

Summary of Exodus 1-3

Summary of Exodus:

The life of Moses who was raised up to deliver Israel out of slavery in Egypt, departing through the Red Sea, to receive the covenant from God at Mt. Sinai.

Outline:

Exodus easily divides into two sections: Redemption and Covenant

I. Redemption from Egypt (1-18)

II. Covenant from God (19-40)

I. The Problem in Egypt: The Enslavement of Israel (Exodus 1)

We pointed out a few weeks back in the reading of Exodus 1 the problem at hand. A pharaoh arises who is not kind to the Hebrew people in memory of the great ruler Joseph from hundreds before.

Exodus 1:9-14 *And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. ¹⁰ Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. ¹² But 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. ¹³ So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves ¹⁴ and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.*

We also pointed out the parallels between the language in this passage and the language in Genesis 11 of the Tower of Babel incident.

Genesis 11	Exodus 1
Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens (v.4)	Come, let us deal shrewdly with them (v.10)... They built for Pharaoh store cities... (v.11)
lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth (v.4)	lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land (v.10)
they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar (v.3)	in mortar and brick , and in all kinds of work in the field (v.14)

This plan actually back-fired on the Egyptians and the Hebrew people continued to multiply:

Exodus 1:12-14 *But 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. ¹³*

So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves 14 and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.

The pharaoh got so desperate that he began to demand the murder of the new born Hebrew babies:

Exodus 1:22 *Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live."*

II. The Solution to the Problem: Moses on the Rise (Exodus 2)

Most of us know the famous story of Moses and how his mother protected him from the Egyptians by sending him down the Nile River in a basket. He was then discovered by Pharaoh's daughter and was raised in Pharaoh's court with the help of his real mother.

KEEP IN MIND: As we are tracing the story-line of the Bible with Genesis 3:15 in view, we must keep asking the question when a new character appears – whose offspring is this: offspring of the **Serpent** or offspring of the **Woman**?

Knowing the full story, it is obvious that Moses will prove himself to be a faithful offspring of the Woman. But, in the early stages of his story, this is hard to tell. Why? Because he committed the same sin as an earlier offspring of the Serpent – Cain:

Exodus 2:11-12 *One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. 12 He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.*

Just like Cain, Moses commits murder. Out of fear that he will be caught, Moses heads into the Sinai wilderness and ends up in Midian. He then begins his career as a shepherd, which he continues in for 40 years.

God had not forgotten about the afflictions of his people and was orchestrating the time in which he would call on Moses:

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. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the people of Israel--and God knew.*

III. The Call of Moses to Deliver Israel (Exodus 3)

As Moses was shepherding in the Sinai wilderness, he came to Mt. Horeb which would be known later at Mt. Sinai. It is near this mountain that he is encountered by God:

Exodus 3:3-22 *And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." 4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. 7 Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." 13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 **God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"** 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, 17 and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.'" 18 And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' 19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. 21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, 22 but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."*

One of the most striking things about this passage is Moses' question and God's reply:

"If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

"I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Here is a sampling of the gods of Egypt:

- God of the Sun – Ra
- God of Music – Hathor
- God of Destruction – Sekhmet
- God of Sky – Nut
- God of Earth – Geb
- God of Dead – Osiris
- God of Desert – Seth
- God of Pharaoh – Horus
- God of Magic – Isis
- God of Wisdom – Thoth
- God of Embalming – Anubis
- God of Justice – Ma'at
- God of Creation – Amun
- God of Cats – Bastet

The name that God uses to identify himself as, “I AM” or “YHWH”, is a window into the infinite complexity of this God. By it he is saying that he is ultimate reality. He is saying in the context of the gods of the Egyptians that he has no beginning, and no end. God simply IS.

