

EXODUS

ENTER GOD'S STORY

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STORYTELLER

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ABOUT STORYTELLER

God could've chosen to reveal Himself in any way that He desired, yet in His wisdom, He chose to reveal Himself in the context of a story. We come to know and understand this reality as we immerse ourselves in the Scriptures and begin to see the entirety of Scripture as one interconnected story. By becoming familiar with the individual stories of Scripture, we train ourselves to see each as one part of God's big story.

Storyteller is a six week devotional and group Bible study experience designed to take people through Scripture in a way that is beautiful, intuitive, and interactive. Each volume uses a book of the Bible or a portion of Scripture from within a book to examine a key theme. This theme guides the Bible study experience and gives readers handles to help understand and digest what they're reading.

At the end of each study, you should have a deeper understanding of God, His Word, the big themes of Scripture, the connectedness of God's story, and His work in your life.

Let's enter the story together.

ABOUT EXODUS

TITLE

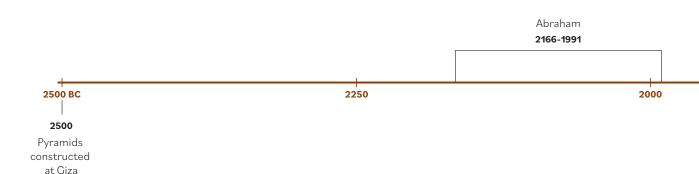
The title *Exodus* comes from a Greek word that means "departure" which is a reference to the central event of the book—the Israelites' exodus from Egyptian enslavement. The Hebrew title for Exodus is *Names* because it is the first word of the book in the original language.

THEME

The theme of Exodus is redemption. The events of the book lead up to and come away from God redeeming Israel from slavery and establishing a chosen nation to serve and represent Him in the world.

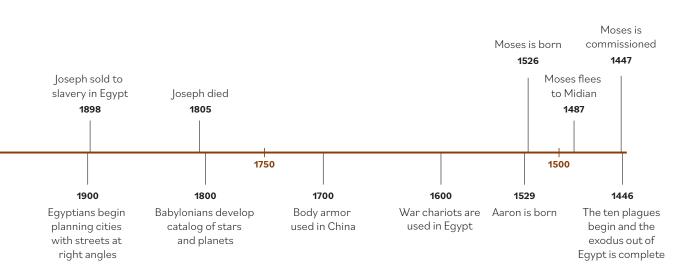
AUTHOR AND DATE

The book of Exodus, like the other books in the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), was written by Moses. The book was written sometime after the exodus in 1446 BC and before the death of Moses in 1406 BC.



SIMPLIFIED OUTLINE OF EXODUS

- 1:1–19:2 The Israelites are delivered from slavery.
- 19:3–24:8 God establishes a covenant with Israel and gives the Ten Commandments.
- 25–31 God provides instructions to build the tabernacle so that He may dwell with His people.
- 32–34 Israel breaks their covenant with God, yet He renews it.
- 35–40 The people of Israel construct the tabernacle.¹

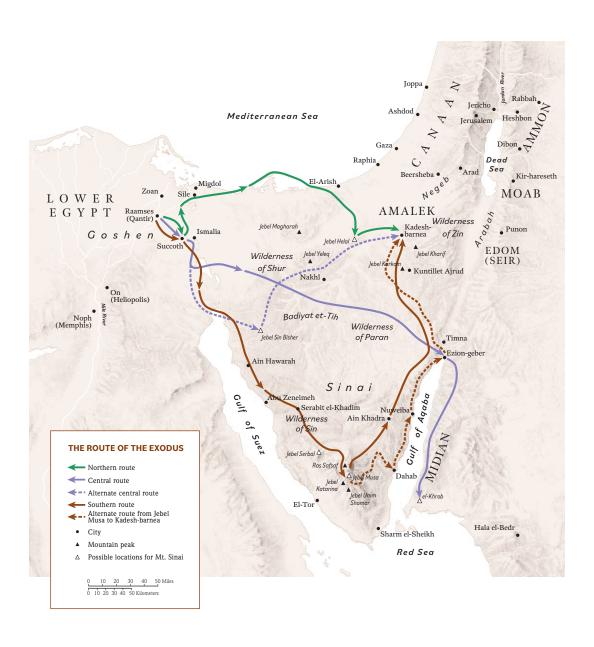


POSSIBLE ROUTES OF THE EXODUS

We know that when the Israelites left Egypt they headed towards Mount Sinai to meet with God and worship Him. Because there is some doubt as to where the biblical Mount Sinai is located, archeologists and biblical scholars have proposed several possible routes the Israelites could've taken out of Egypt. These routes are illustrated on the next page.²

