

Introductions to Series; Slaves in Egypt (Exodus 1)

Expository Lessons from the Book of Exodus

I. Background – Importance of this Series

- a. Today are embarking on new series, starting with **Exodus chapter 1**.
- b. The **Book of Exodus** includes:
 - i. Birth of Moses
 - ii. Moses being called on a mission to lead the Jews out of their slavery in Egypt
 - iii. The battle of Moses against Pharaoh, including the 10 Plagues and the Red Sea crossing.
 - iv. The beginning of the Wilderness Wandering. The **Book of Exodus** only covers a little more than the first year of Israel's 40-year journey through the Wilderness.
 1. That includes the first leg of the journey, from Egypt to Mount Sinai (about 2 months).
 2. It also includes the period while the Israelites encamped at Mt. Sinai, during which Moses was given the Law and instructions for the tabernacle, and the tabernacle was built (about a year).
- c. More details of the Law and regulations given to Moses at Mt. Sinai are provided in **Leviticus**.
- d. The 40-year Wilderness journey, after the stop at Mt. Sinai, continues in the **Book of Numbers**. Near the end of that journey we are provided with a recap and conclusion (death of Moses, with Joshua the new leader who will take the Israelites into Canaan) in the **Book of Deuteronomy**.
- e. The life of Moses covers a period of 120 years, and is captured in the books of **Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers** and **Deuteronomy**. I believe that this story is like a seamless garment, that is best covered as one single, integrated story. For that reason we plan to move through all of these books in succession, to present this as one complete story.
 - i. In that way we will be able to see and appreciate the entire life and ministry of Moses.

- ii. Also, within the story of Moses we have some very significant prophecies, elements of which are in more than one book. By covering these books in sequence, we can better understand these detailed prophecies.
- f. Therefore, our approach in this series is to tell *the whole story* of the life of Moses and the journey from Egypt through the Wilderness for 40 years, all the way to the edge of Canaan.
- g. As in **Genesis**, we want to look at *each of the three levels of the story*, as appreciated by early Christian writers. The three levels are:
 - i. **Level 1:** The basic story line, including the people, events and timeline
 - ii. **Level 2:** Moral lessons we can learn from these people and events, to help us in our own personal spiritual journey (including any connections to the New Testament).
 - iii. **Level 3:** Foreshadowings of things that would come later (especially including foreshadowings of Jesus, and of elements of God's plan to save us).
 - 1. Note that previous lessons we have recorded on Level 3 significance of the Exodus story and journey, posted on our website, are:
 - a. "Where Did Moses Write about Jesus?", video of apologetics lecture/workshop given at Harvard Society of the Two Tasks discussing the **Deuteronomy 18:15-19** prophecy and the parallels between Moses and Jesus (3/1/2018); and
 - b. "The Exodus Map, A Parable of the Christian Life" audio lesson (9/23/2018).
- h. Note that just over a year ago we completed an extensive expository series on **Genesis**. This next series will pick up where we left off there, and will complete the **5 Books of Moses**.

II. Why the Exodus Story is So Important for Christians Today

- a. Some may ask: "Why should we (Christians) spend so much time in the Old Testament? Wasn't that written primarily for the Jews?"
- b. However, after quoting from a passage in the Old Testament, Paul reminded the Christians in Rome:

- i. "...For *whatever things were written before were written for our learning*, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (**Romans 15:4**, NKJV)
- c. New Testament writers and speakers (Jesus, Peter, Paul, Stephen, Jude, the writer of Hebrews) draw extensively from the **Exodus** story to teach important lessons to Christians, including:
 - i. Detailed prophecies to prove to unbelievers that Jesus is the Son of God, who rose from the dead.
 - 1. Recall that Jesus Himself had said, "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for *he wrote about Me*." (**John 5:46**, NKJV)
 - 2. Keep in mind that Moses was writing 1400 years before the time of Jesus, and that these writings have been maintained by the Jews (who were antagonistic toward the Christians).
 - a. *Therefore, there is no way that the Christians could have altered these writings of Moses.*
 - ii. It shows us the importance of working hard and persevering to the end, if we are to be saved on the Day of Judgment.
 - iii. It provides a great example for us to imitate in Moses, who rejected the pleasures and treasures of this world because he was looking for a greater reward.
 - iv. This is where we learn the importance of being devoted to the word of God daily, that "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."
 - v. This is where we find a description of the kind of people God wants us to be: a holy nation, His own special people, set apart.
 - vi. It provides unforgettable graphic reminders of the importance of fearing God.
 - vii. It provides us with warnings about specific sins that can lead to our destruction, including:
 - 1. Hardening our hearts
 - 2. Sexual immorality
 - 3. Idolatry
 - 4. Grumbling and complaining

