

Israel's Deliverance from Egypt: Pictures of the Gospel (Part 1: Bondage)

In the history of Israel, there is no greater person, no greater event, than Moses and Israel's miraculous deliverance from Egypt. It was at that time that the Hebrew people were formed into a great nation. Moses was their great deliverer, their great leader. He spoke with God "*face to face*" (Exod. 33:11) on the great mountain in Sinai. God gave Moses his laws and he communicated them to Israel. Now, many people merely read the story of Moses and Israel's deliverance as history only. Or they read it as just an inspiring story. Or they read to try and find certain truths that might help them. But, as Christians, people of faith, as we who are also included in the great family of Abraham (Gal. 3:7), we see in this story the great plan of God to bless a people, and to ultimately bless the whole world. God will keep his covenant; He has promised!

Now, when we come to this story, we must not read it, or understand it, in and of itself. These are historical facts from real people and a real deliverance. But, this story pictures a greater deliverance, a greater bondage, a greater deliverer! This story pictures and finds its true meaning in the Gospel of Christ. The earthly Land of Canaan was never meant to be an end in itself. The occupation of the earthly "seed" of Abraham was not the end. This story, with all its types and shadows, is designed to picture the church, the people of God by faith, who will one day enter into glory; and which has now been inaugurated in the TRUE deliverer, Jesus Christ.

In Israel's great deliverance we see earthly principles that prepare the people of God for heavenly principles. This is why I am so excited to preach 4 sermons on I Israel's deliverance from slavery. I believe these sermons will be very helpful to us as we put this story into God's great plan of redemption. I want to cover 4 big parts of their deliverance: 1) Bondage in slavery, 2) Deliverer; 3) Deliverance; and 4) Time in the Dessert. Today, we begin with Israel in bondage, which pictures mankind's greater bondage to sin and death.

I. Bondage. Let's begin with Israel's bondage in slavery at the time of Moses' birth. I have two truths: 1) In His mercy, God deliver his people from the bondage of sin, and 2) God prepares his people for heaven.

1. Notice the great mercy of God to deliver his people from the bondage of sin. I get this from the depths of Israel's depravity in Egypt at the time of Moses' birth. If we look at the history, Israel began its time 400 years earlier with Joseph who was 2nd in charge of the nation behind Pharaoh. And at that time Joseph and the Hebrews were greatly favored by Egypt. Joseph was seen as Egypt's great savior. He led them through 7 years of drought to become (possibly) the premier power of the world. And Joseph, with Pharaoh's blessing invited Jacob and his brothers and all their families and possessions to come and live. They were given the great Land of Goshen, arguably the best land in Egypt (See Fairbairn, *Typology of Scripture*.) Jacob, at the end of his life blesses his sons and repeats God's promise to one day take them back to Canaan. I think as a people, concerning "faith" they are greatly favored. They trust God. They trust his promises. They know God will one day take them back to Canaan.

However, this is not the case 400 years later. They develop into a great nation. They enjoy the blessings of Egypt. (They don't become slaves until much later.) But over time, their hearts

gravitate to the pleasures, and even the gods of Egypt, which later becomes evident as to how deep it fits their mindset that they can witness all the miracles of God and still make a golden calf (cow worship was prevalent in Egypt). It had gotten so bad that Moses later had to ask God's name so he could explain Him to the people (Exod. 3:13). They were steeped in Egyptian idolatry. They had forgotten how to worship God in the right way. They certainly do not appear to be living by faith. The longer they stay in Egypt, the more corrupt they become.

And then, after almost 400 years, where do we find this people? They are forced to make bricks and build Egypt's buildings as slaves. They are persecuted. National laws are established against them as they are required to kill their male infants. And if they were to continue what would their fate be? If God were to leave them in their idolatry, and in their physical slavery what would become of them? They would either assimilate into Egypt or in their rebellion, be conquered and cease to be a nation! Let me ask, "*Do you think they deserve to be delivered?*" Of course not!

But . . . God . . . ! God did not forget his promises to Abraham, to bless them and bring them to his land of promise. God did not forsake his people. God will not leave them as slaves. He will deliver them. And again, He will renew his covenant with Moses. And He will teach them again how to worship properly. And more importantly, he will not leave them in their sin of idolatry.

Now, turn with me to Ephesians 2. And as you are turning there, think about us. Are we any different? Which of us has not sinned against God? Which of us has a sinless nature? Which of us can say on our own, "God is my treasure." All of us come from the same father, Adam. We are all born with his sinful nature. It is our inheritance in and of ourselves as children of Adam. And if we are left to ourselves, there will be no deliverance from sin and death. For the wages of sin is death! (Rom. 6:23). And if left to ourselves, we will go down the road of sin, death, and separation from God. Now, look at Eph. 2:1-3: "**And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind . . .**" The slavery of the Hebrews pictures the slavery we all have to sin and death. And if we are left to ourselves, we will perish. We will never find favor with God. There is something worse than slavery in Egypt! There is something worse than being in a man's prison! It is eternal slavery to sin without God; without his favor, without his blessing, without his love.

Now look at v. 4. But God . . . These are the best words a sinner can hear. But God . . . Such was the case with physical Israel in Egypt as they found themselves at the bottom of sin and idolatry with no hope . . . except the promise of God in his covenant with them. Oh, the depths of our bondage to sin and death! But God . . . vv. 4-6 "**being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.**" Beloved, we are rich in sin. We are rich in ourselves. We are rich in idolatry. But . . . God . . . is rich in mercy. And this mercy is found, not in Moses but in Christ, the ONE in whom ALL God's promises are fulfilled! Patrick Fairbairn says: "**true religion was never at a lower point in the family of Abraham than in the last**

days of Egypt.” And such is the case with every son of Adam who finds himself/herself in bondage to sin. But . . . God!

