

Exodus: No Longer Slaves (2)

Leviticus 26:13 NIV - *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would NO LONGER be SLAVES to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high [emphasis added].*

EXODUS!

When we hear that word, we think of the 2nd book of the Bible, but we rarely think about what the word itself really means.

Exodus means “to leave.”

The Book of Exodus is the story of Israel LEAVING their slavery in Egypt, but they didn't just leave. God brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and rescued them from their slavery.

Throughout the Old Testament, there is a repeated phrase, “BROUGHT YOU OUT.”

- The night before God led them out of Egypt, He commanded them to celebrate the first Passover... and Moses said to them in Exodus 13:3 NIV, “Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the LORD BROUGHT YOU OUT of it with a mighty hand...”
- When God gave His law to Israel, the first of the 10 commandments said, “I am the Lord your God, who BROUGHT YOU OUT [emphasis added] of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” (Exodus 20:2)
- God commanded Israel to be an honest people in Leviticus 19:36. “Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah (grain measurement) and an honest hin (liquid measurement=gallon). I am the LORD your God, who BROUGHT YOU OUT [emphasis added] of the land of Egypt.”
- About 40 years later, Joshua called the people to make a decision to follow God. He made his famous statement, “As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” But in part of his speech that day, he declared, “It was the LORD our God himself who BROUGHT us and our parents UP OUT OF EGYPT, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes....[emphasis added]” (Joshua 24:17 NIV).

Over and over and over again, God reminded His people that they were once slaves but He bought them and brought them out of their slavery.

Note: It is interesting that the New Testament reminds us over and over that we have been bought by the blood of Jesus and brought out from the slavery of sin by the power of the cross.

In Exodus, it is very clear that God was intentionally up to something that had significant and eternal purposes. There was a prophetic set-up that pointed to a mighty deliverance through another Messiah, much like Moses.

A generation being brought out of harsh slavery is a wonderful thing! But even more wonderful than that, is the deliverance we have through Christ Jesus, our deliverer.

Galatians 4:7 - *So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.*

Under Joseph, the Israelites were once welcomed and honored guests in Egypt. They were given the fertile land of Goshen to settle and graze their flocks. They enjoyed a level of protection, provision and confidence in Egypt (Read Genesis chapters 45 – 50).

How did they become slaves?

In Exodus 1:8-14 NIV, we're told that... "a new king [pharaoh], to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt."

v.9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. v.10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." v.11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. v.12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites v.13 and worked them ruthlessly. v.14 They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

But even though we know HOW they became slaves there's still the questions... WHY allow them to be slaves and WHY allow them to remain slaves for so long?

Why would God do it that way?

Why didn't God rescue His people immediately?

God was growing a people.

1) God multiplied Israel in their oppression.

Exodus 1:12 NIV - ... the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel.

a) The Promised Land was waiting for them but they would have to possess it. (God's Plan)

It was Israel's slavery in Egypt that made them a fighting force.

When Israel first entered Egypt, they couldn't take over a small city let alone a huge territory like the "Promised Land." When they first came to Egypt, there were only around 70 of them. But centuries later, when they left Egypt, they were a huge nation. Their fighting force alone consisted of over 600,000 men.

- b) Not only did they grow into a huge nation under their slavery, but the harsh work they were forced to do made them a mighty people who were strong, passionate about their freedom, and capable of standing on their own if called to war.

Exodus 1:15-17; 20 NLT – v. **15** *Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave this order to the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah: v. 16 “When you help the Hebrew women as they give birth, watch as they deliver. If the baby is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live.” v. 17 But because the midwives feared God, they refused to obey the king’s orders. They allowed the boys to live, too. v. 20 So God was good to the midwives, and the Israelites continued to multiply, growing more and more powerful.*

When I read this, I always think about the harsh circumstances that many of His people face today and I am reminded of Romans 8:28. *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

Those who love God should declare this promise today... “all things work together for my good.”

- 2) God brought Israel to Himself in their desperation.

- a) Before He could bring them out, He had to bring them in to Himself.

Exodus 2:23-25 - *During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. v. 24 Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. v. 25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.*

Many of the language experts reveal that the cries of the people for help was not directed toward Jehovah. Rather, this cry for help was to any “god” that might hear them and intervene. They had not become completely pagan, but they were not passionate about knowing Jehovah either.

- b) It is important to identify clearly the four things that God did and the object for each, in actual sequence:

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| i) God heard | their groaning |
| ii) God remembered | His covenant |
| iii) God saw | the people |
| iv) God knew | ????????????? |

God knew what? Their condition? God knew Egypt was evil? God knew He had a plan? God knew it was time to act?

I find it so powerful to know that God is all knowing! And for God to know what I am dealing with, brings me peace because just as God kept His covenant with Abraham, I am confident in the covenant I have with God through Jesus the risen Christ!

c) Life is not always pain-free is it?

Sometimes God's waiting is very purposeful.

i) Often times before God brings us out, He has to bring us to Himself.

(1) God tells us in James 4:2, "You do not have because you do not ask God."

Essentially, if you don't ask... He'll wait till you do. Until you ask, God will not intrude. You have to want His help badly enough to ask but the asking is more than simple a request. It is a coming to God in full love and surrender.

(2) Until Israel got to the point where they were willing to ask for help, they were still in bondage to their own agendas and preferences and they would continue to be in bondage until they realized they wanted to be free and God was their answer.

ii) God allowed Israel to suffer for a time so that they could become stronger.

God wants us to become stronger! Ephesians 6:10 - *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.*

(1) To prepare us to take hold of what God wants us to truly have in our lives, often times He treats us the same way.

(2) The Israelites were content in Egypt before their slavery but their destiny was not in Egypt! They had to make a move!

(3) Maybe your discomfort now is the beginning of God bringing you into a new place with Him...a new place of promise!