

## OT Essentials - Exodus: The Global God

July 7, 2019

Brian R. Wipf

So far in our *OT Essentials* series, we've looked at Adam and Eve and then progressed to the very important couple of Abraham and Sarah and saw the beginnings of God's redemptive plan - the inauguration of his covenantal love not just to Abraham and his wife, but to everyone who believes like Abraham so that the world might be blessed. Jacob (or Israel) was the grandson of Abraham; he was the man God formed into a nation, a people of God's very own possession. And this very large extended family of Israel even includes you and me by virtue of our faith in Christ, the most important grandchild of Israel who welcomes everyone who trusts and believes in him to this family, this people of God's.

Today, we are going to talk about the Exodus. You can not possibly overstate the importance of the Exodus to the story of God's grace. Everything was different after the Exodus. Let me give you an example: before the Exodus God often identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but after the Exodus he frequently calls himself as *the God who led you out of Egypt* instead. Think about that change? God put his unique fingerprint on the Exodus in such a way that the people were to see God and relate to God in a new way because of what he did for them in Egypt.

So, to understand why the Exodus is so essential, let me try and do the impossible and give you a summary of what happened. When God made his covenant with Abraham in Gen. 15, he told Abraham about a time of suffering for his people in the future. In Gen. 15:13 we read this, "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 will be afflicted for four hundred years.'" Imagine getting that prophecy from God. Many of you have families. You have kids; many of you have grandkids. Imagine how receiving a prophecy like that would loom large in your imagination. Sometime in the future your family will be afflicted. "When will it happen? How bad will it get?" I can't imagine knowing that. But it wasn't all bad news; in the very next verse we're told (vs. 14), "But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward, they (your family) shall come out with great possessions."

Later in Genesis we learn that the family of Jacob, all 77 of them seek refuge in Egypt during a time of a famine. Almost the entire 2nd half of Genesis chronicles the miraculous way God got Jacob and his family into Egypt. And that was grace; that was mercy, not just for Jacob and his family, but for Egypt and the whole known world. The famine was going to be great, but by God's grace he provided help. The people of Israel were revered and appreciated in Egypt because they knew without Joseph, the special son of Israel, they would have died.

But in the very beginning of the Book of Exodus the bad news begins; vs. 8 says, "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." Somehow this new king didn't know what God had done through Joseph and his family in the salvation of Egypt from famine

(there's a lesson there: know your history, friends). Rather than appreciating Joseph, Israel, and their God, the people of Egypt started hating and despising the nation of Israel. They soon oppressed and enslaved the nation of Israel. The opening chapters of Exodus use the word bitter over and over again to describe the treatment and slavery Israel had to endure in Egypt. Things were absolutely terrible. Turn with me to Exodus 2 to read the response of the people after all of this slavery and abuse (READ vs. 23ff).

God sent his servant Moses to deliver the people out of slavery. And a focal point of God's deliverance are his 10 wonders. Many times we refer to them as the 10 plagues, but the Bible prefers to call them *wonders* and sometimes *judgments*. That's an important word: by great acts of *judgment* the Lord is going to free his people from slavery in Egypt. When God sent his 10 wonders he was judging the Egyptians as much as he was liberating his people. Now, we're going to come back to this word judgment in a few minutes so don't forget that word.

After the 10 wonders, Egypt is in ruins. God has decimated the land and the nation. Their economy is destroyed. There's death throughout the land. And their puny, fake gods have been exposed as frauds. Pharaoh sends Israel out just like God promised; as conquerors of Egypt. But God has one last spectacle in mind; he has one last act of judgment - one last act of deliverance. And that happens at the Red Sea. I know many of you know the story. God purposefully backs his people in a corner so they only have one option - trust in God. God hardens the hearts of the Egyptians so they pursue the Israelites even more. With the Red Sea in front of them and the Egyptian army behind them, they're scared. I love what Moses says to them in their fear (Ex. 14:13); imagine him calling out over the people with a loud voice, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again." God splits the Red Sea so the people walk to safety on dry ground. When the Egyptians pursue them, God fights for them and brings the waters of the Red Sea on top of them destroying the armies of Egypt. Ex. 14:30-31 gives this concluding statement, "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses." Read Exodus sometime for yourself; your eyes will get big, your heart will pound a little harder, and if God is gracious, you, too, will fear the Lord and believe in him.

So, why is this all essential for our faith today? How does it help our understanding of God and faith as NT and NC believers? There are two things I want to show you from the Exodus story that is absolutely critical for our faith in Jesus today.

The first I'm dubbing: God's supremacy. In the Exodus, God demonstrates that he stands alone as God; he shows that there is no one like him. My guess is you have heard, maybe even have wondered, "Don't we really all believe in the same God? Couldn't we spare ourselves the fighting and the offense if we all agreed to say *your god is like my god*. I call my god Jesus and you call your god Allah, and yours Buddha. And so, I won't try to convince you

my god is better and I'd ask you not to do that to me." The story of the Exodus confirms once and for all that thinking that way is not possible. One of the major points of the Exodus was to show that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was superior to any and all gods. God delivered the Israelites to prove that there was no one like him in all the earth. Let me show you how God did this.

