

10-SESSION BIBLE STUDY

GOD OF DELIVERANCE

A STUDY OF EXODUS 1–18

JEN WILKIN

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jen Wilkin is an author and Bible teacher from Dallas, Texas. She has organized and led studies for women in home, church, and parachurch contexts. Her passion is to see others become articulate and committed followers of Christ, with a clear understanding of why they believe what they believe, grounded in the Word of God. Jen is the author of *Ten Words to Live By: Delighting in and Doing What God Commands*, *Women of the Word*, *None Like Him*, *In His Image* and Bible studies exploring the Sermon on the Mount and the Books of Genesis, Hebrews, and 1 Peter. You can find her at JenWilkin.net.

FOREWORD: HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH GOD'S WORD?

OUR PURPOSE

The Bible study you are about to begin will teach you an important passage of the Bible in a way that will stay with you for years to come. It will challenge you to move beyond loving God with just your heart to loving Him with your mind. It will focus on answering the question, “What does the Bible say about God?” It will aid you in the worthy task of God-discovery.

You see, the Bible is not a book about self-discovery; it is a book about God-discovery. The Bible is God's declared intent to make Himself known to us. In learning about the character of God in Scripture, we *will* experience self-discovery, but it must not be the object of our study. The object must be God Himself.

This focus changes the way we study. We look first for what a passage can teach us about the character of God, allowing self-discovery to be the by-product of God-discovery. This is a much better approach because there can be no true knowledge of self apart from knowledge of God. So when I read the account of Jonah, I see first that God is just and faithful to His Word—He is faithful to proclaim His message to Nineveh no matter what. I see second that I, by contrast (and much like Jonah), am unjust to my fellow man and unfaithful to God's Word. Thus, knowledge of God leads to true knowledge of self, which leads to repentance and transformation. So are confirmed Paul's words in Romans 12:2 that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Most of us are good at loving God with our hearts. We are good at employing our emotions in our pursuit of God. But the God who commands us to love with the totality of our hearts, souls, and strength also commands us to love Him with all of our minds. Because He only commands what He also enables His children to do, it must be possible for us to love Him well with our minds or He would not command it. I know you will bring your emotions to your study of God's Word, and that is good and right. But it is your mind that I am jealous for. God intends for you to be a good student, renewing your mind and thus transforming your heart.

OUR PROCESS

Being a good student entails following good study habits. When we sit down to read, most of us like to read through a particular passage and then find a way to apply it to our everyday lives. We may read through an entire book of the Bible over a period of time, or we may jump around from place to place. I want to suggest a different approach, one that may not always yield immediate application, comfort, or peace, but one that builds over time a cumulative understanding of the message of Scripture.

READING IN CONTEXT AND REPETITIVELY

Imagine yourself receiving a letter in the mail. The envelope is handwritten, but you don't glance at the return address. Instead you tear open the envelope, flip to the second page, read two paragraphs near the bottom, and set the letter aside. Knowing that if someone bothered to send it to you, you should act on its contents in some way, you spend a few minutes trying to figure out how to respond to what the section you just read had to say. What are the odds you will be successful?

No one would read a letter this way. But this is precisely the way many of us read our Bibles. We skip past reading the "envelope"—*Who wrote this? To whom was it written? When was it written? Where was it written?*—and then try to determine the purpose of its contents from a portion of the whole. What if we took time to read the envelope? What if, after determining the context for its writing, we started at the beginning and read to the end? Wouldn't that make infinitely more sense?

In our study, we will take this approach to Scripture. We will begin by placing our text in its historical and cultural context. We will "read the envelope." Then we will read through the entire text so that we can better determine what it wants to say to us. We will read repetitively so that we might move through three critical stages of understanding: comprehension, interpretation, and application.

STAGE 1: COMPREHENSION

Remember the reading comprehension section on the SAT? Remember those long reading passages followed by questions to test your knowledge of what you had just read? The objective was to force you to read for detail. We are going to apply the same method to our study of God's Word. When we read for comprehension, we ask ourselves, *What does it say?* This is hard work. A person who *comprehends* the account of the six days of creation can tell you specifically what happened on each day. This is the first step toward being able to interpret and apply the story of creation to our lives.

