's "own special people." In what specific ways should this directly impact your day-to-day life?

Sadly, we regularly forget or discount God's promises to us. Knowing that we have a God who remembers His promises, what specific promises do you want to remember or to trust more fully this week?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is 1 Kings 19:8-18

2

Food For Thought

Meeting on the Mountain of God. We could never know God if He did not choose to reveal Himself to us. But He does choose to do so! And He reveals Himself in different ways to different people. In this week's passage from Exodus, an old shepherd is, probably for the first time, introduced to the God of the universe as fire in a humble bush. Moses had to see God in His holiness – a fire – but also in His nearness – burning in a bush without harming the simple shrub. Yes, it is an awesome thing to be near to God, and yet God is able to make it possible for us to experience His presence and live! The Lord would be able to be in the midst of the children of Israel without destroying them.

But there is another time where God reveals Himself to an individual on this same mountain: much later, in 1 Kings 19:8-18. A discouraged and emotionally spent prophet was borderline suicidal. He had just experienced an incredible spiritual victory, culminating in the execution of many false prophets from Israel, but then had been forced to run for his life because the evil forces were still very much in power in Israel. Elijah appears almost angry in this section, as he declares to God that no one is true to the Lord except for himself. And how does God reveal himself to Elijah? By a contrast! Elijah witnesses a great wind, an earthquake, and a fire, but God is in none of these. Instead, Elijah hears a still, small voice. Elijah was angry and frustrated, but God wasn't! God continued to be just as fully in control of everything as He had been before creation, and He responds to Elijah quietly, in gentleness and love. That calming presence was exactly what Elijah needed. God does this for us also, only we don't meet him on the Mountain of God – we meet him through the word of God, as we read our Bibles! In what way does God want you to better understand Himself? As you spend time in God's word this week, be ready to take your spiritual sandals off your feet as God brings you to holy ground, and listen for the still, small voice of His Spirit speaking to you about Himself.

3

Meditations for the Day

- How does your understanding of the character of God change the way that you respond to different situations?
- What aspects of God's character do you think He wants you to understand better or more correctly?

There is a God who remembers His promises

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Revelation 1:8**

2

Food For Thought

Who Is, Who Was and Who is to Come. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." - Revelation 1:8

I had just left church. I was driving down the freeway and heading toward my exit. Then it hit me like a big rig. I left my niece at church! I had brought my niece to church that day and I didn't pick her up from the nursery! Some time between dropping her off at the nursery and leaving church, I had forgotten her.

Life can sometimes make us feel like we are in my niece's situation. We can feel forgotten. We can face hardships in our lives that seem insurmountable. We can experience injustices in our lives that seem irreparable. We can be assailed by inner struggles with our thoughts, feelings, and desires that seem unyielding.

When you are going through these hard times and feel forgotten, we can often be looking for just a sliver of hope. But God has more to offer than just a sliver of hope. God offers himself and says that He has never forgotten.

In Revelation, three times we are given a description of God as He "who is and who was and who is to come" (Rev. 1:4, 1:8, 4:8). This name is an amazing restatement of the divine name given to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex. 3:14). And in Revelation, as in Exodus, God is giving us this name not only to tell us about His amazing self-sufficiency and eternal existence, but to tell us about His relationship with us.

We might expect the verse to say, "He is the God who is and who was and who will be." But that's not what it says. It says He is the one who is and who was and who is to come. It's not just that God will *be*, it's that He will *be there* for His people.

When God speaks to the Church, He wants us to know that He remembers us, and He remembers His promises to us. He is with us as the Holy Spirit indwells us, He has been with us since the beginning, and He will keep His promise and come for us again. We are not forgotten. He is coming for us.

3

Meditations for the Day

-How can the Lord's promise to come help us when we feel forgotten?

-Take some time to remember how God has kept His promises in the past (He who was). Then, take some time to remember His promises for the future (He who is to come). Now think about how God is at work now in your life (He who is). Spend some time thanking Him for remembering you.

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is II Peter 1:4

2

Food For Thought

When God Fulfills His Promises. Promises are made all the time, at every level of society. Parents, employers, lovers, politicians, and friends all talk about what they will do in the future, and those who hear their promises look, with greater or lesser degrees of confidence, to the time when those promises should be fulfilled. There is something special about a promise made by someone in a higher position than you, because often what is promised is something that you could never gain or achieve on your own. Parents promise expensive gifts to children, and politicians promise sweeping social reforms to their constituents. However, when the time comes, often those gifts fail to realize the lofty expectations of those who rested their hopes on the fulfillment of the promises.

Not so with God. He had promised to judge the nation that held Abraham's descendants captive, to bring the oppressed out with great possessions, and to give to them as a possession the land of Canaan. And when the appointed time came for God to fulfill His promises, it was everything that Israel had hoped for. As Joshua said when God's promised deliverance was finally completed, "you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you." (Joshua 23:14)

Now, in the 21st century, we have a privilege that the Israelites, groaning in slavery in Egypt, did not enjoy. We can look back at God's track record of fulfilled promises. (As if He needed a track record to prove Himself!) We can see that we belong to a God who fulfills His promises. He promised deliverance to Israel, and it came. He promised a Savior to the world and He came! But we look forward to other promises, still, as of the writing of this devotional, unfulfilled (2 Peter 1:4). Take a moment to look forward to what it will be like when God fulfills those promises: when Christ returns, and all believers, living and formerly dead, are caught up together in the clouds with Him; when our mortal bodies have finally put on immortality; when we are at last free from all sin; when we are forever with the Lord. You will see it! You will experience it! And how can you be so certain of it? Because there is a God who remembers His promises.

3

Meditations for the Day

- How can you tell if someone truly believes God's promises to them?
- Today, choose one of God's promises to you and dwell on the various ways your existence will be completely altered when it is finally fulfilled.

LESSON **FOUR**

EXODUS 4

**There is a PEOPLE
called His sons**



There is a People called His sons

Who am I to God? Where do I fit in His story? In the ancient world the motivations of the gods to do the things they did was a topic shrouded in mystery and speculation. The gods were angry, selfish, greedy, lazy and fickle. They were often benevolent and compassionate too but the wise would not rely on them to be so. It would be very difficult to know how the gods felt about you. Israel was different: they could pinpoint the reason why YHWH redeemed them from the clutches of Pharaoh: because He loved them like a father loves his son.

The Lord will overcome all obstacles to His plan to redeem His people because they are His **firstborn sons**.

Discussion Goals

This group discussion is aimed at bringing out the following principles



God holds His people very close to His heart



God is willing to overcome obstacles for His firstborn



God has a role for His firstborn on earth

Leader Notes

The Lord will overcome all obstacles to His plan to redeem His people because they are His firstborn sons (Ex. 4:22). Having told Moses His plan to redeem Israel, Moses, himself, becomes the first obstacle. Moses, like Israel, has forgotten his identity. He knew it at one point. He knew he was meant to deliver Israel. But having been rejected by the people once, he is now reluctant. He insists the people will not believe him. God has an answer for that and gives him his rod as a source of signs to help the people. Moses then insists that he is not eloquent enough to speak to Pharaoh, but God tells him to remember that “I will be with you” (Ex. 3:12) and that includes being with his mouth. Moses just begs for someone else to do it, and God’s nostrils flare a little. He then gives Moses some help in the form of his brother, Aaron. God says the picture will be God, Prophet, People - and since Moses’ reluctance added Aaron into the picture, Moses will be playing God.

The rod will also have to go with Moses. Actually, when Moses leaves Midian, the rod is now called the Rod of God. On the way to Egypt, Moses has two meetings with the Lord. In the first, the Lord tells Moses the extent of His commitment to Israel. The Lord tells Moses that Israel is His firstborn son and that when Pharaoh resists, the Lord will even shed blood if that is what it takes to redeem Israel. In the second, the Lord comes to judge Moses. Moses had failed to bring his firstborn son into the promises of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by failing to circumcise him. Moses has been appointed to fulfill part of those promises and he had not even brought his firstborn into Abraham’s covenant! His wife, with the blood of the covenant, saved his life. God was not playing favorites here. This is about covenant not favoritism. Moses is now fully part of the plan. His brother meets him on the mountain, the rod in his hand, and he meets the elders, who do believe and do worship God.

Scripture Reading

This discussion will draw from all of chapter 4 of Exodus with special focus on 4:19-23.

Discussion Questions

1. When we talk about planning for our future in this country what are we usually talking about? What types of things do we tend to do to plan for our future?

Read Exodus 4: 19-23



2. In the ancient world, the firstborn son would have been the parents' plan for their future AND for the future of their other children. For example, if the family had a plot of land, the firstborn would inherit twice as much as his brothers. This would mean that he would be the head of the family as he would have more control of the family's land holdings than his siblings. It would be like a family today having a business and the father dividing up the company between his children with the firstborn receiving twice the stake in the company as his siblings, making him the controlling partner. The parents' future and the family's future depended on him. This being the case, what would a wise parent have done with their firstborn sons?

