

## *Preview of Exodus*

The Book of Exodus is a vital link in the chain of Old Testament history. To read this book without an acquaintance with what precedes or with what follows would leave one lacking a sense of completeness. The first word, now, suggests a close connection with what precedes. The last words, throughout all their journeys, suggest that not all had been said and that more will follow.

As part of the larger body of truth, Exodus reveals another step of God in the movement of human history. It has been said regarding the Pentateuch: "In Genesis God selects a field in which to sow the seed of His Law: that field, of course, is the Israelite nation. In Exodus He purchases and secures the field. In Leviticus He brings forth His seed but finds the ground hard and thorny. In Numbers, for forty years He is plowing, clearing, and preparing the field; and in Deuteronomy He is again sowing the seed and harrowing it in."

Exodus is a continuation of the great movement that culminates in Christ.

Exodus is the story of Israel's emergence as a nation. God desired that this nation under His government should cause other nations to be attracted to Him. This nation was not founded in order that God might forget other nations, but that He might reach them.

The purpose of the book is further seen by the content, which consists of three basic movements. Chapters 1-5 describe Israel's bitter bondage. Chapters 6-18 give the account of their deliverance. Finally, chapters 19-40 tell the story of their organization as a nation.

Like Genesis, Exodus is valuable for its anticipation of higher truths. The slavery in Egypt is a type of slavery to sin. The plan of deliverance, involving sacrifices and separation from Egypt, typifies the Christian's deliverance from sin. Once outside Egypt, Israel's experiences of victory, protection, provision, guidance, order, testing, instruction, worship typify Christian experience as well.

Throughout the book God is persisting, governing, and guiding. But we see the failure of the people and their murmuring against God. In spite of the people's sin Jehovah remained their all-sufficient provider of bread and meat, bitter water made sweet, and victory over their enemies. In Exodus, we see that human progress is always the result of divine grace and divine patience.

## Lesson 1 - 30 January 2011

### Bondage in Egypt—Israel's Dilemma

**Lesson Scope:** [Exodus 1: 2:23-25](#)

#### Lesson Focus

When Jacob and his family moved into Egypt because of famine in their homeland, Pharaoh welcomed them and offered them the best of the land (Genesis 47:4-6). The Egyptians showed them such favor because Joseph's wise management of Egypt's resources during the years of plenty had made him a national hero and savior during the years of famine.

Knowing that God had promised to bring the children of Israel back into the land of Canaan again after a sojourn in Egypt Joseph arranged for his relatives to live separate from the Egyptians (Genesis 46:31-34). As the years passed, the land of Goshen became filled with Israelites, who remained a separate and readily identifiable people.

Though Satan is not mentioned in our lesson text, it is quite evident that he was behind the efforts of the new Egyptian king "which knew not Joseph." Satan used this king, as a tool to enslave the children of Israel, intending to frustrate God's plan to redeem them. Israel's bondage is symbolic of spiritual bondage, from which only God can deliver.

The forces of evil continually attempt to bring God's people into bondage. But God watches over and preserves them. This lesson provides an opportunity to see how the conflict between God and Satan affects God's people on the earth. Since Satan cannot attack God directly, he opposes God indirectly by attacking His people. In the ongoing conflict between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, the faithful have faced the devil's antagonism down through the ages.

We can conclude this lesson with the encouraging thought of God's consideration and regard for Israel's dilemma. We find strength knowing that God, who knows our circumstances, can preserve us in the furnace of affliction.

**Lesson Aim:** To learn lessons from the conflict between God and Satan over God's covenant people.

### **Theme Verses**

[Exodus 2:24, 25](#). And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel. and God had respect unto them.

### **Lesson Text.**

#### **Slavery**

##### [Exodus 1:6-14](#)

And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

<sup>7</sup>And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. <sup>8</sup>Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. <sup>9</sup>And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: <sup>10</sup>Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. <sup>11</sup>Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. <sup>12</sup>But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. <sup>13</sup>And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: <sup>14</sup>And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

#### **Suppression**

##### [Exodus 1:15-22](#)

And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: <sup>16</sup>And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. <sup>17</sup>But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. <sup>18</sup>And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? <sup>19</sup>And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives

come in unto them. <sup>20</sup>Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. <sup>21</sup>And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. <sup>22</sup>And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

### **Supplication**

[Exodus 2:23-25](#)

And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. <sup>24</sup>And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup>And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

### **Questions for Study**

#### **Slavery**

1. What factors shaped Pharaoh's attitude against the children of Israel?
2. What did the king do in an attempt to restrict Israel's growth?
3. In what ways are we tested by civil authorities today?

