

The Platform

Set Apart



Explore week by week God's mission to rescue
us and bring us back to him

There is no better way to get to know God than to read the bible and hear for yourself how He has worked in peoples lives, working to restore our relationship with Him.

So we challenge you to open up your bibles, explore God's rescue mission for yourself.

There are four weeks between now and the next Platform, and we have designed this booklet specifically to help you explore with us the bible passages as we go along.

There are eight reflections/studies in each booklet. It's designed to make it easy for you, with only two studies each week between The Platforms. Here continues the adventure of God's relationship with man, how man progresses and deviates from God, but how God's grace is lavished on those who respond to Him.

If you have any questions or comments about the content of this booklet then please contact emily@c-y-m.org.uk, or alternatively speak to your youth leader at your local church.

Recap:

So last month's studies showed us how God chose to work in the least, He chose to bless the unlikely, all because they chose to respond to Him. They did nothing to deserve God's favour and attention; it is by His grace any of us are called to act for Him.

We left the studies with Joseph dying in Egypt having been reunited with his family and father. Their whole tribe had moved to Egypt and the Israelites had found favour with the Egyptian people because of Joseph.

But as we start our **brief** study of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua, we find that things have changed quite a bit for the Israelites....

Brief Synopsis of Books

- Exodus** A generation of people grow up who do not know God or what he did through Joseph. The Israelites are then made slaves and badly treated. They cry out to God. He sends them Moses. 10 Plagues. They escape across through the red Sea and end up at Mount Sinai. 10 Commandments.
- Leviticus** Israel is given the entire law of God and how they can be Holy and live in harmony. Remember when you read this that God's people are living in the wilderness after coming out of 400+ yrs of slavery. God tells them how to fend for and look after themselves, even down to how to keep their tent/house clean.
- Numbers** God tells Moses to take Israel into the promised land of Canaan. 12 spies. 2 good Joshua and Caleb but 10 bad who give bad report. Israel refuses to trust God and end up in the wilderness (desert of Zin) for forty years.
- Deuteronomy** Moses passes leadership onto Joshua but delivers three sermons to Israel and goes over all God's commandments.
- Joshua** Joshua leads Israel into promised land (Canaan). There's lots of fights. Israel wins. They divide up the land and live happily.

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua Overview

Slaves

Exodus starts by telling us that since the death of Joseph and the passing of several Pharaohs, the Israelites have grown hugely in number but have lost favour with Egypt, being thought of as a threat instead of a blessing. As a consequence, the Israelites are made to be slaves to the Egyptians, and are badly treated. But God hears their cries and comes to rescue them.

Saved

Exodus gives us the first tangible example of salvation through God's grace. God shows His power and might to the Egyptians through the ten plagues that He sends, a real battle of the gods of this world against the one true God. Pharaoh refuses to let them go free, so God brings judgment on Egypt by killing all living people and animals who were born first in their family. But, having sealed themselves by the blood of a lamb, God shows grace towards those who believe in Him by letting them live.

Set Free

The Israelites are then set free from slavery, are called to be God's people (marking themselves with the sign of circumcision), and are taken into the desert by Moses (through the Red Sea) towards the land God has promised to them for their home. God promises to be with His people, and this is shown through the cloud that appears at Mount Sinai where Moses talks with God. It is here that Moses is given the law. Having already been saved through God's grace, giving them what they don't deserve, (life), the Israelites are told that they are God's people, and that they should be holy because God is holy. They are to live as representations of what it means to live a life with the one true God, to live in obedience to Him, and to live under His rule and authority. To be a holy people, set apart for God.

Law

So Moses is given the "law" the means by which to be obedient, to live a holy life, to live as God wants them to live, for their safety and provision as much as God's glory. The Israelites have been slaves under a foreign ruler and so don't know what it means to be one of God's people anymore.

These are the commands and ways of life that will set them apart from all the other nations around them, and they are listed in Exodus, Leviticus (which teaches about the way to worship God), Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They cover the ten commandments, the command to love the lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, but also cover practical guidance about how to treat people who treat you badly or perhaps hurt a member of your family, cheat you, or murder. It covers what type of relationships are allowed, what things you can and cant eat, what festivals to celebrate, what things you touch that make you unclean or clean before God, and it also covers, how you can make atonement for breaking these laws (making you at one again with God – see Leviticus).

