

**GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB**  
**Exodus 1–3; 6:1-8**

**Memory Verse:** *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful* (Heb. 10:23 ESV).

**Background Helps:**

Since last week's lesson, approximately 400 years have passed. (Use a Bible timeline in class.) The descendants of Jacob (Israel) have settled in the land of Egypt. (Use a Bible map in class.) The story of how this emigration came about is told in Genesis 37–50. This emigration was actually a fulfillment of Bible prophecy, a word that God spoke to Abram in Genesis 15:13-14 (look it up!).

Now we come to the book of Exodus. During the 400-year stay in Egypt, “the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them” (Ex. 1:7 ESV). God was fulfilling his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to make their offspring like the stars of the heaven and the sand of the seashore (see earlier forecasts). This multiplication of Abraham's seed also contributed to the fulfillment of God's earlier plan for Adam and Noah that they be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28; 9:1, 7). But, at the same time, the Egyptian Pharaoh and his people began to oppress the Israelites (also predicted in Gen. 15:13-14) and threatened to squash their population growth by a policy of infanticide (Ex. 1:8-22). (This is not much different than the abortion policy of our day.)

During those days the people of Israel groaned and cried out for help. “Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob” (Ex. 2:23b-24). God remembered his covenant promises to the patriarchs. He raised up a deliverer by the name of Moses (Ex. 2:1-22; 3:1–4:17) and sent him to confront Pharaoh and deliver the Israelites from bondage.

Notice the frequent reference in the early chapters of Exodus to “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (2:24; 3:6, 15-16; 4:5; 6:3, 8). God is remembering the covenant he made with these patriarchs and their offspring. In fact, he mentions this covenant directly to Moses: “I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant” (6:2-5). God then makes seven promises to Israel in verses 6-8—notice the sevenfold “I will . . .” These promises include the most basic of all the covenant promises: “I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God” (v. 7). They also include the promise of “the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession” (v. 8). So we see that in Egypt God has fulfilled the promise to multiply Abraham's offspring. Now he will also fulfill the promise of giving them the land of Canaan.

**Lesson Helps:**

Notice that this week, although we are moving into the book of Exodus and introducing the character of Moses, we are still dealing with God's covenant with Abraham (and Isaac and Jacob). Next week will begin to study the next covenant, God's covenant with Israel through Moses.

A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about the faithfulness of God to his covenant promises (even after a long period of time), so that they will trust God to be faithful to his promises to them (even when the fulfillment of those promises seems delayed). The 400-years gap between Genesis 50 and Exodus 1 gives you the opportunity to encourage your class to keep trusting God to be faithful to his promises even when there seems to be (long) delay. For example, consider Christ's promise to come again. Almost 2000 years have passed since he returned to heaven. But just as surely as the Lord was faithful to his promise to send his Son the first time, so he will be faithful to his promise to send his Son again. See 2 Peter 3:1-14.

Or, consider the story of Lazarus's sickness and death in John 11. Lazarus's two sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus that their brother was ill, hoping he would come. But he delayed his departure for two days (John 11:1-6). When he finally arrived, Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days (v. 17). Jesus was too late! We might say, "But I thought God promises to answer our prayers when we cry out to him in our time of need!" Of course, Jesus did meet the need. He was faithful. He did something even more wonderful than heal the sick Lazarus. He restored the dead Lazarus to life!

Challenge your students to trust in the faithfulness of God and in the promises of God, even in the face of (long) delays. Be sure to incorporate the memory verse into your lesson.

**Home Assignment:**

 Read Exodus 11:1–13:10.

 Memorize 1 Corinthians 5:7b ESV.