When you start reading the accounts of the 10 wonders, you notice it builds in intensity. It starts small, but grows more and more. And in the growing intensity of God's judgments we see God explaining what he's up to. God doesn't just have a purpose for all the wonders (kind of like a package deal), he's got a purpose for each wonder. And that purpose is to show his greatness over all the earth. Let's do some flipping:

- Ex. 7 ~ At the start of these 10 wonders, God wants the people to know that this wasn't happening by coincidence, he was behind it. That's why we read in vs. 17, "Thus says the Lord, 'By this you shall know that I am the Lord.'" I want you to know me, God says.
- The same purpose and plan of God happens in the second wonder, plague of frogs. In 8:10 we read Moses saying, "Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God." Do you see the purpose there? *So that you know* there is no one like God.
- With the 4th wonder (the plague of flies) we read in 8:22, "But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth." Do you hear the crescendo building from God - There is none like!
- Jump forward to ch. 9. In vs. 16 God says, "But for this purpose I have raised you up (Pharaoh, my nemesis), to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." God is using Pharaoh to spread the greatness of his name to the whole world.
- Look at the opening vs. of chapter 10 (READ vs 1-2). God doesn't just have global plans; he has generational plans. The whole world today and the whole world in the future will know that I am the Lord.

When you put all of these statements from God together it becomes very clear what God is up to, right? He wants every person, every nation, every generation to know that YHWH, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who delivered his people from the land of Egypt, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alone the God of the universe. No is like him. He alone is worthy of worship; he alone is to be obeyed and feared.

And do you know what? It worked! The Exodus worked. The news of the God of Israel spread. Let me show you the proof. Remember the story of Jericho? The first city destroyed in Canaan after the nation of Israel marched around it 7 times and blew their trumpets and shouted? Remember how Rahab hid the spies from the King of Jericho and how God blessed her for it? Listen to what she says to the spies in Joshua 2:8-11 (READ). Do you see? The fame of God's supremacy has spread. And friends, it keeps spreading.

The supremacy of God over everything and every so called god isn't bad news. It's not intolerant news. It's good news. The One True Supreme God welcomes all. He sent his son to die for all. No one is excluded on the basis of culture, ethnicity, or birth place. There is a god who is above all; there is a savior for our sins; there is a god who can help us with our broken heart, our irresponsibility, our depression, our broken marriages. God showcasing his supremacy is great news because we can all know that there is one who can help us. The only requirement is that we turn to him. Rejoice, FBC, in his supremacy and know that it is essential.

The second way the Exodus is essential is in helping us understand our redemption. In 1 Cor. 5 the Apostle Paul calls Christ *our passover lamb*. That phrase is taken straight from the Exodus. Let me tell you how. The 10th wonder, the 10th act of judgment was the killing of the firstborn in Egypt. It was a sobering and awful night. Exodus says there was a great cry in all of Egypt because there wasn't a house where someone was not dead. But God provided a way of escape; he had mercy waiting for everyone who would listen to him. He outlined a very specific plan that included the sacrifice of a lamb. The Bible says the Angel of Death would passover the house that had the blood of that lamb painted on its doorpost.

Now, there's something very important for us to ask or consider: why were the first born of Israel spared? Why didn't the Angel of Death take their life? It's not because they were Israelites. It was not because they were innocent. Many years later after the nation of Israel took possession of the Promised Land, their leader, Joshua, was giving his last charge before he passed away. And do you know what he said? (Josh. 24:14) "Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord." Do you hear that? They still have the gods of Egypt with them. They're still tempted to trust and turn to the gods of the Pharaohs and Egyptians. Decades later, after they've witnessed countless miracles and the incredible faithfulness of God, they still want and worship the gods of the Egyptians. Oh no, the Israelites weren't innocent; they were as guilty as the Egyptians. They had the idols of Egypt on their dressers and table tops just like the Egyptians. Even worse, they had the idols and gods of Egypt in their hearts. There's only one reason why the Angel of Death passed over the homes of the Israelites. They trusted in the word of God and in the blood of the lamb.

Remember the word I said was important moments ago? *Judgment*. The Israelites were guilty of sin just like the Egyptians. It's not like the Israelites were these innocent victims and only the Egyptians were guilty of sin. Everyone was guilty of sin; everyone deserved judgment. But the Israelites believed God; they feared God. So they sacrificed the passover lamb and they lived.

Jesus Christ is our passover lamb. Because he died on that cross and poured out his blood for you and for me, God passes over us. Instead of taking our life in righteous judgment, he lets us live. It's not because we're innocent; it's not because of our gender, skin color, church attendance, giving record... none of that. It's also not because God is sorry for our suffering. He is sorry for our suffering; he hurts for the wounds we have and the poor treatment we've

experienced. But here's something very important to remember: the sufferer is also a sinner. In fact, before we are sufferers (victims) we are sinners. That means while we need healing, we need forgiveness even more. That was true of the Israelites; they did suffer at the hands of the Egyptians. But they were sinners first. And that's just like you and me.

In the passover, in the sacrifice of the passover lamb, the Lord ransomed his people to himself. That means he bought back his people; the cost was death. But the death of a lamb can only do so much. A better, a perfect, sacrifice was still needed. That was Jesus. Jesus was the perfect, sinless, son of God; Jesus was God himself in the flesh. And in his death, our ransom was perfectly paid. God now passes over our sins perfectly and forever because Jesus is our passover lamb.

Pretty essential, right? Knowing that the One True God is a global God. That he reigns over everything and everyone is so important to know. If you don't know that, the supremacy of God over everything in everything, you may think there's somewhere else to turn. There's not. Only God can deliver us.

And also, our salvation from sin can only be understood in light of what we learn about redemption in Exodus. Jesus is our passover lamb. Be glad, FBC, that God has paid the ransom for your deliverance. Now, like those who were rescued from Egypt, serve the Lord with your whole heart.

Key vs. 1 Cor. 5:7

#### Questions for the week

- Why would you say it's important to know that God is supreme?
- Did you learn anything new about your salvation in Christ today? What was that?
- What was the most important thing you heard from the message? How will that impact your life?