



LEADER'S GUIDE

Week 2: Exodus 5-12 **Exit Strategy**

September 25, 2016

As you begin this study, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what God is saying in the book of Exodus.

DAY 1: read Exodus chapter 5 through 7:6

1. ***When Moses and Aaron come to Pharaoh to tell him the God of Israel says to let the Israelites go to worship Him, what does Pharaoh say?*** (5:2)

He says "Who is the LORD that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."

What does he do? (5:6-9)

He tells the slave drivers and foremen to no longer supply the straw to make the bricks, but to require the same number of bricks each day; to make the work harder.

2. Notice the encounters in 5:10-21:

- The slave drivers with Israel – the slave drivers kept pressing the Israelites, they beat the Israelite foremen for not meeting the quota of bricks.
- Israel with Pharaoh – the foremen go to Pharaoh to lodge a complaint and he says they are lazy.
- Israel with Moses and Aaron – the foremen come to Moses and Aaron and accuse them of causing their problems with Pharaoh.

Pharaoh clearly resisted the appeals from God through Moses and Aaron to let the Israelites go. In what ways do we resist God's appeals for us to escape from our bondage to sin? Or in what ways do those who oppress us – boss, spouse, other persons – resist appeals to stop oppressing us?

3. ***God's promises to Moses and Israel are restated in 5:22-6:12 – write them down***

God tells Moses that Pharaoh will let Israel go because of God's mighty hand (6:1)

God made His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, He has heard Israel's groaning and He has remembered His covenant

I am the LORD

I will bring Israel out of Egypt

I will free Israel from slavery

I will redeem Israel

I will take Israel as my own people

Israel will know that I am the LORD their God

I will bring Israel to the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

4. In 6:26-7:6 – ***Who will be the spokesman?*** Aaron

Why? Moses said he stuttered; Aaron would be like his prophet

What does God say to Moses in 7:1? I have made you like God to Pharaoh

What does God tell Moses will happen? He tells Moses that He will harden Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh will not listen in spite of mighty signs and wonders until God lays His hand on Egypt and brings Israel out of Egypt; then Pharaoh will know that God is the LORD.

How do these divine promises reflect the character of God, or what characteristics of God are revealed in these promises? All knowing God, all powerful God, faithful God, the only God, the redemptive God, the adopting God

TO DIG DEEPER: Read Exodus chapters 7-12 – A Study of the 10 Plagues – as you read, **describe each plague God brought on the Egyptians.**

Water becoming blood (Nile River)	Boils
Frogs	Hail
Lice (or gnats)	Locusts
Flies	Darkness for 3 days
Livestock disease	Death of first born

1. Which plagues did not affect the Israelites themselves?

Some of the plagues affected only the Egyptians, not the Israelites – flies, livestock disease, hail, darkness, death to first born. God can certainly exact judgment on all sinners, but God can also distinguish between those whose hearts are hardened and those who are open to God’s saving power.

2. How do the plagues reveal God’s power over creation, a power more significant than the power of Pharaoh’s magicians who try to replicate some of the plagues?

Some of the plagues were replicated by Pharaoh’s magicians (blood in water, frogs) but others could not be replicated (lice). Some Bible scholars claim that the magicians used illusions or deceit rather than directly replicating what God had done.

3. How can the individual plagues be seen as direct attacks on the gods of Egypt? (Look up in a Bible handbook, Bible dictionary or Bible commentary about the gods of Egypt). Many, if not all, of the plagues can be seen as a direct attack on various Egyptian gods. For example, the god of the Nile River is targeted in the first plague. Likewise, the gods of various animals were attacked in several plagues, and the god of light was attacked in the ninth plague. The tenth plague was a judgment on Pharaoh (who was considered to be a god) and the whole of Egypt.

4. What did the Israelites (through Moses and Aaron) want from Pharaoh that he was not willing to grant them? The Israelites were seeking to leave Egypt and the difficult life of slavery that they endured at the hand of Pharaoh. Pharaoh didn’t want the Israelites to leave because the Israelite slavery was a significant benefit to the Egyptian economy. Yet it was more than escaping from something; it was also an escaping to do something – worshipping God (Exodus 7:16). In our lives too, deliverance and freedom is both from something and to something. We are delivered from the punishment of our sins and from our enslavement to our own desires in order to worship God and to work to build God’s kingdom.