THE DATE OF THE EXODUS

Based on biblical evidence we can conclude that the exodus from Egypt occurred in 1446 BC. According to 1 Kings 6:1, the exodus occurred 480 years before Solomon's fourth year as king, which in conjunction with other biblical information can be dated to 966 BC. Additionally, in Judges 11:26 Jephthah said that Israel had been living in regions of Palestine for 300 years. Jephthah lived around 1100 BC, thus dating the end of the wilderness journey to around 1400 BC.



WHY STUDY EXODUS?

Exodus is the Rosetta stone for unlocking the Old Testament and the thread of redemption throughout Scripture. If you're looking for the thread of redemption throughout the Bible, there's no better place to start than in Exodus.

Consider what Christopher Wright has to say in The Mission of God.

If you had asked a devout Israelite in the Old Testament period, "Are you redeemed?" the answer would have been a most definite yes. And if you had asked "How do you know?" you would be taken aside to sit down somewhere while your friend recounted a long and exciting story—the story of exodus. For indeed it is the exodus that provided the primary model of God's idea of redemption, not just in the Old Testament but even in the New, where it is used as one of the keys to understanding the meaning of the cross of Christ.³

Over six weeks, we will walk together through the first fifteen chapters of Exodus as God heard the cries of His people, responded by sending a deliverer, and gave us a pattern for recognizing His work in the world.

- 1. The information on this page is adapted from *The CSB Study Bible*, Dorian G. Coover-Cox, "Exodus," in *CSB Study Bible*: Notes, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 87–89.
- Thomas V. Brisco, Holman Bible Atlas, Holman Reference (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 68.
- 3. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God.* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 256.



HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Each week follows a repeated rhythm to guide you in your study of Exodus and was crafted with lots of white space and photographic imagery to facilitate a time of reflection on Scripture.

The week begins with an introduction to the themes of the week. Throughout each week you'll find Scripture readings, devotions, and beautiful imagery to guide your time.



WEEK 5
REDEMPTION

EXOCUS 18-14

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1 RUTHLESS DEMANDS

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You may read this and feel like God had forgotten leasel. You may come to these verses feeling like God has forgotten you. Yet despite what is happening in the foreground, God is at work in the background.

A Problem & A Prom

Each week includes five days of Scripture reading along with a short devotional thought and three questions to process what you've read.

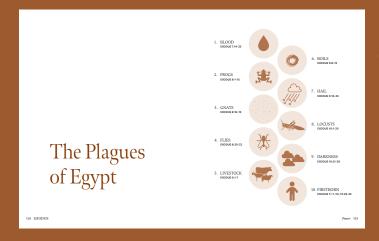
The Scripture reading is printed out for you with plenty of space for you to take notes, circle, underline, and interact with the passage.



The sixth day contains no reading beyond a couple of verses to give you time to pause and listen to what God has said through the Scriptures this week. You may be tempted to skip this day all together, but resist this temptation. Sit and be quiet with God—even if it's only for a few minutes.

The seventh day each week offers a list of open-ended questions that apply to any passage of Scripture. Use this day to reflect on your own or meet with a group to discuss what you've learned. Take intentional time to remember and reflect on what the story of Exodus is teaching you.





Throughout each week of study, you will notice callout boxes or supplemental pages provided to give greater context and clarity to the Scripture you're reading. These features will help you connect Exodus to the bigger story of Scripture.

LEADING A GROUP

Each week of study contains a set of questions that can be used for small group meetings. These open-ended questions are meant to guide discussion of the week's Scripture passage. No matter the size of your group, here are some helpful tips for guiding discussion.

PREPARE

REVIEW the Scripture and your answers to the week's questions ahead of time.

PRAY over your group as well as the Scriptures you've been studying. Ask God's Spirit for help to lead the group deeper into God's truth and deeper in relationship with one another.

MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS

We live in a time when our attention is increasingly divided. Try to see your group time as a space and respite from the digital clutter—from scrolling, notifications, likes, and newsfeeds. Commit to one another to give focused time and attention to the discussion at hand and minimize outside distractions. Help people focus on what's most important: connecting with God, with the Bible, and with one another.

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION

A good small group experience has the following characteristics.