5. Testing God

viii. In this story (the overall exodus journey, covering **Exodus-Deuteronomy**) we find elements of so many elements of the Christian life, including:

1. The word and concept of “church”, the assembly of those called out by God.
 2. Baptism
 3. The Lord’s supper
 4. The Passover Lamb, the blood of Christ
 5. The cross
 6. The Holy Spirit
 7. Church discipline (putting out of the assembly those who refuse to repent)
 8. Leadership in the church
 9. The dangers of false prophets and false teachers
 10. The goal of our faith will not be found here in this life; it is in heaven, our Promised Land
 11. Even the *very name of Jesus* is revealed in advance, 1400 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem!
- d. We will find many other very practical things in this story as well, that will help us to be thoroughly equipped on our own spiritual journey, and that will give us deeper and more accurate understanding of the New Testament.
- i. The New Testament writers assumed that their readers would be familiar with the story of the **Exodus** and other major events in the Old Testament.
 - ii. They establish their case for important elements of the faith by referring to those stories from the Old Testament.

III. Setting the Stage: How the Jews Ended Up Enslaved in Egypt

- a. God had told Abraham in the beginning (even before Isaac or Ishmael were born) that he would have many descendants, and that they would inherit Canaan. However, first they would suffer affliction for 400 years in another land.

- i. Read **Genesis 15:4-6** and **15:12-16**.
- ii. The important promises made to Abraham in **Genesis 15** include:
 1. He would have many offspring, “like the stars in the sky” (**Genesis 15:5**).
 - a. Ultimately the many offspring of Abraham would include not only his physical descendants (the Jews) but also his spiritual descendants (the Christians, who are of the same faith as Abraham), as Paul explains in **Romans 4** and **Galatians 3**.
 2. They would inherit the land of Canaan and beyond.
 3. However, before inheriting that land they first would serve in a land not their own, for 400 years, during which they would suffer affliction.
 4. They would leave that land with great possessions.
 5. That nation they served under would be judged by God.
 6. Abraham would live to “a good old age”.
 - a. He ended up dying at the age of 175, as recorded in **Genesis 25:7**.
 7. The reason for the delay in inheriting Canaan was related to waiting until the sin of the current inhabitants, the Amorites, “was filled up” (LXX, OSB).
 - a. Or from the NKJV: “But in the fourth generation they shall return here, *for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete*.” (**Genesis 15:16**, NKJV)
- b. The move to Egypt happens during the lifetime of Abraham’s grandson Jacob (also called Israel).
 - i. Jacob has 12 sons, one of which was Joseph.
 - ii. The other brothers become jealous and resentful of Joseph, and sell him into slavery, to Ishmaelite traders who take Joseph to Egypt as a slave (**Genesis 37**).
 - iii. Joseph serves in the household of Potiphar, ending up in prison despite his being an innocent man. After more than two years in prison, Joseph is released to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh (**Genesis 39-41**).

- iv. Joseph correctly interprets the dreams, which indicate that there will be 7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of famine. Pharaoh places Joseph as ruler over Egypt (below only himself). Under Joseph's authority grain is stored by Egypt during the 7 years of plenty (**Genesis 41**).
- v. When the famine hits, Canaan (where Joseph's brothers and father are) is impacted also. Joseph's father Jacob hears that there is grain in Egypt, and sends his sons down to purchase some (**Genesis 42-44**).
- vi. Ultimately Joseph reveals himself to his brothers, and has his father and the rest of the extended family of Jacob all come down to Egypt, where Joseph makes sure they are well taken care of (**Genesis 45-47**).
- vii. The story of Genesis ends with the deaths of Jacob and then Joseph; and all of Jacob's descendants in Egypt. (Read **Genesis 50:22-26**.)