3. Why do you think God calls Israel His firstborn son?

4. If Israel is called God's firstborn, what might that mean for their role in this world?

5. What obstacles is God willing to overcome in order to redeem His firstborn? (Ex. 4:1, 4:10, 4:13, 3:19)



6. How is the church like Israel in sonship and how are we different? (Heb.12:23, Gal. 3:26-29, 1 Cor. 3:17)

7. What might our sonship mean for our role in this world?

8. What obstacles did God and will God overcome to redeem the church? (Rev. 5:9-10, Rom. 8:18-23)



9. Israel is enslaved in Egypt. I'm sure seeing themselves as God's firstborn might have been hard for them. We saw that Moses had trouble seeing himself how God saw him, and the role God had for him. How might it be hard for the church to see themselves as God sees them? (circumstances, sin, inadequacy, etc.)

10. If we don't see ourselves as God sees us, how might that make it hard for us to fulfill our role?

CALL TO ACTION

What can you do this week to see members of the church, yourself included, as God sees them? How can that help you do your part in fulfilling the church's role?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Galatians 3:26-29**

2

Food For Thought

Reality of Sonship. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." - Galatians 3:26

If you have ever wondered how God sees you when He looks at you, here it is. If you have placed your faith in Christ Jesus, He calls you "My son" just like He called Israel "My son" in Exodus. Just think about all that this means for how God thinks about you and what He has planned for you!

When He called Israel "My son", we saw how precious they were to His heart. They were to Him as a firstborn son was to a family in the ancient world. They were to Him as "the apple of His eye" (Deut 32:10). They were so valuable to Him that He "gave Egypt for [their] ransom." That is why He tells His son, "...you were precious in My sight, You have been honored, And I have loved you..." (Isa. 43:3-4).

What does that mean for us? We know that it means God sees us as His sons too. When God looks at you, you are as important to Him as a firstborn son was to a family in the ancient world, you are as the apple of His eye, He wouldn't trade you for anything, you are precious in His sight, you have been honored, and He has loved you.

And what could make you more precious, more honored, more loved in His sight?

Nothing!

What can make you less precious, less honored, less loved in His sight?

Nothing!

3

Meditations for the Day

-What has God done to show you that you are precious, honored, and loved in His sight?

-What are some of the benefits of being His son that you can give thanks for today?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Deuteronomy 7:6-11**

2

Food For Thought

The Attitude of Sonship. "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." - Deuteronomy 7:7-8

"If I am precious, if I am honored, if I am loved as a son, doesn't that mean I am better than those around me? Does that not mean that everyone who is not a son is less valuable than I am?" Christians can at times be accused of thinking this way. In truth, sometimes we really can act this way. The symptoms that can be caused by this type of thinking are just deeds of the flesh dressed in spirituality: rudeness, arrogance, self-righteousness, and even hate. All of these can have their root in this perversion of the Bible's teaching.

The Lord corrects this false view in Israel in Deuteronomy chapter 7 & chapter 9. He does so both times by reminding them of their history and their standing among the nations. They were not the best nation, the most glorious nation, or the most righteous nation. On the contrary, they were the least, they were in inglorious bondage, and they were stiff-necked. The Lord's love for them should humble them and not cause conceit. It should push them to love the Lord and to show the fruit of a life invaded by God's love: kindness, humility, sincerity, and love.

What about us? Well, I think we have our own Deuteronomy 7s and 9s in the New Testament. Like this one in Titus 3: "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

3

Meditations for the Day

- Who do you speak evil of, quarrel with, show harshness to, or act arrogant towards? What makes you think you can treat them this way?
- Think of the ways the Lord spoke well of you, was peaceable to you, gentle to you, and showed humility toward you. Then, ask Him to change your heart to be like His.

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **II Corinthians 6:16-7:1**

2

Food For Thought

The Holiness of Sonship. "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.' Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." - II Corinthians 6:18-7:1

When God calls you "My son" it carries with it a call to leave Egypt. It meant leaving oppression, but it also meant leaving a way of life. Things were hard in Egypt, but they were also familiar. There is comfort in familiarity. But God was not sending Moses to have the Israelites stay in Egypt under Pharaoh's rule. God was not going to just change their circumstances a little. The goals were not just no more hard work, no more beatings, and a kind Pharaoh to be slaves to. The goal was not an upgraded slavery with God getting rid of the bad parts.

When God redeems us from sin, He does not merely remove the bad parts of our sin and leave us to live in it. God does not say, "Yeah, you are still a slave to sin. Yeah, you still have to answer its call. But at least now you aren't going to face judgment for your sin."

No, God did not send His unique Son to leave us under the rule of sin in our lives. We are going to have to leave Egypt. We are going to have to leave the rule of sin in our lives because that is what redemption means. If we refuse to do so, we are rejecting His redemption.

We might be used to our sin. We might be comfortable with how we see life and how we act. God does not want to come to just patch up your life - He wants to come and disrupt the whole order of it to set you free and bring you into a glorious walk with Him.

If we walk with Him, we will begin to be separated from the filthiness of the world around us. If we walk with Him, we will begin to be set apart for His will in our lives - we will be holy. Once the redeemer comes, staying in Egypt is no longer an option, unless you do not want redemption.

3

Meditations for the Day

-What are some worldly beliefs, values, or habits that you were very comfortable with before coming to know the Lord?

-How has being His son changed those beliefs, values, or habits? What are some that still need to change?

SECTION III

LET MY

PEOPLE GO





LESSON FIVE

EXODUS 5:1-6:1

**There is a GOD
who knows your fears**



There is a God who knows your fears

Moses was haunted by the failures of his past. The people of Israel have an underlying fear that Pharaoh really is all-powerful. When Moses confronts Pharaoh things don't get better for Israel – they get worse. From their perspective all their fears seem to have been founded. How will God respond to a people who lose faith at the first sign of trouble?

“Moses and the people had to realize that there was nothing they could do to help themselves. They needed a Savior. Now they were ready to see the **deliverance** of the Lord.”

Discussion Goals

In this group discussion, we will see the following principles from Exodus 5:1-6:1



The abuse Israel is experiencing doesn't mean God isn't working



What to do when the power of the enemy seems more imminent and real than the power of God

Leader Notes

In Exodus 4:21-23, the Lord told Moses to tell Pharaoh to release Israel, but that Pharaoh would refuse to let the people go. That is exactly what happened, yet this caused Moses and the people great discouragement. Not only are the people not released, their workload was drastically increased when they were forced to find their own straw for brick-making. It felt like God had led them into a trap and then left Moses and Israel on their own. Pharaoh would not even recognize that the Hebrew God existed! He increased the work in order to take their mind off of Moses' rabble-rousing rhetoric (vs. 9). When the Israeli foremen tried to negotiate a less demanding agreement, Pharaoh called them "lazy, very lazy" (vs. 17). Imagine, seeking a small bit of ease from your slave masters! Maybe let's go back to the way things were? That didn't work, so then the foremen, representing the people, blamed Moses and Aaron for their increased trouble. Doing things God's way does not seem to be helping the situation! Moses went to the Lord and blamed Him for the trouble. Lord, You're not keeping Your promise. This is not how I envisioned it happening. You do not meet expectations, and now it's too late. Throughout the chapter God has been silent. But in verse 6:1, instead of rebuking Moses for a lack of faith, the Lord said, "Now you shall see..." that Pharaoh will not only allow the people to leave, but will actually drive them out. Moses and the people had to realize that there was nothing they could do to help themselves. They needed a Savior. Now they were ready to see the deliverance of the Lord.

Additional Note: This week we'll be in chapter 5:1 through 6:1. Next week will include some overlap as we look at 5:22 through 7:7.

Scripture Reading

This discussion will draw from Exodus 5:1-6:1


Discussion Questions


1. Why do you think that the people, and even Moses, became so discouraged after Pharaoh refused to let the people go?


2. What do you think the increased work-load ultimately does for the people's relationship with their God?

3. What is one of your great fears that the Lord has helped you with?

4. Have you ever been discontent with God in your life? What did you learn in that situation?

-  5. Have you ever felt that your obedience to God only increased the trouble in your life? Or that God was to blame for your situation?

-  6. How does Paul's testimony of trouble in 2 Corinthians 11:24-31 help you understand why God seems silent throughout chapter 5, when things seemed to be spinning out of control?

-  7. What do the following verses say about how we should respond when it seems God is silent to us? Psalm 62:1, 8.

8. Describe a situation in which a believer may be too comfortable in the world and needs to repent and follow Jesus more closely.

9. In what way did you discover that you were in need of a Savior in your life?

CALL TO ACTION

How does knowing Jesus help you to deal with fear?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Psalm 23:4**

2

Food For Thought

God Knows Your Situation. In Exodus chapter 5 things are about to go from bad to worse for the people of Israel. Their circumstances have been awful for decades, having lived under the Egyptian boot of slavery, having no freedom, no hope of improvement. It would be easy for them to wonder where God is in all of this? Did He even know where they were?

The psalmist understood that his God not only knew where he was at all times, but was there with him. Even with the threat of death looming over him, David was able to say "I fear no evil". Why? Because God was right there with him. Later on, in Psalm 118:6, he says "...the Lord is for me, I will not fear; what can man do to me?" David had a clear view of who God is. God is bigger than any man, or any circumstance. It is this view of God that allows men like David to face-off against giants like Goliath. Why would you be afraid of a mere 9 foot tall man when you had the God of the universe on your side, standing with you? "...for You are with me". That's good to know when you're in the valley, and the shadow of death is passing over you. When we see God for who He is, we recognize that all death can do to us is cast a shadow. At some point, God may allow death to do a little bit more, and usher us into the actual presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. But that is also under God's control and timing.

