



# 9

## The Exodus from Egypt

### Key Themes

- God faithfully provides for the needs of His people.
- God is faithful to keep His promises.

### Key Passages

- Genesis 15:13–16; Exodus 3:19–22, 12:31–42, 13:17–14:31

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the fulfillment of the promises God made hundreds of years earlier to free His people from Egypt.
- Describe examples of God's faithfulness in providing for the Israelites during the Exodus.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

Write on the board, "Who parted the Red Sea?"

Students will use bookmarks to mark Genesis 15:13; Exodus 3:19, 12:31, 14:5, 15:23, 16:2, and 17:1 in their Bibles.



### Studying God's Word

page 4

Moses led the people from Egypt fulfilling the promise to Abraham made over 400 years earlier. The Israelites immediately doubted God when the Egyptian army pursued them. God rescued them by the Red Sea passage. Their complaints continued despite God's constant faithfulness to provide for all of their needs.

Study the Prepare to Share section.

Go Before the Throne.



### Activity: Complaints!

page 8

Students will look at the passages that describe the complaints the Israelites leveled against Moses and God. In spite of the constant miracles and provisions from God's mighty hand, the people cried out against what they perceived as hopeless situations.

Print one Complaints! worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.



# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

To prepare for the lesson, read and meditate on the following passages: Genesis 15:13–14; Exodus 3:19–22, 14:5–31, 16:2–3, 16:11–12, 17:3–6.

Nearly 500 years before the Exodus, God told Abraham that his descendants would go into slavery and then “come out with great possessions” (Genesis 15:14). Following the final plague on Egypt—the death of the firstborn all across Egypt—Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites go. When this huge group of former slaves (some estimate more than 2 million) left, these words came true as they plundered the Egyptians, taking “articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing” (Exodus 12:35).

God took them along a route through the wilderness by the Red Sea. And He went before them “by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night” (Exodus 13:21).

As they approached the sea, Pharaoh came after them. With the large Egyptian army in pursuit, the Israelites became afraid and began to complain to Moses: “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness” (Exodus 14:11–12).

With Israel fearful for their lives and holding God to blame, God showed His faithfulness and provided them with safety. He parted the sea and they crossed on dry ground (Exodus 14:21–22) with the Egyptians drowning in pursuit. God showed Himself faithful and His name was exalted (Exodus 14:30–31). Israel saw God’s amazing power and faithfulness.

The departure of Israel out of Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea is one of the most dramatic events in all of the Bible; the biblical writers repeatedly refer to it as the most significant sign of God’s love for Israel. A helpless slave people had been delivered from their enemies by their powerful Redeemer God. They celebrated their victory with a song of praise (Exodus 15:1–2):