STAGE 2: INTERPRETATION

While comprehension asks, *What does it say?*, interpretation asks, *What does it mean?* Once we have read a passage enough times to know what it says, we are ready to look into its meaning. A person who *interprets* the creation story can tell you why God created in a particular order or way. She is able to imply things from the text beyond what it says.

STAGE 3: APPLICATION

After doing the work to understand what the text says and what the text means, we are finally ready to ask, *How should it change me?* Here is where we draw on our God-centered perspective to ask three supporting questions:

- What does this passage teach me about God?
- How does this aspect of God's character change my view of self?
- What should I do in response?

A person who *applies* the creation story can tell us that because God creates in an orderly fashion, we, too, should live well-ordered lives. Knowledge of God gleaned through comprehension of the text and interpretation of its meaning can now be applied to my life in a way that challenges me to be different.

SOME GUIDELINES

It is vital to the learning process that you allow yourself to move through the three stages of understanding on your own, without the aid of commentaries or study notes. The first several times you read a passage, you will probably be confused. In our study together, not all the homework questions will have answers that are immediately clear to you. This is actually a good thing. If you are unsure of an answer, give it your best shot. Allow yourself

to feel lost, to dwell in the “I don’t know.” It will make the moment of discovery stick. We’ll also expand our understanding in the small-group discussion and teaching time.

Nobody likes to feel lost or confused, but it is an important step in the acquisition and retention of understanding. Because of this, I have a few guidelines to lay out for you as you go through this study.

1. **Avoid all commentaries** until *comprehension* and *interpretation* have been earnestly attempted on your own. In other words, wait to read commentaries until after you have done the homework, attended small-group time, and listened to the teaching. And then, consult commentaries you can trust. Ask a pastor or Bible teacher at your church for suggested authors. I used the following commentaries in creating this study: *Exodus: an Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* by Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus: A Mentor Commentary* by John L. Mackay, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory* by Philip Graham Ryken, and *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage* by J. A. Motyer.
2. For the purposes of this study, **get a Bible without study notes**. Come on, it’s just too easy to look at them. You know I’m right.
3. Though commentaries are initially off-limits, here are some **tools you should use**:
 - **Cross-references.** These are the Scripture references in the margin or at the bottom of the page in your Bible. They point you to other passages that deal with the same topic or theme.
 - **An English dictionary** to look up unfamiliar words. A good online dictionary is: *merriam-webster.com*.
 - **Other translations of the Bible.** We will use the English Standard Version (ESV) as a starting point, but you can easily consult other versions online. I recommend the Christian Standard Bible (CSB), New International Version (NIV), New American Standard Version (NASB), and the New King James Version (NKJV). Reading more than one translation can expand your understanding of the meaning of a passage. Note: a paraphrase, such as *The Message*, can be useful but should be regarded as a commentary rather than a translation. They are best consulted after careful study of an actual translation.
 - **A printed copy of the text, double-spaced, so you can mark repeated words, phrases, or ideas. For certain lessons in this workbook, portions of the text will be provided for you to mark. If you find it helpful to mark other sections of the text, you should print them and do so.**

STORING UP TREASURE

Approaching God's Word with a God-centered perspective, with context, and with care takes effort and commitment. It is study for the long-term. Some days your study may not move you emotionally or speak to an immediate need. You may not be able to apply a passage at all. But what if ten years from now, in a dark night of the soul, that passage suddenly opens up to you because of the work you have done today? Wouldn't your long-term investment be worth it?

In Matthew 13 we see Jesus begin to teach in parables. He told seven deceptively simple stories that left His disciples struggling for understanding—dwelling in the “I don't know,” if you will. After the last parable, He turned to them and asked, “Have you understood all these things?” (v. 51a). Despite their apparent confusion, they answered out of their earnest desire with, “Yes” (v. 51b). Jesus told them that their newfound understanding made them “like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old” (13:52, NIV).