Meanwhile, His presence brings us comfort. "Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." The rod represents God's direction, discipline, and defense over us. The good shepherd uses it to direct the flock to green pastures, and to bring straying lambs back on the right path. It also serves as a weapon against the fearsome beasts that would try to attack and devour the sheep.

The staff is a long stick with a hook, or curved section at one end. This is designed to fit around a sheep's neck, allowing the shepherd to pull the animal to safety if it has wandered off a ledge or is stuck in a place from which it cannot escape.

Israel found itself in a place where death was casting a large shadow over the nation. They longed to know whether their God was with them or not. Would His rod deal with the Egyptian enemy? Would His staff lift them from the place of danger up to the place of safety?

Perhaps you struggle with similar questions. We need to see God for who He is, to see Him as the psalmist saw Him. That God is with us, Immanuel. That God is able to protect us, even from death, that He will provide all that we need, and that all He asks is that we trust Him.

3

Meditations for the Day

- How does it help you to know that you are not alone? That the Lord is with you and is very aware of everything that you are going through?
- How has the Lord comforted you, protected you, or corrected you this past week?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Matthew 10:28-31**

2

Food For Thought

God Knows Your Fears. Exodus 5 can be summarized as follows: (1) Children of Israel are suffering. (2) Moses comes along. (3) Children of Israel are suffering even more. They had suffered for years as slaves for Egypt, oppressed, over-worked, but at least the Egyptians provided what was needed to do the work. The clay, the straw, the tools. Israel had grown used to this situation. Sure, it was impossibly hard, but at least they were alive. But now, after Moses' big meeting with Pharaoh, the straw was no longer to be provided. The impossible work-load was now doubled by having to scavenge for a key ingredient. It could not be done. Not weakened as they were. Not within the time they were allowed. Not with the same quota of bricks as before. Was Moses trying to help us or get us killed? What was God doing by sending us this quack? Why is God doing this to us?

Perspective is a powerful tool. We use it all the time. Visually, we look at things from different angles, we turn things around, we move to different positions in order to see an object from all sides so that we do not miss anything. Intellectually, we take an idea that we are interested in and we ask questions about it to see if it makes sense, and whether it is useful to us in some way. God seeks to provide us with an eternal perspective. Man's great fear is physical death. Jesus is saying in Matthew 10 that death should not be our greatest fear, that there is something much greater to be afraid of: Him.

Yes. Him. Physical death is very limited in what it can do to us. It can separate our soul from our body. Jesus said that the person who threatens physical death is not the one we should fear. It is the One whom we will meet after this physical death that we should fear. Hebrews 9:27 states that after we die physically, we face judgment. Who will be the Judge? The Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:22; 2 Corinthians 5:10). He is the one who is able to destroy "both soul and body in hell." And if Jesus had stopped speaking at this point, we would rightly live in fear and despair, having no hope of surviving such a judgment. But then Jesus begins to speak about tiny little birds and their value at the market. They're not worth more than a penny, and yet God knows when any of them fall to the ground. Jesus then speaks about those standing around him. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." What kind of a God would care about the fall of a cheap, tiny bird, or the number of hairs on our head?

Jesus is saying that if His Father has such concern over a sparrow, then He must have a great love for you. That if God knows us so intimately that He would count the number of our hairs, then think of how concerned He is about our life and what happens to us. If we belong to Him, physical death is a much less important issue than it once was. We have a new perspective. The One who is able to send the body and soul to hell is on our side! We know the One who cares for sparrows, and who sacrificed Himself on our behalf. In Exodus, Israel will soon gain a new perspective about their God. Do we need a new perspective? Is the Lord really enough to help you through life's difficulties? Does He really know your fears? Yes, He does. He also knows how He will get you through. But like Israel, He may ask you to trust Him for what seems like the impossible. "So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows." Indeed.

3

Meditations for the Day

Do you have an eternal perspective? Are you trusting Jesus for the hard things in your life? Or do you need a fresh picture of who God is? Ask Him to show you Himself. Look at Psalm 68, particularly verses 20 and 21. Be sure your heart is clean before Him.

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is 1 John 4:18-19

2

Food For Thought

God's Answer for Our Fears. By the end of Exodus chapter 5, Moses' greatest fear had come to pass. At least, that was the way Moses saw it. God had miserably failed both him and Israel, and had become a laughingstock to the enemy. Moses had done everything God had told him to do, however reluctantly. It seemed that it had only served to make the situation worse. Israel was afraid. How could they survive with the additional work-load? Was it God's plan to increase fear? No! God loved His people, Israel. He loved Moses. His plan was for deliverance, for freedom, for a new home in a land flowing with good things. His plan was to abide with His people, and they with Him.

In such a relationship, there is no fear (dread), only love and reverence. John's epistle tells us that "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear". The cowering fear of judgment, the kind that robs our soul of joy and confidence before God is cast out. God's people are free from such fear. Our enemies are defeated: Death, sin, and Satan. Their power is broken. Their future is in Hell. The problems we face in this life are opportunities to trust in an almighty Savior, who loved us long before we ever thought of loving Him back.

But what if we are afraid anyway, even knowing what we know? Recognize that "...the one who fears is not perfected in love." You are not yet complete; there is still some growing to do. Just as Israel had to grow in their love and appreciation for what God was doing in their midst, so too, we are called to "...all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13). We must study to become workers who accurately handle the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). It is the word of truth (scriptures) which show us who God really is and what He is like. We must get to know God more and more.

God's answer to our fears is His love flowing into our hearts, and our love flowing back to Him, and those around us. If we are more consumed with Him, there is less room for fear. If we focus on His love for us rather than what some petty politico is planning, we will live in peace. If we endure the hard things for Jesus' sake, remembering what He has gone through for us, He will not fail in His reward for our faithfulness. Let's learn to abide with Him.

3

Meditations for the Day

- How do you think Moses should have responded to God in Exodus 5:22-23?
- How did you respond the last time your circumstances seemed to go from bad to worse?
- What are truths about God that bring you the most comfort and confidence in times of trouble?

LESSON **SIX**

EXODUS 5:22-7:7

**There is a GOD
who keeps His promises**



There is a God who keeps His promises

We are very quick to forget what God has said. Moses had done everything God told him to and yet, the people were not free – Pharaoh would not let the people go. From his perspective he had failed and so had God. Instead of a blunt blow to jog his memory, Moses receives a gentle answer pointing him back to what God had already said. God’s promises are sure. Even when we stumble, even when we fall, especially when things go wrong – we can count on Him to be steadfast. Our circumstances may change, but His word remains the same.

The very thing Moses was scared of had come to happen. But the Lord doesn’t fear what we fear, and He was **just getting started**.

Discussion Goals

This group discussion is aimed at bringing out the following principles



We can often think something that is part of God's plan is failure



God sees what He is accomplishing through our failure



We can stay in God's plan when it looks like we are failing

Leader Notes

Moses did everything according to plan. He got the elders on board. He went and asked Pharaoh to let the people go. Then, everything seemed to spiral out of control. Pharaoh's rejection was one thing, but the people's rejection happened again. The very thing Moses was scared of had come to happen. But the Lord doesn't fear what we fear and He was just getting started. He had everybody right where he wanted them now. This seeming failure was part of God's plan. Now He could work to show He is a God who keeps His promises and who will make Himself known in doing so. Instead of being angry at Moses for forgetting what He told him on the mountain about this plan, God speaks in mercy some amazing words here. The name of YHWH is going to be known by Israel in a national, world changing way. And they will know that name when God fulfills these 7 "I will" promises to them (Ex. 6:6-8). Israel might not accept it, but Moses is told to go to Pharaoh anyway. He objects, but God reminds him that he is in fact His man, that this was part of the plan, and that God is going to work in a way that even His opponents will know that He is YHWH. So, Moses and Aaron do what they were called to do. They obeyed the Lord and trusted His promises.

Scripture Reading

This discussion will draw from Exodus 5:22-7:7 with special focus on 6:1-13.


EXODUS 5:22-7:7

GROUP DISCUSSION


There is a God who keeps His promises

Discussion Questions

1. What are some common emotions associated with failure? When someone fails, how do they feel?


 2. How do you think Moses is feeling about God's plan at the end of Chapter 5? (Ex. 5:20-23)

3. How did God perceive the failure of the plan? (Ex. 6:6-7; 7:4-5)

 4. Why did God say the failure was necessary?

5. How did the failure make Moses feel about his abilities? (Ex. 6:12, 30)

6. Read Luke 6:22-36. What are some ways a person in this situation might feel like Moses?

 7. What does God intend to make known through what could feel like failure in Luke 6:22-36?

8. Sometimes failure can be our fault. We can be in the flesh and our actions, attitudes, or worldly priorities get in the way of success. But sometimes, what looks like failure is God doing something amazing. Where can what looks like failure in evangelism, relationships, prayer, or other areas, really be God doing something amazing?

9. What do Moses and Aaron do once they understand that failure and rejection are part of the game plan (Ex.7:6)?

CALL TO ACTION

How can knowing that failure is sometimes part of the plan help you be more bold in serving the Lord this week?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Exodus 6:6-8**

2

Food For Thought

His Name is on the Line. "Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." - Exodus 6:7b

"And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them." - Exodus 7:5

God's work in the lives of His people is evidence. It is evidence to His people and it is evidence to the world around them.