Let's read together:

Pastor: For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age

Congregation: waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works (Titus 2:11-14)

Pastor: But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy

Congregation: by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)

Pastor: And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

Congregation: This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (Col. 2:13-15).

2. God Must Prepare His People to Receive Heaven. We see this with Israel in Egypt. They were not living in the land God had promised to Abraham. They were in a foreign land. And yes, this was also God's plan as he would take care of them in Egypt and make them into a great people. But, in earthly terms, Egypt was not their home. Where was their earthly home of promise? Their home was Canaan. Therefore, God must not only take them to Canaan, He must also prepare them to receive Canaan. He will do this in two ways: 1) He will prepare their hearts; and 2) He will teach them through experience and prepare them physically to take the land and live there. (We will only have time to speak about the first way this morning.)

Let's think about this a little more. Israel had become way too comfortable in Egypt over the years. They had been there for almost 400 years. And I gather that, as a whole, they were not ready to leave the comforts of Egypt. They were not ready to give up the pleasures they enjoyed. And, they were not ready to leave the idolatry of the land. Now, this did not happen all at once. When they began their time in Egypt, they were full of faith. Jacob and his family witnessed the great work of God in Joseph to preserve them. They were given the best land. Pharaoh cared for them. And at the end of his life Jacob blesses his children and makes great prophecies over their lives. He tells them to take his bones back to Canaan. Joseph does the same. But, over time, generation after generation, we find a very different Israel. We find an Israel with a heart not desiring Canaan, much less ready to set their delights on that land.

And, as we've seen, God could have left them there in their rebellion. But he did not. He delivers them from slavery. But, in the meantime, God must work on their hearts that they might desire Canaan. Think about it. If we count 40 years as a generation, Israel would have had 10 generations in their 400 years in Israel. Brothers and sisters, I can only grasp the overlapping of about 3 generations that have come and are going. But to think about moving my entire family to a land I have never been to and resettle is almost unthinkable. It would be kind of like me telling all of us we are moving to Asia to stay forever (and everything that would go along with that). I promise you, I would not go unless my heart says, "Yes." Motive is the key to everything. "***Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.***" And Israel was not ready, in their heart, to leave Egypt! So, what does God do? In his mercy and grace, he begins to prepare their hearts for Canaan once again. How does he do this?

Exod. 1:8-11 says: "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. 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." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses."

Here we see the grace of God, the love of God, as he begins to discipline his people and turn their hearts back to him. And in God's providence, Egypt starts to persecute the Hebrews. Instead of a privileged people they become a nation of slaves. Does this sound like mercy and grace? Over time they become slaves. But, what happens in their slavery? They begin, once again to pray to God and ask for deliverance. And God answers as the parents of Moses, by faith, put the infant into a basket, which is the beginning of their turning back to God and a desire for his promise in the Land of Canaan. And in the coming days we will see great hardships as he prepares their hearts for Canaan. This is a principle we see throughout the Bible. With OT Israel, God often judges his people. And when he does, he also keeps his promise not to completely destroy them. And at the right times, God works through affliction, hardships, persecutions to cause his people to long for Him, to long for heaven.

Application: God disciplines his children to prepare to leave the things of this world behind. He prepares through the discipline of affliction, persecutions, hardships, to draw our hearts away from this world and to love Him. If you do not love Jesus, what will you like about heaven? For his people of faith, God disciplines us in such a way that we seek things that are above. What do you think would have happened with the Hebrews if hardships and persecution had not come? Do you think they would have ever left Egypt? How vain would have been any attempt to get them to love Canaan if the difficulties had not arrived when they did?

If you love your sin, if you love this world, pray for God's discipline! I think this kind of a prayer is really a test to know if a person really has faith or not! Who wants God's discipline?! But, if I see my heart moving to the things of this world, the people of this world, the fleeting pleasures of sin, as a person of faith I will pray for God to work on me, in whatever way He sees fit.

Beloved, if you love the things of this world, what makes you think you will love heaven? If you love yourself and your own desires, and your own idolatrous sins, and you are the “lord” of your life, what makes you think you will love the Lord of heaven? Why would you want to go there if you have nothing in common with heavenly things? We cannot serve two masters! Therefore, “choose this day whom you will serve.”

Application: The kingdom of God must be entered through tribulation. What Israel experienced in affliction is a testimony to this common truth. Difficulties and tribulations come from the hand of God to prevent our minds and our hearts to wed with this world, with temporal things, things that do not last. The Apostle Paul says: “**For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us**” (Rom. 8:18). He also says: “**For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal**” (2 Cor. 4:17-18). This means that trials and tribulations are common for God’s people of faith. One person said: “Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions.” Is this your mindset? Know this truth should change how we view hardships! The kingdom of God must be entered through tribulation.

Now, in closing, we must turn to the gospel of Christ as the ultimate application of our two truths.

Truth 1: Our bondage is not in physical slavery. Our bondage is slavery to sin. And who is our redeemer? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. And even Israel of Moses’ time, by faith looked forward to his day! God fulfilled his promise to send the Messiah. And those who look to him by faith, knowing that he laid down his life a sinless sacrifice, and trust his blood, will find the mercy and grace of God and be delivered from their sins.

Truth 2) God prepares his people to receive heaven. It is only as we look unto Christ that we are able to leave the things of this world behind. It is only as we follow him through the power of the Holy Spirit that our hearts can love God and not the things of this world. This is why I am sure that the greatest motive to love and live as we ought in this world is Christ and his great beauty!