A storeroom, as Jesus indicated, is a place for keeping valuables over a long period of time for use when needed. Faithful study of God's Word is a means for filling our spiritual storerooms with truth, so that in our hour of need we can bring forth both the old and the new as a source of rich provision. I pray that this study would be for you a source of much treasure and that you would labor well to obtain it.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jen Wilkin', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jen Wilkin

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This workbook is designed to be used in a specific way. The homework in the workbook will start you in the process of comprehension, interpretation, and application. However, it was designed to dovetail with small-group discussion time and the teaching sessions. You can use the workbook by itself, but you are likely to find yourself with some unresolved questions. The teaching sessions are intended to resolve most, if not all, of your unanswered questions from the homework and discussion time. **For detailed information about how to access the teaching sessions that accompany this workbook, see page 176.** With this in mind, consider using the materials as follows:

- If you are going through the study **on your own**, first work through the homework, and then watch or listen to the corresponding teaching for that week.
- If you are going through the study **in a group**, first do your homework, and then discuss the questions your group decides to cover. Then watch or listen to the teaching. Some groups watch or listen to the teaching before they meet, which can also work if that format fits best for everyone.

Note: For Week One, there is no homework. The study begins with an audio or video introduction. You will find a Viewer Guide on pages 14–15 that you can use as you watch or listen to the introductory material.

HOW TO USE THE LEADER GUIDE

At the end of each week's homework you will find a leader guide intended to help facilitate discussion in small groups. The leader guide includes questions to help group members compare what they have learned from their homework on Days Two through Five. These questions are either pulled directly from the homework, or they summarize a concept or theme that the homework covered. Each section covers content from a particular day of the homework, first asking group members to observe and then asking them to apply. The observation questions typically ask group members to report a finding or flesh out an interpretation. The application questions challenge them to move beyond intellectual understanding and to identify ways to live differently in light of what they have learned.

As a small group leader, you will want to review these questions before you meet with your group, thinking through your own answers, marking where they occur in the homework, and noting if there are any additional questions you might want to reference to help the flow of the discussion. These questions are suggestions only, intended to help you cover as much ground as you can in a 45-minute discussion time. They should not be seen as requirements or limitations, but as guidelines to help you prepare your group for the teaching time by allowing them to process collectively what they have learned during their homework.

As a facilitator of discussion rather than a teacher, you are allowed and encouraged to be a colearner with your group members. This means you yourself may not always feel confident of your answer to a given question, and that is perfectly OK. Because we are studying for the long-term, we are allowed to leave some questions partially answered or unresolved, trusting for clarity at a later time. In most cases, the teaching time should address any lingering questions that are not resolved in the homework or the small-group discussion time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am deeply grateful to Jenni Hamm for her editorial help on this study. Her insights, attention to detail, and love for the Lord and His Word have been indispensable to me. “Let her works praise her in the gates” (Prov. 31:31).

NOTES

WEEK ONE:

Introduction | A Going Out

Who wrote the Book of Exodus?

When was it written?

To whom was it written?

In what style was it written?

What is the central theme of the book?

WEEK TWO:

A Deliverer Delivered

Exodus 1:1–2:10

Having faithfully recorded the history of Israel from Eden to the death of Joseph in the Book of Genesis, Moses continues the story of the people of God in the Book of Exodus. In Genesis Moses told the story of others, but in Exodus he will tell a story in which he himself is a central figure.

DAY ONE

READ EXODUS 1:1–2:10.

1. Summarize chapter 1 in two to three sentences.
2. Summarize chapter 2:1-10 in two to three sentences.
3. How would you describe the mood of the story at this point?

DAY TWO

NOW LOOK BACK AT EXODUS 1:1-7.

4. As we reviewed in our introductory lesson, Exodus picks up the thread of the redemptive story several hundred years after the death of Joseph. What purpose do verses 1-7 serve in the narrative? Skim through Genesis 46:8-27 to help with your answer.

5. How many of Jacob's descendents are recorded as having gone into Egypt to escape the famine (Ex. 1:5)?

What does verse 7 tell us happened in the intervening centuries?