It must have been hard for an Israelite to hear Pharaoh's rejection of the LORD's command along with his stinging question, "Who is the LORD?" The ruler of that world had flippantly defied their God and put into question His ability to do anything about their plight. It would be easy to doubt. But God tells them to hang on to His promises even through the hard times and He will come through. In order to reassure them, He ties His name, YHWH, to those promises.

We know what it means to tie your name to something. We have sayings like, "A man is only as good as his word." We also understand the importance of a business owner saying it's their name on the door. We know that our reputation is on the line for what we or those associated with us do.

And because God has made promises and tied His name to those promises, when He works it is evidence of who He is. He is YHWH. He is the one who can and will work in the lives of those who trust Him. It might be hard now, but when God finishes, His name will be vindicated and all will know He is the LORD.

3

Meditations for the Day

- What are some promises God has made that seem hard to believe at times?
- How is God's reputation on the line in keeping those promises?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Psalm 105:1-8**

2

Food For Thought

Past and Future Promises. "Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples!" - Psalms 105:1

If you spend a lot of time around parents and children, you come to notice that kids are often blamed for adult mistakes. Working in schools, there were times that kids would hear a promise from an adult that sounded great, but their response didn't seem to fit the promise. "We are going to get ice cream." "Do you want a new bike?" We would expect some excitement or some gratitude. When kids showed neither, we would often think they were spoiled. But what if these kids weren't spoiled? What if it was the exact opposite? What if they have heard these promises time and time again and they just never seem to actually happen?

That is how life is for some people. The world made them promises it just couldn't keep. It promised them happiness, peace, fulfillment, the whole deal. It said if you take good things, like work, relationships, education, family, entertainment, politics, or bodily pleasure, and make them the most important aspect of your life, you will have what you really want. And then it doesn't come through. No wonder there are so many people who are sad or angry or just going through the motions, maybe using something to numb the pain.

But the Lord's people can look back and say that He has kept the promises He made to them. And the promises they are waiting for, He will keep.

That is not to say that life is always sunshine and rainbows. No, He never promised that. He said there would be hard times, just like He told Moses there would be hard times. But He promised that hard times are not the end. He promised that we are heading somewhere brighter. So, we can look back to past kept promises and call on His name for future kept promises. It is His deeds and His name that give us hope.

Not only can we hope in the Lord, we can tell others about that hope! We can tell what He has already done for His people, what He is doing now in our lives, and what He has promised to do in the future.

In a world of broken promises, it is good to give thanks to the Lord!

3

Meditations for the Day

-Think of promises God has made and kept to His people from Adam and Eve to right now.

You can "call on God's name" about hardships in your life. What hardships are you praying about?

-What future promise can help you endure this hardship?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Colossians 3:1-4**

2

Food For Thought

His Name, Your Life. "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." - Colossians 3:4

In Egypt, when Moses spoke on behalf of God, Moses was putting his life, his reputation, his future in the Lord's hands. God's name was on the line, but so was Moses' life. That is why the rejection is so important to the story. First, Pharaoh rejected him. Then, his people rejected him. Moses had been an outcast for 40 years in the wilderness. Now he is an outcast in the land. It's just him, Aaron, and the Lord.

The Lord promises Moses something very special though. He promises him vindication. He promises him obvious, public proof that he was right to trust in the LORD. Moses is going to be revealed as right. When everyone knows who the LORD is, they will also know who Moses, His servant, is.

Christians in this world often find themselves in a similar predicament. We can be outcasts from certain social circles for many reasons. We aren't following their religious customs. We aren't following their worldly behavior. We don't agree with everything the right says. We don't agree with everything the left says. We live in a way that is different from those around us. We love those who live in ways very different from us. We worship Jesus and claim Him as Lord. We don't give our hearts to another.

The Christians in Colossae were told not to lose focus despite the voices around them. They were to continue to seek Christ's priorities here on earth - and worry about His opinion, not those of earthly men. Sure, they might be outcasts now, but now is not the end of the story.

The end of the story is "when Christ, who is our life, is revealed." On that day not only will Christ be known, not only will He be seen for who He is among the nations, but we "also will be revealed with Him in glory." Everyone will know who Jesus is, and they will also know who you, His servant, are.

3

Meditations for the Day

-What decisions have you made in following Christ that others have misunderstood, opposed, or rejected you for?

-How does knowing that Christ will reveal who was right and who was wrong in the end encourage you? How can it also be a warning to all of us?

LESSON SEVEN

EXODUS 7:8-9:12

There is a **KNOWLEDGE**
that brings true power



There is a knowledge that brings true power

Knowledge is power. Pharaoh was a man of great pride and it's not hard to see why – he was one of the most powerful rulers in all the world. He had access to armies and labor that neighboring kingdoms couldn't hope to rival but even more important than that he has access to knowledge. Egypt had military technology that made them a world power, they had architects and mathematicians that could do things that still marvel us today, they had magicians that could do things that send a shiver down our spine. All that knowledge made Pharaoh powerful, but it was not enough. All the knowledge the earth has to offer comes to nothing if you don't know the living God. To know Him is to truly know power.

“A man with so much knowledge, so much power, but he was missing the only knowledge that really matters: **to know the living God.**”

Discussion Goals

This group discussion is aimed at bringing out the following principles



Knowing God is the greatest knowledge we can have



God shows mercy even in His judgments



Each of us, like Pharaoh, has things we rely on other than God

Leader Notes

Pharaoh wastes no time in sending for his magicians. Theirs was a power he had come to rely upon and what a power it was! The ability to call up snakes from mere sticks, or to call up blood from water; that is power that would surely dazzle all of us if we were to see it in person. It's no wonder that Pharaoh was over-confident in his first encounter with Moses, he had real power at his fingertips and he had never seen any to rival it...until now. What would Pharaoh do when he found a greater power than his own? It is a very difficult thing for the rich, wise and mighty to admit that their power is not ultimate. The reality is that all their faculties, however impressive they may be, can't solve all their problems. Notice that while the magicians can duplicate some of the plagues, only God can take them away. Pharaoh and Egypt would do well to realize that all their wisdom and knowledge is worthless unless they come to know the one true God.


In Exodus 5:2 Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." A man with so much knowledge, so much power, but he was missing the only knowledge that really matters: to know the living God. God states time and again in these chapters that His intention with the plagues is to make himself known on the earth (7:5, 7:17, 8:10, 8:22, 9:14, 9:29). As terrible as it must have been for Egypt to live through the plagues, they are an example of the mercy of God. Each one was a chance for all of Egypt to learn who this God of Israel really was. Each one was a chance for Pharaoh to repent and turn. How many kings have you heard of who, after having offended a greater king, have been given nine chances to repent? In the plagues God showed His awesome power, but He also showed His compassion and mercy - He showed his desire to see all men repent and come to a knowledge of Him. You can know the God of Exodus - not just know about Him but know Him and if you do you will find He has all the power you'll ever need.

Scripture Reading


This discussion will draw from Exodus 7:8-9:12 with special focus on 7:21-25 and 8:16-19.

Discussion Questions

1. Thought experiment: If you woke up tomorrow and all your bank accounts said \$0, what would you do next? Where would you turn?

 2. Read Exodus 7:21-25, what event was it that caused Pharaoh to harden his heart? Why do you think that was?


3. Read Exodus 8:16-19, when the magicians could not bring forth lice, what was their conclusion? Why didn't Pharaoh come to the same conclusion as the magicians?

 4. After the plagues start - Pharaoh is not able to deny the power of God for long but he still will not heed Moses' warning. Why not? What would happen to Pharaoh's image if he were to give in? What would happen to Egypt's economic stability if he let this free labor go? What are some other reasons Pharaoh may not want to give in?

5. Consider your answers to question 1. Pharaoh turned to his magicians when he faced Moses, where are some places you turn in times of need? (people? habits? sources of validation?)

6. Pharaoh's magicians had real power, and these lifelines that we turn to bring real comfort - so what's wrong with them?

7. Some (if not all) people will at some point come face to face with the reality that the sources of power they have relied on are not so reliable as they once seemed. Just consider what happened to people's security blankets in the recent pandemic! These things utterly pale in comparison with the power of the living God. But even after realizing that - many still won't let go. Why not?

 8. Judgement is a scary word when we are talking about God but what are some ways judgement can be a good thing? Could God use something like a pandemic to accomplish his purposes? How so?

9. We, like Pharaoh, turn to false sources of comfort in times of need. How can knowing God be a real help to you in such times? As you feel comfortable, share personal examples.

CALL TO ACTION

How will you seek to let go of false comforts and seek to know God better?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Psalm 105:7-9, 23-38**

2

Food For Thought

A God of Covenant. You don't really understand God until you understand him as your husband. There are many metaphors God uses to describe His relationship to us - father, king, shepherd. One of the most significant is bridegroom. Covenant maker. God made a promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and He made a covenant with the people of Israel. When He did that, He was saying to them the same thing a husband says to his wife on their wedding day: "I am He who will be there with you." For better or worse, in good times or bad, I will be there.

