

God's Message to Us in Exodus 1-15

Halifax, NS

7 January 2018, 2:00 PM

Introduction

I am very glad to resume our new afternoon sermon series called "God's Message to Us in Every Book of the Bible." I love this series.

- I have been encouraging you to read through the Bible as we go along.
- My plan is to go through the whole Bible to look at the general message of each book as it pertains to us today.
 - The Bible is a very unique book, not only because it is infallible and without error, being God-breathed,
 - But also because it was written not only for the benefit of the original recipients, but also for the benefit of those who live after the coming of Christ.
 - Paul reminds us of this in Romans 15:4 when he says: **For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**
 - So in this series, we are looking at how each book applies to us in our day.

So far, we have only done the book of Genesis... two sermons on it,

- and today we are covering the first part of Exodus: Exodus 1-15.
 - I plan to have two sermons on Exodus as well—with next week overlapping a little as we will go from Exodus 12 to 40.

Like Genesis, Exodus was written by Moses roughly 3500 years ago.

- It is really a continuation of Genesis.
- Genesis actually ends the way a book with a sequel ends.
 - The family of Jacob (or Israel) had received promises from God that they would grow into a great nation that would bring forth the Son that God had promised who would bring blessing to all the nations of the earth.
 - He was the Son that God promised in Genesis 3:15 who would be born of woman and who would crush the head of the serpent who led the human race into rebellion.
 - God had promised to the family of Jacob that He would make them into a great nation and give them the land of Canaan as their inheritance,
 - And that from here, they would bring forth this Son that would save them (as well as the people from all the nations) from their sins.
 - However, God had revealed to Abraham that they would not inherit Canaan for 400 years;
 - that first they must go to Egypt and then be in bondage there for a time.
 - So at the end of Genesis, we have Jacob's family in Egypt with Jacob's son Joseph reminding them that God will surely visit them in Egypt at the appointed time to bring them out from there.
 - He has them promise to bring his bones to Canaan in that day and bury him in the land of promise with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - His bones are a standing reminder of God's promise to them during the time that they are in Egypt, even when they end up in cruel bondage, that God has plans to bring them out.

- So Exodus is a continuation of their history—picking up with them in bondage as the promised time of deliverance or redemption draws near.
 - *Redemption* is a key word to describe what happens in Exodus.
 - *Redemption* is a word that is used for deliverance from slavery.
 - In the ancient world, when a loved one was made a slave to pay a debt or was taken by an enemy in war; it was the duty of a close relative to redeem them if he could.
 - They would do this either by purchasing their freedom—buying them back from slavery...
 - Or if they had been taken into slavery by enemies through war, they would redeem them by raising up an army and conquering those who had taken them.
- Exodus is the account of God redeeming His people from bondage in Egypt to make them into a nation governed by Him in the promised land of Canaan.
 - There are so many lessons for us here because God shaped this history in a way that reveals to us the redemption that He has for His people in Jesus Christ.
 - Not only is it written in a way that reveals this, but the events themselves were arranged by God’s sovereign hand to display this.
 - He brought Israel into Egypt, put them in bondage there, and then delivered them in a way that shows us:
 - how we are in bondage to Satan and his rebellion,
 - how He is the LORD who redeems us from bondage,
 - and how He forms us into a people for Himself.

Those are the three things I want to look at as God’s message to us from Exodus, again:

- How we are in bondage to Satan and his rebellion...
- How God is the LORD who redeems us from bondage...
- And how He forms us into a people for Himself (we will look at this next week).

So let’s get started with:

I. How God shows us in Exodus that we are in bondage to Satan and his rebellion.

A. Exodus opens with a description of Israel (God’s people) in bondage in Egypt.

1. We are told that Joseph and his generation of Jacob’s sons have died (1:6).
 - But in accordance with His promise, God has caused them to multiply in a marvellous way (He had promised that they would be fruitful and multiply there):
 - Look at Exodus 1:7: **But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.**
2. But we are also told in the rest of chapter one that a king arose in Egypt who did not know Joseph.
 - And he is concerned about Israel multiplying and wants to suppress them.
 - He is afraid that they will overpower his kingdom.

