

Moses Part 5 - When God Does Amazing Things



Exodus chapters 11 to 15

Today's Bassline is centred around the liberation of the Israelites from the oppression of the Egyptians. Throughout Exodus chapters 11 to 15, God does amazing things for his people, but there are challenging parts to navigate in this story. Alongside the demonstrations of God's miraculous power, we'll see destruction and violence. How do we sit with these contradictory aspects of God's character? We'll also consider how we can take time to praise God for the amazing things he has done, and continues to do, in our lives.

You will need:

- 'Amazing Things God Has Done' handout
- 'Song of Moses and Miriam' handout
- Highlighters and coloured pens





Ask:

- What's the most amazing thing someone has ever done for you?
- How would you define an 'amazing thing'?

Say

A dictionary defines 'amazing' as follows:

- causing great surprise or wonder, astonishing.
- very impressive; excellent.

Ask:

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Having heard a dictionary definition of 'amazing', do you think it is a word that is overused?
 Explain your response.



- What word do you think would often be more appropriate to use instead of 'amazing'?

Say:

In the next part of Moses' story, God does some things that fully meet the dictionary definition of amazing. In fact, the word amazing may not be big enough to describe the miraculous power at work in this story.



Ask:

If you could do something amazing for someone you know, who would it be and what would you do?





Leader's notes:

If there are those in the group who have followed through the Moses series so far, then give them one minute to recap the story. We will try this activity every week, and it will get trickier to fit in all the facts as we move through the story of Moses.

The following clip summarises the story so far and covers the main Scripture passage for today. It is aimed at a younger age group, but it will keep the young people on track with the story of Moses.

Watch:

Free at Last: The Story of the Exodus (Exodus 4-15) (stop at 3:46) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axnf5llKd5Q

Leader's notes:

It's unorthodox to do this, and it won't become a regular thing, but please read to the young people the following note from the writer behind this Bible study.

Read:

The title of this Bible study is 'When God does amazing things', but I nearly changed it to 'When things get tricky'. Within today's session we see God perform miracles to liberate the Israelites from the oppression of the Egyptians. We also hear the howls of pain from parents discovering their baby boys had been slaughtered in the night. We'll read the first song of praise found in the Bible, which celebrates Pharaoh's army drowning in the Red Sea. Did God do amazing things for the people of Israel? Yes, definitely! But I wonder if, like me, some of this may sit uncomfortably with you. I encourage you to grapple with the tricky parts of this story and recognise the destructive way God's power is expressed.



It is both amazing and tricky, but the Bible is full of stories that ask us to sit with those contradictions. Avoid looking for easy answers and enjoy learning about the next part of the story.

- Kay Moorby

Say:

In Exodus 11 we read about the final plague sent by God to punish the Egyptians. Moses went to Pharaoh and told him what would happen.

Read:

- ⁴ So Moses said, 'This is what the Lord says: "About midnight I will go throughout Egypt.
- ⁵ Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. ⁶ There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. ⁷ But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any person or animal." Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. ⁸ All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, "Go, you and all the people who follow you!" After that I will leave.' Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

- (Exodus 11:4-8)

Say:

After giving the Israelites a specific set of instructions, God protected them from the final plague. Exodus 12:30 describes the loud wailing of the Egyptian families 'for there was not a house without someone dead'.

Ask:

- How do you feel about the violence within this final plague?
- How do you reconcile actions like this with your knowledge that God is love?
- Did God do an amazing thing at Passover? Explain your thoughts.

Say:

Exodus 13 continues with God's request that every firstborn Israelite would be consecrated to him.

Read:

¹⁴ [Moses said to the people] 'In days to come when your son asks you, "What does this mean?" say to him, "With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹⁵ When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed the firstborn of both people and animals in Egypt. This is why I sacrifice to the Lord the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons." ¹⁶ And it will be like a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead that the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his mighty hand.'

- (Exodus 13:14-16)



Ask:

- Why do you think God specifically requested that the firstborn be consecrated to him?

Leader's notes:

Divide the group into teams and give them an 'Amazing Things God Has Done' handout. Explain to the group that many people keep gratitude journals to record what they are thankful for or celebrate moments when God has done amazing things in their lives. Recapping the story so far and reading through the remainder of Exodus 13 and 14, ask the group to imagine they are in the Israelite camp. What amazing things does God do for the Israelites throughout these chapters? The aim is to recognise the tangible ways God showed up for his people and the miraculous way he set them free from slavery. Encourage the group to jot down Bible references that they can refer back to during the discussion.

Give the group time to create their 'Amazing Things God Has Done' list and then share it together.

Ask:

Imagine you are an Israelite standing safely on the bank of the Red Sea, having walked to freedom. What impact would that experience have on your faith in God?



Leader's notes:

If your group would like to learn more about this story and how it links to Jesus, then watch and discuss the clip together.