IV. Stephen Recounts the Story of the Life of Moses, in Acts 7

- a. In Stephen's final address to the Jewish leaders, right before he is martyred by stoning, he gave them (and us) an overview of the life of Moses and the story of the exodus from Egypt. Stephen recalls the promise God had made to Abraham in **Genesis 15**, then continues on to the stories of Joseph and Moses.
- b. Stephen was being accused of rejecting the words of Moses, of speaking against the Law and the temple (**Acts 6:8-14**).
- c. Read **Acts 7:1-41** and **Acts 7:51-60**.
- d. Important take-aways from Stephen's speech:
 - i. Life of Moses can be split into three periods of 40 years each.
 - 1. First 40 years: growing up as a prince in Egypt
 - 2. Second 40 years: in Midian, after fleeing Egypt
 - 3. Third 40 years: leading Israel through the Wilderness
 - ii. The prophecy God gave to Moses in **Deuteronomy 18:15-19** (also cited by Peter in **Acts 3**) applied to Jesus.
 - 1. God had told Moses, "I will raise up a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and I will put My word in His mouth, and He shall speak all I command Him." (**Deuteronomy 18:15**, LXX, OSB)

2. The great Prophet to come (the Christ) was to be “like Moses”.
 3. If we look at the lives of Jesus and Moses, we should expect to see many unusual similarities, according to this prophecy.
 4. Stephen alludes to some of the similarities:
 - a. God had selected Moses (like Jesus) *to deliver his people* from their bondage and *to be their ruler*.
 - b. Moses (like Jesus) showed *miraculous signs and wonders* from God.
 - c. Moses (like Jesus) was *initially rejected by his own people*, when he addressed their sins against one another. They responded, “*Who made you ruler and judge over us?*” (**Acts 7:27**).
 5. Throughout this series we will note other striking ways in which the Jesus is “like Moses”, in terms of dozens of extraordinary parallels between their lives.
 - a. This is especially important to understand when we are reaching out to Muslims, since they incorrectly claim that “the Prophet” God was promising in **Deuteronomy 18:15-19** referred to Mohammad.
 - b. The better we understand the life of Moses, the easier it will be to logically demolish the false claims of Muslims on this point.
 - c. We will prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the promised “Prophet like Moses” refers to Jesus, not Mohammad.
- iii. The essence of Stephen’s message (why he retold the story of Moses, and why Stephen was killed) is a two-point sermon:
1. *Your forefathers rejected Joseph and Moses*, men who were sent by God. They also persecuted and killed the prophets, who foretold the coming of the Righteous One.
 2. You are *just like your forefathers!*
 - a. They had just rejected and killed the Just One, the Christ, the Son of Man who is now standing at the right hand of God!

- iv. If we compare what Stephen is saying in his speech versus the Masoretic Text (Hebrew OT used the basis for most modern English language Bible translations) and the Septuagint (abbreviated LXX, the Greek language Old Testament translated c. 200-250 BC) it is pretty clear that Stephen was coming out of the LXX. We can see this in his quotes from the Old Testament here, as well as in some of the details he provides. Stephen's following the LXX is consistent with the pattern we see from the apostles and early Christian writers: generally relying on the LXX when they quote from the Old Testament.
 - 1. For example, when Stephen states that "75 people" came down to Egypt with Jacob, in **Acts 7:14** this is what it says in **Exodus 1:5** the LXX (but not in the Masoretic Text).
 - 2. Also consider where Stephen quotes passages from the Old Testament, such as in **Acts 7:42-43** where he quotes from **Amos 5:25-27**. Compare Stephen's quote, "*you took up the tent of Molech and the star of your god Remphan*" against both the Masoretic Text and the LXX.
 - 3. Clearly Stephen assumed that his opponents were using that text as well. Giving such a controversial and incendiary speech, there is no way one would want to use a text that your enemies could deride as questionable or suspect.
 - 4. **Question:** If the LXX is the text that Stephen, hand-picked by the apostles and "filled with the Holy Spirit" (**Acts 6:5 & 7:55**) was using, *why shouldn't we also use it today*, rather than the Masoretic Text?
 - a. That is one of the reasons we will be relying predominantly on the LXX for our text in this series of lessons.

V. Keep in Mind the 'Exodus Map'

- a. As we have discussed in a previous lesson, "*The Exodus Map*", the New Testament points to the exodus journey (from bondage in Egypt to entering the Promised Land) as foreshadowing the Christian life. This story foreshadowed *God's plan to deliver us from spiritual bondage and bring us to heaven*.
- b. This point (the exodus journey foreshadowing the Christian life) is made in the New Testament:
 - i. By Paul in **1 Corinthians 10:1-13**;
 - ii. By the Hebrews writer in **Hebrews 3-4**; and