- So in an effort to keep them from rising, he puts them to forced servitude...very cruel servitude... in which he deliberately afflicts them.
3. But we learn in verse 12 what always seems to happen when people try to suppress the church, whether in the Old Testament or the New...
 - **(v. 12) the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.**
 - The result is that the Egyptians **were in dread of the children of Israel.** ¹³ **So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor.**
 - Pharaoh even ordered the midwives to kill the sons of the Israelites at birth and when that did not work, ordered the sons that were born to be killed.
 - This was a bad move on Pharaoh's part that will lead, as we shall see, to the LORD killing Pharaoh's son...
- B. But the bondage and the oppression that Israel experiences is the same kind of bondage that we are all in before God redeems us.
1. You see, Pharaoh and the Egyptians are agents of Satan in the rebellion that Satan started against God in the Garden of Eden.
 - As a serpent, he led Adam and Eve to reject God as their God—and Adam was the representative of the whole human race that was to be born of him.
 - Satan succeeded in this, but was told in Genesis 3:15, that God would raise up a people, led by a son that would be born, to turn against Satan and his rebellion and at last overthrow Satan and those who follow him.
 - Satan is obviously terrified whenever he sees God's people multiplying.
 - That is why Pharaoh, Satan's minion, was terrified when he saw Israel multiplying.
 - They are terrified today as they are multiplying in Iran and Iraq and China and India and parts of Africa today in a remarkable way.
 - They are terrified at the threat of Christians taking over!
 - Satan wants to suppress them, and he has his agents—the leaders, the dictators, the rulers—whatever they are, as well as the people of his kingdom.
 - It is incredible to see the alliances that are formed against Christians.
 - For example, in Canada, you have Muslims and feminists (with opposite principles) uniting against the Lord and His people.
 2. Satan brought us into rebellion with him against God and he does not want us to turn back to God and to start serving God.
 - So he does everything he can to keep us in bondage to him.
 - If he can, he will force us to work for him.
 - If he can, he will kill us in an effort to keep us from multiplying.
 - He will even try to convince us that we are better off serving him.
 - We see all three of these approaches in Exodus.
 - a. We have just looked at the forced labour and the murder that did not prevent them from multiplying.
 - But the forced labour *did* prevent them from worshipping God—
 - Satan has them in bondage to do his will... and to serve idols...

- There are sins in our lives that hold us in bondage to Satan—we cannot get free of them.
 - Even though God is calling us to serve Him, we are in bondage and we cannot escape.
 - That is the condition we are in when God’s call first comes to us to repent and follow Him as our redeemer.
- b. And later on in Exodus we see the third approach—Satan trying to make the people think that they would be better off serving him instead of God...
 - The people become discouraged again and again say that they would be better off serving Pharaoh (Satan) rather than the Lord.
 - In Exodus 14:2, they actually say, **“For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.”**
 - And so it is for us when trouble and persecution arise.
 - The most dangerous kind of bondage to the world is willing bondage—when to have what the world offers, we think it better for us to forsake God.

TRANS> Such is our condition of bondage until the LORD rescues us.

- We have no will to be delivered unless the Lord supernaturally draws us to Himself.
 - Jesus said that no one will come to Him unless the Father draws them.
- And that leads us to the next thing that the Lord reveals to us in Exodus.

II. That He is the LORD who redeems us from bondage.

A. We see right away the unwavering commitment He has to His people.

1. Moses comes on the scene in chapter 2 & 3...
 - First as an infant who is marvellously rescued and who providentially is adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter—
 - enabling him to be prepared for the work that God has for him.
 - Then we see him with a heart to deliver Israel rather than to live in the luxury of Egypt, but unable to pull it off, resulting in discouragement and fear...
 - such that in his weakness he flees Egypt, marries, and doesn’t even circumcise his son.
 - But then God calls him at the burning bush to go to Pharaoh and act as His spokesman for the deliverance of His people from bondage.
 - He is the evangelist that God raises up to call Israel to freedom from Satan that they may serve the Lord.
2. And in the LORD’s calling of Moses, we also learn of the LORD’s unwavering commitment to His people... and that in two ways...
 - That He has compassion on His people when He sees them struggling under the bondage of Egypt.
 - That He remembers the promise that He made to their fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- a. The compassion is seen when He appears to Moses at the burning bush in chapter 3 and says in verse 7-10: **“I have surely seen the oppression of My**

people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. ⁸ So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. ⁹ Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