*“But the people of Israel were _____ and
_____ greatly; they _____ and grew
exceedingly strong, so that the land was _____ with them” (ESV).*

6. Skim through chapter 1 and note how many times this idea is mentioned. In what other verses does it occur?

7. Moses has deliberately chosen the language of verse 7 and the other verses you noted to make a point. In the chart below, look up each verse and fill in the requested information:

VERSE	TO WHOM WAS GOD SPEAKING?	PROMISE OR COMMAND
Genesis 1:28		
Genesis 9:1		
Genesis 17:2,6		
Genesis 22:17		
Genesis 26:4		
Genesis 28:14		
Genesis 35:11		
Genesis 48:4		

How do these promises in Genesis relate to Exodus 1:7? What does Moses want us to understand?

8. **APPLY:** Just as Moses reminds his readers of the faithfulness of God with His promises, so we need to be reminded. How have you witnessed God's unfaltering faithfulness to bring about fruitfulness in your life?

DAY THREE

NOW LOOK AT EXODUS 1:8-14.

9. At this point in the story, Joseph is long dead. What does the text mean when it says, “. . . there arose a new king . . . *who did not know Joseph*” (v. 8, *italics mine*)?

10. Specifically, what did this new king fear about the Israelites (vv. 9-10)?

11. What does it mean to “deal shrewdly with” someone (v. 10)? What is the difference between a shrewd person and a smart or wise person? Look up the word *shrewd* in a dictionary and/or thesaurus to help you with your answer.

12. In verse 11, who did the following?
 - Set taskmasters over the Israelites: _____
 - Built the store cities of Pithom and Raamses: _____

13. What word is repeated to emphasize the nature of the treatment the Israelites received (vv. 13-14)?

Look this word up in a dictionary/thesaurus and list some appropriate synonyms for it:

14. What is the result of the ruthless treatment the Israelites received at the hands of the Egyptians (v. 12)?

15. **APPLY:** What does this teach us about the God the Israelites served? How is this lesson a comfort to you?

DAY FOUR

NOW LOOK AT EXODUS 1:15-22.

16. Seeing that his ruthless treatment of the Israelites has failed to subdue them, what does Pharaoh choose for his next strategy (vv. 15-16)?

17. Who thwarts the plans of Pharaoh (vv. 17-19)?

18. The Egyptians worshiped their pharaohs as gods. What do you think would have happened to Shiphrah and Puah if Pharaoh had uncovered their deception?

19. What is God's response to the actions of Shiphrah and Puah (vv. 20-21)?

20. **APPLY:** What is *your* response to the actions of Shiphrah and Puah? How are they worthy of your admiration and imitation? List some thoughts below:

21. Commentaries frequently emphasize that the midwives lied to Pharaoh when he asked why they had not obeyed his murderous command. We will discuss it further in the teaching time, but for now, what is your response to this line of thought? If the midwives were lying, were they wrong to do so?

22. Seeing that his ruthless plan to have the midwives murder all the male Israelite babies has failed, what does Pharaoh choose for his next strategy (v. 22)?

23. **APPLY:** Think of a time when you were pressured to do wrong in order to preserve a job or relationship. How did you handle that situation? How should having a fear of the Lord shape our responses to times like those?

DAY FIVE

NOW LOOK AT EXODUS 2:1-10.

24. In the space below is a list of each of the people mentioned in these ten verses. Skim through the passage. Next to the character, write his or her proper name if you find it in the text.

Verse 1 a man from the house of Levi _____

Verse 1 his wife, a Levite woman _____

Verse 2 a fine child, hidden for three months _____

Verse 4 the child's sister _____

Verse 5 the daughter of Pharaoh _____

Did you only find one proper name? What explanation would you give for how this passage is written? Why is only one name given?

25. Now let's try to fill in a few more blanks. Look up the following verses and fill in the names they contain next to their owners in the blanks above:

Exodus 6:20 | Exodus 15:20 | Numbers 26:59

(Remember that, as we learned in the teaching time last week, Pharaoh was never named. It follows that we would not know his daughter's name either.)

