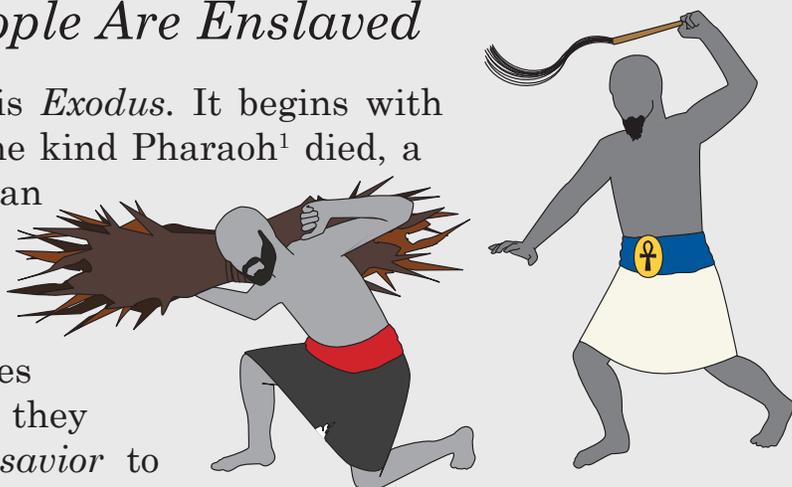


Lesson 5: Israel Enslaved and Redeemed

Introduction: God's People Are Enslaved

The next book of the Bible is *Exodus*. It begins with the Israelites in Egypt. When the kind Pharaoh¹ died, a new Pharaoh ruled (*Pharaoh* is an Egyptian title for king). He grew afraid that Israel would grow into a mighty nation and attack Egypt. He ordered the Israelites to be enslaved.² For 400 years, they served Egypt. They needed a *savior* to deliver them from slavery to freedom. (A *savior* is someone who saves others from danger or ruin.)³



Moses: A Savior for Israel

Another cruel Pharaoh tried to stop the growth of the Israelite nation by having all the baby boys killed. One of the Israelite woman hid her baby boy in a basket and placed it in the reeds along the edge of the Nile River to escape the Egyptian soldiers. An Egyptian princess found him by the river. She named him *Moses*, which means *drawn out*, since he was drawn out of the river. Through God's planning, Moses' mother was found to care for the baby. When he was weaned, he was brought to live with the Egyptian princess.



Moses was living in two worlds. One had all the comforts and riches of Egyptian royalty. The other was one of guilt and frustration, because he knew that the Israelites were suffering.

One day, Moses noticed an Egyptian beating an Israelite. He could not tolerate what he saw; Moses killed the Egyptian. (Like other faithful men in the Bible, Moses still struggled with sin. He was guilty of murder. Although he would become a great man, he was still only human.) The king of Egypt tried to kill Moses in revenge. Giving up his life of Egyptian royalty, Moses escaped to another kingdom where he became a humble shepherd.



¹ Genesis 47:5-6

² Exodus 1-2

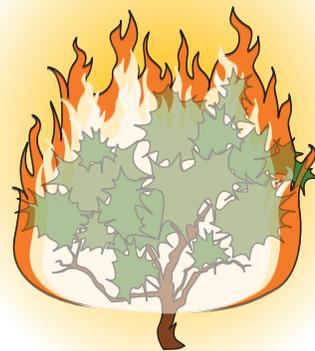
³ See *Christian Basics: What is a Savior?*

Discussion Questions:

- We will see Moses become a great leader and national savior. Why spend time learning about his sins?
- Have you ever "lived in two worlds?" (perhaps figuratively)

God vs. Pharaoh

Many years passed. One day while Moses was watching the sheep, he noticed a strange light on the mountainside. When he approached, he saw there was a burning bush. It was on fire continually, but never burning up. God spoke to Moses from the burning bush. He told Moses that He heard the cries of the Israelites. God wanted Moses to deliver the nation. Moses was very hesitant to become such a leader, but eventually he agreed to be the savior of Israel.⁴



When Moses came before Pharaoh, he told him that the God of the Israelites commanded that Pharaoh let them go. This was an insult to Pharaoh because he considered himself to be a god. As the supposed god in control of Egypt, Pharaoh would not listen. When the Pharaoh would not heed Moses' warnings, God used Moses to perform great miracles called “The Ten Plagues.” These plagues were designed to show the power of God over Pharaoh. Some of the plagues included various swarms of pests like frogs, flies, and gnats that destroyed the crops and land.⁵

Sometimes, Pharaoh pretended to be sorry until Moses sent the plague away. Other times he openly defied the warnings of God without being sorry. Either way, it always ended with him being stubborn or “hard hearted.” The plagues grew worse. Livestock began to die and entire harvests of crops were lost.