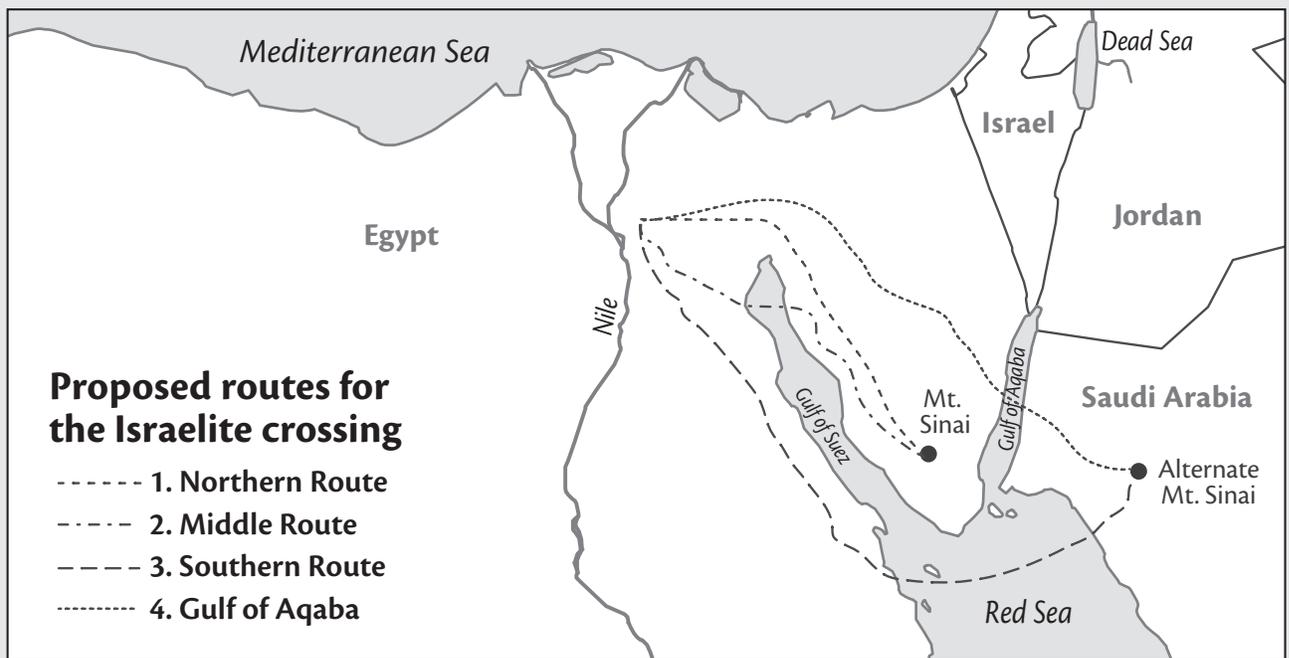
I will sing to the Lord  
For He has triumphed gloriously!  
The horse and its rider  
He has thrown into the sea!  
The Lord is my strength and song,  
And He has become my salvation.  
He is my God, and I will praise Him;  
My father’s God, and I will exalt Him.

## APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

For many years scholars have disagreed over the exact location of the Israelites’ crossing, and thus the site of the drowning of Pharaoh’s army. Four routes for the Exodus have been proposed and continue to be debated. Keep in mind that the crossing of the Israelites is not in question here—just the exact location. God’s Word reveals this historical event—and we believe it! (See next page for a map of the four proposed routes.)

1. Some believe that the Israelites took a northern route and crossed a shallow lake north of the Red Sea—near either Lake Timsah or one of the Bitter Lakes. The theory is that during the time of the Exodus—nearly 3,500 years ago—there was much more water in this area than there is today.
2. Other scholars prefer a middle route, putting the crossing of the Israelites through the Gulf of Suez. The Gulf of Suez is quite shallow, with an average depth of 40 feet, making a passing here quite possible.
3. Some prefer a far-south crossing, below the Sinai Peninsula, across the Red Sea proper. This would take considerably more time for the Israelites to travel as they fled the Egyptians, and the underwater topography of the Red Sea would be prohibitive for a crossing here, being up to 300 feet deep.
4. One researcher has proposed that the crossing was actually at the Gulf of Aqaba, and that the Israelites crossed the Sinai Peninsula while the Egyptian armies were chasing them, which seems a bit difficult given the time it would take to move more than 2 million people that far.

While we may not know what exact route the Israelites took during the Exodus, or the exact body of water they crossed, we stand on the authority of God’s Word as a true record of history. Archaeological findings are sparse, extra-biblical historical records are incomplete, and the topography has changed much over the years. Although we don’t know for sure where the crossing was, we know it was a monumental event demonstrating God’s omnipotence and glory. One author of several works on biblical history offers this perspective: “The crossing of Israel . . . cannot be explained as a wading through a swamp. It required a mighty act of God, an act so significant both in scope and meaning that forever after in Israel’s history it was the paradigm against which all of his redemptive and saving work was measured” (Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1987, p. 66).



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After many decades of slavery to the Egyptian Pharaohs, during which time the Israelites were subjected to backbreaking labor and unbearable horrors, God saw the people’s distress and sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message: “Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness” (Exodus 7:16). But despite numerous warnings, Pharaoh refused to heed God’s command. God then sent upon Egypt ten devastating plagues, afflicting them and destroying everything from their livestock to their crops.

The final plague hit at midnight on the 15th of Nissan as all the firstborn in the land of Egypt began to die, including the firstborn of Pharaoh himself, exactly as Moses had warned (Exodus 12:29). However, God had instructed the Israelites how they would avoid the final plague:

Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you (Exodus 12:21–23).