God with them

In addition to all this, God tells them that He will dwell with them, first in the tent of meeting, but then in the special place they build called the tabernacle. So He presides with His people, the first time since the garden of Eden. First salvation from death, second freedom from slavery, third being marked as God's chosen people, fourth God dwelling with them, and fifth, being told how to live as God wants them to – does this reflect anything else you know in the bible?

Failure

Unfortunately though, the Israelites keep failing. We are told in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers of the numerous ways that the Israelites frustrate and disobey God, and prove themselves to be an ungrateful people. And yet God still dwells with them, protects and provides for them. They show through all their mistakes that without God and His spirit, living fully in obedience to God is impossible, and has repercussions if we fail, pointing us to our need for Jesus through their failure – we can never reach God's standards, only through God's grace and Jesus can we live God's way.

Consequences

In Numbers, they see the repercussions of their doubt and lack of faith in God. They are told to go into the land God has promised them, and he will give it to them. But they doubt this, and send 12 spies in to see what their chances are. 10 of the 12 spies declare that they have no hope, and when the people say they will not go and claim the land God says He will give them, God reacts by banning their generation from ever getting to the promised land. So they wander in the desert for 40 years instead (God still stays with them). At the end of his life Moses reminds the people (through all that is written in Deuteronomy) of all God has done for them, reminds them of all that they have done, and urges them to live a life for God.

Promised Land

Joshua then takes over, and with courage and faith in God, the Israelites march into the promised land. Throughout the book of Joshua we see many battles take place as God brings judgment on the sinful nations around Israel. The Israelites are told not to have anything to do with the nations around them, in order to remain set apart and holy. At the end of the book of Joshua, the land is distributed between the 12 tribes, and Joshua again reminds the people, that they have a choice regarding who to follow, God or the gods of this world, but be warned if they don't follow the one true God, Yahweh.

But Why?

In all the events that take place, it is clear that the Israelites are a people set apart from all other nations. But for what purpose? To show God's saving power and glory through them and to bring judgment on those who fail to recognize it. Throughout each book, you will see that the people and nations around them have two ways to respond to God and the Israelites – as Jethro, Baalam and Rahab did, by recognizing the might and power of the God the Israelites serve, and choosing to obey and follow Him for themselves. Or responding as Pharaoh, the Midianites, Balak and so many others did, to choose to not recognize His power and authority, and stand against Him instead, to their ultimate doom and destruction.

Day One - God is a mighty God.

Read Exodus 3

Who did God say He was?

What do these names tell us about God?

What do 3 vs 5 – 10 tell us about God's character and how He chooses to act?

Note: God refers to Himself in two ways in this chapter, and throughout His relationship with His people. He repeatedly states "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob". This is a reminder to whoever He is speaking to regarding who He is, what He has done, and the promises He has made to them (see Genesis 12:1-3). He is not only declaring who He is, but establishing His might, His faithfulness and reminding them of their history and relationship with Him.

The other way that God refers to Himself in this chapter is in vs 14. This is the first time that God refers to Himself as the sacred Yahweh, "I am", a name that the Israelites used, but never spoke, with regards to God. But what is in a name? Well, the name for things in that culture was indicative of the named being's character, their power, and their authority. By calling Himself *I am*, He is re-establishing with His people His unchanging nature. He has been, He is, and He will always be. He is the Lord of all the earth. He is the creator God who was there at the beginning, and who will be there at the end.

Before God shows His saving power, and brings salvation and freedom for the Israelites, He wants them to know who will be responsible for all that happens. Chapter 3 vs 18-22 shows us that nothing will be a surprise to God in all that is to come. He knows all that will happen, and will use it all for His glory. His people will be released, through His mighty works (Exodus 6:1).

Compare 3:4 – 6, Moses response to God, with Genesis 22:1-2, 10-13, and Genesis 46:1-7.

What does this tell us about Moses' belief in God?

How do these reactions compare with that of Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1-2?