#### **Suppression**

4. What lessons can we learn from the God-fearing midwives?
5. How can God's people prosper regardless of Satan's efforts?
6. How is Israel's bondage in Egypt similar to spiritual bondage?

#### **Supplication**

7. Find words in verses 24 and 25 that show God's response to Israel's cry.
8. How does God respond to our supplications today?

### **Analyzing the Passage**

When Jacob came into Egypt, his extended family numbered seventy souls (Genesis 46:26-27). As the Book of Exodus opens, the children of Israel had become a multitude of nearly two million people (Exodus 1:7; 12:37), leading, the new king of Egypt to believe they, were becoming numerically stronger than the Egyptians (Exodus 1:9). Yet the Israelites were such an economic asset to the Egyptians that they did not want them to leave.

Fearing that the Israelites might join forces with Egypt's enemies in event of war, the king took action to prevent this from occurring. The first tactic the king employed was forced labor, intended to weaken them and reduce their numbers. That failed, actually producing the opposite effect (Exodus 1: 12). The second tactic, requiring the midwives to kill the baby boys,

failed also because the midwives would not carry out the king's commandment (Exodus 1: 17). In a third attempt, the king finally ordered the people to cast all the boy babies into the river (Exodus 1:22).

In these circumstances the children of Israel sighed and cried (Exodus 2:23). They were ready for help. God heard and was ready to help them (Exodus 2:24). The words "had respect" (Exodus 2:25) are from the same Hebrew word translated "knew" (1:8). God understood their need and remembered His covenant (Exodus 2:24).

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Slavery**

1. God's people prospering under His blessing (Exodus 1:7). All men receive God's blessings. He sends His sunshine and rain on the just and on the unjust. But when His blessings fall on the righteous, they become fruitful and increase beyond the ordinary, especially in spiritual life. God's own people prosper in a way that is noticeable to all. It becomes obvious that God's favor and blessing are upon His own.

2. Satan resents the prosperity God's people (Exodus 1:7-10). He devises ways to hinder and oppose the people whom God has blessed and who are thriving as a result of God's favor. When the Church grows strong Satan increases his efforts to weaken her spiritual power and neutralize her influence.

3. Satan often works through civil rulers to oppose God's people (Exodus 1:8-11). History is full of accounts of those times when Satan vigorously opposed God's people through civil authorities. Even in times when God's people have not been subjected to threats and persecution from civil leaders, they have recognized that they were not part of the kingdom of this world.

### **Suppression**

4. Satan employs a variety of measures to accomplish his evil ends (Exodus 1:12-16, 22). Satan is not ready to give up when his first attacks fail. We note in the story of Job that Satan increased the intensity of his attacks when Job retained his integrity. The Scriptures also forewarn us that he will increase his efforts against the Church in the last days. We do not presently experience his attacks as a roaring lion, but we must carefully guard against his strategies of deception. He would use freedom, material prosperity and ease to lull us to sleep and make us feel at home in this world. The appeal of modern technology and easy communication has led many where they never intended to go.

5. Satan's malicious designs cannot thwart God's gracious purposes for His people (Exodus 1: 12, 20). God's grace is granted to His people in measure equal to their needs. "He giveth more grace" (James 4:6). Israel grew stronger and multiplied at the same time Satan was working to weaken and subdue them. God supplies us with the armor we need to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-20).

6. God blesses those who fear and obey Him rather than men (Exodus 1:17-21). Pharaoh's orders did make some hardships for the Israelites, but God overruled to their ultimate good and benefit. Their fear of God gave them courage to stand for truth and then to simply let the outcome in God's hands. God blessed and rewarded the midwives because they feared Him rather than the king.

