



## Old Testament Overview 4

### Moses: Trusting God in impossible situations – Leaders version

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

**Check in** – ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

The account of Moses' life is far too big to cover it in a Bible study. We are going to study one chapter of his story. Encourage the group to read the rest of it in their own time, particularly Exodus 1-20.

(Time For Change has produced a series of 7 studies covering the life of Moses in more depth).

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

60 minutes

\*1. Read Exodus 2 v 11-12. What was Moses' criminal record?

*He was a murderer.*

**After this, Moses went on the run and didn't return to Egypt for 40 years. He was a shepherd in the desert. The Israelites were still in Egypt, in slavery to Pharaoh. Then God met Moses in a burning bush and sent him to Egypt to lead the Israelites (Jacob's descendants, now 600,000 men, plus women and children) out of Egyptian slavery. God sent plagues on Egypt until Pharaoh let the people leave. We pick up the account when the people have left Egypt and are stood at the shore of the Red Sea with Pharaoh chasing them.**

Read Exodus 14 v 1-4

2. What does God tell Moses to do? Why does He tell him to do something that seems so unwise?

*To retrace their steps and head back to Egypt, and camp by the sea – i.e. put over a million people in a place with no escape route when Pharaoh's army catches up with them!*

*God told Moses to do this in order to make Pharaoh think they were confused and entice Pharaoh to come closer. Ultimately, God would be glorified through this – we will find out how...*

3. Does it surprise you to read that God says He will gain glory for His name through His enemies (the Egyptians)? Why does He do this?

*God is Lord of all, not just of those who believe in Him. God's name will be glorified because He deserves all the glory. God can glorify Himself through those who don't love him, as well as through those who do. Ultimately, the Bible says, every knee will bow before him – Philippians 2 v 10.*

*God does this because he wants the Egyptians to recognise Him, even though they don't worship Him.*

Questions 4-6 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. Let the group to work on them in pairs.

\*4. **SDL** Read Exodus 14 v 10-12. How did the Israelites feel when they saw the Egyptian army coming after them? What did they do?

*They were terrified and they cried out to God about it. They also blamed Moses and wished they had never left Egypt, a place of slavery.*

\*5. **SDL** The Israelites were panicking. What happens to our view of reality and our ability to make wise decisions when we are panicking?

*Our view of reality becomes distorted, we look at things negatively and see the worst outcome that could possibly occur. We can't make good decisions when we are panicking because we can't think straight. We tend to focus on the immediate future, not the long-term outcome of decisions. Snap decisions made in panic tend to lead to further problems and further snap decisions.*

\*6. **SDL** When you are afraid, do you pray straight away or does it take you a while to bring things to God? What do you think is the best response to fear?

*Spend some time thinking about the need to pray early on about scary situations, not as a last resort.*

\*7. Read Exodus 14 v 13-14. What does this tell us about who was really in control of the situation?

*God was in control, even though, at the time it looked like they would all be captured or killed.*

8. What specifically does Moses tell the people to do in v14?

*Stand still! God is going to do the work, the people just have to stand still and let Him. For the million or so Israelites, literally standing still was the command. For us, in order to know whether God wants us to stand still or take an active role in a situation, we need to pray for guidance and listen to God's response.*

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Read Exodus 14 v 13-14 again. Is there a situation in your life in which you need to stand still and let God do the fighting?

*Standing still doesn't mean absolving oneself of any involvement! Standing still certainly involves prayer, and also involves us obeying the law in the situation, turning up at court, telling the truth, etc. But not trying to manipulate or control the situation ourselves.*

\*9. Read Exodus 14 v 16-22. What does God tell Moses to do? What happens when Moses does it?

*God tells Moses to stretch his hand over the water. The water opened to create dry land for the people to cross the sea bed. (The Red Sea is a long stretch of inland water about 20 miles wide).*

\*10. Read Exodus 14 v 23-28. What happened to the Egyptians when they crossed the seabed? Why did this happen (see v17-18)?

