

# The Big Picture of Scripture

## Lesson 10: Exodus—The Pattern of Redemption and Entrance into the Kingdom of God

Why did God promise Abraham and his descendants a land occupied by several mighty nations? Why did He let them live in the land as sojourners and never give it to them? And then why did He take them out of it and move them to Egypt?

*In short*, the unique feature of Israel's history was that it not only involved the revelation of *the way of salvation* through types and shadows but it was itself *salvation history* in that *the way by which sinners are to be brought into the Kingdom of God was reflected in their history*. Thus *the necessity of the Exodus* was to show that there is a way for exiles to be reconciled to God, but it's only by redemption from slavery, Heb 2.14-15.

### I. Egypt

- A. What began for Abraham's descendants as a place of abundance, refuge, safety, and favor (Gen 50), later became a place of slavery, oppression, and death when a new Pharaoh arose who had no regard for Joseph—or Joseph's God or the Abrahamic covenant, Ex 1.
- B. Once again the reality of the Kingdom of God and the covenant promises made with Abraham seem out of reach. As the book of Exodus opens, *the right people in the wrong place under the wrong rule*.
- C. Israel's captivity in Egypt expresses the ultimate challenge to God's covenant promises. Exodus opens to show us Abraham's descendants seemingly abandoned by God and powerless to save themselves. Questions that arise are: *Where are His promises? Where is His covenant with Abraham? Where is Israel's God? Does He not see? Does He not know? Does He not remember? Has He forgotten them or forsaken them? Is He powerless against the foreign gods of the Egyptians?*
  1. The theological meaning of the captivity in Egypt lies in its opposition to the covenant. The people needing redemption (Adam's descendants) are slaves in bondage to a foreign power.
  2. At this point, their slavery's purely political. But when we see that God has come to judge not simply Pharaoh, but Egypt's gods, Ex 6.6; 12.12; 2Sam 7.23, it becomes increasingly clear that the redemption of the nation from political slavery is meant to reflect the redemption of the elect from spiritual slavery, Col 1.13-14; Tit 2.14.
- D. They must come to understand that being God's people is not a matter of genealogy or nationality. For sinners in exile to become God's people they need to be redeemed and brought out of bondage by a mighty arm. And only God can do it.
- E. God puts them in Egypt, permits them to be enslaved and oppressed, to provide a historical framework for their redemption, a framework which will serve as the reference point for the conversion, atonement, and redemption of God's elect throughout the entire OT until the cross of Christ, Ex 20.2; Lev 11.45; Dt 4.20; Josh 24.17; Jdg 6.8; 1Sam 10.18; Neh 9.18; Ps 81.10; Jer 11.4; 34.13-14; Hos 11.1; Amos 3.1; Jude 5.

### II. Moses

- A. The story of Moses is the story of the next step of redemptive history.
  1. Abraham's descendants are in bondage and the very existence of the Hebrew nation is in question as Pharaoh demands that every male child be killed at birth.
  2. Suddenly the Lord miraculously and even ironically saves a Hebrew child named Moses. We're not told why. After he comes of age, Moses rejects Pharaoh's heritage and chooses to

align himself with the heritage of his Hebrew people—which Heb 11 says is a choice for Christ over the world. The choice forces him into exile. “So much for a friend at court.”

3. God appears to him and calls him to mediate the deliverance of Abraham’s descendants from the hands of Pharaoh and bring them into the Promised Land in fulfillment of His covenant, Ex 3.1-4.17. The theology of Exodus is primarily the theology of the Abrahamic covenant in action, Ex 2.23-25.

- B. The theological significance of Moses’ deliverance as an infant lies in the overruling of the powers opposed to God’s Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is coming and the gates of Pharaoh/hell can’t prevail against it, Ex 2.23-25; 3.18-22; Mt 16.18.
  1. Moses’ significance is in the way he foreshadows the nature of the work of Christ, who is: *the Mediator of the Covenant, the Redeemer of the Elect, the Law-Giver, the Prophet of God, the Intercessor, the Shepherd through the wilderness, the Temple Builder, the Glory Revealer, the Miracle Worker, the One who talks with God Face-to-Face, the One who can ascend the Mount of God, see the Glory of God, know the secrets of God, and speak the Word of God.*