### **Supplication**

7. God responds to the cry of the oppressed (Exodus 2:23-25). Under His all-seeing eyes, nothing that touches His people goes unnoticed. He is especially compassionate when His people are treated unjustly. He not only hears those who cry to Him but also does something for them. He recognizes that His people have no one else to deliver them. He understands what they face.

8. God will surely deliver His faithful people (Exodus 2:24-25). When God heard Israel's cry, He remembered His covenant with their fathers and provided deliverance. In the fullness of time He does deliver His people. It may not be in the way or at the time we would think best, but God always moves in the best interest of His people.

### **Important Teachings**

1. God's people prosper under His blessing (Exodus 1:7).

2. Satan resents the prosperity of God's people (Exodus 1:7-10).

3. Satan often works through civil rulers to oppose God's people (Exodus 1:8-11).

4. Satan employs a variety of measures to accomplish his evil ends (Exodus 1:12-16, 22).

5. Satan's malicious designs cannot thwart God's gracious purposes for His people (Exodus 1:12, 20).

6. God blesses those who fear and obey Him rather than men (Exodus 1:17-21).

7. God responds to the cry of the oppressed (Exodus 2:23-25).

8. God will surely deliver His faithful people (Exodus 2:24-25).

## Answers to Questions

1. What factors shaped Pharaoh's attitude against the children of Israel?

Pharaoh did not remember Joseph's service in the famine. He felt threatened by Israel's population increase and emerging strength. He feared that Israel could join forces with Egypt's enemies and fight against them. He was reluctant to have the Israelites leave Egypt and thereby to lose the economic benefits they provided.

2. What did the king do in an attempt to restrict Israel's growth?

Pharaoh called on his fellow Egyptians to assist him in dealing with Israel. Taskmasters were set over the children of Israel, compelling them to work hard and to build cities for Pharaoh. He commanded the midwives to kill all male babies to halt Israel's population increase. When the midwives failed to carry out his orders, Pharaoh asked all the Egyptians to assist by casting the Israelite boy babies into the river.

3. In what ways are we tested by civil authorities today?

Accepting government subsidies and handouts will weaken our sense of obligation to provide for our own (1 Timothy 5:8). We might be tempted to accept government funds to operate our schools. Increasing socialistic trends may test us further in relation to our practice of child discipline. We must trust our God in every circumstance and not rely on the government to solve our problems for us.

4. What lessons can we learn from the God-fearing midwives?

God blesses those who fear Him rather than men. We should be on guard lest we unknowingly become tools of Satan to destroy others. Human life is sacred; it must be respected and preserved at every age.

5. How can God's people prosper regardless of Satan's efforts?

God is greater and more powerful than Satan. He can preserve His people in the furnace of affliction. He can limit Satan's attacks and actually use them to help His people to grow stronger.

6. How is Israel's bondage in Egypt similar to spiritual bondage?

Israel's bondage typifies spiritual bondage both in the methods employed and in the affect they had on the people. Satan tries to enslave people and make them work to support his cause. He uses civil leaders to oppose and suppress God's people. He works to hinder God's efforts to redeem His people. Once a man is in Satan's bondage, he cannot deliver himself. Only God can make him free.

7. Find words in verses 24 and 25 that show God's response to Israel's Cry.

God "heard"; God "remembered" (verse 24); God "looked upon"; God "had respect" (verse 25).

8. How does God respond to our supplications today?

He always hears the prayers of His people. He may not always grant immediate deliverance from affliction, but He gives grace to be strong and courageous in the midst of opposition and difficulty. God knows what the need is even before His people call on Him. He wants to hear from His people when they cry out for His help.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

Whether he approaches as a roaring lion or as an angel of light, Satan is always the enemy of God's people. As long as they are in this world, God's people will continue to be Satan's targets.

Let us call upon the God of our salvation as long as we are in this world. He is able to preserve us until the time of our exodus from this world, which is Satan's domain, to a place beyond Satan's reach.

### **Research Guide**

1. Read God's promises to Abraham in the following Scriptures: Genesis 12:1-3; 15:13-16. Also note how Joseph expressed faith in this promise to Abraham by requiring an oath that the children of Israel would carry his bones back to the land God had promised to them (Genesis 50:24-25).
2. In Acts 7:2-19, read Stephen's summary of this part of Israel's history.