EVERYONE IS INCLUDED. Your goal is to foster a community where people are welcome just as they are but encouraged to grow spiritually.

EVERYONE PARTICIPATES. Encourage everyone to ask questions, share, or read aloud.

NO ONE DOMINATES. Even though you may be "leading" the group, try to see yourself as a participant steering the conversation rather than a teacher imparting information.

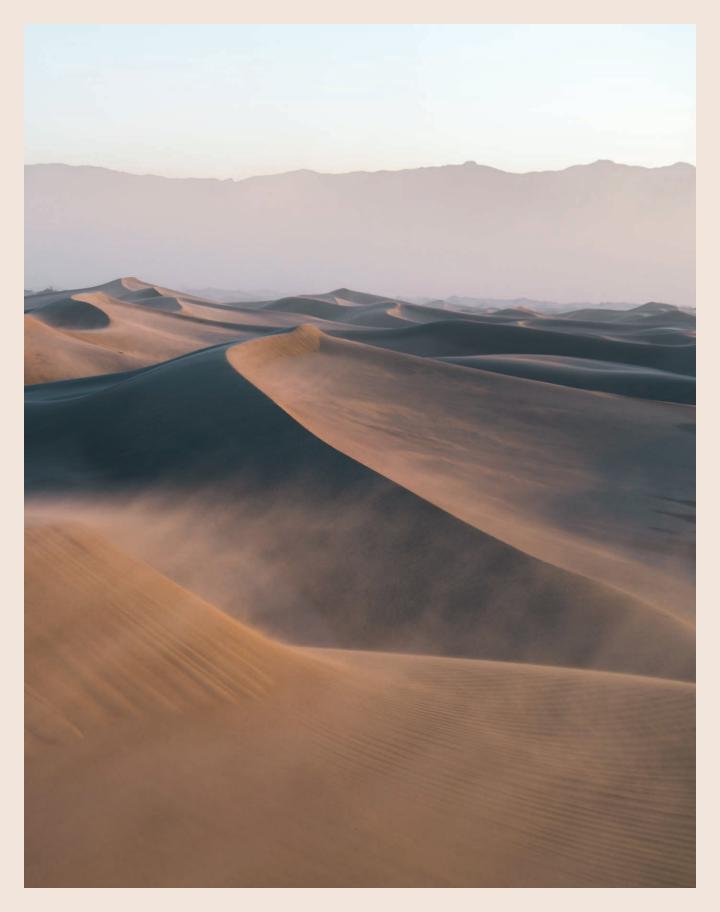
DON'T RUSH. Don't feel that a moment of silence is a bad thing. People may need time, and we should be glad to give it to them. Don't feel like you have to ask all the questions or stay away from questions that aren't included. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and to one another. Take your time.

INPUT IS AFFIRMED AND FOLLOWED UP. Make sure you point out something true or helpful in a response. Don't just move on. Build community with follow-up questions, asking other people to share when they have experienced similar things or how a truth has shaped their understanding of God and the Scripture you're studying. Conversation stalls when people feel that you don't want to hear their answers or that you're looking for only a certain answer. Engagement and affirmation keeps the conversation going.

GOD AND HIS WORD ARE CENTRAL. The questions in this study are meant to steer the conversation back to God, His Word, and the work of the gospel in our lives. Opinions and experiences are valuable and can be helpful, but God is the center of the Bible, the center of our story, and should be the center of our discussion. Trust Him to lead the discussion. Continually point people to the Word and to active steps of faith.

KEEP CONNECTING

Spiritual growth occurs in the context of community. Think of ways to connect with group members during the week. Your group will be more enjoyable the more you get to know one another through time spent outside of an official group meeting. The more people are comfortable with and involved in one another's lives, the more they'll look forward to being together. When people move beyond being friendly to truly being friends who form a community, they come to each session eager to engage instead of merely attending. Reserve time each week to touch base with individual group members.



WEEK 1

A PROBLEM & A PROMISE

Enter the story.

Entering the story of Exodus, you quickly realize the people of Israel have a problem. They are enslaved by a king who did not know about the Israelite man, Joseph, who once oversaw the entire Egyptian empire. But as you continue through Exodus, you will find it is also a book about a promise.

A promise of freedom and redemption.

And yet.

Every day God's people languished, God had a plan for delivering His people. He was in the details, preparing the way for their redemption. He worked through men and mighty miracles to free the Israelites from the Egyptians who enslaved them. He worked to free them from themselves.

