



Lesson 5:

Israel's Liberation

Exodus 1:1 - 18:27

“He humbled you and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

—Deuteronomy 8:3

For further study:
Watch the Lecture by Dr. James Hoffmeier,
The Exodus in Light of Recent Archeological and Geological Work in the Northern Sinai
<http://vimeo.com/24777556>

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Structure of Exodus⁶

I. Israel's liberation chs. 1—18

- A. Israel's affliction (Israel is Egypt's possession) 1:1—2:14
- B. Deliverance 2:15—18:27
 - A Midian: Moses' commission 2:15—4:28
 - B Enemy: Egypt defeated 4:29—15:21
 - C Water: bitter to sweet and 12 springs 15:22-27
 - D Food: manna and quail ch. 16**
 - C' Water: out of rock 17:1-7
 - B' Enemy: Amalek defeated 17:8-16
 - A' Midian: Moses accepts wisdom ch. 18

II. Israel's adoption chs. 19—40

- A Covenant delivered 19:1—24:11
 - B Tabernacle planned 24:12—27:21
 - C Priestly instructions chs. 28—30
 - D Craftsmen's direction 31:1-11
 - E Sabbath instructions 31:12-18
 - F Covenant broken ch. 32**
 - F' Covenant renewed chs. 33—34**
 - E' Sabbath reminded 35:1-3
 - D' Craftsmen and construction 35:4—38:31
 - C' Priests prepared ch. 39
 - B' Tabernacle completed 40:1-33
 - A' Covenant sealed 40:34-38

Historicity of the Exodus

There are three views on the history of the Exodus:

1. It happened as written.
2. A great embellishment of distant memories.
3. Pious fiction.

A good approach: Study the story of the Scriptures as they are written. Hold the study of history and the study of the story in tension. Where there are discrepancies with the study of ancient history, be faithfully patient. Many of these questions work themselves out.

⁶ Constable, Thomas, Notes on Exodus: 2013 Edition (Sonic Light Publishing, 2013) pgs. 4-5.



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Israel's Affliction (1:1-2:14)

Multiplying in Egypt

Remember Genesis, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:28)? Well that is exactly what the Israelites were doing. The promises to the patriarchs of numerous descendants were being fulfilled. In Egypt, Israel grew from a big family to a great people. Where the Patriarchs suffered from too much infertility, the Hebrews in bondage experienced the opposite: the people were fruitful and multiplied and grew exceedingly strong! (1:7, 20) And that was a problem—to Pharaoh!

Hard Labor

While the initial relationship between Pharaoh and Joseph was positive, there arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph. (1:8) The people of Israel were a threat to be controlled and subdued. The bondage was cruel and Israel cried out to God. And God *heard...remembered...saw...and knew.*

Food for Thought: God remembers his covenant with us, he forgets our sins. (Jer. 31:34, Heb. 8:12)

Moses Commission and Wisdom

In Midian, Moses is chosen to be the mouthpiece of the Deliverer of the people of Israel. God reveals himself to Moses in “the bush ablaze with fire” that nevertheless is “not consumed”. (3: Yet he a reluctant ruler, “Here I am, send him”—Aaron that is. Moses’ is deeply insecure when it comes to his own ability to lead and to speak. He raises several objections with YHWH, “Who am I?”

Moses must learn that his authority and power to lead Israel and speak to Pharaoh come not from himself but from the Sovereign One, YHWH who will equip him and use him as *instrument of deliverance*. He is given the confidence of the Divine Presence, the authority of the Divine Name: YHWH, a Staff for doing signs, and an assistant Mouthpiece: Aaron. But even will all of these helps and aids, Egypt will need to be “compelled by a mighty hand” it will require that the Lord stretch out his hand and strike Egypt! (3:19)

“...the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.”

--Exodus 2:23-24



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“I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you let my son go that he may serve me.’ If you refuse to let him go, behold I will kill your firstborn son.”

—Exodus 4:21-23

Hardness of Heart

While Moses and Aaron implements the divine directives to go speak to Pharaoh (5:1) they lose the courteousness and diplomacy that the LORD had encouraged in 3:18. Indeed, Pharaoh responds in kind: “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover I will not let Israel go.” (5:2) He then made the burdens and the bondage greater, but he is about to “know the LORD.”