5. Why did God bring these plagues on Egypt? (see Exodus 7:1-5; 7:16-17)

So the Egyptians will know that God is the LORD; as mighty acts of judgment; that Pharaoh will know that God is the LORD.

6. How were the plagues a response to what Pharaoh was thinking and saying? (see Exodus 5:2) The plagues were God’s response to Pharaoh’s hardened heart and his stubborn resistance to the pleas of Moses and Aaron to let the Israelites go. Exodus 5:2 indicates that Pharaoh did not know God and did not desire to obey God. Pharaoh’s attack on God led him to increase the burden on the Israelite slaves (Exodus 5:6-14). But the plagues were more than a response to a stubborn Pharaoh. Exodus 7 reveals that God brought these plagues as “miraculous signs and miracles,” as “mighty acts of judgment,” and a statement that God is Lord. In addition, God told the Israelites to make sure that their children and grandchildren knew about and remembered God’s display of power.

7. Pharaoh’s typical response to individual plagues was to harden his heart against the Israelites and against God. This was a result not only of Pharaoh’s recognition of the economic benefits of Israelite slavery, but also the personal stubbornness of the man himself. Pharaoh wanted to be in charge and would not acknowledge another power that might compete against him. Several times, Exodus reminds us that Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, even after seeing God’s power displayed in awesome ways. *When have our own hearts been hardened against God or when have we demonstrated our own stubbornness, despite clear evidence that God is in control?*

8. At a couple of points, Pharaoh seemed willing to compromise (Exodus 8:25; Exodus 9:27; Exodus 10:11) but later changed his mind. On occasion, Pharaoh’s response was to bargain or compromise with Moses and Aaron, probably to demonstrate his own power and control. After the plague of flies, Pharaoh said that Israel could go to offer sacrifices, but imposed limitations on where they could go. After the plague of hail, Pharaoh even said that he has sinned and would let the people go, but soon changed his

mind. After the plague of locusts, Pharaoh said that only the Israelite men could go into the desert to worship. After the plague of darkness, Pharaoh said that the Israelites could go but could not take their livestock. Each effort to compromise was met with resistance from Moses and Aaron, leading Pharaoh to renege on his promises.

In what ways do we try to bargain with God to escape God's punishment for our sins?

9. The plagues remind us that God's power rather than our own, is necessary for deliverance from bondage.

How has this lesson been revealed in your life?

On their own, the Israelites could not escape the slavery they endured in Egypt for more than 400 years. It took the miraculous power of God displayed in the ten horrible plagues to change Pharaoh's heart. God created the world and God has the power to use the forces of nature to rescue Israel. So too, we cannot escape the slavery of our own sin and the bondage of our own evil passions without the salvation power of God. God is both Creator and Redeemer.

DAY 2: read Exodus 12

1. Read Exodus 12:1-3 – ***describe the establishment of the Jewish Calendar by God.***

If you have a Study Bible, Bible handbook or Bible dictionary, look up Calendar or Jewish Calendar and write down what you find out about it. See the Calendar in the Historical Background materials.

2. Read Exodus 12:1-11 – ***write down the details of the Passover Feast.***

On the 10th day of the first month – take a male lamb without defect (sheep or goat).

Keep it until the 14th day – then all the people (households vs. 3) slaughter their lamb at twilight.

Use some of the blood and paint their door frames of their house.

Eat the meat the same night with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast; must be roasted, don't leave any until morning or burn it.

Be dressed with cloak tucked in your belt, sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand.

The Passover – the common verb for pass over is a-bhar or gabhar. The word used in Exodus is pasha, from the noun pesah. This is translated Passover. It also resembles the Egyptian word pesh which means "to spread wings over". This paints the picture of sheltering under the protection of the Most High (Psalm 91). (See also, Exodus 19:4.) In Exodus 12:23 it is clear that God did not merely pass over the houses sprinkled with blood, but He stood guard at the door, not allowing the destroyer entrance. The original Passover Feast was much simpler than the Seder meals of today.

