

Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

Week 04: Exodus 1-19

Welcome to week four of the Bible Reading Coach podcast. My name is Karl Vaters, and I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks. As a reminder, the transcripts of every episode are available at KarlVaters.com/transcripts.

In this episode, we leave the first book of the Bible, Genesis, to spend the next two weeks in Exodus. Then this week, we'll be covering chapters one through 19, in which God delivers his people by using Moses to do so. This is one of the most cinematic passages of the entire Bible. And I mean that literally cinematic from Charlton Heston dividing the Red Sea to movies like *The Prince of Egypt*, and so many more this has been put on film, other than the life of Jesus, probably more than any other passage of scripture. So let's take a look at this book.

First of all, Exodus is the second book of the Bible. It's also the second book of the Old Testament, the second book of the narrative books, and the second book of the Torah or also called Law, the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses.

Now a quick note about the names of the Bible books. The names of the books of the Bible fit into one of four categories. Some of them are named after their main character. We'll see that coming up in Joshua, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther Job, those books. Some books are named after their author, like the Old Testament prophets, and the Gospels and some of the New Testament letters. Some books are named after the recipient of the book like Romans and Ephesians. And some books are named after the theme of the book like Genesis, Numbers, Psalms, Revelation. And Exodus is that last type, it is about the theme of their rescue and their exodus, from Egypt, and into freedom. So that's where the names of Genesis, Exodus, in fact the first five books of the Bible, come from.

So let's take a look at the passage beginning with Exodus chapter one, and how they ended up in slavery. The Bible is a book about relationships, its entire story arc is about God establishing his relationship with us, it being lost because of our sin. And then the need to re-establish that relationship not just with God, but with each other, and with the rest of his creation. We also see that God himself is a trinity, that is, God lives in relationship with Himself. We saw that hinted at in Genesis one, when God said, "Let us make people in our image". There's a relationship going on, even when God exists all by himself without us he still lives in relationship with Himself, one God, three persons.

So what does that have to do with what's going on and exit as well? Genesis ended with Joseph having his relationships restored with his brothers, and with his father. And because he had a good trusting relationship with Pharaoh, Pharaoh gave him and his descendants land in Egypt because he trusted Joseph. So all of this happens because of trust and because of relationships. Exodus, however, begins with this verse, or pretty much begins with this verse, chapter one, verse eight says this. "Now, a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." Everything changes because of that, because the old king knew Joseph, things went right. When the new King comes along, who didn't know Joseph and the kings following, of course, the pharaohs following what happened was, the trust grew into distrust, and the distrust grew into fear. And so because of fear, and because the Hebrews were growing so fast, the king

of the Pharaoh, the king, also known as Pharaoh, of Egypt, enslaved them and they were kept enslaved for hundreds of years.

Now, I want you to remember this slavery, because slavery is a theme. This slavery especially, is a theme that will resonate through the rest of the Bible, as will the theme of Egypt, we will see this idea of not enslaving people, in several laws as we go through them. You'll see it whenever God says, be hospitable to strangers almost every time it ends with "Because you were strangers in Egypt". Like, you know what it feels like for people to be not hospitable to you, in fact, to enslave you. God's good goodness to us is framed as freedom from slavery. What Christ did for us is framed as freedom from slavery. And it harkens back to the slavery in Egypt. This establishes so much about how God treats us from this point on and how He wants us to treat others. And this guy, this idea of freedom from slavery is such a core issue throughout all of the rest of Scripture.

So how does this freedom from slavery come about? Well, it begins chapters two and three with the birth and call of a man named Moses. When God has a plan, he always chooses a person to enact it. So far, we've seen that happen with Noah with Abraham and with Joseph. Eventually we'll see it happen with people like David and Esther and Mary. Now For this chapter of the story, he chooses Moses and he chooses Moses as a baby. This is another thing that will repeat again in Scripture over and over again, the choice of us as babies. In fact, the choice of pre born people, before we're born, God chooses certain people. We see this as a common theme to Scripture. We saw it already in Isaac, we saw it and Jacob and Esau will see it coming up in Solomon, and ultimately in Jesus, that even before they were born, God had chosen them for a great task. This, again, like I say, becomes a real theme through scripture, and is an anchor for a lot of Christian theology.

