

## **What's the Point...of Exodus? Mark Garner**

*In Exodus, we see God freeing the Israelites from Egypt, being with them in the desert, and giving them guidance and care, in spite of their frequent straying. Likewise, Jesus has brought us redemption and salvation and forgiveness, and our Redeemer promises to be with us each step, as our Father in heaven renews us inwardly day by day as we walk in the light of his Son.*

### ***God's Understanding & Compassion (Exodus 1-4)***

Just as God is well aware of the misfortunes the Israelites have endured and promises to deliver them, our Heavenly Father also understands our weaknesses and sorrows and fears, and he promises us too that he will help and save those who call on him in truth. God's design to redeem the Israelites will take some time to unfold; similarly, he calls us to walk by faith in Jesus.

The Lord provides a home for Moses in the Pharaoh's palace; an irony that tells us of God's understanding. Moses later has to flee from Egypt; then after a long stay in the desert, God's call to Moses comes. God wants to take his people to a better land, as he also promises us; and when God says that he is, "I Am Who I Am", this carries meaning deeper than words can fully express.

### ***Deliverance & Redemption (Exodus 5-14)***

A series of plagues (Exodus 5-10) helps the Israelites see God's might, and also gives the Egyptians a chance to see the futility of their false gods compared with the majesty of the Lord. Pharaoh's stubbornness prevents him from listening, leading to the final plague and the Passover, a foreshadowing of Jesus' sacrificial ministry (Exodus 11-13).

As God tells the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on the tops and sides of their doorframes, our Heavenly Father has already made this Passover sacrifice for us, and he puts Jesus' blood on the 'doorframes' of our hearts, so that we may not die spiritually. Pharaoh finally lets them go, yet then he pursues them, so God helps them cross the Red Sea on foot (Exodus 14).

### ***God's Holiness & His Covenant (Exodus 15-40)***

New problems arise, as the Israelites begin a trend of grumbling and doubting; yet God continually shows them his care (Exodus 15-18). We too still live as weak mortals in this world, so our Heavenly Father reassures us in many ways of his care for us. In the next section (Exodus 19-31), while the "Ten Commandments" are familiar, many of the other instructions may seem obscure; yet they can often tell us about God's nature, his holiness, and his desire to live among his flock.

In the incident of the 'golden calf' (Exodus 32-34), we see both God's holiness and his mercy; while Israel had broken the covenant, God has not. The tabernacle (Exodus 35-40) reminds us of God's desire to dwell among his people and to bring them atonement for their sins. Then he reassures them of his presence, through the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. God has now given us even better reassurances in the cross, the empty tomb, and his Spirit who lives in us.

## **What's the Point...of Exodus? Caleb Dillinger**

Exodus, the second book of the Bible, is the story of Israel's captivity in Egypt and subsequent rescue by God. Set hundreds of years after the time of Joseph, the leading character at the end of the previous book Genesis, there arose a leader in Egypt (Pharaoh) who did not know what Joseph had done to save the country from famine. Joseph and his brothers had so many children and descendants after 400 years that Pharaoh grew fearful they would try to take over, so he forces them to be his slaves. Not only that, Pharaoh attempts to slaughter all male children. His efforts are thwarted by two women, Shiphrah and Puah, who do their best to save as many children as possible. The story of Exodus focuses on one particular male child who survives: Moses.

Moses was placed in a basket and hidden along the reeds of the Nile River. The daughter of Pharaoh came by and found the baby and adopted him as her son. One day, Moses sees an Egyptian taskmaster abusing a Jew and Moses kills the Egyptian. The next day, two Jews were fighting each other and Moses attempted to intervene, and they accused him of meddling and asked if he was going to try to kill them! Moses becomes fearful he flees from Egypt altogether. For the next forty years, Moses lives in the desert, marries, has a child, and settles as a shepherd. The people of Israel cry out to God while Moses is living a new peaceful life, and the Bible delivers this wonderful line: God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

The next chapter highlights Moses encountering a burning bush that for some reason would not burn up from the fire. As Moses drew near, God called out to him and reveals himself as Yahweh - the Hebrew name for the "I Am" God. The God who was, the God who is, and the God who will forever be. God promises to work through Moses (despite his objections) to free all of Israel. Sure enough, God sends 10 plagues upon Egypt, miracles that not even the most powerful of Pharaoh's magicians could reproduce. Israel is finally let go. But then Pharaoh changes his mind! And he sends his army after them and Israel is trapped between an army and the Red Sea. But God parts the waters and Israel walk on dry land to the other side, while the Egyptians are swamped and killed by the water when they try to follow.

You may think, "what a happy ending to a great bedtime story." But then the book continues...Israel is given the 10 commandments (chapter 20), and the very first line is "You shall have no other God before me." So what does Israel do? While Moses is talking to God, they make an idol of a gold calf and begin to worship it. God is angered and is ready to give up on all of Israel, but Moses reminds God of his promise - that these are his people. So God renews his covenant and begins setting the rules for what will distinguish his people from the world (to be continued in the next book of the Bible - Leviticus).

So what's the point of this crazy story? Primarily, it testifies how God saved Israel from Egypt (including the origin story of the Passover meal which means so much for Christians), and how the Israelites were unworthy. Israel was not saved because they were worthy. They were saved because God heard their cries and loved them. That same message is told to us again and again throughout Scripture, but it begins here. That's why you should read Exodus.