Read Exodus 5 – 6:12, and Chapter 7 – 12:42.

How do the Israelites respond to what God does through Moses and Aaron? Why do you think their attitude might have changed when the plagues came? In particular, note that the Israelites were not affected by the last 7 plagues.

How does Pharaoh respond to Moses and Aaron and ultimately to God, and why?

Why do you think God hardened the heart of Pharaoh? (Vs 7:3 – 5, 9:14-16)

Look at the actions of the Egyptian magicians in the first two plagues and their capability to copy God's mighty act, and then compare this with the other 7 plagues and their complete inability to repeat what God had done, or prevent it.

What does this tell us about God's power in comparison to the power of the gods of this world?

The beginning of Exodus, with the calling of Moses and the ten plagues, is a clear sign to us and to the Israelites of God's power, authority and might. He is the God that controls all things, the God that has promised great things, and delivers great things for those who believe in Him. He uses Pharaoh to show His might and His glory. So often we see this as a boastful egotistical thing, but actually God is showing mankind who He is, in an attempt to make them see He is the Lord of everything, to stop them from their bad behaviour. Through the 10 plagues on Egypt, many of the Egyptians became believers and learned to "fear" the Lord (hold him in high esteem, and recognise His power and authority). We are told in the Exodus (when they leave Egypt, Chapter 12:38) that many people went with them. God's actions were judgements on Egypt and a call to come to Him and believe in Him. (12:12)

God can and does work powerfully in your life and in the lives of others today. Do you see it? Do you want to see God work?

Prayer:

Lord, help us to see who you truly are, the Lord of all the earth. Help me to recognise your power and authority, not just in my own life, but actually in the whole earth. Help me not to keep making you small, and putting you in the box of my understanding, but help me to be ready to trust you, and to act with you, in all that you want to see done on this earth.

Day Two - A God who saves

Read Exodus 11 – 13:-16

What does God say He will do as the last and final plague on the Egyptians?

Why? (11:7)

Here we see God setting His people apart. It began with them not being inflicted with the other plagues, but now, He makes a clear distinction between His people and the Egyptians. He will save His people from judgement, death.

What are the Israelites told to do? (12: 1 – 11)

What does the lamb remind us of?

What does the blood of the lamb stop from happening?

Why does God tell them to eat with their cloak tucked into their belt, and their sandals on their feet, and to eat in a hurry?

What happens to all the other people? Is there a distinction made between people? If so, what is the distinction? Does it matter if you are rich or poor?

God killed the firstborn of each house as a judgement on Egypt for all that they were doing wrong against Him, and His people, for their failure to recognise who He was. Those that believed in Him and trusted Him were saved, through the death of the lamb, the mark of blood, and the eating of the lamb. They haven't done anything to deserve it, except carry out the instructions that God gave to Moses. God draws no distinction between rich and poor, kings or slaves, good people or bad people; only those who know and recognise His authority and those who don't.

What happens next? (Exodus 12:31-13:16)

When Pharaoh sees that all the people and animals born first in each family have died, he tells the Israelites to go. Through marking them with the blood of the lamb, God not only set His people apart and saved them from death but they were also given their freedom. This is the first tangible example of sacrifice and being saved that we are given, and it is a foretelling of all that Jesus does for us, and has done for the Israelites.

Read Matthew 26:17-30.

This is the account of the last supper, the last meal that Jesus has with His disciples before He dies. It is a Passover meal, as the Jews were instructed to carry out in remembrance of God's mighty act to save His people from slavery, and call them to be a people for Him.

Jesus is often referred to as “the lamb of God” (John 1:36, Revelation 5).

Thinking about how the lamb was used to save the people of Israel from death and set them free, what might this tell us about what Jesus' death accomplished?

Just as the Israelites were instructed to not only use the blood of the lamb on the doors, but to eat the lamb as well, what are we instructed to eat and drink in this passage, and why? What significance does eating this have?

By eating the lamb as well as using it for its blood, the Israelites were being obedient to God's instructions, and showing that they were joined with the lamb by eating it. In the same way, when we eat the bread at communion we are symbolically saying that we are united with Jesus in His death and that we share in the freedom He brings – freedom from all the things that we do that don't please God, freedom from the punishment for all those things, and freedom to live in relationship with God.