Lamb, blemish-free, killed in a specific way, drained of blood which was applied to the door, roasted, not eaten raw or boiled, eaten with traveling clothes on and hurriedly. The lamb is not a part of modern Seders because since the destruction of the Temple, no sacrificial slaughtering is possible. Current meals have a lamb shank bone on the Seder plate to remind the people of the slain lamb that allowed for redemption. Today "the remembrance of redemption from death through the blood of the lamb is overshadowed by emphasis on the redemption from Egyptian slavery and thoughts of national liberty". (from Christ in the Passover, page 76 by Ceil and Moishe Rosen, 2006).

Bitter herbs are a reminder of hardships (Exodus 1:14). Bitterness also speaks to death and mourning. We gain life through death – we eat plants and animals that once had life. Their death enables us to be sustained. In the Seder of today, horseradish is the most common bitter herb. The meal is often begun though, using celery, lettuce or parsley, all considered bitter. It is dipped into salt water and eaten. The salt water symbolizes tears.

What other feast is celebrated at this time? For how many days? (Exodus 12:17-20)

The Feast of Unleavened Bread – for 7 days, from the morning of the 14th day to the 21st day.

Unleavened bread – no yeast. Yeast usually symbolizes sin in the Bible. They were asked to eat the first feast with unleavened bread, and subsequently to pass down the practice of clearing all yeast from their homes and to eat unleavened bread for 7 days. This has become a practice of tremendous house cleaning, refurbishing and preparation for the Feast. They sweep all yeast from their homes and prayers are offered. The matzo remains a staple for the entire week. Christians are told to "get rid of the old yeast" in 1 Corinthians 5:7.

Now read 1 Peter 1:19, Hebrew 4:15 and Hebrews 7:27 – ***how does Jesus fulfill the Passover?***

Christ is the lamb without blemish, without sin. He sacrificed for our sins, once for all, he offered himself.

3. According to Exodus 12:12-13, **why was the blood to be put on the door frames?**

As a sign so God will pass over their house and not kill their first born.

Read Leviticus 17:10-12 – **why does God declare blood sacred?**

The life of the creature is in the blood, the blood makes atonement for each person in the sacrificial system.

According to Hebrews 9:12-14 **why was it important for Jesus to shed His blood?**

Jesus, as the ultimate sacrifice, made atonement once for all by His own blood. It is His blood that cleanses us within, by His blood He obtained eternal redemption for us.

4. Exodus 12:14-20 – describes **the Feast of Unleavened Bread – note the details of this feast.**

A feast of 7 days, eat bread made without yeast from day 14-21 of the first month.

On the 1st day (the 14th day of the month) they are to remove all yeast from their house and hold a sacred assembly, no one is to do any work other than prepare food. They are to do this wherever they live.

On the 7th day (the 21st day of the month) they are to hold another sacred assembly – no one is to do any work other than to prepare food.

In 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, Paul talks about yeast – how does it affect the dough?

A little yeast works its way through all the dough

How does Paul apply this to our lives as Christians?

As Christians we are to celebrate Christ, our Passover Lamb, without yeast in our lives.

What specific things does he describe as yeast in our lives?

Particularly he describes malice and wickedness as yeast our lives – or any device of evil, including thoughts and actions with a disregard for justice, righteousness, truth, honor, virtue, and any perverseness.

What is the bread without yeast?

The bread of sincerity and truth

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are thought of collectively today as Passover. Even during the time of Jesus they were looked upon as one feast (see Matthew 26:17, Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:1). It was not celebrated during the 40 years in the wilderness. Exodus 12:25 says they are to observe this ceremony when they enter the Promised Land. Throughout Biblical history, there were times it was celebrated and other times when it seems to have been forgotten. Seder means “set order”. It is the ritual followed during the meal. Jews in Israel only have one Seder. Jews outside of Israel usually have two. This is to ensure that they observe the feast during the correct time of the moon. Being separated from Israel, they could not be certain when it was officially declared. Now that the moon phases are very well documented, it is still customary for two Seders; often congregations will have one with their families and another with the congregation. They consider it an observation, not a celebration.