This thought is at the center of Psalm 105. The Psalmist is recounting the plagues in this poem and at the heart of his description is a God who makes promises.

"He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth. He remembers His covenant forever, The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac (7-9)."

As terrifying as the plagues were, the Psalmist sees them not just as wrath and judgement (although they certainly were that): he sees them as the fulfillment of a promise. God would not leave His chosen people in the hands of oppression. He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob - the God of their past. He is the God who will bring them into the promised land - the God of their future. And He is the God who heard their suffering - He is the God of their present.

The Psalmist is telling us why God brought these plagues: He did it from the position of a king correcting His subjects, but also, He did it from the perspective of a covenant partner, a husband, rescuing His bride. What we need more than relief from hard circumstances, is a relationship with that bridegroom.

In a good marriage you start to learn to trust your marriage partner. Early on in the marriage, difficult circumstances can really send you reeling. A little financial trouble, sickness, family trouble - these can really send waves through the marriage and have you feeling like a rowboat in the pacific, being tossed around. After a while though, as the marriage grows you start to realize something - that though all the world around you is all storms and waves, the other person in the boat with you isn't going anywhere. It doesn't matter how much that boat rocks, that person stays just as close to you as they always were. Life can blow us all sorts of places but as long as the distance between you and your chosen life partner doesn't change - that brings comfort and strength. Knowing that another has promised to ride those waves with you makes all the difference.

What if the person who made that promise was God? There are certainly waves coming Israel's way in this week's section of Exodus and in the following weeks. But what's far more important than the size or frequency of those waves is who is in the boat with you.

3

Meditations for the Day

-What promises has God made to you that bring you comfort?

-What difficult or frightening circumstance in your life could actually be evidence of God working?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Psalm 7:7-17**

2

Food For Thought

A Just Judge. The anger of God is not a popular topic. Even in churches, among people who follow Jesus, we don't like to discuss God's wrath. It makes us squirm - it makes us uncomfortable. It is devastating and disheartening. So, why then does the Psalmist ask for it to come? "Arise oh Lord in your anger!" He's actually praying for it! Is he just insane? Out of touch with reality? Or is there something deeper?

If God is real, and if the truth in His word is really from above, then we should expect that some topics are going to make us feel threatened and uncomfortable. That can happen when we consider the plagues in Exodus. When we think about the wrath of God poured out on man, we want to shy away, but that is the wrong instinct. If you look deeper into the character of God and the truth in His word, you will never be disappointed.

The psalmist is able to look forward to God's judgement because he realizes something: God is a just judge (vs 11). Think about that. That means when God judges, the result is always justice. Imagine living in Israel during the time of the judges. Foreign powers come to take your crops, threaten your family and your livelihood. Your neighbor, in response to the scarcity, steals what little livestock you have left. There is no army to come defend you, no police to arrest anyone, no court in which your case can be heard. You would yearn for judgement! If only a just judge - someone with authority - would hear your trial, what a relief that would be! You would look forward to that day.

We can feel injustice right down to our bones. Just think about the last time you watched a movie or read a book with a really good villain. As you got immersed in that story, you yearned for justice to be done. You wanted to see someone who had the moral fortitude to oppose that villain and someone with the power to stop that evil person. God is both of those things. He hates sin and rightfully so! Praise God he hates sin! When we get a clear look at sin, we hate it too. It is ugly and terrible and at least some part of us knows that it must be judged.

The psalmist is looking forward to the day when justice comes to his life and to the world. We can do the same. We can confidently say that whatever God is doing, the result will be justice and that is something we all yearn for.

3

Meditations for the Day

-Consider a God who hates sin so completely but loves you so entirely. How is that possible?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Revelation 11:15-19**

2

Food For Thought

The End of Judgement. There are striking similarities between the plagues described in Exodus and the judgements described in Revelation. The trumpet judgments, so called because they are announced by seven angels sounding trumpets, are described in Revelation 8-11. If you have just read Exodus, there is much in the description of them that will sound familiar. Consider the following: hail and fire fall from the sky, a third of the sea becomes blood, darkness comes over the land, locusts plague the land. These are all very reminiscent of Exodus!

It is certainly a time of great calamity and difficulty for the world. And yet, at the end of the sixth trumpet we see something we may not expect: worship. The elders bow down to the God of all and sing the beautiful song that was today's reading. They praise the Lord for two things: that He is responding in kind to the sins of the world and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. The very last line of their song praises God as the one who "destroys those who destroy the earth." (v.18) Did you catch that? His judgement is punishing sin, but it is also bringing good for the faithful. Sin, as the elders point out, destroys the world. Man's rebellion against God is the source of anger, selfishness, greed, and lust. Sin has led to murder, theft, abuse, and brokenness. Sin breaks things; sin destroys the world. So, it is an objectively good thing for God to remove sin from the world.

As God deals with sin in these plagues or judgments, He is also healing the world. Just like a surgeon has to do damage to the body to remove a tumor, so God in His judgment has to do damage to the world to remove the sinners from it. One way or another sin must be dealt with. Either the Lamb can remove the sin by washing it with His blood or eventually, the Great Surgeon will remove the sinner from the picture.

At the end of our passage, heaven is opened, and the earth gets a view of the ark of His covenant. Even in this dark hour of judgement, the world is reminded of God's covenant. A reminder that God makes promises to man and that He keeps them. Those who are spared from this surgeon's scalpel are those who have put their trust in Jesus, the slain lamb who died to pay the price for their sins.

Why are the plagues similar in Exodus and Revelation? Maybe because one is an echo of the other. The same God is working. In Exodus He is rescuing His people from their oppressors, in Revelation He is rescuing the world from the presence of sin. Judgement is a fearful thing - it is terrible for the judged - but it is also the realization of a promise to the faithful. God has made a promise to rescue his people from sin and death and for that, like the elders, we can praise Him.

3

Meditations for the Day

- What if God never judged sin - what if let it go on forever? What would happen to the world?
- What will be better about God's reign than the reign of earthly rulers?

LESSON EIGHT

EXODUS 9:13-10:29

There is **MERCY**
offered to all



There is mercy offered to all

The Pharaoh of Moses' day was probably the most powerful man in the world at that time, considered a god by his people. The Egyptians had plenty of their own gods; they didn't need the LORD, to them a foreign god of their slaves, the Jews. So Pharaoh refused to acknowledge the LORD God's authority in his nation. The one true God could have judged Pharaoh on the spot the first time he refused what Moses asked of him in the name of the LORD. Instead, God mercifully gave Pharaoh ten chances to repent and acknowledge Him, during an introductory visit followed by the first nine plagues God sent on the land of Egypt. The worse things got, the more stubborn Pharaoh became, hardening his heart six times before we get to this week's passage. So, the LORD follows through on what He had told Moses, by hardening Pharaoh's heart Himself after plagues 6 to 9. The Lord's mercy was offered even to Pharaoh, but by refusing it so many times all hope was lost for this wicked, unbelieving king. The mercy he rejected hardened his heart, yet Pharaoh still served God's purpose in his time.

Man's natural way is to resist all God's attempts to reach him

Discussion Goals

This group discussion is aimed at bringing out the following principles



Understand what it means to harden your heart when God has shown you mercy



Understand how important it is to approach God in humility and sincerity

Leader Notes

Man's natural way is to resist all God's attempts to reach him. This week we will see how God gave Pharaoh many opportunities to humble himself before God, but Pharaoh never listened. After sending six plagues on Egypt in last week's passage, God sends three even more destructive plagues this week, all to get Pharaoh to let God's people go. Each of these plagues is a direct attack on the gods of Egypt, who are shown to be powerless to stop them.


We will discuss the repeated hardening of Pharaoh's heart in defiance of the Lord God and see how at the same time God extends repeated mercy to the stubborn king. At first Pharaoh figured that since his magicians could duplicate the feat, he didn't have to worry about God (7:22-23). Later he was concerned a little bit, until he got relief from the effects of the plagues (8:15, 31-32; 9:34). God is merciful to this stubborn man, as He continues to spare his life in spite of his direct defiance (9:15-16). God even offers mercy to Pharaoh's people in one of these plagues, and we will see how some took advantage of that offer. We will also see three reasons why God hardens Pharaoh's heart in these last plagues. Pharaoh will try negotiating with Moses, then threatening him with death, but nothing he does will be able to stop the LORD from delivering His people from Egypt.


Scripture Reading

This discussion will draw from Exodus 9:13-10:29.

Discussion Questions


1. With these plagues, what lesson was the Lord trying to teach Pharaoh and the Egyptians about Himself, as compared to all their other gods (9:14-16)? What attributes of God can you find in these three verses?

 2. Pharaoh had hardened his own heart six times so far in response to previous plagues and miracles (9:7 is the sixth); what does it mean for a person to harden his heart? If you can think of a time when you hardened your heart to God, tell the group how that turned out for you.

 3. When Paul quotes Exodus 9:16 in Romans, what lesson does he draw from God's dealings with Pharaoh (Romans 9:17-18)? In these plagues, did God have mercy on Pharaoh, harden Pharaoh, or do both? Give reasons from Exodus 9:12-15 for your answer.

4. What reasons does God give for hardening Pharaoh's heart (10:1-2)? How have you seen the Lord make progress with you using one of these "reasons" in your life?