Why did God do all these things?

Read Deuteronomy 4:32-40

Prayer:

Lord, thank you that you are a God that wants to live in relationship with His people. Thank you that you mark everyone that believes in you Jesus, just as you marked the Israelites, and you save us from the punishment of all that we do wrong against God. Thank you that we have freedom when we live with you. Please help me to understand this more and more.

Day Three - God with them

**Read Exodus 33:11-23 and Leviticus 26:12-13, Exodus 29:42-46,
What do these passages teach us about God's relationship with His people?**

What does it tell us about God's awesome power?

**Read Exodus 40:34-38 and Numbers 9:15 - 23
What does this tell us about the relationship that the Israelites had with God?**

Why did they behave as they did (refer back to Exodus 33:12-23)?

For the first time since the Garden of Eden, God dwells with His people, in the form of a cloud, first in the tent of meeting and then in the specially constructed tabernacle. He not only has called them out from slavery, and set them apart as a holy nation, but He dwells with them, and Moses is even described as talking with God, face to face, as we would do with a friend. This is the same God that sent all the plagues, that parted the red sea, that provided them with food in the desert. This is the God that Moses could not even look at as he passed in Exodus 33, and yet, God dwelt with His people and talked with them, and instructed them how to live their lives, and where they should go.

Read John 14:15-17. Jesus promises that when He dies, the Holy Spirit will come and live within us if we believe in Jesus. What God does in these five books is a shadow of all that happened through Jesus. It points us to the final one who will completely save us, free us, and will allow God to dwell with us fully in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Do you know God living with you?

Read Deuteronomy 4:29-31. If we seek God with all we have, if we really want to know Him, then we will find Him, and He will not abandon us.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you that you are a God that wants to know His people, that wants to guide and direct and teach us. Lord help me to know more about the holy spirit, and to listen to what you want me to do in every day situations. Help me to listen and obey, and to go where you want me to go.

Day Four - God's way of life

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are filled with instructions from God about how the Israelites are to live, the types of food they can and can't eat, the way they should worship God and offer sacrifices so that they can still have God with them (God is such a holy God that He cannot be in the presence of things that go against who He is, and what He has designed this world and us for), how they are to relate with each other, how they deal with people who do things wrong, and many more life instructions.

But all of these instructions, and what God really wants from His people are summed up in various different passages.

Read Deuteronomy 11

What does God require from the Israelites?

Why does He expect them to keep His instructions? (Read Deut. 11:7-8, Leviticus 11:44 & 45)

Why does He give these commands? (Read Deut. 4:3-8)

What will be the result of keeping these commands? (Read Deut 11: 8 – 15, 22 – 25, Joshua 1:7, Deut 7:11-15)

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-11, 10:12-13, 11:13

What is the main focus of all the commands and laws that God gives the Israelites?

What does He really want from them?

What warning do we find in Deuteronomy 28:15-19?

Read Leviticus 26:3 – 13.

What does living God's way result in?

What does God want for His people? Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

What lessons can we learn for our own lives here, about living God's way?

God has called His people out from slavery, and set them free. But what does freedom mean? Free to be exactly the same as everyone else? No. God wants more for His people than that. He gives them instructions on how to live, as an act of worship to Him.

The reason why He wants the Israelites to obey His commands is not because He is a dictator, just wanting to boss them around. But because He wants them to live the best life they can, and that means doing it God's way. He knows us, and knows what we need, what is bad for us, and what will be good for us. Therefore, why wouldn't we want to follow the maker's instruction manual, especially one who has already done tremendous awesome things for us.

As a response to all God has already done for them, He asks that they live a life of obedience to Him – it's in their own best interests. Living God's way means recognising who God is, His awesome power and authority, and means giving recognition to all He has already done, and having faith in all that He will continue to do. Living His way, according to the maker's instruction manual can only result in good things, God's blessing. The essence to all His commands are to love Him with all they have, and if that is the case, the rest will fall into place.