The Passover: A Symbol of Jesus

The final plague was the worst of all.⁶ It was called *the death of the firstborn*. God would come down and go through the land and either take the soul of the first born in each home. In order to protect a home from this plague, God commanded that each home sacrifice a lamb and cover their door frames with its blood. As the Lord went through the city, He looked at each door. If there were blood on the door frame, the Lord would pass over and leave that home alone. If a home did not have blood, then the soul of the firstborn child of the home would be taken (thus, the child would die). All the Israelites obeyed God, but the Egyptians did not. That night the Egyptians (even the Pharaoh) began to cry when they realized what had happened.

⁴ Exodus 3-4; See *Christian Basics: Moses: A Type of Jesus*

⁵ Exodus 5-10

⁶ Exodus 11

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Pharaoh refused to listen to Moses so many times?
- How can people today be hard hearted like Pharaoh?



God also commanded that the Israelites prepare a special meal. It was called *the Passover*.⁷ They were to eat it inside their blood covered houses as the Lord *passed over* them. This special meal was a foreshadowing example of Jesus Christ.

He would become the “Passover lamb” that was sacrificed for our sins. Similar to the sacrificial lamb, His blood is our protection. The difference is that Jesus saves us from *spiritual* death.⁸

The Exodus from Egypt

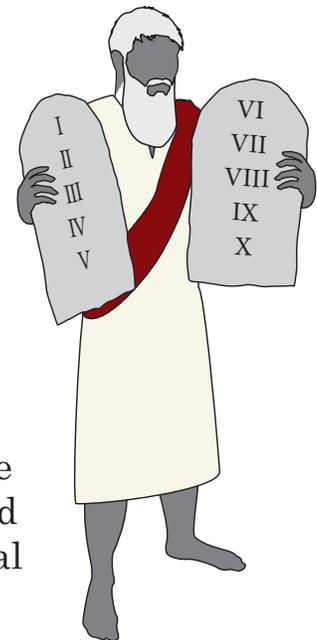
A broken and humbled Pharaoh released the Israelites. They gathered their possessions and left Egypt immediately. The Israelites began the long journey back to their promised land, Canaan. While they traveled, the Pharaoh hardened his heart and rebelled against God again. He wanted his slaves back. His chariot army chased after the Israelites. They caught them at a place called the Red Sea. The Israelites were trapped between the sea and Pharaoh’s army.

God told Moses to lift his staff and stretch out his hand towards the sea. When he did, God parted the waters! Israel quickly began crossing the dry ground on the sea floor. Pharaoh sent his chariot army in after them. When all the Israelites were safe on the other side, the Egyptians were still inside. God made the waters return. The army of Egypt was destroyed. God had saved the Israelites.⁹

The Law of Moses

Shortly after this, God called Moses to the top of a mountain called Sinai. Here, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. These ten laws were the moral foundation of a covenant that God made with Israel. Eventually, 613 laws became the Law of Moses.¹⁰ This is found in the Bible books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*.

The Law of Moses was meant to teach Israel how to love and honor God. The laws also taught Israel how to love and honor their fellow man. Through Israel, God intended to reveal His plan of redemption to the entire world.



⁷ Exodus 12

⁸ 1 Corinthians 5:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19; See *Christian Basics: The Passover: A Preview of Jesus' Sacrifice*

⁹ Exodus 13-14

¹⁰ See *Christian Basics: Do Christians Obey the Law of Moses?*

Discussion Questions:

- *The crossing of the Red Sea is an amazing moment of God's power over nature. If you could choose to witness one of these moments, which one would you want to see the most?*

Blood Sacrifice



The Law introduced a tabernacle (and later a permanent temple) where God’s people could come and worship God at a specific location. There were also priests whose job was to sacrifice animals as a sin offering for the people. This sacrificial system was to teach Israel that in order for sins to be forgiven, an innocent sacrifice had to die.

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.¹¹

This is what God required. For their covenant, the Israelites could use the blood of animals. It would temporarily cover their sin. God was teaching His people what to look forward to when the time came for Jesus to arrive. This sacrificial system foreshadowed His death.¹² He would become the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. His blood would redeem the sins of people for all time, instead of needing to sacrifice again and again.

In Review: Israel Enslaved and Redeemed

After moving to Egypt and growing into a mighty nation, Israel was enslaved by an evil king. Later, God used Moses to deliver the people. As they returned to the promised land, God made a special covenant with them through the Law of Moses. Jesus was foreshadowed in the system of sacrifice, as He would become a perfect sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. Through the Law of Moses, the relationship between God and man was improving. Now man could read and understand God’s word.¹³ As His redemption plan unfolds, it is clear that God’s love for us is overwhelming.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16

¹¹ Hebrews 9:22

¹² See *Christian Basics: Blood Sacrifice*

¹³ See Appendix A: Three Spiritual Ages