Watch:

Exodus 14:15 - Red Sea - Bible Study (3:20)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GD-MJJb4olk



Say

In Exodus 15, we read what is commonly thought to be the first song in the Bible. It is full of words of praise. We're going to explore this song and see how we can apply it to our own faith journey. Our Sound Check today will help us consider ways to make time for praise and adoration for our amazing God.

Leader's notes:

Give each member of the group a 'Song of Moses and Miriam' handout. Either read through Exodus 15 from *The Message* translation or use the link provided.



Listen:

Bible Gateway - Exodus 15 Message Translation (4:01) https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/dolan/msg/Exod.15

Ask:

- What is your response to Moses and Miriam's song of praise?
- Which bits do you find tricky?

Leader's notes:

After acknowledging that there are tricky aspects to navigate within this song, ask the group to focus on the words of praise. Either working individually or in small groups, the young people need to highlight (or annotate) all the examples of praise within the song. They can then use these words and phrases as inspiration to write their own song of praise.

Give the young people time to create their song and then share them together.



Ask:

 How do you feel about the way the psalm celebrates the downfall and destruction of those who stood in the way of God's will?



Ask:

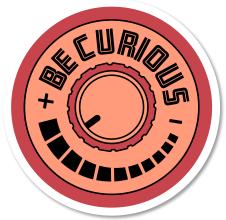
- How often do you take a moment to think about the amazing things God has done for you?
- How could you make praise a regular part of your prayer life?

Say:

For our Selah today, we're going to use the words of Exodus 15 to spend time in praise and reflection. As the music plays, focus on every word and thank God for the amazing things he has done in your life.

Watch:

'Song of Moses' (Official Lyric Video) – Isaac Tarter (5:20) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3CiPBVXJx4







Say:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from the events in today's story?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.







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Song of Moses and Miriam

EXODUS 15

¹⁻⁸ Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to God, giving voice together,

I'm singing my heart out to God—what a victory!

He pitched horse and rider into the sea.

God is my strength, God is my song, and, yes! God is my saluation.

This is the kind of God I have and I'm telling the world!

This is the God of my father—
I'm spreading the news far and wide!

God is a fighter,

pure God, through and through.

Pharaoh's chariots and army he dumped in the sea,

The elite of his officers

he drowned in the Red Sea.

Wild ocean waters poured over them; they sank like a rock in the deep blue sea.

Your strong right hand, God, shimmers with power; your strong right hand shatters the enemy.

In your mighty majesty
you smash your upstart enemies,

You let loose your hot anger and burn them to a crisp.
At a blast from your nostrils the waters piled up;
Tumbling streams dammed up,

wild oceans curdled into a swamp.

⁹ The enemy spoke, "I'll pursue, I'll hunt them down, I'll divide up the plunder, I'll glut myself on them; I'll pull out my sword, my fist will send them reeling."

¹⁰⁻¹¹ You blew with all your might and the sea covered them.

They sank like a lead weight in the majestic waters.

Who compares with you among gods, O God?

Who compares with you in power, in holy majesty,

In awesome praises, wonder-working God?

12-13 You stretched out your right hand and the Earth swallowed them up.
But the people you redeemed, you led in merciful love;
You guided them under your protection to your holy pasture.



14-18 When people heard, they were scared;

Philistines writhed and trembled; Yes, even the head men in Edom were shaken,

and the big bosses in Moab.

Everybody in Canaan panicked and fell faint.

Dread and terror sent them reeling.

Before your brandished right arm they were struck dumb like a stone, Until your people crossed over and entered, O God,

until the people you made crossed over and entered.

You brought them and planted them on the mountain of your heritage,

The place where you live,

the place you made,

Your sanctuary, Master, that you established with your own hands.

Let God rule forever, for eternity!

¹⁹ Yes, Pharaoh's horses and chariots and riders went into the sea and God turned the waters back on them; but the Israelites walked on dry land right through the middle of the sea.

²⁰⁻²¹ Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine, and all the women followed her with tambourines, dancing. Miriam led them in singing,

Sing to God—
what a victory!
He pitched horse and rider
into the sea!

Traveling Through the Wilderness

²²⁻²⁴ Moses led Israel from the Red Sea on to the Wilderness of Shur. They traveled for three days through the wilderness without finding any water. They got to Marah, but they couldn't drink the water at Marah; it was bitter. That's why they called the place Marah (Bitter). And the people complained to Moses, "So what are we supposed to drink?"

²⁵ So Moses cried out in prayer to God. God pointed him to a stick of wood. Moses threw it into the water and the water turned sweet.

²⁶ That's the place where God set up rules and procedures; that's where he started testing them.

God said, "If you listen, listen obediently to how God tells you to live in his presence, obeying his commandments and keeping all his laws, then I won't strike you with all the diseases that I inflicted on the Egyptians; I am God your healer."

²⁷ They came to Elim where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees. They set up camp there by the water.