But there is also a warning: if you don't live according to God's rules, then there will be repercussions. If the essence of God's commands is to love Him, then if you love Him, you will want to live as He wants. And if you don't manage that, and don't atone for what you have done (making yourself at-one with God), then you are saying that you don't really love Him, nor think He is the awesome, all powerful God who did all those tremendous things for you. God cannot live with people who think and behave like that, and there are things that happen as a consequence.

Prayer:

Lord thank you that you know how each of us are made, and you know exactly the right things for us. Help me to put my words into actions, and to let my actions speak of how I feel about you, and who I think you are. Forgive me when I get it so wrong, but help me to know that Jesus has dealt with all my mistakes, and I have a new chance every day.

Day Five - God's chosen people, an example for everyone around them

Read Deuteronomy 26:16-19, Exodus 19:4-6

Who are the Israelites to God?

Read Leviticus 10:10-11, Leviticus 11:44-45, Leviticus 18:1-5, Exodus 20:1-17.

How are the Israelites supposed to be different from everyone else?

Read Exodus 20:1-2.

What is the status of the Israelites ie. what has God already done for them, BEFORE they are given the 10 commandments?

Read Exodus 19:4-6 again.

What did priests do, and therefore what is Israel's role in the world?

Read Deuteronomy 32:3-4, and Exodus 34:10-14.

What do these passages tell us about how God is using Israel amongst the nations around them?

God lavishes His grace on the Israelites, and saves them from Egypt, calling them out from slavery to be something different, something different for Him.

Israel was to live a life for God, according to His instructions, to live a holy life, so that the other nations could see the stark difference between a life with God and a life without God. They were a model nation that would encourage other nations to want to come under God's rule, a nation through which other people could see God's power, and learn to walk His ways. They were to invite those who weren't originally Jews in, and make atonement for them (make them at one with God), just as the priests were asked to do for the people.

They were to live holy lives, because God is holy. But, they failed.

Read Numbers 32:11-13.

The Israelites failed to do as God commanded, the most serious being they failed to believe God could give them success if they went into battle and attacked the promised land. So God made them wander in the desert for 40 years.

So if they failed, and if God knew they were going to fail, and continue to repeatedly, why did God give them the law?

Well, to show other people around them what it was like to live a life with God, but most importantly to show the people around them and to learn themselves that it is impossible to live as God intends without His spirit to help them.

Ultimately, they were always going to fail, but that does not stop the laws and commandments given to them from being a vital part in God's plan. Because the instructions were never there as a means of salvation. At the beginning of Exodus 20 God first tells them they are a saved people, and then, only after that, does He give them the ten commandments. The law is there to show the Israelites, and to show us, how badly we live as God wants us to live, and therefore reveals to us our need for someone to save us, ie. the law points us to our need for Jesus.

How many of the ten commandments have you obeyed?

Why should we as Christians want to obey the ten commandments? Read James 2:14-18, Romans 12:1.

Do you think your life tells people around you what a life with God looks like? If not, why not?

Read 1 Peter 1:13-2:10.

Are we called to do the same things as Israel? What are they?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to live a life that reflects who you are and how important you are to me. Help me to know what you want me to do to show that to the people around me. Thank you so much that even though I muck up so many times, it doesn't matter because if I believe in Jesus you have already saved me. But help me to try to live in a way that pleases you.

Day Six - Looking in from the outside.

So Israel were called to be a people that represented what life was like with the one true God, and bring judgement on those that failed to recognise Him and His authority. But how did the people around them respond?

Read Exodus 5:1-3

What were Pharaoh and the Egyptians' response to God?

Read Exodus 18:9-12, Numbers 23:18-24, Joshua 2:1-24, Exodus 8:18-19, 9:20

Who did these people see God as?

What were these people's responses to God?

Read Deut. 8:19-20, Deut. 4:3-4, Leviticus 26:21

What is the result of not recognising who God is, and even worshipping other gods?

Read Deut 7:11-15, Joshua 1:3-9, Exodus 6:1-9.

What is the result of recognising who God is?

How do you respond to God? Do you recognise Him as Rahab, Jethro and Baalam did?

Read Deuteronomy 4:32-40 as a reminder of who God is, and what Israel and in turn Christians are called to believe in and do.