### III. The Plagues and Passover

- A. The ten plagues that God performs through Moses are judging-saving events which show that God’s salvation of His people simultaneously means God’s judgments on His enemies.
  1. In other words, the work of redemption is also a work of judgment in that when the wicked are judged, the Substitute is judged in place of the redeemed. This is necessary because *none* is righteous. The redeemed are delivered, not by God rewarding their goodness, but by God judging their badness in Another. That’s how the redemption of sinners must work, Isa 53.6.
  2. Thus, even the Second Coming will be simultaneously an act of salvation and judgment.
- B. This is made unmistakably clear in the final plague. None of the earlier plagues had touched the Israelites, but they’re drawn in under the final plague with the whole nation because *every* firstborn in Egypt is a sinner before God, Ex 11.4-5.
  1. Thus the only way to redeem them from the death they deserve is by the death of a Substitute.
  2. Israel’s involvement in the final plague is critical. God will provide the Substitute and God will honor the sacrifice of the Substitute by passing over the homes of the Israelites seeking refuge in the Substitute, but they must believe the Word spoken by God, act in faith by killing the lamb, applying the blood, and staying indoors when the plague comes.
  3. The Passover shows that *redemption* involves not only the release from our slavery in sin but also the shedding of atoning blood as a means of escape from the judgment we deserve.
  4. Thus, entrance into the Kingdom of God, as always, is by faith in God’s redeeming work, Mt 11.28. God must do it but man must appropriate it for himself by faith, Acts 16.30-31.
- C. Another principle which becomes clear in the narrative is the household principle, so that the faith of the head of household has saving significance for the whole household. This principle is at the heart of the Abrahamic covenant in Gen 17 and never altered by Christ or His apostles in the NT, Acts 2.37-39. The implications of this for baptism are obvious, Acts 16.14-15, 30-34.

### IV. The Red Sea

- A. God’s redemption of His people from Egypt involves not simply bringing them out. It also involves the complete destruction of their oppressors so that they will never threaten or harm them again, Ex 14.13. The significance of this is seen in the complete victory which Christ gives His people over the flesh, the world, and the devil, over sin, death, and hell, Rom 6.6, 11-14; 7.24-25; 1Cor 15.54-56; 2Cor 5.17; Heb 2.14-15.

## V. Summary

- A. Now we can see why God led Abraham's descendants to Egypt. Possession of the Promised Land—i.e., entrance into the Kingdom of God—and becoming the people of God is not simply a matter of walking over the border into the Kingdom, and much less is it something we're born into.
1. By nature, we're all sinners living in exile away from God as Adam's offspring. God chose to reveal His redemptive purpose in Israel's history so that the *captivity in Egypt* demonstrates the captivity of the human race to sin and death and the *exodus* demonstrates the powerful work of God necessary to rescue a people from the fallen estate, Eph 2.1-4.
    - a) Goldsworthy, "Now we can answer the question: why has God not fulfilled the promises? Israel was brought to Egypt and the patriarchs never possessed the land, because God intended to reveal the way into His Kingdom. It's a way involving a miraculous redemption from a bondage that holds us and keeps us out of the Kingdom. Only a miracle of God can bring us back to the Kingdom. The Exodus will remain now the key model for the understanding of redemption in the life of Israel, and the people of God will be made to recall it as the basis of their [loving and obedient] response to a God who saves, Ex 20.2; Dt 6.20-25; 26.5-10; Josh 24.6-13; Neh 9.6-12; Pss 78, 105, 106, 114, 135, 136."
  2. This is the first exodus of God's people and it serves as *the pattern of redemption* for God's people. A second exodus will involve the return of the Israelites from Babylon in the 6th century BC, Dt 30.1-10; Hos 11.10-11; 13.14. But both of these point to *the true exodus* in which Jesus brings His people out of captivity to sin and death, Hos 11.1; Mt 2.13-15; Eph 2.1-6; Heb 2.14-15; 1Pet 2.9-10.
- B. When God appears on the scene in Exodus 3, He appears as the One who keeps covenant, the One who's not forgotten. The exodus is the end of captivity, but it's only the beginning of freedom. God has much to do to show His people what it means to live freely as His people under His rule in His land.
- C. The only fitting response to redemption is praise and thanksgiving, Ex 15. And the only fitting response to the Redeemer is love, worship, and obedience, Ex 20—which we'll look at next time.