The story of Exodus is rich with present-day promise and relevance—especially for anyone, anywhere, who has ever felt stuck. Anyone who has stood in faith or fallen in brokenness. Anyone longing to see a promise kept or begin a new day.

And who hasn't?

Just like He was for the Israelites, God—the same yesterday, today and forever—is present in our problems waiting to fulfill His promises. Now, as then, He is working in the details of our lives, preparing the way for ultimate redemption.

Ready for a closer look?

EXODUS 1:8-14

⁸A new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. ⁹He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and powerful than we are. ¹⁰ Come, let's deal shrewdly with them; otherwise they will multiply further, and when war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country." ¹¹ So the Egyptians assigned taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. They built Pithom and Rameses as supply cities for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and spread so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. ¹³ They worked the Israelites ruthlessly ¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with difficult labor in brick and mortar and in all kinds of fieldwork. They ruthlessly imposed all this work on them.

DAY 1

RUTHLESS DEMANDS

The new king of Egypt was feeling threatened. The Israelites were overtaking his nation. Joseph, the great Jewish leader under a previous Pharaoh, had invited them to come. But much time had passed; generations had continued. The new king didn't know their history or understand their lineage. Frankly, he didn't care.

All he knew was that there were too many Israelites, and they were too strong. These Israelites worshiped only one God, while the Egyptians worshiped many. Could they overrun his kingdom? Could they steal away his power? Fear can make a man mean. It can rule the emotions and justify the unjustifiable.

The king enslaved the Israelites and appointed brutal slave drivers to wear them down with crushing labor. That way, he could show them who's "boss." But the more the king oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied and spread. The more they multiplied, the more oppressive the king became. The Bible tells us the Egyptians treated the Israelites without mercy, made their lives bitter, and were ruthless with demands.

Imagine it: unbearable oppression, seemingly no way out. And things were about to get worse. We don't yet know how the Israelites felt about their suffering. All the story has told us so far is about a hard-hearted king who ruled out of fear and anger. Yet lurking in the details of these verses of oppression is the promise God made long ago to make His people into a great nation as numerous as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on a shore.

You may read this and feel like God had forgotten Israel. You may come to these verses feeling like God has forgotten you. Yet despite what is happening in the foreground, God is at work in the background.



REFLECTIONS

What made Pharaoh feel threatened? How did he respond? Why does feeling threatened lead us to make poor choices?

These verses show God at work in the background of the story. What are some ways God operates in the background of our lives?

How might learning to find those instances where God is working in the background help you to trust God when it seems or feels like He is absent?

TRACING THE STORY

Reading Exodus is joining a story already in progress. It is the second book of the Bible and picks up where Genesis, the first book of the Bible, left off.

The majority of Genesis traces the family history of a man named Abraham. Joseph referred to in Exodus 1:8 is Abraham's great-grandson. His story is found in Genesis chapters 37-50.

EXODUS 1:15-22

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives — the first, whose name was Shiphrah, and the second, whose name was Puah — ¹⁶ "When you help the Hebrew women give birth, observe them as they deliver. If the child is a son, kill him, but if it's a daughter, she may live." ¹⁷ The midwives, however, feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this and let the boys live?"

¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, "The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them."

²⁰ So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied and became very numerous. ²¹ Since the midwives feared God, he gave them families. ²² Pharaoh then commanded all his people, "You must throw every son born to the Hebrews into the Nile, but let every daughter live."

