

Week 1 Can God deliver?

Exodus 1-2

Aim: To see that when God makes promises he can be trusted to deliver. While this is only the introduction it recalls a pattern of promises begun to be kept, and even under increasing threat. As disciples of Jesus we have the privilege of looking back on God's track record of willingness and ability to deliver what he promises and knowing confidently that what he has promised for life in Christ now, and in the future, he will deliver, whatever the temptation, suffering, hardship or other obstacle that would try and persuade us otherwise.

Getting Started:

What events do you remember surrounding the Exodus from Egypt?

A fairly general question to get people started, and it is not necessary to seek an exhaustive description of the events of the Exodus here – we'll work through them

Pray for understanding as we read God's word.

What is God saying?

You may feel familiar with the events described in Exodus, but let's take this opportunity to consider them more carefully and feel their weight.

Read Genesis 12:1-3 & 15:1-6

Read Exodus 1

Abram had a son Isaac, and he had a son Jacob (also called Israel). How has God kept his promises to date?

V1 Israel and his descendants were 70 in number when they went to Egypt. Now we're told in v7 they were 'exceedingly fruitful', 'multiplied greatly', 'increased in numbers', 'became so numerous' that 'the land was filled with them'.

There are numerous references to their numerous-ness! See also v9,10,12

Note in the table the episodes revealing God's promise being kept, and likewise their progress under threat

<i>Being kept</i>	<i>Under threat</i>
<p><i>1:1-7</i> <i>Answered above</i></p>	<p><i>1:8-14</i> <i>Pharoah's concerns in their numbers they could turn against them leads to enslaving, oppressing them with forced labour, making their lives bitter with harsh labour & working ruthlessly</i></p>
<p><i>1:12</i> <i>The more Pharoah oppressed them, the more they increased in number</i></p>	<p><i>1:15-16</i> <i>Pharoah enlists the midwives to kill baby Israelite boys</i></p>
<p><i>1:17-21</i> <i>The midwives don't do kill the boys</i> <i>They fear God, not Pharoah, even though Pharoah is visible, formidable presence,</i></p>	<p><i>1:22</i> <i>Pharoah enlists all Egyptians to kill baby Israelite boys</i></p>

Read Exodus 2:1-10

How does God meet the latest threat to fulfilling his promises?

He provides a baby boy(!). His mother hid him, then placed him in a basket (an ark) in the Nile. Pharoah's daughter noticed him and adopted him. So she is an instrument in God's hands to deliver the Israelites from Pharoah's enslavement

Describe the ironies you notice here in how God progresses his plan against such incredible threats?

Pharoah's rule is ignored right under his nose, by his daughter in his own house, and his household raises Moses, who will deliver Israel from Pharoah's enslavement

Moses' sister offers a nurse to Pharoah's daughter, the baby's mother, and the Pharaohs' daughter offers to pay her to nurse her own child, who has been spared the death decreed for him 😊

Moses grew up, fled Egypt, married and had a son such that a long time passed.

Read Exodus 2:23-25

What do these words reveal about Israel, and God, and what is unfolding? *Israel's slavery and anguish continued a very long time – from before Moses' birth to him as an adult and established in Midian a long time later. And they cried out – prayed to God – for him to help.*

God is living and personal. Notice how he 'hears', he 'remembers' (he didn't forget, of course), and 'he looked' and was 'concerned'. God plans on keeping his promises. A covenant is a legal word for a promise or contract. God made this back in Gen 12 and 15. Even now chs 1-2 show the beginning but much more – and greater is yet to come.

Why is God saying this?

What does God show us about his ability and willingness to deliver on his promises?

While a lot more is yet to unfold in Exodus, God starts the way he plans to continue, meeting increasing threats to his promises in order to keep them. Specifically, what started with a small number of people is growing numerically according to the promise, despite obstacles

Consider the experience of Israel in Egypt. How does their need point to ours, God's power to meet them in that need reflect how he does ours, and God raising up Moses point to him raising up Jesus?

Language and themes that get picked up in the OT and NT, of God's majesty directed in mercy to free enslaved people, to ransom them, to redeem them, first from Egypt, but ultimately from sin and death. Moses too is a deliverer from among God's people, as is Jesus, the one greater than Moses

Consider the time frame over which these events unfolded. From Genesis 12 to Exodus 1, and Exodus 1 till the end of chapter 2. How does this assist or challenge how you think about trusting God's promises to us now?

It's a long time, meaning they are suffering a long time, and God's timing is his own. It reminds us of '1000 years are like a day' (2 Peter 3:3-9), and that while suffering and hardship and hostility in this life are very real, it is not a sign that God is unwilling, or unable to keep the promises he has made to us for life in Christ now, and in the future. Instead, we may walk in confident trust based on his track record of successfully dealing with every threat to his promises, all in his good timing.

Prayer Starters

- Thank God that he remembers his promises
- Praise God this he is willing and able to deliver on his promises
- Ask God to enable us to trust him and his timing, even as we experience suffering now, in hope of his promises to come

Growing Growth Group Suggestion

Plan to call or catch up with someone from the group during the week to check in with how they're going. Or plan to pray for your group and let them know when you have done it.

Are there any people I should follow up this week?