5. What two groups of people were spared from the plague of hail (9:19-21, 25-26)? Which group had been spared from some of the earlier plagues (8:21-23)? What lesson was God trying to teach the people by sparing some?

 6. What attitudes do we see Pharaoh display here (9:17, 30; 10:3, 27)? What words and actions make him seem unrepentant (9:27-28, 34; 10:16-17, 26)? What attitudes are important when someone wants to genuinely appeal to the Lord?

7. Describe the steps of negotiation that took place before the plague of locusts - what did each person (or group) say to support their position (10:3-11)? How did God respond to Pharaoh's decision after all that negotiating (10:12)? Can you describe a time when you tried to negotiate with God like this, and how that worked out for you?

CALL TO ACTION

Note how the book of Exodus summarizes all of the first nine plagues (11:10). Might there be any area of your life where God is trying to get your attention so you will obey Him in some way?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Proverbs 28:14**

2

Food For Thought

Is your Heart Soft or Hard Toward God? The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is a major theme of Exodus chapters 7-14. We are instructed to learn from the examples in the Old Testament, whether good or bad (1 Corinthians 10:11). Pharaoh promises freedom to Moses for the Jewish slaves (Exodus 9:28), but then we see him deliberately harden his own heart as soon as his circumstances improve, when the plague of hail lets up (9:34). And this makes him change his mind about letting Israel go (9:35).

How can you tell if your heart is soft or hard toward God? Have you ever asked for relief from your circumstances and promised something to God if He answers your prayer? If the Lord gave you what you asked for and you kept your promise, your heart was soft. But if you went back to life as usual without keeping your promise, your heart was hard.

Most children start life with soft hearts. As they reach their teens, they begin to show whether their hearts are remaining soft toward God or are becoming hardened to spiritual things. What a joy it is to spend time with teenagers and young adults whose hearts stay soft, who allow the Lord to mold their lives into what He wants them to be.

But watch out when people begin to harden their hearts toward God. The Lord will let each person choose his or her own way and then reap the consequences (Romans 2:5). Keep this in mind as we see what happens to Pharaoh in the final plague and then at the Red Sea. Calamity is certainly coming his way as we continue in the book of Exodus.

3

Meditations for the Day

-Consider a difficult circumstance you might face this week. How would a person with a hard heart act? How would a person with a soft heart towards God act differently?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Romans 9:18**

2

Food For Thought

Mercy Shown to Pharaoh. This verse in Romans is Paul's commentary on Moses and Pharaoh from the book of Exodus. Pharaoh was the king of Egypt, the mightiest nation in the world in his day. He repeatedly refused to free the Jewish people who were his slaves. Moses was a Jewish boy raised in Pharaoh's palace, who grew up to become a murderer. On which one did God show mercy?

It is easy to quickly answer "Moses," and that is a correct answer. God forgave Moses's sin and raised him up to lead the people of Israel. But have you ever considered how much mercy God showed to Pharaoh?

In Exodus 9:15 the Lord says, "For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth." At that point God had already brought six plagues on Egypt and its people, and Pharaoh had survived them all. God says He could have cut him off from the earth, but He didn't – at least not up until that time. How merciful of God to give Pharaoh those six chances to repent, plus three more after each of the three plagues we studied in this week's passage.

But there comes a time when God stops showing His mercy to those who refuse to accept it. And in 9:12, the Lord finally hardens Pharaoh's heart as He said He would, but only after Pharaoh has hardened it himself six times (7:13,22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7). The Lord had shown Pharaoh mercy, but now He hardens whom He desires. And the Bible tells us that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart five more times in the book of Exodus (10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:8).

Moses and Pharaoh both received mercy from God, but only Moses received that mercy and was forgiven by God, leading to his eternal salvation.

3

Meditations for the Day

-How have you responded to the mercy God has shown you?

-Have you received the mercy God offers in Christ that leads to eternal salvation?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Proverbs 9:10**

2

Food For Thought

The Fear of The Lord. All throughout the plagues of Exodus, the LORD was trying to show the Egyptians that He was the one true God. Apparently, some of them were starting to get the message. Before the plague of hail (#7 out of 10), the LORD warned Pharaoh's servants to get themselves and their livestock out of the fields if they didn't want to die (9:19). Some of these Egyptians heeded God's warning and fled into their houses – "the one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD" (9:20).

What does it mean to "fear" the LORD and His word? For believers, it carries the idea of respect or reverence more than it does being afraid. We are to have a healthy respect for the LORD when He gives us commands to obey. For unbelievers, it means just what it says – they should be terrified of falling into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31). This is how some of Pharaoh's servants responded that day when they took cover with their animals. They acted quickly based on what the LORD had told them. In another sense, they "feared" the consequences of what would happen to them if they didn't pay attention to what God had warned them about.

There are many ways God still is trying to get people's attention today, but few people seem to recognize His warnings. In California, we have the examples of wildfires, drought, and earthquakes as things designed to get our attention and show us our need for the LORD. When these things happen, the LORD wants people to call out to Him for help and ask Him how we should respond. It is good for us to ask ourselves if there are any areas in our lives that we need to get straightened out with the LORD. That's one lesson we can learn from Pharaoh's servants, who showed wisdom when they took action based on a healthy "fear" of the LORD.

3

Meditations for the Day

- How does the fear of the Lord affect your daily living?
- Are there any areas in your life that you need to get straightened out with the LORD?

LESSON NINE

EXODUS 11-12

**There is a LAMB
who is greater than
Pharaoh**



There is a Lamb who is greater than Pharaoh

What would God use to break the power of Pharaoh and set the people free? After nine plagues, nine spectacles of the power of God and His might, the people were still in chains. The time for warnings was at an end, the 10th plague would not be a warning but a final judgement. God's wrath was coming to the earth and the lives of every firstborn would be forfeit. Unless they trusted in God's provision for their salvation: not a might spectacle in the sky but a simple lamb, slain. In the end, the thing that God used to free his people, the thing that truly broke the hold Pharaoh had on them was the death of an innocent lamb.

God has redeemed us by purchasing us not with gold or silver but with the spotless **blood of Christ** which is precious and of infinite value.

Discussion Goals

This group discussion is aimed at bringing out the following principles



Redemption, redemption, redemption! God uses a lamb to free His people from the god (Pharaoh) of this world



The lamb had to meet certain qualifications



The blood of the lamb had to be applied by ALL (Hebrew people and Egyptians) to escape the wrath of God



The people ate in haste. It is inconsistent to say you have applied the blood of the lamb and yet refuse to leave Egypt.

Leader Notes

God tells Moses there will be one more plague and then Pharaoh will let His people go. The final plague is the killing of the firstborn by the Destroying Angel. The previous Pharaoh killed all the Hebrew males (Ex 1:16) and both Pharaohs enslaved God's firstborn son, Israel. God is just and warned Pharaoh what would happen to his firstborn son (Ex 4:22-23) if he did not let the Hebrew people go. God's judgment was indiscriminate (in reference to question #3) as Egyptians and Hebrew people, both rich and poor, needed the blood of the lamb over their doorpost to save their firstborn from the wrath to come. The lamb needed to meet certain qualifications such as age, spotlessness, etc. Keeping the Passover was an act of faith (Hebrews 11:28). This foreshadowed the True Lamb of God who was to come (John 1:29), who was spotless (1 Peter 1:19) and who redeemed us from our futile way of life (1 Peter 1:14). God has redeemed us by purchasing us not with gold or silver but with the spotless blood of Christ which is precious and of infinite value. Redemption means we are under new ownership. This ownership should affect the way we live during the time of our exile (1 Peter 1:14-17). As the Hebrew people ate in haste, so we too are called upon to "gird up our minds" (1 Peter 1:13) as we soberly think through our great salvation and our great hope that one day will be fully realized. What a complete change we have experienced as a result of being under a new Master, "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Col 1:13-14).

Scripture Reading

This discussion will draw from the events in Exodus 11-12 and discuss their implications in several New Testament passages.


Discussion Questions


1. Have you ever been part of a company or visited an establishment (maybe a restaurant or store) that ended up under new ownership? What was the situation, and did it end up for better or worse? Why?


In this lesson, we will see that the Hebrew people were under a cruel master, Pharaoh, but were redeemed as a result of the blood of the lamb. We too have been redeemed and are under a new owner. Before we get too much into that, let's work our way there and continue with question #2.

2. Why do you think God chose the killing of the firstborn as the final plague?

3. How would you respond to someone that asked, "Why wouldn't God just kill Pharaoh's firstborn? Why threaten to kill everyone's? Pharaoh was the one that refused to let the people go."

 4. How was the true Lamb of God a greater sacrifice? What qualifications did He meet in order to be the perfect substitute for our salvation? See 1 Peter 1:19, John 10:18, Hebrews 10:14, Col. 2:9.

 5. Read 1 Peter 1:13-25. How would you define redemption? What do we learn about redemption from this passage? Since we've been redeemed, what is the parallel for us of eating with one's loins girded (or eating with a belt on one's waist prepared and ready to go)? See 1 Peter 1:13.

 6. As we mentioned earlier, companies under new management can be for the better or worse. Our redemption has freed us and only made us rich in Christ. Can you think of any passages that contrast the differences in being under the new ownership of Christ? See Col. 1:13-14, Eph 2.