As the Jews prepare their homes for Passover, all leavening (which is often used metaphorically as sin) is removed. **Do you use the season of Lent to allow God to “create in me a clean heart” (Psalm 51:10)? Did you ever give up something for the season of Lent as a sacrifice to the Lord? Was this giving up rather trivial or was it more significant? Why? Do you see parallels with that practice and the abstinence from leavened bread? Why or why not?**

Can we relate our Lent to the Passover? According to Rabbi Evan Moffic yes. Lent is 40 days in length as was the period Jesus withdrew to the desert to sacrifice and prepare for His ministry. Preparation is the purpose of Lent. Passover includes all the preparation for the meal itself. This prep is as important as the meal. The Jews are to prepare their homes by removing all leavening. They are to prepare their minds and souls to experience the Passover by spending time studying the Exodus and in self-reflection. Israel spent 40 years in the desert to prepare for experiencing redemption – a new life and new laws in the Promised Land. Lent prepares us to celebrate the resurrection which allows for the redemption of humanity.

5. What does Exodus 12:26-27 say Passover means?

It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spare their homes when He struck down the Egyptians.

DAY 3: read Exodus 12

1. Read Exodus 12:12-13 – what is God going to do?

Strike down the first-born of men and cattle of the Egyptians.

Why? As a judgment on all the gods of Egypt

Now read Exodus 12:29 – **what did God do?**

At midnight God struck down all the first-born in Egypt – from Pharaoh's son to the first-born of the prisoner and of all the livestock. There was not a house without someone dead!

2. What was the response of the Israelites? (Exodus 12:28, 50)

They worshipped God, did all the Lord commanded them.

3. What was the response of Pharaoh? (Exodus 12:30-32)

Wailing in grief, he summoned Moses and Aaron and told them to leave with Israel.

4. What was the response of the Egyptians? (Exodus 12:33-36)

The Egyptians urged the Israelites to hurry and leave, they were afraid they would all die, and they gave the Israelites whatever they asked for.

5. The final terrible plague finally broke through to Pharaoh and the Egyptians. As you think about your own exodus from slavery to sin, what broke through to you in a powerful way?

DAY 4: read Exodus 12

1. Read Exodus 12:37-41 – refer to the map from the Historical background materials – note on it what the text says about the travel route of the Israelites.

2. Approximately how many Israelites leave Egypt?

600,000 men plus women and children and livestock and flock (note that this is comparable to the current population of the Columbus metropolitan area).

What did they take with them?

Their dough with no yeast in the kneading troughs, clothing, silver and gold

3. In verse 38 – who else went with them?

Many other people – some probably Egyptians, some non-Hebrews who had married Hebrews

4. From verse 40, how many years were the Israelites in Egypt? 430 years

What did the Lord do?

To the very day, God brings Israel out of Egypt, He kept vigil to bring them out

DAY 5

1. Exodus 12:43-49 gives special regulations for the Passover. Write them down.

No foreigner – temporary or hire – to celebrate Passover unless circumcised

Whoever eats, all males in their house must be circumcised

Eat it inside one house per family – not take any meat outside

Do not break any bones of the lamb

The whole community of Israel is to celebrate Passover

From John 19:36 how does Jesus fulfill this?

None of his bones were broken

2. In verse 50, who did what the Lord commanded? All the Israelites

3. Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-33. Now compare the Passover feast (Exodus 12: 1-11 and 43-49) with communion. What conclusion(s) do you draw from these 2 commemorations?

In communion we celebrate Jesus body was given for us, His blood was shed as the new covenant – it commemorates the Lord's death.

In both commemorations, those who participate must come worthy; to examine yourself can be compared to circumcision; to come inappropriately is to be disciplined by Christ which can be compared to being cut off. Both commemorations are sacred and are to be done with the appropriate preparation and attitude.

