

The exodus is of huge significance to the history of Israel as God's chosen people. If you have time have a look at the frequency of reference as their history is recorded. (Joshua 24: 6-7, Psalms 77: 16-20, 78: 12-13, 106: 9-12, 136: 13-16, Isaiah 43: 16-17, 50: 2, Acts 7: 36, Hebrews 11: 29).

From captivity to liberty we can see God:-

intimately involved with his creation.

Intervenes in human history to liberate and establish the people Israel.

- ◆ We can see the outworking of his big plan, to restore the relationship with humanity and all of creation (salvation)?

Prayer

Who is like you among the gods, O Lord, glorious in holiness, awesome in splendour, performing great wonders? You raised your right hand, and the earth swallowed our enemies. With your unfailing love you lead the people you have redeemed. In your might, you guide them to your sacred home. The peoples hear and tremble.

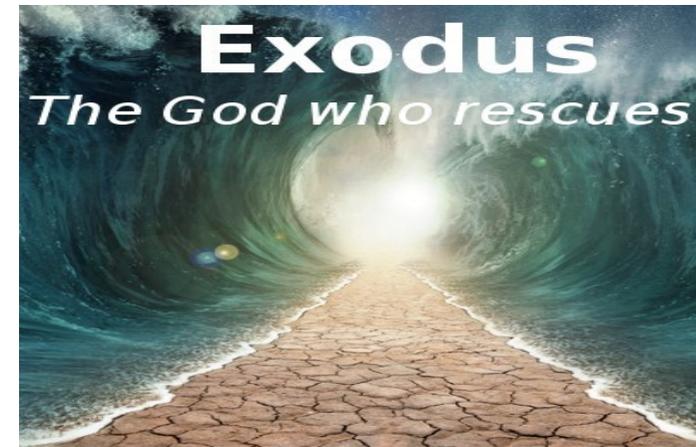
(Exodus 15: 11- 14^a NLT)

Thought to carry into the week ahead:-

The first question at the start of this study was about defining freedom. Have you noticed that the three things most people seem to crave, 'freedom', 'happiness' and 'peace of mind' are always obtained by giving them to someone else!

God's one big plan

Slavery & Exodus—unit 3



We're going to be looking in this study (unit 3) at release from captivity (slavery) into freedom (liberty). It's a theme which, in various guises, is repeated often through both old and new testaments. It's a theme too often repeated in life today. We can probably name a number of today's 'captivities' – addiction, abusive relationship, poverty, excessive parenting, and dictatorships to name a few; but 'freedoms' are more difficult to name. If you were today counselling someone who was a 'captive' and painting a verbal picture of what 'freedom' was, what would your picture contain?

Approximately 400 years have passed since Jacob with family and entourage arrived in Egypt. Their situation has changed from welcome guests to crushed slaves. Chapter one of Exodus details the reasons (especially note verse 8).

Read Exodus 2: 1 – 10

- ◆ What do you think Moses' mother had in mind when she cast him adrift on the river Nile?

- ◆ Looking through this reading and chapter one, can you see how God uses women to both grow the Israelites and thwart Pharaoh's efforts to suppress such growth.

Read Exodus 3:1 – 4:23 – The call of Moses

Try making a comparison of Moses' excuses and God's responses.

Moses' excuse	God's response
3: 11	3: 12
3: 13	3: 14-15
4: 1	4: 2-9
4: 10	4: 11-12
4: 13	4: 14-16

Take a moment to try and imagine yourself in Moses' position. One minute tending sheep, and the next he is in conversation with God about the future, not of sheep, but the whole chosen nation of Israel.

- ◆ Are we surprised by Moses' response?
- ◆ Can you identify with this?

Lets look now at the 10 plagues inflicted upon the Egyptians, (blood, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, firstborn). There's more going on here than a simple attempt to frighten Pharaoh into releasing the Israelites. The detailed account is contained within 7: 1 to 11: 10, so again too much to read through, but compare verse 5: 2 with 7: 5, 8: 10, and 9: 14.

- ◆ So what is happening?

See also 12: 12. God uses and controls nature for his purposes. The plagues are an account of how natural phenomena, near and dear to the Egyptians, are turned against them: the Nile was worshipped as a life-giving force but it became a vehicle of death; frogs had divine powers and were associated with fertility; darkness symbolises defeat of the sun & moon gods.

Read 7: 14 and 8: 15.

- ◆ What is God doing here? (see 9: 13 – 16 for the answer).

God emphasises that he is Lord of the whole earth and often works through men and women who do not know him and do not belong to the chosen people.

- ◆ God can and does produce good from bad. What examples are you personally aware of?

Read 12: 31 – 42

Note that the Israelites leave with all their possessions plus gold, silver and clothing from the Egyptians.

- ◆ Should they have been expecting this?

Read 13:17 – 14:31 crossing the sea

Note God's instructions to Moses (14: 1-4) compared to Pharaoh's view of the same episode (14: 5-9), and the impact of the outcome upon the Israelites (14: 29-31).