Thus, the Children of Israel were spared as God

“passed over” their homes—hence the name of the holiday Jews still celebrate today—Passover.

In the New Testament we see the Lord’s Supper at the heart of the Passover meal. This connection explains the importance of both the first Passover in Egypt and the Passover Jesus Himself presided over (Matthew 26:17–29). The meaning is significant and poignant. Jesus Christ is Himself the Passover Lamb, offered up for the redemption and deliverance of His people (1 Corinthians 5:7), the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The bread and wine speak of His death, and of the New Covenant it ratifies, reconciling God and man. Jesus said “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25), telling His disciples that the Passover was fulfilled in Him. Until He comes again (Luke 22:18; 1 Corinthians 11:26), we are to remember the significance of what He has done for us.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Thank you, Lord, that you are faithful to provide, protect, guide, and comfort in all situations. Help me to trust confidently in you and your promises whatever the circumstances. Please Lord, open the minds of the students to understand and trust you better—to begin to see that you will provide according to your Word and that you are honored when we turn to you in prayer for our needs rather than complaining and whining.

## Review

In our last lesson we looked at the plagues that God brought on Egypt in preparation for the Exodus of the Israelites from the period of bondage. God had promised Abraham that although his descendants would be in bondage, after 400 years they would be delivered to inherit the Promised Land.

- ? How did we see God demonstrate His power over nature? *Through the ten plagues, God showed His control over every aspect of nature.*
- ? How did we see God demonstrate His power over mankind? *God knew that Pharaoh would reject His commands, and God hardened Pharaoh's heart and ensured the outcome that accomplished His will.*
- ? How did we see God demonstrate His power over the false gods of the Egyptians?

*Each of the plagues was aimed at a deity of the Egyptians who was supposed to protect the nation from such calamity. God demonstrated that He is the one true God who alone is to be worshipped.*

In instituting the Passover, God called the Israelites to kill and eat a lamb, wiping the blood on the doorposts of the house so that God might pass over the house and not kill the firstborn. That imagery is a foreshadowing of Christ's work on the Cross. He offered Himself as a lamb without spot to pay for the sins of His people that God would not judge them for their sin. Jesus is our Passover Lamb, and we look to His shed blood as a symbol of our safety from God's wrath against sin.



► Write on the board, "Who parted the Red Sea?"



## Studying God's Word

### READ THE WORD

Let's refresh our minds about the promises God had made concerning the Exodus. We are going to look at three passages and then examine their similarities. I need three people to read the following passages: Genesis 15:13–16; Exodus 3:19–22; and Exodus 12:33–36. *Have three people read the passages aloud.*

Genesis 15:13–16;  
Exodus 3:19–22,  
12:33–36

### EXAMINE THE WORD

#### Observe the Text

*Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.*

- ? **Who are these promises being made to?** *To Abraham and Moses, but ultimately to the Israelites*
- ? **What did God tell Abram about his descendants in Genesis 15:13?** *They will be strangers in a land that is not theirs; they will serve the people in that land; they will be there for 400 years.*

► Students should turn to page 65 in their Student Guides.

- ? **What are some things God promised Moses in Exodus 3:19–20?** *Let the students discuss. Answers should include: the king of Egypt will not let them go; God will stretch out His hand against Egypt; Abram's descendants will find favor; when the people leave Egypt they will leave with riches of silver, gold, and clothing.*
- ? **How were God's promises fulfilled In Exodus 12:33–36?** *The Egyptians gave their wealth to the Israelites who had found favor with them.*
- ? **What common ideas are present in these passages?** *The promise of release from bondage; the promise of plunder taken from the Egyptians and favor during the release; a promise of God's punishment for the oppressors*
- ? **How much time passed between the promise to Abraham and the Exodus?** *About 430 years had passed since the promise to Abraham.*
- ? **What does the passage tell us about God?** *God knows the future, controls the future, and is faithful to fulfill His promises.*

## Discover the Truth

It is clear from these passages that God had a plan in place to make a great nation through Abraham, send his descendants into bondage, and free them in a miraculous way. Not only would they be released, but they would find favor in the eyes of their oppressors and be given riches and clothing as they left.