2

DEFYING AUTHORITY

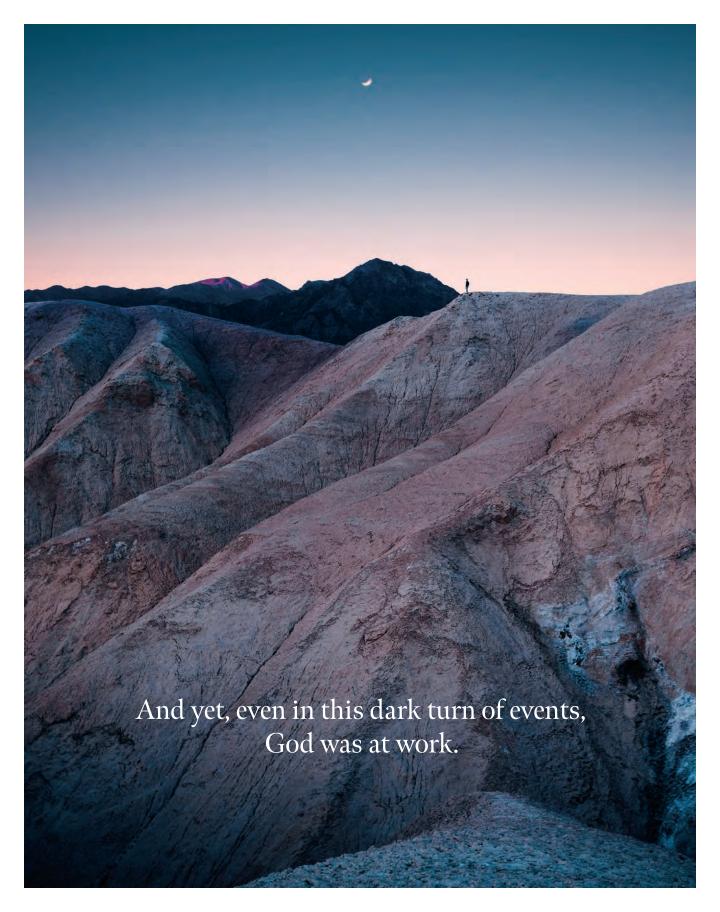
The king's anger continued to burn. It was no longer enough to just punish the Israelites. His anger and paranoia took him further.

He pulled aside a couple of Hebrew midwives and ordered them to kill any boy born to the Hebrews. Killing the Hebrew boys would prevent them from becoming men who could outnumber and overpower the Egyptians. But Shiphrah and Puah worshiped God and chose to obey Him rather than the King of Egypt.

When the king discovered that the boys were still alive, the midwives defended themselves by telling the king that Hebrew women were so vigorous that they delivered before the midwives could even get there. Was this true? The Bible does not tell us. We do know that God honored these women and their intent to protect the Hebrew babies.

God used the faithfulness of these two women to move His story of deliverance forward. If the midwives had gone along with the king's plan, the king wouldn't have had to escalate the situation further. However, once his plot with the midwives failed, Pharaoh took his rage a step further—he commanded his people to throw every Hebrew baby boy into the Nile. He was unthreatened by the daughters, even though he had just been outwitted by two women.

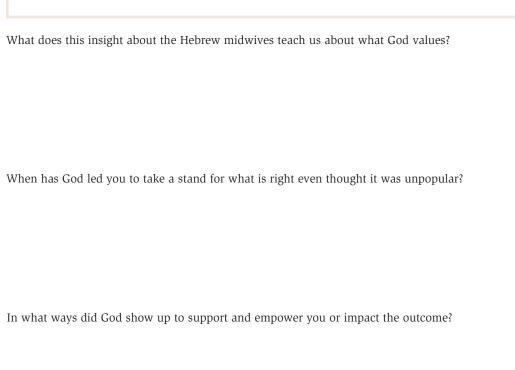
At Pharaoh's command, the Nile—the river that brought vitality and fertility to all of Egypt—would become a graveyard for Hebrew boys. And yet, even in this dark turn of events, God was at work. The king's order would lead to a crucial turn of events for one baby boy in particular: Moses. The edict ended up placing this baby exactly where he needed to be, at exactly the right moment, to fulfill the role God planned for him before time began.



REFLECTIONS

INSIGHTS

The book of Exodus was originally written in Hebrew. In Hebrew, the book is called Names because it's the first word in the book. In our English translation it reads, "These are the names." Names figure prominently in the story of Exodus. In this book, we first learn the personal name of God-Yahweh-when God discloses it to Moses. So it is not by accident that we never learn Pharoah's proper name, yet we know the name of two Hebrew midwives—Shiphrah and Puah.



EXODUS 2:1-10

MOSES'S BIRTH AND ADOPTION

Now a man from the family of Levi married a Levite woman. ² The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son; when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could no longer hide him, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with asphalt and pitch. She placed the child in it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. ⁴ Then his sister stood at a distance in order to see what would happen to him.

⁵ Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe at the Nile while her servant girls walked along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds, sent her slave girl, took it, ⁶ opened it, and saw him, the child—and there he was, a little boy, crying. She felt sorry for him and said, "This is one of the Hebrew boys."

⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Should I go and call a Hebrew woman who is nursing to nurse the boy for you?"

⁸ "Go," Pharaoh's daughter told her. So the girl went and called the boy's mother.