- This shows us the tender mercy of God toward sinners when He sees us wallowing in bondage to Satan, weary in our futile service to him.
 - As He begins to open our eyes to His calling, we become more and more miserable in our bondage to Satan and the world.
 - We feel the burden of it and the futility of it and we start to cry.
 - This, in turn, stirs up the Lord to come to rescue us.
- b. And the second thing... the LORD’s unwavering commitment to his promise to our fathers and to the covenant He has made with them, is seen in chapter 6.
 - Here you can see how his covenant promise goes hand in hand with His compassion.
 - In Exodus 6:2-6, He says: **And God spoke to Moses and said to him: “I *am* the LORD. ³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name LORD I was not known to them. ⁴ I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. ⁵ And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. ⁶ Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I *am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.’ ”**
 - God is going to deliver them because He is the God of their Fathers and so is also their God by covenant.
 - His commitment is so strong that later on in chapter 32, after God has delivered them from Egypt and they end up worshipping the golden calf,
 - the Lord threatens to destroy them and raise up another nation,
 - but when Moses pleads to God for them in Exodus 32:13 on the basis of the covenant promise that the LORD made, the LORD relents and has mercy upon them.
 - This adds additional assurance to us of the LORD’s unwavering love and commitment to us as His people.
 - He is showing us what He is like so that we can take comfort in His love and mercy and faithfulness.
 - For us, this is all greatly strengthened when we see what He has done to keep His promise, even delivering up His only Son to be crucified for us.

TRANS> But His commitment to save us is not the only thing that He shows us in Exodus to make us sure of His redemption!

B. He also reveals His mighty arm by which He redeems us from bondage.

1. He tells us plainly that it is His intention to reveal that He is the LORD.

a. In the passage we just looked at in chapter 6, God mentions that to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He was not known by His name LORD (or Yahweh—which is usually translated as *LORD* with all upper case in our English Bibles).

- Back in chapter 3 at the burning bush, God revealed this name to Moses.
 - In 3:14, after Moses has asked who he should say has sent him, it says: **And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”**
- This name, Yahweh, which means, “I AM” refers to God’s uniqueness from all other gods as the only One who is self-existing and uncreated.
 - Since false gods were called *gods*, God, as the true God, revealed this name *Yahweh* to distinguish Him from them.
 - Since the time of the flood, the nations of the world had gradually twisted the truth about God till the distortion was so great that their idolatrous versions of God could no longer properly be called God.
 - The nations had made rulers (like Pharaoh) and demons and ancestors (saints) to be their gods.
 - It is no different today—
 - You have people who trust in the government to take care of them, who pray to false gods like Allah or Vishnu or Shiva, or who trust in saints or ancestors to save them.

b. God makes it clear that it is His intention to show the Israelites that He alone is Yahweh, the LORD, the sovereign self-existing God.

- He tells Moses this in chapter 6, verse 7.
 - In 6:6, as we saw, He says: **“Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I *am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments...’ ”**
- And then in verse 7 He explains the result... that they will know that He is the LORD, Yahweh... It says:
 - **verse 7: “I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD (Yahweh) your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.”**
- In other words, at the end of the encounter with Pharaoh, which was not going very well at first...
 - Moses had gone to Pharaoh and Pharaoh had been angered and made the bondage of Israel even worse—forcing them to keep making bricks as before, but now also to gather their own straw for the bricks...

- But God tells Moses that the outcome will be that they will know that He is the LORD, that He is Yahweh, the self-existing sovereign God of all power.
 - And at the end of the whole ordeal—after all the plagues and after the parting of the Red Sea, they do know that!
 - God is showing us here the mighty power that He exerts to deliver us from our bondage to the devil and his minions (Pharaoh or the world or whatever our idols may be).
 - When He has delivered us by His mighty power, we learn that He is truly the LORD—that there is no one like Him in heaven or earth.
 - c. But it is not only Israel that God shows this to.
 - He also shows Pharaoh and all Egypt that He is LORD by these events.
 - When Moses first goes to Pharaoh, Pharaoh makes a huge mistake when he responds to Moses’ request from God to let Israel go and worship Him...
 - In 5:2, Pharaoh says, **“Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go.”**
 - That is never the thing to say to God, even as His enemy!
 - Pharaoh is going to find out the hard way who the LORD is that he should obey Him!
 - God tells Moses that He will be gloried in the eyes of the Egyptians... that they too will see that He is LORD.
 - He clearly explains this to Moses in chapter 7, verses 4-5: **“But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. ⁵ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”**
 - In Exodus 9, the LORD even tells Pharaoh that He has given him power for this very purpose. In 9:14-16, He says:
 - **“at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that there is none like Me in all the earth. ¹⁵ Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶ But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.”**
2. Brothers and sisters, this is what God does when He redeems people!
- He does it in such a way that everyone might see that He is the LORD, Yahweh, the sovereign self-existing God!
 - He has raised up Satan himself and given him great power and dominion for this purpose... that He might be glorified in bringing him down.
 - This is how God, for His glory, displays Himself to His creatures!

