



## Moses 4

### God's plan isn't always a walk in the park, but God *is* in control – Leaders version

#### For a one hour study, just do the starred \* questions

**Check in** – with the group sitting in a semi circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

*Explain that we are going to study a passage that shows that God is in control, even when events seem to be out of our control.*

1. What do you remember from the last study, when we thought about the night before the people left Egypt?

#### What does the passage say and mean?

60 minutes

\*2. Read Exodus 13:17-18. Why did God take the people 'the long way round' through the desert instead of the shorter route?

*Because the long way would avoid the likelihood of war, which would frighten the people so much that they would go back to Egypt and slavery.*

3. Read Exodus 13:21-22. What did God use to guide the Israelites as they journeyed in the desert and why?

*A pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, so they could see which direction to take and be reminded that God was with them all the time.*

\*4. Read Exodus 14:4. What did God say would happen and why?

*Pharaoh and his army will pursue the Israelites, because God has hardened Pharaoh's heart. But it will end in something that brings glory to God alone – the Egyptians will recognise that God is God.*

5. **STICKERS** Exodus 14:6-9 tells us that Pharaoh took his army, 600 of the best chariots and all the other chariots in the land, to chase the Israelites and they caught up with them by the sea. What do you think is going to happen to the Israelite people now?

*Read out their answers, but don't tell them the correct answer!*

Questions 6-8 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. You need to write them on flip-chart sheets for the group to work on in pairs.

\*6. **SDL** Read Exodus 14:10-12. What happened when the Israelites saw the Egyptian army?

*They were terrified and cried out to God. This was a good idea. Then they blamed Moses for rescuing them and asked to go back to Egypt! This was not a good idea!*

\*7. **SDL** After 2 days of freedom, the Israelites wanted to go back to slavery, because it was better! Have you ever been in a similar situation?

*People who are in a 'revolving door' cycle – in and out of prison repeatedly – might empathise with the Israelites at this point. Encourage them to think about what things in particular they find difficult to face 'outside' and practical ways of dealing with these situations.*

\*8. **SDL** Read v13-14. What does Moses say to the Israelites? Where would Moses and the people get the strength from to stand firm and trust God in this situation?

*Paraphrased, Moses said, 'Stand firm and let God do the fighting.' The Israelites could not defend themselves – they were armed, but they were not an army. Moses told them to let God fight for them and not try to sort it out themselves.*

*To do this, they had to trust God as trouble got closer and they could only trust God if they had faith in him.*

9. Read v16. What did God tell Moses to do and why?

*To raise his staff (stick) and stretch his hand over the sea so that there would be dry ground for the people to walk on.*

\*10. **STICKERS** What happened the following morning? Does this surprise you? Why? (v21-22)

*The sea was divided and the Israelites crossed to the other side. If someone says that this is not possible, then explain that it was a miracle which God worked through Moses to make it happen. Miracles are supernatural events – by definition they are not 'possible' – that's the definition of a miracle! (Jesus' miracles were done on his own authority, not with special power from God, since Jesus was God).*

11. The Egyptian army followed them. But what did God do in v25?

*Made the wheels come and off their chariots, so they turned around and tried to go back to Egypt.*

\*12. Then the Lord told Moses to stretch out his hand again over the sea – what happened this time? (v28)

*The water of the sea came over the Egyptians and they were all drowned.*

13. Why do you think God let so many people die?

*This is a big and tricky question – one that many people will ask about the Old Testament. It is important to make clear that God has not changed; the God of the OT is the same God as in the NT. The Egyptians were living against God – they had rebelled against his commands (thus the plagues) and they did not believe in him. The result of God's judgement on them was destruction. Everyone who is destroyed by God in the OT is destroyed in judgement of their unbelief or rebellion, not on a whim.*

*This demonstrates God's justice – reading about this event should direct us to the cross, where our sin and rebellion are paid for, and the destruction we deserve (eternal separation from God, i.e. hell) is averted by Jesus' death in our place, if we trust and believe. Make sure you bring the discussion around to Jesus!*

14. What happened to the Israelites when they saw what God had done? (v31)

*They feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses. ('Feared' not meaning 'scared' but 'revered / respected').*

\*15. Think again about the reason that all this happened – 14:4. Who saw what God did? How did God gain glory for himself through these events?

*The Israelites saw it as it happened, and v31, they feared God and put their trust in him. The Egyptians who were waiting for their army to return knew that the God of Israel had taken his people from Egypt, and when the army didn't return, they would have recognised God's power and glory too.*

\*16. In what ways does Moses fore-shadow Jesus?

*You will need to explain 'fore-shadow' - it means that something in Moses' life tells us something important about Jesus.*

*Moses is used by God to deliver his people from slavery to Egypt. God takes the people across an impossible barrier (the sea), from a land of slavery to a land of promise. Jesus delivered his people from slavery to sin, at the cross, and has given repentant sinners a land of promise – heaven.*

## **How can I live according to these truths in my life?**

20 minutes

\*1. Do you cry out to God in anger and blame him when you don't understand what's going on in your life, or do you seek his presence to give you strength in the situation? How can you start to trust God more in the situations you are in?

*Read out Philippians 4v13 which is a promise that God will give us strength to cope. In order to trust God with our lives, we need to pray about the situations we are in! Encourage the group to pray about their problems, on their own, or in the group if they are happy to share.*

\*2. Read Exodus 14:14 again. Are there situations in your life, which, like crossing the Red Sea, are too big for you to handle? Can you start to trust God with those situations and let yourself stand still while God does the fighting?

*It's difficult to trust God with scary situations. We don't always understand what God is doing but he wants us to trust him (as with the Israelites – God told them to walk towards a sea they could not hope to cross, and make camp on the Egyptian side. But v4 'So the Israelites did this'). However, it may help to remind the group that we only have to trust God one day at a time – small chunks are easier!!*

*nb. Standing still is not the same as passivity, which is similar to laziness... We may still have a role to play, even as we stand still. With the scenario of looking for a job, the options might be:*

*1. I control the situation = I take a job that we know is not pleasing to God e.g. illegal/ immoral/ I know God's saying no to this job.*

*2. I do nothing and expect God to do everything (passivity) = I stay in bed and wait for someone to ring me.*

*3. I trust God for his outcome (standing still but still being active) = I pray for guidance and ask my personal officer for help / go to the job centre.*

3. In v11-12 the Israelites looked back to Egypt and forgot God's promises of deliverance and land. Suddenly slavery, attempted genocide, injustice, extremely hard work and racial oppression didn't seem so bad! Do you ever look back to life before you were a Christian, and think it was simpler then? What promises of Jesus do you need to remember when you start to think like this?

**Check out** – with the group sitting in a semi circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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6, 7, 8 **SDL**

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