4. **How does the celebration of the Lord's Supper help us to understand how we are delivered from our bondage to sin?** It took God Himself to deliver us, by the death of Jesus Christ whose blood redeems us from death and frees us from bondage to sin.

Just as God's power was used to free the Israelites, how does God's power free us?

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we are freed from life controlled by sin and raised to new life in the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:1-4).

How can this be applied to the things in our lives that enslave and entrap us, keeping us from growing and thriving in Christ?

DAY 6: read DeGroat, Chapter 4

(If you have the book Leaving Egypt, read chapter 4. If you do not have the book, consider how you might respond to these questions based on your own experiences and understanding.)

1. On page 59 DeGroat writes "The story of redemption, which is really the whole story of the Scriptures, is an excruciatingly long, tumultuous narrative full of resistance, battle, defeat, exile, reunion and rebellion – stretched out over centuries. Couldn't it be simpler somehow?" **Why is the way of trust both so difficult and so appealing?**

To acknowledge the truth of where you are is painful. Trust involves that the next step discloses itself in the discernment of God acting in the present moment – not a grand laid out plan for us to see. We are committed to our many Egypts from which we will be leaving over and over again.

2. **Ponder your life and some of the struggles you have experienced with sin. How does the deliverance of Israel at Passover aid you in your understanding of redemption? Do you struggle with the fact that it isn't simple? Why is leaving our own "Egypt", the things that ensnare us, so difficult? What helps in the struggle?**

On page 60, DeGroat writes, "The Exodus way is paved with roadblocks, detours and dead ends. Some obstacles – the Pharaohs we live with in an abusive spouse or boss, the external slavery in social or economic struggles – exist outside of us. Yet many obstacles exist within us as well."

3. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt for many years, and it is possible that they had gotten used to their situation. Likewise, trapped in our own "Egypt," we experience a loss of our true identity and become disconnected from God. Often we are unable to leave Egypt on our own because, as humans, we are victims of our sinful nature, uncontrollable circumstances and outside influences that seek to enslave us. We become powerless in our situation, discouraged from attempting change because of our cruel bondage. **Have you experienced a sense of powerlessness in your "Egypt"? How has this impacted your sense of value, worth, and significance? How do we get the courage to break from this "normalcy" and seek real deliverance from the power of sin?** (see *Leaving Egypt* chapter 2). We depend on God's grace as well as other people in our lives who help us through the difficult circumstances. As DeGroat writes (p. 63), "Our utter helplessness brings us to the point that we cry for help, confess our utter neediness, and reach out for the hand of our Rescuer."

On page 34 DeGroat writes "An honest look at ourselves reveals that our hearts are addicted to managing our pain and sin rather than really acknowledging and embracing them.... Pay attention to your very own Egypt and how it operated in your life." As we think about our lives, we can perhaps see this in times of depression, a sense of hopelessness, or chronic negativity toward people and situations. From page 41, "We all need a Moses – someone who's willing to wake us up to the larger invitation God offers of life, freedom, beauty, love, desire and goodness."

4. DeGroat seems to compare Israel's coping with their situation of slavery and our own coping with our life of bondage to sin. Instead of seeking escape, we cope with our sin, our enslavements, our entrapments. We look for ways to numb the pain; we seek emotional "bandaids." These bandaids can take the form of intense busyness, trying to constantly please people, insistently portraying success, or anything else that keeps the pain or weariness at bay. **How has this been evident in your life?** Some seek various self-help strategies, some turn to using alcohol or medications, and some lose themselves in church work, cell phones, computer games, etc. On page 39, DeGroat writes about how a friend realized

their addiction: “And then it dawned on my friend. ‘We’re addicts!’ he said. ‘Look at us. We’re anxious, angry, irritated, trying to find something to fill the void.’ He got it. My friend saw that ordinary things can do the same things psychologically and physiologically, on a smaller level, as severe addictions.”

5. The old hymn is sung: What can wash away my sin?
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
 What can make me whole again?
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Israel showed faith in God by following His directive to paint their doors with the blood of an unblemished lamb. ***Do you believe that blood is necessary, that Passover is necessary? Why?***