God was demonstrating His faithfulness to His promises. He had demonstrated His power over nature in the plagues and His power over his creatures as he directed the heart of Pharaoh and had the Egyptians give their riches to the departing Israelites.

Throughout Scripture, this event is seen as a major milestone that the Israelites would look back on to be reminded of the faithfulness of God.



FAITHFUL

## READ THE WORD

We are going to read the account of the Exodus from Egypt and the Red Sea crossing next. Let's read Exodus 12:31–42 together and then we'll look at the crossing. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Exodus 12:31–42

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? **What did Pharaoh allow the Israelites to do?** *To leave Egypt with their flocks and herds.*
- ? **Why did the Egyptians want the Israelites to leave?** *Because they were afraid God would kill everyone if they stayed.*
- ? **What did the Israelites take with them as they left Egypt?** *Bread dough, kneading bowls, and the clothing they were wearing, as well as silver, gold, and clothing from the Egyptians.*

- ? **How did the Israelites find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians?** *God gave them favor—God caused the Egyptians to give their possessions to the Israelites.*
- ? **Are there any figures of speech in the text?** *The mention of only the men in the numbering is a figure of speech. This seems to be a part of Hebrew thought as, even in the Gospels, the groups following Jesus were counted by the number of men.*
- ? **How many people left Egypt?** *The text does not say.*
- ? **How many men left?** *600,000—adding the number of women and children, there may have been 2 million people leaving Egypt.*
- ? **Besides the men, who was included in the procession?** *Children and women as well as a “mixed multitude” including non-Israelites, and also an abundance of livestock.*

## Discover the Truth

God had brought His plan to fruition—the Israelites were free to leave and He had caused the Egyptians to give them their riches. The Israelites had been freed from their bondage and they held that night as a solemn time of observing what God had done for them.



## READ THE WORD

Exodus 13:17–14:31

Now, let's read Exodus 13:17–14:31 together and look at the crossing of the Red Sea. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? **Who can summarize what we just read in about five sentences?** *The Israelites left Egypt, taking the bones of Joseph, and were led toward the Red Sea. God led them in the form of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. God caused Pharaoh to pursue the Israelites so that they were trapped and doubted God's providence. After confusing the Egyptians with a dark cloud, God parted the sea for the Israelites to cross and then drowned the Egyptians when they tried to cross; God drowned every last one of them.*
- ? **What caused Pharaoh to pursue the Israelites?** *God hardened his heart and turned it against the Israelites. This is repeated in chapter 14, verses 4, 5, 8, and 17, not to mention during the plagues, and is used as an example of God's command over the kings of the world in various places in Scripture.*
- ? **How does Proverbs 21:1 relate to this passage?** *God directs the king's heart which dictates His actions. Just as God is in control of nature (rivers), He guides the hearts of kings to accomplish His plans.*

- ? **According to Exodus 14:4 and 14:17–18, what was God seeking to show through Pharaoh’s actions?** *That God gained honor over Pharaoh so that the Egyptians would know that God is the Lord—the sovereign God of the universe.*
- ? **Exodus 14:8 says that the Israelites left Egypt with boldness. How had their attitude changed by verses 10–12?** *They were complaining to Moses that it would have been better for them to be slaves in Egypt than die in the wilderness.*
- ? **How is the response of Moses different from the Israelites?** *Moses trusted in God to preserve them and told the Israelites to look forward to God’s salvation.*
- ? **How did God provide time for the Israelites to cross the sea?** *The pillar of cloud, strongly connected to the presence of Jesus as the Angel of God, moved and placed the Egyptians in complete darkness while giving light to the Israelites.*
- ? **Did God or Moses part the sea?** *God instructed Moses to raise his rod, but Exodus 14:21 says that the Lord caused the sea to go back.*
- ? **How is the pathway of the Israelites described?** *They crossed on dry ground with a wall of water on either side.*
- ? **In what other ways did the Lord interfere with the plans of the Egyptians?** *He caused the wheels of the chariots to fall off.*
- ? **How did the Egyptians meet their end?** *They were drowned as Moses held his hand out and the waters returned and covered all of them.*
- ? **Who conquered the Egyptians?** *God “overthrew the Egyptians.”*
- ? **Who saved the Israelites?** *God*

## Discover the Truth

The Egyptian army was destroyed without a sword or a spear—every last man. Despite the doubts and complaining of the Israelites, who had just witnessed the miracles of the Passover and the pillaging of the Egyptians, God delivered them from their distress. God demonstrated His faithfulness to fulfill the promises He had made.