⁹ Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages." So the woman took the boy and nursed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

DAY

DIVINE COINCIDENCE

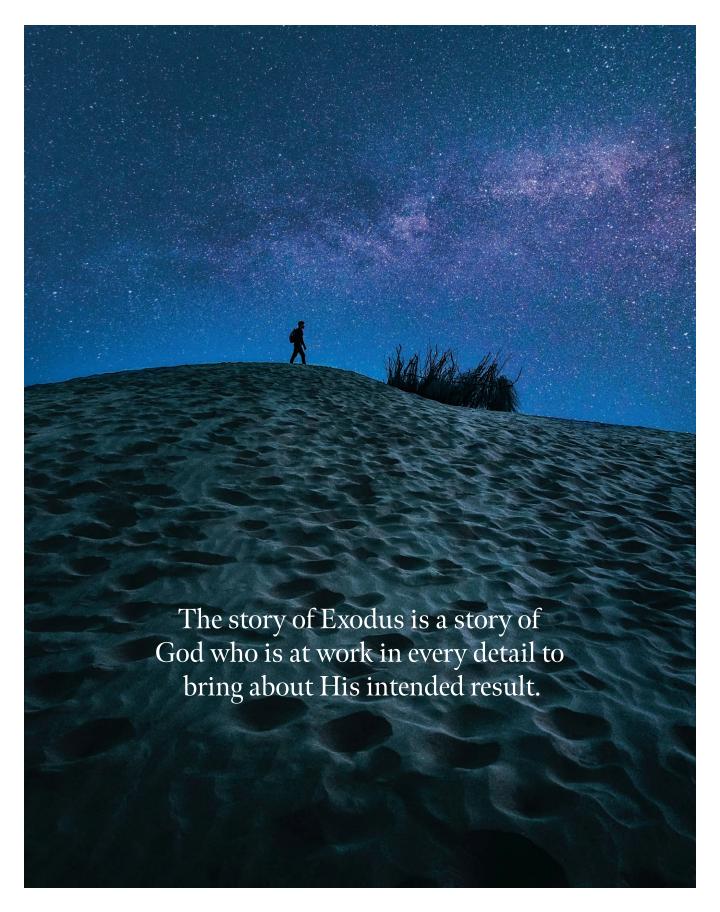
God continued to play the long game in this journey to deliverance. There were simply too many "coincidences" along the way to believe otherwise.

At the same time Egypt's homicidal king decreed that all Hebrew boys should be throw into the Nile, God brought together an ordinary couple who had a special son—the Bible tells us he was "beautiful." His mother hid him for as long as she could, then made a special basket to help him float on the Nile waters.

Was it a coincidence that this woman might know how to make such a basket to hide him among the reeds? Was it chance that she might also have a daughter, old enough to stand nearby and watch what was happening? And was it just happenstance that the first person to see the baby in the basket might be an Egyptian princess who would feel compassion for him and raise him as her own?

God carefully orchestrated the events of Moses's life to lead to this moment. He was delivered from the Nile, found by an Egyptian princess, and nursed through infancy by his own Hebrew mother in an almost-too-fantastic-to-be-true moment.

The experiences this Moses would have in the palace would prepare him for the years to come in a way that nobody could have imagined. The story of Exodus is a story of God who is at work in every detail to bring about His intended result.



| REFLECTIONS |
|---|
| What steps did God take to ensure that Moses survived Pharaoh's attempts to kill the Hebrew boys? |
| What seemingly "coincidental" events in your life has God used to bring you to the place He wants you to be? |
| What are some ways we might keep our eyes open to see God's faithfulness in the overlooked details of our lives? Give specific examples from the last year. |

EXODUS 2:11-22

MOSES IN MIDIAN

¹¹ Years later, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his own people and observed their forced labor. He saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his people. ¹² Looking all around and seeing no one, he struck the Egyptian dead and hid him in the sand. ¹³ The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you attacking your neighbor?"

¹⁴ "Who made you a commander and judge over us?" the man replied. "Are you planning to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?"

Then Moses became afraid and thought, "What I did is certainly known."

¹⁵When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian, and sat down by a well.

¹⁶ Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷ Then some shepherds arrived and drove them away, but Moses came to their rescue and watered their flock. ¹⁸ When they returned to their father Reuel, he asked, "Why have you come back so quickly today?"

¹⁹They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock."

²⁰ "So where is he?" he asked his daughters. "Why then did you leave the man behind? Invite him to eat dinner."

²¹ Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. ²² She gave birth to a son whom he named Gershom, for he said, "I have been a resident alien in a foreign land."

