



Lesson 8 / April 30, 2017

THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT

Exodus 1-15

Key Verse

“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. 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 6:6-7

Discussion Questions

1. Read Exodus 6:1-13. Why does God redeem Israel even when they do not believe in him?
2. Why do you think God chose Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt?
3. What is the significance of God's name, Yahweh, in Exodus 3?
4. How does God demonstrate his power over Pharaoh?
5. What do you make of God “hardening” Pharaoh's heart? See Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 14:4, 17 and Romans 9:17-18.
6. How is God a “warrior”? Do you think of God as a warrior?
7. How does this redemption become a model, or paradigm, for redemption in Scripture?
8. How does the Passover foreshadow the sacrifice of Christ?
9. Have you experienced the redemption God offers us in Christ?

Question 15: How does God redeem us?

Short Answer: *God redeems us by delivering us from slavery to evil.*

Full Answer: *God redeems us by delivering us from slavery to evil, by his power and grace, with a price paid in blood, for the purpose of establishing us as his people who will faithfully worship him.*

Question 16: What does the Passover signify?

Short Answer: *The Passover signifies the price of our redemption.*

Full Answer: *The Passover signifies the price of our redemption, namely the substitutionary sacrifice of a perfect lamb so that we are marked by innocent blood as the people of God and thereby saved from death.*

Summary

When we turn from the first book of the Bible to the second book, from Genesis to Exodus, we move forward in history 400 years and Exodus 1 reveals that a lot has changed. Abraham's descendants – the Israelites – have grown from 70 people into a great nation. The Egyptians have forgotten about Joseph and over time they have enslaved the Israelites and subjected them to increasing abuse. The Israelites have forgotten about their God and they have begun to worship the gods of Egypt (see Joshua 24:14). The breaking point comes when Pharaoh, king of Egypt, decides he will kill Israel's newborn sons. Israel cries out for deliverance and the God they have forgotten remembers them. God hears their cry, remembers his covenant with Abraham, and determines to redeem them. God will take back for himself the people who belong to him that they might faithfully worship him.

The book of Exodus tells the dramatic story of God's work to redeem Israel and to lead them in an exodus (= mass departure) out of Egypt. This exodus actually develops as a series of events orchestrated carefully by God. Through these events, we learn about God's identity and power, as God reveals himself to be a warrior who delivers his people.

The redemption story begins with a burning bush that burns and yet is not burned (Exod 3-4). From this bush, God calls Moses and appoints him to be the person through whom God will lead Israel out of Egypt. Moses is a murderer on the run who has killed an Egyptian and fled into the wilderness. He has no credibility, no following, and no skills of warfare or even of public speaking. Yet God selects Moses not *despite* his flaws, but precisely *because* of his flaws so that Israel will learn not to place their trust in a human leader such as Moses, but in the God who sends Moses. And who is this God? God identifies himself as *Yahweh*, a Hebrew word (sometimes pronounced *Jehovah*) which literally means "I AM" and is often translated into English as "LORD." The LORD is the one true God, the *I AM*, the self-existent and self-determining God who covenanted with Abraham and who will now redeem his people.

Through Moses, God unleashes a program of divine shock and awe – ten plagues designed to demonstrate the full extent of his power (Exod 5-11). In the first nine plagues, God uses creation itself (water, creatures, weather, light, etc.) as weapons against Pharaoh, but at the same time God hardens Pharaoh's heart so that Pharaoh cannot end the bombardment by letting Israel go. Think of the mighty

power of God, who not only controls creation, but who also manipulates the heart and thoughts of the world's most powerful human! And God's demonstration of power is finally complete only after He establishes his sovereign power over human life itself by taking the lives of Egypt's firstborns in the tenth plague. And unlike Pharaoh, God's plan to take human life will not be thwarted by a few stubborn midwives!

The tenth plague also brings to us the important story of the Passover (Exod 12-13). God gives detailed instructions to graciously preserve Israel from the tenth plague. The Israelites must sacrifice a perfect lamb, feast on its meat, spread its blood on their doorposts, and prepare unleavened bread for a journey. Death "passes over" those homes marked by the blood of perfect lambs and their firstborns are spared, but the Egyptian firstborns are taken and a great cry of mourning arises in Egypt. Pharaoh finally relents and lets God's people go.

But God's redemption requires one final signature act to seal the deal and to impress (forever?) upon Israel the power and glory of their God (Exod 14). God first leads Israel into a dead-end at the shore of the Red Sea, then he hardens Pharaoh's heart such that Pharaoh pursues Israel with his army. Israel despairs that all hope is lost. How quickly they have forgotten the God who just unleashed the ten plagues upon Egypt! God parts the waters and Israel passes through on dry ground, and when the Egyptian army follows, God closes the waters over them and utterly destroys them. Now, with the redemption complete, Moses and the Israelites celebrate their God (Exod 15). They sing, "The LORD is a warrior," *our* warrior, who has routed our enemies, redeemed us, and established us as his people.

The events of this redemption, and especially the Passover event, will become an important model in Scripture for *how* God accomplishes redemption. Indeed, God commands Israel to observe a Passover feast every year as a constant reminder of how God redeemed them from Egypt. And this Passover foreshadows God's greatest redemption in Christ, who is himself our "Passover Lamb" (1 Cor 5:7) now sacrificed for us, so that all who believe in Him are redeemed by his blood and receive new life in His name. In Christ, the LORD is indeed *our* warrior who saves us from sin and death.