CALL TO ACTION

If Christ has purchased you, how should that logically impact you in the circumstances you are dealing with during this season of your life?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Hebrews 11:28**

2

Food For Thought

Delivered from Even the Touch of Wrath. The author of Hebrews points out that Moses in keeping the Passover and the sprinkling of blood does so in an act of faith. At first glance, what Moses did might not seem very impressive. God told him exactly what to do and he simply did it. However, isn't that what faith is? Trusting in the Word of God and thereby acting in accordance with what He has told you? Lack of faith in God always has a cost, and in this case, it was the price of your firstborn. Why the firstborn? If that seems arbitrary to you, remember that Pharaoh determined to get rid of all the Hebrew males. He enslaved God's firstborn son Israel and refused to let him go to worship Yahweh. As a result, God warned Pharaoh in Ex 4:22-23 that He would kill Pharaoh's son, his firstborn. God's justice is not arbitrary and Divine justice through the Destroyer would invariably come. God's justice is not partial. The Egyptians, Hebrew people, and even Moses himself all had to take heed to this warning from God, none were exempt.

A day of wrath is yet to come (Rom. 2:5). We have the very word of God that says it is so and yet many balk at the idea. "More evidence", people shout! The amazing plagues of Egypt were not enough evidence for many during Moses's time. Today, all of creation shouts, the Word of God shouts, and Christ's testimony shouts, still many balk, and fail to take heed to the warning. Others may not outright reject the warning, rather they simply neglect to do anything about this day that will come. The concerns of everyday life take precedence and they neglect to consider that Divine justice is on its way. The hourglass is soon to give up its last grain. Ultimately, rejection of God's Lamb is why people will perish. What must be done? Faith by itself is an empty hand. Faith must rely on what God requires. Moses did not come empty handed but simply brought (trusted) in what God required, a lamb, and sprinkled its blood on the door post. The Destroyer would not so much as touch the firstborn. We too must come solely with what the Father has provided, the true Lamb of God. It is the blood of the Lamb that has been given to us. Have you trusted in the Lamb of God to save you from this great day of wrath? If so, count yourself blessed. How blessed are the people of God. Not one speck of God's wrath shall touch you because all has been laid upon the Lamb of God. He has not destined us to wrath!

3

Meditations for the Day

- Have you trusted in the Lamb of God to save you from the wrath to come?
- Spend time worshipping the true Lamb who spared not himself.

There is a Lamb who is greater than Pharaoh

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Revelation 5:1-14**

2

Food For Thought

A Just Judge. "But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." - Rev. 5:7

"You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth." - Rev. 5:9-10

In Revelation, the question of who will rule the world is at stake. Will the beast rule or will the Christ? Twice we learn that the beast will overcome. In 11:7, he overcomes the two witnesses by killing them. In 13:7, he overcomes the saints by making war against them. This is not hypothetical; the beast uses death as a weapon against God's work on this earth.

But the church is told time and time again in Revelation to overcome. We are told that there are rewards to those who overcome. Christians are to prevail. But how?

In Revelation 12:11, we are told how the saints overcome. It says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."

We see here that the first part of overcoming the beast goes back to the Lamb who already overcame. Jesus overcame. How? "For [He] was slain." Jesus overcame the beast by willingly giving His life for our sake on the cross. His death "redeemed us" from the beast's rule. It brought us out from under the beast's claim because the death of Jesus, the true Lamb, beat his biggest weapon. Jesus beat death.

Jesus has taken the sword out of his evil hand, and though he might swing and fight and at times look like he's winning, the truth is, Jesus has already beaten him.

And now that death has been made toothless because of the Lamb's redemption, we can overcome "him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of [our] testimony, and [we do] not love [our] lives to the death." We can overcome like Jesus did - by not being scared off by any of the enemy's schemes, be they social, financial, or even physical - and being willing to suffer whatever consequences may come from our testimony for Jesus.

3

Meditations for the Day

- How many different ways can you think of that Jesus overcame the devil and how did He accomplish that?
- How is God's victory different from Satan's? How does that influence Christian choices?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is **Exodus 12:13**

2

Food For Thought

The Assurance of an Eternal Redemption. Can you imagine what it would have been like to have been a firstborn on the night of the first Passover? Would you have felt scared, nervous, assured, or unassured? In my fanciful mind, I picture myself making sure there would have been plenty of blood put on the door post. 'Why don't we give that an extra coat just to make sure?' What your assurance was based on would probably dictate how anxious or peaceful of a night you would have had.

It is true also today, that many believers at times struggle with assurance of salvation. They are quick to compare themselves with other believers. Although they have had victory in some areas of life, other areas still feel like a dog fight. Some days they feel saved and others they wonder. God wants His people to know where they stand with Him. He wants them to have assurance of salvation. If our assurance is based on our performance or on the roller coaster of our feelings, we will be in for a long night so to speak, an anxious night. For the firstborn, what made him safe? It was the blood of the lamb on the door post, put there on his behalf. What gave the firstborn assurance that he would be passed over? It was the very word of God, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." It's been said, "It is the blood that makes us safe and the Word that makes us sure." The writer of Hebrews in chapter 9 verse 12 says this, "He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption." For us then, no blood was put on any door post. Rather, the very blood of Christ was brought to the greater and more perfect tabernacle - into heaven itself. God saw it, and He was satisfied with it. What do we have as a result? A partial redemption depending on our feelings and performance? No, see what the writer says: "obtaining an eternal redemption." Your redemption is eternal and, last I checked eternal does not mean for a period of time. Christ has obtained an eternal redemption for you. He has purchased you, owns you forever. Now there is a place in heaven itself, reserved for you. The Word of God says it is so. What a wonderful God we have!

3

Meditations for the Day

-It's been said, "For every look you take at self, take ten looks at Christ. In what way does occupation with Christ give you assurance of salvation?"

-What other passages of Scripture have helped you when it comes to assurance of salvation? Here are other ones I'd recommend, John 10:28-30, Hebrews 6:13-20.

LESSONTEN

EXODUS 12:14-13:16

**There is a REDEMPTION
worth remembering**



There is a redemption worth remembering

The text in Exodus takes a break from the action to discuss in great detail how the Israelites were supposed to remember the Passover. Even before they have been delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, Moses is telling the people how God would have them reflect on this event once they get out. Remembrance is powerful and important. All followers of God for all time have been called to do it. It helps form our identity, gives confidence in the reason for our hope and focuses us on our purpose.

True liberation is when we are no longer under the god of this world but under the True and living God. It means we are free to serve and worship Him.

Discussion Goals

This group discussion is aimed at bringing out the following principles



- God instituted the remembrance of Passover, unleavened bread and law of the firstborn to keep Israel from forgetting the true meaning of their liberation – serving and worshiping the Lord as a Holy people.

- Being redeemed, God's people are to grow in holiness (obedience in the observance of unleavened bread and consecration of firstborn). People who say they are redeemed but refuse to repent are misrepresenting the gospel.

- Redemption is the beginning of a journey. The Jews have a religious and a civil calendar, and Passover marks the beginning of their religious year (Ex. 12:2-3). This is a God who not only wants to free us and start us out on our journey but remain with us.

- When it comes to our redemption and our holiness, God wants us to think generationally and pass on what He has taught us, "And when your children say to you..." (Ex. 12:26)



Leader Notes

God instituted the remembrance of Passover, unleavened bread and law of the firstborn to keep Israel from forgetting the true meaning of their liberation. God's intention was to lead his people to the Promised Land and bring them to Himself, but what if they should forget Him while in the Promised Land amidst all the great food, ease and comfort? (Ex. 12:24-25, Ex. 13:8-10) Should they forget the meaning of their liberation and merely arrive at their destination, would be to have missed the complete goal. Also, what if the second, third, and future generations take for granted or are out of touch with the I AM who has accomplished this redemption for His people? The great I AM is for every generation and wants all to know that. He knows all too well that our memories can be feeble. Ease, comfort, or distresses can cause us to doubt Him and forget Him. Other lovers can steal our affections from Him. Yet, remembering Him is for our benefit.

True liberation is when we are no longer under the god of this world but under the True and living God. It means we are free to serve and worship Him. We can continually live our lives under Him, loving one another and enjoying and using the gifts He has given us as we seek His purposes. Being liberated means we can live holy lives, lives pleasing to Him. Since He is Holy, we ought to live holy lives (1 Peter 1:15-16). This is for our good so that we do not waste our lives (1 Peter 1:17). What is holiness? It means to be set apart from something to something. Holiness has a negative side and a positive side. There are things God does not want us to do. Things we are to be set apart from, hence the negative side. Things we are to remove from our lives, the "Thou shalt not" commands. The Feast of Unleavened Bread reminds us of the things we need to remove from our lives (Ex 13:3-10), also see, 1 Cor 5:6-8. This is a picture of our departure from worldliness, leaving our Egypt, our old life. It is true that the Apostle Paul tells those in Corinth (1 Cor 5:7) they are "Unleavened," a holy people set apart for the Lord. Yet, they are to practically live as such, removing the leaven, the malice and wickedness from their lives and thereby practicing sincerity and truth. Isn't holiness merely not doing and refraining from things? No.