A A

THE DESERT

The book of Exodus covers many years. Some we experience in detail, but others pass by without a mention. Moses's time in the palace of the king is one such season.

Surrounded by power and opportunity, Moses would have been trained in all the wisdom of Egypt—the most educated, sophisticated culture of that time. He would've inherited an understanding of the Egyptians that would serve him well in his future dealings with Egypt.

At this point, he was forty years old.

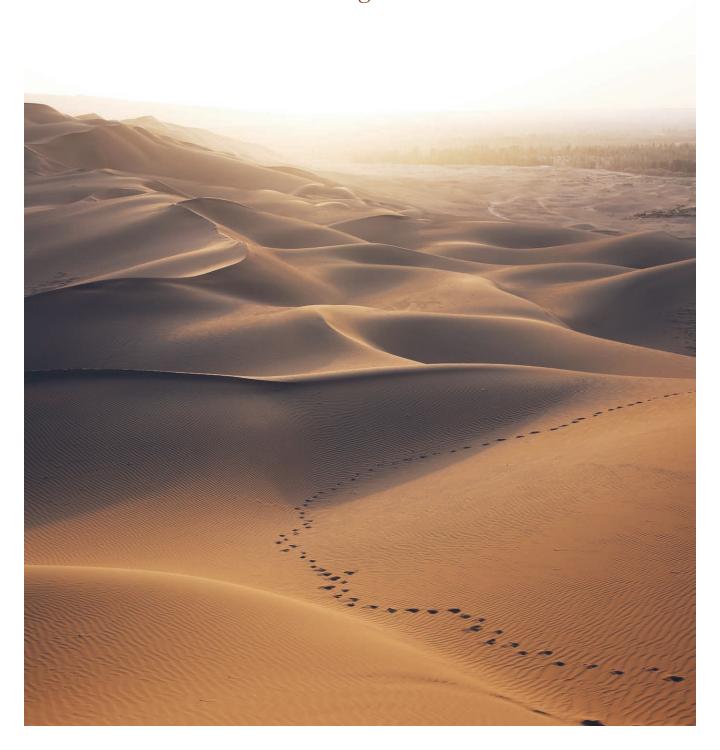
And it would take another forty years in a completely different atmosphere to complete his training—and to place him at another precise moment in history. We find him going out to visit his own people—and seeing how harshly the Egyptians were treating them.

In a moment of anger, this still immature leader lashed out. Seeing an Egyptian beating a fellow Hebrew, Moses looked to make sure nobody was watching, killed the Egyptian, and hid the body in the sand. Moses tried to become a deliverer before God made him into a deliverer. The next day, he learned that his secret was out. He was seen. Worse yet, the king heard of his actions, and tried to kill Moses.

Moses escaped to Midian, where he began life as a shepherd. It is here that he met Zipporah, who would become his wife, and Zipporah's father, Jethro, who would prove to be a wise advisor. Even as he fled to escape punishment, God still saw, and still moved on his behalf.

Moses continued to trust God. But he also knew he was not yet where he was supposed to be; he was, by his own admission, a foreigner in a foreign land, waiting for God to move.

Moses was waiting for God to move.



| REFLECTIONS |
|--|
| In these verses Moses is involved in two physical altercations. What is the difference between these two events? |
| |
| Moses had entered a period of waiting. Why can waiting be so hard on our souls? |
| |

How might God use delayed deliverance, like waiting or some time in a "desert,"

to actually build your faith?

Connecting the Story

Exodus is one of the central stories of the Bible. Many themes found in Exodus echo in other parts of Scripture. Here are a few from this week's reading. Consider looking them up and reading them for yourselves.

EXODUS 1:7

The Israelites increased in Egypt

GENESIS 15:5

God promised Abraham his descendants (the Israelites) would be too numerous to count

EXODUS 1:15-22

Pharaoh ordered all Hebrew boys to be killed

MATTHEW 2:13-15

Herod slaughtered children in an attempt to kill Jesus

EXODUS 2:3

Moses was placed in a basket in the Nile

GENESIS 6-8

The Hebrew word for "basket" is the same word for ark used in the story of Noah and the flood

EXODUS 2:15-21

Moses met his wife at a well

GENESIS 24

Isaac met his wife at a well JOHN 4:1-26 Jesus ministered to a woman at a well

EXODUS 2:23-25

 $^{23}\,\mathrm{After}\,\mathrm{a}\,\mathrm{long}\,\mathrm{time},$ the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor, they cried out, and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God. 24 God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the Israelites, and God knew. 5 DAY

GOD HEARD

Time didn't stand still for the Israelites while Moses was away.