- When we are rescued from bondage to sin, from bondage to Satan, and from bondage to the world, we should praise Him as LORD of all!
 - When we see others who are rescued, we should do the same.
 - At the last day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD when He brings Satan and all of his minions to a complete end!
3. Much of the book of Exodus is taken up with God displaying Himself as LORD by redeeming His people.
- a. First there are the ten plagues.
- 1) We do not have time to look at each of them in this overview, but one important fact is that each of them is a judgment on the idols of Egypt.
 - For example, they worshipped the Nile River as a source of life—and in the first plague, the great river is turned to blood.
 - They worshipped the sun, yet in one of the plagues the sun is turned to darkness by the LORD.
 - They also worshipped Pharaoh, yet, in the tenth plague, God wipes out his firstborn son who was in line to be the next Pharaoh.
 - In fact, He wipes out all the firstborn sons of Egypt who led their households as priests—or would do so when they grew up as the case might be.
 - By the plagues, God shows that He has authority over all the idols of Egypt.
 - 2) It is noteworthy as well that with the first plagues, the magicians of Egypt employed their tricks to try to imitate the plagues,
 - but when the third plague came, they give up and tell Pharaoh (as recorded in Exodus 8:18): **“This is the finger of God.”**
 - They admit that this is an act of deity that they cannot imitate.
 - 3) All along the way as the plagues are enacted, Moses pleads with Pharaoh to let Israel go to worship God.
 - A few times, Pharaoh agrees, often demanding certain compromises, but then changes his mind and refuses.
 - His heart was hardened to the point of stupidity so that in his pride, he acted against his own best interests—which is actually what sinners always do.
 - But here, it was made obvious as the whole land of Egypt is being destroyed before him.
 - In face of judgments that were coming, he refused to yield.

TRANS> But in all of this, we are to see the glory of God—that He is Yahweh.

- b. This is demonstrated again, besides by the plagues, at the Red Sea crossing.
- 1) After the tenth plague, the Egyptians are eager for Israel to leave...
 - So much so that they even provide them with silver and gold.
 - So Israel leaves, but only to have Pharaoh decide to pursue them with his armies.

- 2) The well-known result is given in chapter 14.
- Unarmed Israel sees the Egyptian army coming with their chariots and they conclude that there is no way for them escape—and they cry out in complaint against Moses.
 - But in 14:15-18, we read: **And the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶ But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea. ¹⁷ And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸ Then the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”**
- 3) Notice the stated purpose of this—that God might gain honour for Himself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen!
- It is to reveal that God is the LORD.
 - This is what we need to see most of all—because we really don’t see it.
 - We are like Israel—we seem to think that there are things that are too hard for God to contend with.
 - He shows us that He is LORD, when He redeems us from bondage to the world—and then He goes on showing that until He brings us to glory at the last day.
 - Those of us who believe respond as Israel did in Exodus 15 when God brings us out of the world to be His people...
 - We believe that He is indeed Yahweh, and we praise Him:
 - As it says in Exodus 15:1-2: **Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying: “I will sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! ² The LORD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.”**

Conclusion:

So let us give thanks to God for bringing out from under Satan.

- We are just as helpless as Israel was before Satan’s minion, Pharaoh.
 - Satan has his minions today—worldly leaders who want us to trust them instead of God—even ministers who lead us to worship idols instead of God—and the whole system of the world that trusts in idols.
 - Until the LORD Almighty delivers us, we are completely under their dominion.
 - But in Christ, we are delivered from bondage to Satan to serve God.

Next week, we will look at the third thing that God reveals to us in Exodus...

- How, having delivered us from Satan and the world, He forms us into a people for Himself.