There is a positive side to holiness. The law of redemption, which involved only the firstborn sons and male animals (Ex 13:12) functioned as a memorial of the tenth plague (Ex: 13:14-16). Had it not been for the sacrifice of the lamb during Passover, the firstborn son would have had no life to live. As a result, the firstborn males were to be consecrated to God, they belonged to Him. Eventually God took the Levites as His special possession in place of the firstborn (Numbers 3:12-13). We too owe our lives to the Lord. Holiness then has a positive side, it is loyalty and consecration to God. It is loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. It is presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service (Rom 12:1).

As believers, what is our motivation to live such lives, saying "no" to things and saying "yes" to living for the Lord? Our motivation is based upon a feast that we too remember. When the Lord celebrated the Passover with his disciples he instituted and ushered in a new Supper, the Lord's Supper. In it we remember the Lord Jesus who was slain on our behalf, offering his body and blood. The blood speaks of a new covenant, where God has pledged to write His law on our hearts and minds. He has committed Himself to our holiness. Thank God it is so because, "...without holiness, no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). As this world continues to grow colder and colder, may we be a people that remember our Lord, walking in the liberation He has provided for us and passing on the things entrusted to us.

Discussion Questions

1. What advice has someone passed onto you that you still remember to this day? This can be related to any topic.

🔑 2. God does not simply give His people advice Ex. 12:1-13:16, rather, He calls them to remember and not forget three crucial things, what are they? Hint, Ex 12:43, 12:15, 13:1.

3. What was the goal of their liberation, Ex. 10:3, 19:4? How would remembering each of these three events (Ex 12:43 - Passover, 12:15 - feast of Unleavened Bread, 13:1 - consecration of the firstborn, from question #2), help God's people to not forget the goal of their liberation? What application can we as Christians make from each of these three events?

🔑 4. What evidence might show if we are beginning to forget about the Lord and are starting to grow cold? What have you seen when this has happened in your own life?

5. During the Passover, our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper and called us to remember His body broken for us and the blood of the new covenant. What is the new covenant of his blood (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:10-12)?

🔑 6. Read 1 Cor 11:17-34, should the breaking of bread play a role in our personal holiness? How so?

7. What motivates you to seek to live a holy life to the Lord?

CALL TO ACTION

It is clear God is concerned about the next generation "tell your child", or "tell your son" - 12:26, 13:8, 13:14. What is your view of the younger generation(s)? How have you passed on to them what God has entrusted to you?

Holiness has a negative aspect, "saying no to things - removing the leaven from our lives" and a positive side "loyalty to God - consecration of firstborn (in our case, our lives)", loving God with all our mind, soul, body and strength, offering ourselves as a living sacrifice. In your own personal life, do you tend to over focus on the "negative" aspects (if I might call it that), or the positive side of holiness? What might we be communicating if we tend to over operate in one of the extremes? Ask God to help you hate what he hates and love what He loves.

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is II Kings 23:21-23

2

Food For Thought

Coming Back to the Heart of Worship. And the King commanded all the people, "Keep the Passover to the Lord your God, as it is written in the book of the Covenant." For no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel or during all the days of the Kings of Israel or of the Kings of Judah. But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was kept to the Lord in Jerusalem.

It was when the word of God was forgotten that the spiritual decline of the kings and the people were at its worst. It is still true today that when people refuse to retain God in their knowledge, spiritual decay ensues (Rom 1:28). We have not lost the Scriptures, but the Word of God may have little place in our lives. We would never say it doesn't matter. Quite the contrary! We do believe it matters, but it may occupy very little of our time. It is not just time studying the word either. We can be an academic and know all about the word, but it can still have little place in our daily living. Oh, that God will keep us from an, "I already know that" mentality! May God give us fresh eyes to see and appreciate passages we have read many times.

When the word of God has very little place in our lives, it's very easy to neglect the very thing He has asked us to do: remember Him. Israel neglected the Passover and we can neglect the breaking of bread. If we find that we are not participating in the remembrance meeting, we should ask ourselves: why are we neglecting to do what our loving Savior has asked? You see, when the Word of God was forgotten in 2 Kings, idolatry crept in, in all sorts of ways. Also, what God asked the people to remember, the Passover, was totally forgotten about and it is sad to see. Imagine celebrating the Passover, the remembrance of when God freed your ancestors from the slavery of Egypt, and here you are enslaved to various idols. It is the Holy Spirit who uses the Word of God to show us we have gone astray. When King Josiah discovered the word of God, there was massive repentance and reform. The Passover was then celebrated again.

God help us, give us sensitive hearts to your Word, that we may be an obedient people, eager to repent, and to come back to the heart of worship.

3

Meditations for the Day

-The point in reading the Word of God is to get to know the God of the Word. What thing(s) in His word has He recently revealed to you that He may want to change in your life?

-Isaiah 66:2 "...but this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word." What does it mean to tremble at His Word? What keeps you from trembling at His word and how can this be overcome?

-How does a right attitude towards God's word influence our participation in the breaking of bread?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

2

Food For Thought

Removing the Leaven. "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The ancient community was to keep the Passover year after year, but how do we who know Jesus respond to the Passover?

One way is to realize that we have found its fulfillment in Christ. He was sacrificed for us to redeem us from under the rule of sin, the devil, and death. He gave Himself to set us free.

But that has implications for us as well. One is that since Christ is the Passover, we are the unleavened bread. The Israelites ate the unleavened bread for 7 days to remember that they were driven out of Egypt and left right away. They were no longer under Pharaoh and they were now the Lord's people.

The leaven came to be a symbol of the evil of this world, like the evil of Egypt. And Paul says that all of us who have come to Christ have been separated from this world by Him, and because we are separated from this world, we are the fulfillment of that unleavened lump.

So how should we who have Christ as our Passover and have been separated from this world live? The Bible says we should keep the feast. What does that mean? It does not mean actually keeping Passover. It does mean that those of us who have faith in the true Passover, Christ, should keep the true meaning of the feast in our daily lives. We can live separated from the world.

We do not have to wonder what that means. We have 3 clear ways of being separate from the world's ways and 2 clear ways to hold on to the Lord's ways. We should avoid keeping it with our old worldly attitudes, with malice, or with wickedness. That would dishonor the true meaning of the feast. We should fulfill the true meaning by holding on to sincerity and truth.

3

Meditations for the Day

-What are some ways that we can profess Christ with old worldly attitudes, malice, or wickedness?

-What are some ways that we can profess Christ with sincerity and truth?

1

Scripture Reading

Today's scripture reading is | Peter 1:13-21

2

Food For Thought

Girding your Mind. In Exodus 12, part of God's instructions were for the people to not only take some of the blood of the lamb and put it on the doorposts but for the people to actually eat the Passover lamb (vs. 7-8). However, you couldn't eat it any old way that you felt like. There was a certain manner in which you ate it, "belt fastened, sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand" (Ex 12:11). You were to eat it in haste, ready to leave and journey as pilgrims. People would gird up their loins meaning they would gather up their long tunic and tie it up to keep the tunic from obstructing their legs. People at that time would normally do this if they needed to run, work, or fight. You often see women do this but with ponytails. They don't want to obstruct their vision so they tie their hair up.

Peter is telling us to do the same thing but with our minds. We gird up our minds for all kinds of things don't we? We prepare for tests, we think through our day and what we need to do, we prepare for meetings, we prepare for what we are going to say to certain people. Yet, Peter is telling us to prepare our minds for action because we too are on a journey. The journey is a long one with all the difficulties of life and we must remember a few things as we travel. Peter starts with "Therefore", meaning in light of your new birth to a living hope, in light of your inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, in light of all the trials and testing that you experience, be sober minded and take seriously this great salvation that you have. Remember these things God has done in you (new birth), has given you (inheritance) and is doing in you (refining your faith). This refining of your faith will lead to praise, glory and honor in the coming day (1 Peter 1:7), so keep trusting in Him. You are headed somewhere. Think hard about where you are headed. You are headed towards the revelation of Jesus Christ. You have not seen him yet, but you love Him. However, one day you will look Christ in the eyes. He will look you in the eyes. Let that sink in.

Now, think about your life as it is today. So many different things going on. Would Christ say that in the midst of all you have going on that you are walking as an obedient child, that you are trusting in Him that He is holy and good? Are you spending your life on what matters to Him? He takes our holiness pretty seriously you know, not as a harsh tyrant but as our Holy Father who wants the best for us. Taking seriously the holiness of God will help keep us on track in our spiritual pilgrimage. There is a healthy fear we can have, the fear of wasting our valuable lives. Your life is valuable to God. He paid the highest price He possibly could for it! One day He will evaluate our lives not in terms of salvation but of service and what we did in our bodies for Him. He has the right to do that since He made you and redeemed you with something so precious to Him, the spotless blood of Christ. Sending His Son was His plan before the foundation of the world, and even now, time is moving towards the great revelation of Jesus Christ. What a day it will be! Let us be a holy people with minds prepared for action as we journey through the rest of the time God has given us.

3

Meditations for the Day

- How has God as your Holy Father kept you on track during your spiritual pilgrimage? Spend time thanking Him for that.
- What in your life keeps your mind from being girded for action? Ask the Lord to help you in this area. Share with someone so they can pray for you.
- Do you suffer from dirty rotten sinner syndrome where you constantly beat yourself up? Yes, we are sinners and deserve God's judgement. In what sense does God value you? How should that shape the way you think about your life?

The End of Volume I