They continued to be enslaved, year after year.

They cried out. They groaned in their slavery.

And their cries rose to God.

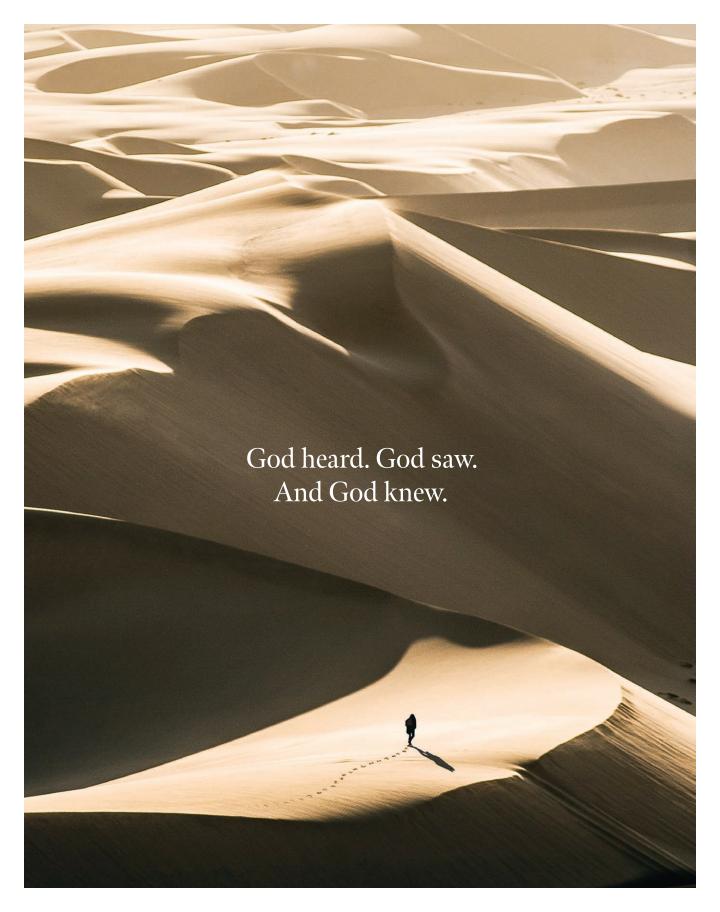
In the final few verses of Exodus 2, we hear directly from the main character of Exodus. God heard the cries of His people and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God heard, God saw, and God knew. He was about to send the Israelites the deliverer He had been preparing for them.

A few things are notable at this point in our story: First, the king who had been treating the Egyptians harshly had died. That means Moses would be able to return. Second, though, at this key turning point, there's no mention of Moses: only of God and of His covenant. Moses, after all, would not be a savior. He would be a human leader powerfully used by God.

God didn't choose Moses to lead His people to the Promised Land because of who Moses was; He chose Moses because of who He is: One who is faithful, One who never forgets, One who delivers on every promise He's ever made—even if it doesn't happen in the timeline we expect.

Eighty years had passed since Moses was a baby in a basket in the Nile.

In all those years, God wasn't just preparing Moses to be the leader he would become. He was continuing to weave a story of redemption and deliverance far beyond the Israelites for all of humanity.



| REFLECTIONS |
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| Review the chart on page 37. Which connection is the most interesting to you? |
| These verses reveal God's perspective on Israel's suffering. How might verses like these help us when we're tempted to believe that God doesn't care? |
| Think back through the reading this week, reviewing the key points. How would you summarize the Bible reading from this week in a sentence or two? |

PAUSE & LISTEN Spend some time reflecting over the week's reading.

After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor, and they cried out, and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God. God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the Israelites, and God knew. EXODUS 2:23-25



REFLECTION

Use these questions for personal reflection or group discussion on Exodus 1-2.

| What stuck out to you most in this week's reading? What surprised you? Confused you? |
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| What does this week's Scripture teach you about God and His character? |
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| What does this week's Scripture teach you about humanity and our need for grace? |
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| How does this week's Scripture point you to Jesus? |
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| What steps of faith and obedience is God asking you to take through these Scriptures? |
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| PRAY |
| Spend a few moments thanking God for the promises we have in Him. Ask that we could trust them even when our circumstances are trying. |