

Week One: The God Who Knows His People

Exodus 1:1–5:21

Question

The book of Exodus begins with the statement that a new king arose over Egypt, and he did not know Joseph. What is the importance of being known? How is God making himself known?

Key Verse

“During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel – and God knew.”— Exodus 2:23-25

Session Introduction

For 400 years, the people of Israel were slaves in Egypt. We read of their affliction and groaning. While Pharaoh did not know Joseph, the Lord did. Not only did the Lord remember Joseph, but he remembered his covenantal promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel was his firstborn son. While Pharaoh did not care for the Israelites, the Lord did care for them. He heard their groaning, he cared about their cries, and he had a plan for their redemption.

To be known is to be loved. *“God saw the people of Israel and God knew”* (2:25). Just as a parent knows his or her child, so God knows his people. In knowing them, he loves them.

To be known is to be understood. *“Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God”* (2:23). The Lord heard the cries of his children, and he understood their pain. The Lord truly saw their desperate situation. He knew, he understood, and he cared for his people.

To be known is to be valued. *“And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”* (2:24). The Israelites were God’s chosen people. They were precious to him, his firstborn son. Because of their great value, the Lord will redeem his people from their slavery. He will fulfill his covenant.

Reading Plan: Week One

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Reading</i>	
1	Aug 23	Exodus 1:1-22	
2	Aug 24	Exodus 2:1-10	
3	Aug 25	Exodus 2:11-25	
4	Aug 26	Exodus 3:1-22	
5	Aug 27	Exodus 4:1-17	
6	Aug 28	Exodus 4:18-31	
7	Aug 29	Exodus 5:1-21	

Exodus: Leaving Egypt

Opening Prayer

Lord, you know us. You have always known us, always seen us, and always heard us. You know the deepest cries of our hearts. We thank you for your perfect care for us. Lead us now into a deeper knowing of you, into a deeper relationship with you, and into a deeper trust in your sovereign plan for our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord we pray, Amen.

Getting Started

1. If this is the first time your group has met or if you have new members, take some time to go around and introduce yourself. What are your hopes for joining this group and your study of the book of Exodus?
2. The first chapters of Exodus show how the providential working of the Lord will ultimately lead to his plan of salvation for the nation of Israel. How does it comfort you to know that God always has a plan of salvation for his people? Do you believe that he has a plan for your circumstances today?

Sinai: Meeting at the Mountain

Watch the Video

Video Notes

God knows his people. The book of Exodus begins with the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt. A new Pharaoh arose who did not know Joseph, and he was deeply threatened by the strength of the Israelite nation, so he set taskmasters over them and forced them into slavery. The nation of Israel went from being renowned throughout Egypt to being oppressed. While it seemed that their cries and misery were unnoticed and unheard, the Lord saw, heard, and knew all their affliction.

The Lord remembers his covenant. The Lord knows his people, loves his people, and has a plan for their deliverance. In his sovereignty, the Lord has always known the plan for his people. In Genesis 15:13, the Lord makes a covenant with Abraham and speaks these words: “*Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.*” Even before Joseph was born, the Lord knew his people would be in Egypt. The providential hand of the Lord will be seen all throughout the book of Exodus. He will be working on behalf of his people, working out his plan and purpose in his time.

The Lord loves his children. Throughout the book of Exodus, Yahweh is inviting the nation of Israel to know him. Just as the Pharaoh had forgotten Joseph and the history of Joseph in the land of Egypt, so the Hebrews had forgotten the Lord. When facing their afflictions, the people groaned to their taskmasters and cried out to Pharaoh instead of to the Lord.

Apart from the Lord, we are insecure. When Moses received his call from the Lord, he asked the question, “Who shall I say has sent me?” Graciously, the Lord would remind Moses and the people of his covenants, of his steadfast love, of his attributes, and of who they are to him – his firstborn son. This knowledge would strengthen Moses to the task of leadership.

Shema: Hearing God’s Covenant Word

Read Exodus 3:13-22: The Calling of Moses

3. Moses went from living in the palace of Pharaoh to living in a tent in the desert wilderness of Midian. He went from all the royal privileges to serving as a shepherd (a detestable occupation to the Egyptian people). How do you think both experiences shaped Moses to be the deliverer of his people? How has God used the experiences in your life to shape you and prepare you for your roles and ministries?

4. After beholding the burning bush and hearing the Lord's call, Moses offered five excuses as to why he was not the person for the job. What excuses of Moses most resonate with you? What do you think God wants you to know about your own insecurities?
5. Just as Moses made excuses when God called him, so we are prone to highlight our insecurities when God calls us. Thankfully, the Lord's call was not dependent on the character of Moses but on the character of God. How does God overcome Moses' excuses?
6. The Lord is sending Moses to his people. In sending them, he reveals his name to Moses: "I AM WHO I AM" (3:14). This is the personal and intimate name for God, which we say as Yahweh. How does knowing God's name help build confidence for Moses' calling?

Tabernacle: Journeying with Glory

7. Hebrews 4:15 says, *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."* Jesus took on human flesh so that he could not only know our temptations and tribulations but sympathize with us in them. How does that minister to you today?
 8. Do you have a sense of God's calling for your life? If not, what could be the first step toward discerning your call?
 9. What will be the main learning you will apply to your life this week?
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Prayer Requests

You may want to share prayer requests with one another. There's a Prayer & Praise Journal found on p. 46 where you can keep track of your group's requests. Have someone close in prayer or pray together as a group.

Closing Prayer