

EXODUS: The Person, Promise, and Power of God

Exodus 1: The Rise of Israel

From Genesis to Exodus

12 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)

The overarching theme of **Genesis** is **GOD'S ELECTING GRACE**.

Of Noah's 3 sons, God chose **SHEM** to be the vein through which His people would come. Likewise, God uniquely singled out **ABRAHAM** to be the father of His chosen nation. God bypassed **ISHAMEL** and chose **ISAAC**. He rejected **ESAU** and favored **JACOB**. He appointed **JOSEPH** as his instrument of deliverance. At the end, instead of Joseph's older sons, God gives the birthright position to **EPHRAIM**.

In his **PROMISES** to future Israel, God was also **PROTECTING** and **PREPARING** the nascent nation to become His Chosen People. At every stage of their journey, we see God's sovereignty on display thru his **PROVIDENCE**.

Ultimately, future Israel arrives in Egypt per God's prophetic promise to Abraham and in accordance with His divine plan when He **UNILATERALLY COVENANTED** with Abraham:

*15 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ² But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue **childless**, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" ³ And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." ⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." ⁵ And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

⁷ And he said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." ⁸ But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" ⁹ He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, ²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites." (Genesis 15)

From Promise to Fulfillment

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: ² Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, ³ Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, ⁴ Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. ⁵ All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. (Exodus 1:1-5)

In Goshen, the 70 descendants of Jacob who sojourned there, plus the family of Joseph already in residence there, THRIVED. In Canaan, they faced an array of adversaries and the constant threat of cultural, religious, and ethnic ASSIMILATION at best, and then with the addition of great famine, EXTINCTION at the worst. But when God moved them to Goshen, they were SAFE and SEPARATE from the culture and religion of the Egyptians, who had relatively nothing to do with them and no desire to assimilate them.

“At the opening of the book of Exodus, Abraham himself was, of course, long dead (Gen. 25:8), and his family, now organized under the names of the twelve sons of Abraham’s grandson Jacob, was resident in Egypt. Over the years it had expanded considerably and enjoyed the good life under the patronage of Joseph, Pharaoh’s deputy (Gen. 41:39-46). With the death of Joseph and a change of government, however, the good times were over (1:6, 8). The Egyptian authorities had become pathologically nervous about this increase in the immigrant population and determined, first, on a policy of **persecution** and then **ethnic cleansing** and **genocide** (1:9-11, 22)”¹

⁸ Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ And he said to his people, “Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.”

¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. ¹³ So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves ¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, ¹⁶ “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” ¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” ²⁰ So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. ²² Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.” (Exodus 1:8-22)

Remember – God never intended Egypt to be a substitute for the PROMISED LAND.

At his end, Joseph said, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” (Genesis 50:24). He even made his sons give this promise: “Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.” (Genesis 50:25).

¹ Alec Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage*, 17.

God would use the FEAR, which grew into HATRED, and then became the SUBJUGATION of the Israelites to accomplish that very purpose. In their great misery and bondage, God was about to raise up a deliver.

But this account is far more than just HISTORICALLY important.

Exodus is profoundly important THEOLOGICALLY.

Pharaoh claimed to be the incarnate Son of Re (Ra) – the sun god – who was the primary deity in the Egyptian pantheon. This means that the struggle between Israel and Egypt was not about politics but about religion.

Pharaoh's strategy for claiming sovereignty over Israel was slavery. In the Egyptian temple of Edfu, there is an inscription from the time of Rameses depicting a god registering slaves for Pharaoh. The picture is a reminder that by enslaving the Israelites, Pharaoh was trying to make a theological point: The Hebrews would not serve their own God – they would work for him. They would not be free to go to the land of God's promise – they would stay right where they were. In effect, Pharaoh was claiming to be the lord of Israel, and by doing so – perhaps without even realizing it – he became the tool of Satan. In his book on spiritual warfare, Donald Grey Barnhouse called Egypt "the greatest symbol of Satan's enmity against the children of Israel," and he went on to say: "The devil was in Egypt. The devil was ruling Egypt. Behind Pharaoh there was Satan." The exodus, therefore, was not simply an epic struggle between Moses and Pharaoh, or between Israel and Egypt. Ultimately it was another skirmish in the great, ongoing war between God and Satan.²

If Genesis was primarily about the FORMATION of a people, then Exodus is primarily about the SALVATION of that people. For that, they needed to be free from bondage and given a foundation for covenant and community living – The Law.

