



feel the
WEIGHT

9 STUDIES FROM EXODUS
MITCHELTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Feel the **WEIGHT**

The God of Exodus is not to be taken lightly

Exodus - it's one of the most exciting books of the Bible. The stories are some of the most vivid, dramatic and action-packed in the whole Bible. Think of Israel's slavery in Egypt and Moses' amazing rescue from the river. Think of God appearing to Moses in a burning bush and sending him back to confront Pharaoh. The spectacular plagues on Egypt and the Passover for Israel. Crossing the Red Sea and seeing Pharaoh's army destroyed. Manna in the wilderness. The Ten Commandments. The Golden Calf. God's glory in the Tabernacle. This book has it all!

But while we're enjoying these huge stories, there's a question we need to ask: Beyond providing great stories, what was the point of it all? What was this spectacular stuff all for? When you read Exodus carefully, God himself tells us his real purpose. And it's not what you might expect. God tells us he did all of this so that Israel, Egypt and the whole world (that's us too!) would come to know one thing about him: This God is a heavyweight God. Don't take him lightly. The God of Exodus is worth taking more seriously than you ever have before. Hear how God himself puts it:

To Israel: *I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. **Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.***

Exodus 6:6-7

To Pharaoh: *Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, **so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth.** For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, **that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.***

Exodus 9:13-16

*I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. **The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.***

Exodus 14:17-18

The Hebrew word translated "glory" here more literally means "heaviness" or "weight." Like gold, where you know it's true worth only when you feel its weight. Like furniture when you can only tell it's solid and dependable when you try to move it. Like a barbell where you only realise your own limitations when you can't lift it. Exodus is a book where we get to feel the weight of God. See his true worth. See his solid dependability. Learn how crazy it is to take him lightly and treat him with disrespect.

Whether you already know God because you're following Jesus, or whether you're just starting to get to know him, our prayer should be that we'd all get know God more deeply through the book of Exodus. That we'd really feel the weight of who God is. These 9 weeks in Exodus will be a great opportunity to do that together.

Jeremy Wales
APRIL 2017

Fewer Questions, More Discussion

This year's growth group guides are a little different. If you've been part of an MPC growth group before, you'll know that our study guides have often had lots of pre-reading and cross referencing and background material. We've had feedback that sometimes the studies have been too long and too complex. (Though some people think the opposite!) Also, at times we've heard that the length of the studies means there's not much discussion on each question.

In this series we're trying to encourage more free flowing discussion, by asking fewer questions - 10 questions in each study. Your group meeting shouldn't be any shorter - we want you to tussle with the text, debate, cross-question and even argue. Vibrant discussions are great. We expect your group discussion should last from 45 minutes to an hour, with a time of prayer afterwards.

Maybe, your group will find the studies too short. If so, do your bit to contribute more to the discussion! Otherwise, have a longer time of prayer. (If that doesn't work, spend longer chatting over coffee together!) Please let us know how your group is going week by week.

Phil Campbell
APRIL 2017



WEEK 1 || *EXODUS 1-2*

THE ONE WHO IS FAITHFUL

Before we jump into Exodus, it's helpful to understand where we are in the biblical timeline. Essentially the whole Bible is the history of God's dealing with his world and his people. In the opening pages, in the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve's sin fractured their relationships with God and with the land. But God made promises that would bring these parties all back together, and he would bring that about through the family of a man named Abraham: the ancient nation of Israel.

KNOWING GOD FROM EXODUS

1. Summarise the original promises from God to Abraham in the sidebar.

Read Exodus 1:1-2:10

2. What promises is God beginning to fulfil by Exodus 1? Which promises haven't yet been fulfilled?

3. Pharaoh is intimidated by how fast the Israelites are increasing. How does he try to slow them down?

How successful is the policy? Why?

Read Exodus 2:11-25. Israel is in a desperate situation, but it looks like Moses is going to be the 'saviour' everyone has been hoping for.

4. How effective is Moses as a saviour figure for Israel from this chapter?
5. What's the real hope the Israelites have by the end of the chapter?
6. What do we learn about God's character from these chapters? What can we anticipate about how God will respond to Israel's slavery?

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Genesis 15:1-16

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."

Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

He also said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."

But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?"... As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. Then the Lord said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here..."

Even though it looked as if God had forgotten his people, God is faithful to his promises - in the midst of hardship, God had faithfully increased Israel's numbers (1:7, 9, 20), blessed those who had protected his people (1:19-20), and provided for his people. And he isn't going to forget them now!

KNOWING GOD IN JESUS

God's character never changes. His faithfulness is ultimately seen in what he has done for us in Jesus.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:20-22

7. What does it mean that all God's promises are 'yes' in Christ?

8. God promised to restore humanity's relationship to himself and the world by keeping a series of promises to Abraham. If ALL God's promises find their 'yes' in Jesus, how have even those promises been fulfilled in Jesus? (This might take some thought).

FEEL THE WEIGHT

9. Just like the Israelites, there are often times when we can feel God has forgotten us. Have you ever felt like God has forgotten you? When?

10. How does feeling the weight of what God has already done for us in Jesus help us when we're feeling abandoned or in desperate situations?