Pharaoh himself is responsible for his own sinful response to Moses and the call of YHWH, but he is also used by YHWH to display his Mighty Power and Strong Hand. God will harden Pharaoh’s heart in order to multiply his own display of power in deliverance. The Apostle Paul will reflect on the sovereignty of God with respect to Moses and the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. God “raised up” Pharaoh for a purpose. He was the LORD’s instrument to “show his wrath and make his power known”, in order that he may also reveal “the riches of his glory to the objects of his mercy.” (Romans 9:14-23)

The Mighty Acts of YHWH (6:2-15:21)

Ten Plagues

Plague 1: Water into Blood

Plague 2: A Frog Infestation

Plague 3: Learning a Lesson from Lice

Plague 4: Inundated with Insects

Plague 5: Heavy Pestilence, Heavy Heart

Plague 6: Pharaoh Not Bothered by Boils

Plague 7: God’s Hail, Moses Hands

Plague 8 Lots and Lots of Locusts

Plague 9: A Darkness That One Can Feel

The Final Plague: The Firstborn’s Death

Each plague displays power over Pharaoh and the “gods” of Egypt. As Pharaoh is receiving his lesson “that there is no one like the LORD, our God”, he responds with repentance but then duplicitously changes his mind. At first the texts tells us it is Pharaoh who hardens his own heart (7:22, 8:15, 19, 32, 9:7, 34), as Pharaoh begins to wither under the punishing plagues, the LORD “raised him up” (9:35-36, 10:1-2) for another round by hardening his heart so that he would not let them go (9:12, 10:20, 27).



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Redemption: The LORD's Passover

The final plague is the Passover of the Lord. God begins to address the "congregation" of Israel. He establishes a time through marking days and months and establishing annual remembrance of a "memorial day". "But my, what a monumental change happens in a person's life when God is in Charge of one's time instead of Pharaoh! Expectation replaces resignation. Hope replaces numbness. Rhapsody replaces routine. Celebration replaces drudgery."⁷

The LORD's Passover is where judgment and mercy converge. The blood of a lamb sacrificed and spread on the doorposts and lintel of the homes will be a sign for the people and the LORD of Judgment and Redemption. When the Angel of the Lord passes over the nation of Egypt he will judge, but he will not strike the homes where he sees the blood.

John the Baptist would later refer to Jesus as "The Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the World." (John 1:29) Jesus himself would retell the story of the Passover by applying the meal to his own work on the Cross and the New Covenant.

Blessed Deliverance: The Exodus

The Israelites were redeemed by the blood of the sacrificed lamb, now they needed to be delivered from their bondage by the power of God. Israel no longer belonged to Pharaoh, they now belonged to the LORD. "Consecrate to me all the firstborn."

The Israelites are led by God through the waters of the Red, or Reed Sea (the Hebrew is uncertain). The miraculous crossing again displays both the power of YHWH and the powerlessness of the most powerful and feared human army of the world at that time. "YHWH is a man of war; the LORD is his name!" (15:3)

The Lord Your Healer

Someone once said, "It took 40 years to get Egypt out of Israel." Being redeemed and delivered is just the beginning of the renewed relationship between Israel and YHWH. Israel must learn to trust YHWH to be their "healer" (15:26). The miraculous provision of water, manna and quail demonstrate God's provision, in spite of Israel's grumbling and nostalgia for Egypt. Trust and obey!

"When Pharaoh is in charge of time, one's days become an endless repetition of wearisome toil that in time may seem to go on forever. Past and future are just limitless extensions of an intolerable present."

J. G. Janzen, Exodus p. 81

Alleluia, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us! Therefore let us keep the feast! Alleluia!
--BCP, p. 364

"Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?"
--Moses (Exodus 17:2)

"Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"
--The Israelites (Ex. 17:3)

⁷ Victor Hamilton, Exodus (Baker Academic, 2011) p. 179.



True Greatness

Matthew 18

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Structure

Faltering Faith and True Greatness (13:54 – 18:35)

- A. Resisting Faith in Jesus (13:54 – 17:27)
- B. Ecclesial Sermon: True Greatness within Kingdom Family Life (18:1-35)

Present Opposition and Future Victory (19:1 – 25:46)

- A. Intensifying Opposition (19:1 – 23:39)
- B. Eschatological Sermon: Future Victory (24:1 – 25:46)

Faltering Faith and True Greatness

Ecclesial sermon: True Greatness within the Kingdom Family (18)

The fourth discourse of teaches that in order to go great heights one must stoop to the lowest depths. Self-centeredness must give way to repentance and forgiveness in the community of faith.

- Humility as Children: 18:2-4
- Care for the Weak: 18:5-14
- Dealing with Sin: 18:15-20
- Forgiving Sin: 18:21-35