¹³ "You have led in your steadfast love **the people whom you have redeemed**; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode." (Exodus 15:13)

⁴ "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, **if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples ...**" (Exodus 19:4-5a)

The overarching theme in **Exodus** is GOD'S REDEEMING GRACE.

"God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Exodus 2:24)

In *Gleanings from Exodus*, A.W. Pink beautifully summarizes the theme of redemption:

First, we see the NEED for redemption – pictured by a people enslaved: chs. 1 to 6.

Second, we are shown the MIGHT of the Redeemer – displayed in the plagues on Egypt: chs. 7 to 11.

Third, we behold the CHARACTER of redemption – purchased by blood, emancipated by power: chs. 12 to 18.

Fourth, we are taught the DUTY of the redeemed – obedience to the Lord: chs. 19 to 24.

² Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, 34.

Fifth, we have revealed the PROVISIONS made for the failures of the redeemed – seen in the tabernacle and its services: chs. 25 to 40.

Finally, in Exodus we see more than *who* God redeemed – His covenant people; *why* He redeemed them – for the glory of His name; *how* he redeemed them – thru a blood sacrifice and miraculous means; but we see the Deliverer – God Himself - revealed in the most personal of ways:

*13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' **This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations ...**" (Exodus 3:13-15)*

*"I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. 6 Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. 7 I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that **I am the Lord your God**, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.'" (Exodus 6:5-7)*

YAHWEH's redeeming grace will be the prevalent theme throughout the book – and throughout the rest of Scripture.

Bobby Jamieson writes,

"The exodus is the definitive paradigm of redemption in the whole Old Testament. Later events – like the entry into and conquest of the land – recapitulate it. The Psalms celebrate and reflect on it. The prophets predict a new exodus patterned after it (e.g., Isa 40:1-11). Crucial New Testament terms like "redemption" derive from the Exodus, when God rescued his people at the precisely calculated cost of one lamb per household (Exod 12:1-13). God's entire plan of salvation is exodus-shaped. The whole of Scripture is exodus-shaped."

A.W. Pink:

"The deliverance of Israel from Egypt furnishes a remarkably full and accurate typification of our redemption by Christ.

Israel in Egypt illustrates the place we were in before Divine grace saved us. Egypt symbolizes the world, according to the course of which we all walked in time past. Pharaoh, who knew not the Lord, who defied Him, who was the inveterate enemy of God's people, but who at the end was overthrown by God, shadows forth the great adversary, the Devil. The cruel bondage of the enslaved Hebrews pictures the tyrannical dominion of sin over its captives. The groaning of the Israelites under their burdens speaks of the painful exercises of conscience and heart when convicted of our lost condition. The deliverer raised up by God in the person of Moses, points to the greater Deliverer, even our Lord Jesus Christ. The Passover-night tells of the security of the believer beneath the sheltering blood of God's Lamb. The exodus from Egypt announces our deliverance from the yoke of bondage and our judicial separation from the world. The crossing of the Red Sea depicts our union with Christ in His death and resurrection. The journey through the wilderness – its trials and testings, with God's provision to meet every need – represent the experiences of our pilgrim course.

The giving of the law to Israel teaches us the obedient submission which we owe to our new Master. The tabernacle with its beautiful fittings and furnishings, shows us the varied excellencies and glories of Christ."

Gleanings in Exodus