*The Egyptians made it across the sea but then God confused them, their chariots broke and they fled back towards Egypt. God brought the sea back to its place and all the Egyptians drowned.*

*People often have big questions about God destroying people in the Old Testament. Verse 17 tells us why it happened – so that God would be glorified. God was glorified in this because His enemies were destroyed (the Egyptians were His enemies as they didn't recognise Him and were oppressing His people). Those who survived (waiting in Egypt for the army to return) would have realised that the God of the Israelites had defeated their army and protected His people.*

*When God destroys individual people or nations in the Old Testament, it is always ultimately in judgement of unbelief. God never destroyed those who loved Him. This does not mean God is capricious. He is just. When God acts in judgement on His own people in the OT, it is to remove sin and make the nation holy (set apart) again, since they should 'be holy as God is holy'. He removes foreign nations from the Promised Land in order to give the land to those He had chosen to be His people, that the land too may be set apart (holy).*

11. Read Exodus 14 v 29-31. What effect did this have on the Israelites, who were by now on the far side of the Red Sea?

*They had been saved from the Egyptians. They could see that their enemies were dead and no longer a threat. They feared the LORD – refers to trust in God and in His word, not to being scared. They put their trust in God and in Moses. Remember v4; God had said he would use this situation to bring glory to Himself.*

\*12. **SHOUT-OUT** What do you think the Israelites should have learnt about God, Moses and themselves during this?

*God – God is in control. God allowed a bad situation, so He could use it to bring glory to His name and save His people. God judges those who reject Him.*

*Moses – God was working through Moses. Moses was listening to, and obeying God.*

*Themselves – God loved them and had a plan for them.*

\*13. **STICKERS** Can you think of another situation in the Bible, where things were as bad as they could possibly get, but God used the situation to bring glory to His name and to save many people?

*There are many, including Joseph's imprisonment, Noah stuck on a small boat on a flooded earth... The big one you're looking for is Jesus' death on the cross! Spend some time thinking about this with the group.*

14. Read Exodus 15 v 24. What happens 3 days after the miracle of the Red Sea crossing? Is this surprising? Had they really learnt the lessons we identified in Q12?

*The people grumble that there is no water. You would think they would remember how God saved them at the Red Sea, and asked God for water rather than grumbling.*

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Do you cry out to God in anger and blame when you don't understand what's going on in your life, or do you ask God to give you strength in the situation?

*Philippians 4 v 13 – God will give us strength to cope in every situation. We need to go to Him for this strength though!*

15. Read Exodus 16 v 2-3. What happened about a month later?

*The Israelites are grumbling again – this time about lack of food.*

**?\***

As we read the account of Moses' life we see the people of Israel repeatedly rebelling against God and doubting Him. Do you see this in your own life? How should God's response to the Israelites encourage us?

*God didn't stop loving the Israelites, no matter what they did. He called them to repent and He forgave them. He continued to lead them through the desert and into the Promised Land.*

16. What lesson do you think God wanted the Israelites to learn?

*That He will provide for us if we trust Him and turn to him for help. Instead of grumbling, they should have been praying and trusting God (as should we). We can look back at what God has done in the past to help*

*us to remember that God is involved in our lives.*

*Encourage the group to think of some examples of when God has done things in their life, that they can look back on next time they are struggling / grumbling.*

*NB. God doesn't always provide for us exactly what we asked, or in the way that we expected! The Israelites got manna – something like coriander seed that settled on the floor – and quails, every day for 40 years. That's probably not what they would have ordered had they been given a menu!*

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What have you learnt today about how God provides for us?

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**TIME-LINE** if you are making a time-line, do the next part of it now – ask the group to add what they have learnt today in the appropriate place. See the time-line on the TFC website for guidance of dates.

**Check out** – ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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Read Exodus 14 v 1-4

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3. Does it surprise you to read that God says He will gain glory for His name through His enemies (the Egyptians)? Why does He do this?

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As we read the account of Moses' life we see the people of Israel repeatedly rebelling against God and doubting Him. Do you see this in your own life? How should God's response to the Israelites encourage us?

16. What lesson do you think God wanted the Israelites to learn, and wants us to learn?

**?\***

What have you learnt today about how God provides for us?