Prayer:

Lord help me to see you as you really are, help me to make decisions every day that will honour you. Help me to live a life that shows people who you are, and give me the words to say when they ask me about you.

Day Seven - A warning

**Read Deuteronomy 4:9, Deut 6: 13-19, Leviticus 18:24-28, Exodus 20:5-7,
What is the warning that is given in these passages?**

Read Deuteronomy 9:4-6.

What does this tell us about Israel and then tell us about God?

Why do the people have to be destroyed?

Read Numbers 32:11-13.

What is the Israelites crime? What did they do wrong? (Read Deuteronomy 1:19 - 46)

How does God punish disobedience from the Israelites?

How is this different to what God says in the other passages, and what does this then show us about God's character?

Read Deuteronomy 4:25-31, Leviticus 26:40-45

What hope does these passages give us?

God gives the Israelites a warning. He will not tolerate His people behaving as the other nations behave, and if they do so, then they will no longer have His blessing, and all the good things that come from living a life with God. Sounds harsh? Well, imagine you are starving hungry and just want food. There's a man you know who cooks the best meals ever. So you go to him. Now he has some rules about how you eat in his

restaurant. But you don't want to keep to them. So instead, you decide to do what you want to do, and as a consequence everything you do ends up being offensive to this man, and goes against all the good food he has just given you. Why should he continue to let you stay, and what's more keep giving you the good food? He doesn't does he. And it's the same with God.

He gives a warning to His people, that He is a holy God and they are to be a holy people, but if they can't manage that, then there will be repercussions for them.

Israel were not just an example of what a life with God could be like, but they were also an active example of the repercussions if you failed to live as God wanted you to, both within their own failings, but also through the way they destroyed the other nations that set themselves against God.

We saw in the last study that God judges and deals with people harshly if they don't respond to Him, and part of Israel's role was to show that to the people around them, but also to learn it for themselves.

The last passages in this study though give us hope. We see that the Israelites won't be punished forever. If they turn to God and seek forgiveness then He will give it to them.

He gives a warning to His people, that He is a holy God and they are to be a holy people, but if they can't manage that, then there will be repercussions for them.

The Israelites failed to do as God commanded, the most serious being they failed to believe God could give them success if they went into battle and attacked the promised land. So God made them wander in the desert for 40 years.

But the last couple of passages give us hope. God wants to be with His people, and will forgive them if they repent.

Prayer:

Lord thank you for always being willing to forgive us. I am sorry that I don't always live as you want me to. Help me to recognise this warning, that you are a God who loves us, but who will let us live with the consequences of what I do. Help me to recognise that, and look for the ways that you will teach me through disciplining me.

Day Eight - Choices

Read Joshua Chapters 23, 24:1-27.

Joshua is reminding the Israelites just before he dies, of all that God has done for them. And he concludes by offering them a choice.

That day they must choose who they are going to follow, God or the gods of this world. The Israelites know, and have been reminded of the consequences of not choosing God.

Read Deuteronomy 11:26-32 and 30:19-20

What are the results of choosing God?

What are the results of not choosing God?

What things in your life do you think you place above God? X-box, friends, family, celebrities, money, cars, having a good time etc... None of them are wrong in essence, but do they stop you from letting God be God of all your life. Do they push God out, and you prioritise other things instead?

**Choose today, who you are going to serve:
The God of the bible, or the gods of this world?**

To give you something to aim for, each month at the back of the bible study booklet there is going to be 8 questions related to the 8 bible studies.

If you complete the questions and bring this sheet with you to the next Platform then there'll be a free goodie upon arrival!

Happy answering, and hopefully happy munching!

Name:

Age:

1) Why did God harden the heart of Pharaoh?

2) What stopped the Israelites from dying in the plague that killed all the first born people?

3) What appeared over the tent of meeting and tabernacle when God was present?

4) What is the main focus of all the commands and laws that God gives the Israelites?

5) Why were the Israelites supposed to live a holy life?

6) Name two people that didn't belong to Israel that recognised who God was by how He cared for and provided for the Israelites.

7) Why do the Israelites wander in the desert for 40 years?

8) What choice do Moses and Joshua give the Israelites?