- iii. By Jude in **Jude v. 5**.
- c. Paul outlines many of the parallels in the **1 Corinthians 10** passage. However, some early Christian writers (Cyprian, Gregory of Nyssa) also speak about this, sometimes explaining other details of the parallel not specifically mentioned by Paul.
- d. Overview of the parallels, taken from the New Testament and early Christian writers (we will be discussing details throughout this series):
 - i. Jesus' sacrifice = Passover Lamb that was slain
 - ii. Lord's supper = Passover meal (eating flesh of the Passover Lamb, remembering the sacrifice); also the spiritual food and drink that sustained God's people in the Wilderness
 - iii. Blood of Jesus that protects us = blood of the Passover Lamb to be placed on the doorframes of the houses, to protect those inside from death
 - iv. Baptism = crossing the Red Sea
 - v. Holy Spirit = pillar of cloud and fire that led the people to the water and all the way to the Promised Land
 - vi. Heaven (ultimate destination) = Promised Land
 - vii. Christian life (between baptism and death) = 40 years in the Wilderness, a time of testing
 - viii. Sins that will lead to our destruction = sins Israelites committed in the Wilderness that led to their deaths; also represented by the yeast that must be cast out after the Passover Lamb is slain
 - ix. The righteous (few) Christians who will make it to heaven = Joshua and Caleb
 - x. Those who become Christians but do not make it to the end = those who fell in the Wilderness because of sin
 - xi. Old life in the world before we become Christians = Egypt
 - xii. Satan = Pharaoh, the cruel and lying ruler who does not want to let his captive subjects go
- e. As we are going through the story of the exodus journey, let us keep these things in mind so that we can learn all the important lessons in there for us, and so we can use these lessons to help others come to faith and make it to heaven in the end.

VI. Slaves in Egypt

- a. Read **Exodus 1:1-22**.
- b. The storyline
 - i. Things change for the Jews over time.
 - ii. Egypt turns into a time of slavery and oppression.
 - iii. Pharaoh comes up with a devious plan to turn the tables on the Jews: "Come, let us outwit them..."
 - iv. The Jews are afflicted and humbled by violent, oppressive taskmasters.
 - v. They are forced to bitter and hard labor making bricks and working in the fields for the Egyptians.
 - vi. We see Pharaoh is a mass-murderer, from the beginning of the story.
 1. He tries to get the midwives to kill the Hebrew baby boys.
 2. When that fails, he gives orders that all the baby boys be cast into the river, to die by drowning.
- c. Lessons we can learn from this chapter.
 - i. God always keeps his promises; including the tough one made hundreds of years earlier to Abraham.
 - ii. Often things get bad for God's people before they get better.
 1. Consider Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego (**Daniel 1-6**).
 2. Consider the story of **Job**.
 3. Consider David being hunted down by Saul in David's early days (**1 Samuel 18-31**).
 4. Consider the apostles and other close followers of Jesus, immediately after He was crucified (**Luke 24**).
 5. So many times throughout spiritual history, God's people are ground down through trials right before the Lord delivers them.
 - iii. God in His sovereignty does things for His own reasons, which only become apparent over time.

- iv. While it may look like evil is triumphing, God will use it to accomplish His own purposes.
- v. One of the benefits of reading the Old Testament is that we find great heroes of faith, for us to imitate. Here we find *two unlikely heroines: the Hebrew midwives*.
 - 1. They refuse to follow the orders of Pharaoh, because they fear God more than they fear Pharaoh!
 - 2. Similar to Rahab, who risked her life to save the spies *because she feared God*. Read **Joshua 2:8-13**.
 - 3. Their action, risking their lives to save the righteous, is similar to what we see in the magi, the wise men. After being warned by God, they would not cooperate with King Herod and departed by another route (**Matthew 2:1-12**).
 - 4. Importance of fearing God (rather than fearing people):
 - a. Peter admonishes Christians to “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. *Fear God*. Honor the king.” (**1 Peter 2:17**, NKJV).
 - b. Jesus speaks about fearing God (not men) in connection with spreading the message.
 - i. Read **Matthew 10:16-33**.
 - ii. When the apostles were afraid of the reaction of others when spreading the message of the kingdom, Jesus told them to *fear God*, not people!
 - c. **Question:** What do you believe is the No. 1 reason most Christians rarely open their mouths to spread the gospel to unbelievers?
 - i. **Obvious Answer:** They (we) fear the reactions of people.
 - d. Read **Acts 4:29-31**. The apostles prayed for boldness (to spread the message of the kingdom) in the face of threats from their own people, the Jewish leaders.
 - i. The challenge for us: to imitate the heroes of faith (like the two midwives). Let us fear God, and stop being afraid of people!