26. What was the baby doing that caused Pharaoh's daughter to take pity on him in the basket (v. 6)?

27. What sweet arrangement does God devise through Miriam's words and actions (vv. 7-9)?
28. Why do you think Jochebed places her baby in a basket among the reeds? What outcome do you think she expects, hopes for, or fears?
29. Genesis tells a similar story of a mother in a desperate situation. Having been cast out by her mistress, Sarah, Hagar wanders with her young son into the desert to face certain death. She places the child under a tree where he lies crying in his misery. Read Genesis 21:15-16 to find out why she does this. How might Hagar's story shed light on Jochebed's actions?

NOW LOOK AT GENESIS 21:17-20a FOR THE REST OF HAGAR'S STORY:

¹⁷And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. ¹⁸Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation." ¹⁹Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

²⁰And God was with the boy, and he grew up.

How tender the tracings of the hand of God on the lives of these two women and their similar stories: a child's cry heard by One who can save, a son with a destiny to fulfill, and a mother who holds the drink necessary for him to live.

30. **APPLY:** How should these two stories of Hagar and Jochebed instruct us when we find ourselves in a seemingly hopeless situation? What do these stories teach us about the character of God?
31. When he is brought to her, Pharaoh's daughter names the baby Moses. What does the name mean? (See Ex. 2:10.) How is it appropriate?
32. **APPLY:** Moses is taken into the care of the very household that had decreed his death. Think of a time God granted you favor with an enemy. What did that situation teach you about His faithfulness? His power over human hearts?

WRAP-UP

Did you see evidence of the theme of deliverance in this week's passage?
If so, where?

What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of Exodus shown you more clearly? *(Note: Each week we will end our homework by focusing on what the text has revealed about God. A list of God's attributes can be found in the back of your workbook on pages 172–173 to help you think through your answer to the wrap-up questions.)*

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is _____ shows me that
I am _____.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

NOTES

WEEK TWO | GROUP DISCUSSION

1. OBSERVE: (question 4, p. 19) As we reviewed in our introductory lesson, Exodus picks up the thread of the redemptive story several hundred years after the death of Joseph. What purpose does Exodus 1:1-7 serve in the narrative? Skim through Genesis 46:8-27 to help with your answer.

APPLY: (question 8, p. 20) Just as Moses reminds his readers of the faithfulness of God with His promises, so we need to be reminded. How have you witnessed God's unfaltering faithfulness to bring about fruitfulness in your life?

2. OBSERVE: (question 14, p. 22) What is the result of the ruthless treatment the Israelites received at the hands of the Egyptians (Ex. 1:12)?

APPLY: (question 15, p. 22) What does this teach us about the God the Israelites served? How is this lesson a comfort to you?

3. OBSERVE: (question 18, p. 23) The Egyptians worshiped their pharaohs as gods. What do you think would have happened to Shiphrah and Puah if Pharaoh had uncovered their deception?

APPLY: (question 20, p. 23) What is *your* response to the actions of Shiphrah and Puah? How are they worthy of your admiration and imitation?

4. OBSERVE: (question 21, p. 23) Commentaries frequently emphasize that the midwives lied to Pharaoh when he asked why they had not obeyed his murderous command. We will discuss it further in the teaching time, but for now, what is your response to this line of thought? If the midwives were lying, were they wrong to do so?

APPLY: (question 23, p. 24) Think of a time when you were pressured to do wrong in order to preserve a job or relationship. How did you handle that situation? How should having a fear of the Lord shape our responses to times like those?

APPLY: (question 30, p. 27) How should these two stories of Hagar and Jochebed instruct us when we find ourselves in a seemingly hopeless situation? What do these stories teach us about the character of God?

5. OBSERVE: (question 31, p. 27) When he is brought to her, Pharaoh's daughter names the baby Moses. What does the name mean? (See Ex. 2:10.) How is it appropriate?

APPLY: (question 32, p. 27) Moses is taken into the care of the very household that had decreed his death. Think of a time God granted you favor with an enemy. What did that situation teach you about His faithfulness? His power over human hearts?

6. WRAP-UP: (p. 28) What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of Exodus shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is shows me that
I am .

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

WEEK TWO | VIEWER GUIDE NOTES