The promise God had made was never a conditional promise—God was faithful in spite of the doubts and fears of the Israelites. He showed them His power again by parting the sea and then overthrowing the army. They then celebrated with the songs recorded in chapter 15. This is a poetic retelling of the Exodus. We don’t have time to review it, but I would encourage you to look at it this week. It will give you a good comparison of the Bible’s poetry its prose accounts—a poem can also recount historical truth.





# Complaints!

## MATERIALS

- Complaints! worksheet for each student
- Complaints! answer key

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Pass out the worksheets and have the students work in groups to study the passages and answer the questions.*

When was the last time you complained? It probably wasn't very long ago. We are going to look at the complaints of the Israelites as God led them out of Egypt. Use this worksheet to examine each of the passages of Scripture and then answer the questions at the bottom. We will discuss them in a few minutes.

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

*Using the answer key, take time to answer any questions about the worksheet.*

What were these people thinking? God provides everything they need and Moses and Aaron give them guidance on behalf of God and they whine and complain about their circumstances. I can't believe they would do that!

- ? Who thinks I am a hypocrite for saying those things? *Allow for responses.*
- ? How many of us are guilty of the same thing? *Allow for responses.*

If we are honest with ourselves, we complain more than we should about our circumstances. God gives us life and breath and food and clothing every day. Just as He provided for the Israelites, He provides for us—His children. When we complain about our circumstances we complain against God.

The Bible contains several admonitions against complaining. *Have someone read the passages: Philippians 2:14–16, 4:11–13*

- ? What do we learn about complaining about our circumstances from the two Philippians passages on your worksheet?

*There is a direct command to not complain about anything and Paul, who was likely in prison when he wrote this letter, demonstrates the attitude we should have—contentment with whatever our circumstances are.*



# Applying God's Word

## WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

I hope you have recognized two important ideas from looking at God's Word today: God has demonstrated His faithfulness in fulfilling the promises He had made to Abraham and He has also demonstrated His faithfulness to provide for the needs of the nation He had called for Himself.

Just like the Israelites, we often get focused on our circumstances and forget the promises that God has made to us. We forget that He is faithful. We forget that He never changes. The remedy is to constantly fix our minds on God's character and the constant provision we receive from Him. Most importantly, we need to acknowledge God's faithfulness to His promise to forgive our sins through Christ's work on the Cross. When we think on that, it helps to put not having our preferred beverage or food product in its proper perspective.

## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

? **How might God use an apparently hopeless situation in your life to grow you to be more like Christ?** *Circumstances that may seem hopeless to us are all in the hands of God and under His direction. We need to remember His faithfulness, and trust that He will indeed work these things together for good (Romans 8:28).*

? **What types of things do you tend to complain about?** *Allow for answers.*

? **How can we encourage one another to overcome the sin of complaining?** *Galatians 6:1 calls us to come alongside others in their sin with the hope of restoring them. Being willing to approach one another in a gentle spirit to reprove sin is an important part of being the Body of Christ. But we must remember to examine our own hearts first as Jesus called us to in the example of the log and the speck.*

? **Let's think out loud together. In what ways does God provide for your needs?** *Allow students to answer and suggest they take time to make a personal list that they can use to thank God for in prayer.*

? **How can we use the faithfulness of God in sharing the gospel with others?** *We can testify of God's goodness in our lives, forgiving us of our sins and giving us power to overcome sin. We can show the examples of provision in the Bible and connect that to the character of God.*



### MEMORY VERSE

**Exodus 20:1–5a** And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them."



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for His faithfulness to provide, protect, guide, and comfort in all situations.
- Confess the sin of complaining to God.
- Ask God for a heart that will turn to Him for help instead of complaining, whining, or blaming others for our troubles.