So what is happening now, though, in Egypt is that the fear of the pharaohs who didn't know Joseph has now turned brutal, and now they're slaughtering babies, because the Hebrews are growing too quickly for them. Moses' mother decides she does not want her son to be handed over to the Egyptian authorities to be killed. So instead, she builds a little raft, she's put some on it, sets that raft into the Nile, little basket in the Nile, and basically says, God, my son is in your hands. Well, he's discovered by Pharaoh's daughter, and he's raised in Pharaoh's household. And I'll let you read through the rest of that story of how he's raised and how he ends up out in the wilderness anyway, and how God uses just all kinds of strange and difficult aspects of Moses life, to put him in the place where he can be the deliverer of God's people.

We then get to one of history's great moments where God calls Moses at the burning bush. And at that point, in addition to calling Moses to free his people, also for the first time, in the Bible, God gives himself a name. And he does so because Moses asks, basically, he says, "I'm going to go back and tell people God sent me, but they're going to say which God", because Egypt got ton of gods. So which god are you and God for the first time gives himself a name, and it is the name "I am", which simply means I exist, or we sometimes transliterate that as Yahweh or Jehovah. So anytime you hear the phrase, Jehovah, it is the phrase "I am", it is God's name that he gave to Moses in the burning bush. We then see in chapters 4 through 11, Moses' time before Pharaoh, where these amazing things happen, the plagues occur. And it's an amazing story of how often in our lives, things get worse before they get better.

Like, here it is, God says, I'm going to free my people. And then immediately, things get worse for God's people. That's a theme that repeats again later, as well, including in our own

lives, we need to remember that because when we get to the set place where we have a sense of you know, I really believe God's going to do something wonderful for me, watch out, it's probably going to get worse before it gets better. And this is where faith steps in. Don't step away from God, don't get mad at God, when things get worse for a while, because it is a common theme. When God does things that he brings us to the trial in order to get to the good place he brings us, he brought his own son through crucifixion, to get to resurrection. So it gets worse before it gets better. This is why faith matters.

And then in chapter 12, does the establishment of the Passover. This is still the biggest holiday for our Jewish friends. And remember the Passover, read it carefully, because we will see the theme of Passover again, come up again and again. You notice in this passage, how many things I've told you already, "this is a theme, we'll come back to it". Yeah, we're not even done with that, we're gonna see the Passover again, and again, especially for Christians, as the backdrop for Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. It's the backdrop theologically, it's also the backdrop in that he was crucified and resurrected during the Passover season of the year.

We then go to 13 through 15. Chapters 13 through 15 of Exodus, where we see this amazing crossing of the Red Sea. It's another test of their faith. It is one of the most vivid examples of God's power in all of Scripture. It's one that they are told to remember, because it's going to echo again in 40 years as they're about to go into the Promised Land. God parts the water wants to free them from slavery, he will part water again to bring them into the Promised Land 40 years after this. So remember this when it echoes again, later. And then they have a time in the desert and 16 through 19. This is probably just a few months at this point, as they're traveling from Egypt to the Promised Land on the way they pause. Or they're visited by Moses' Father in law, Jethro, who actually helps to give them a system to develop and to train and to coordinate leadership within their nation. Chapter 18 is a great lesson on biblical leadership. And then the reading for this week.

We'll end with chapter 19, as they arrive back at the mountain where Moses first met with God at the burning bush and where God said, "You're going to come back to this mountain with those people, and you're going to worship me there". And that's where we'll put a pause in it. Because next week, we're going to start with something very special with the 10 commandments, but we're not going to get there this week.

So this week, what do we pay attention to? First of all, pay attention to how God's plan is something we can and must pray for. But also notice that it's something we can have faith in, it's something that we must act in and act with God in. But God's plan is not something we can fully anticipate. The details of God's plan will always work out differently than our expectations, always, always, always. And mostly by going through more difficulties than we want or than we expect, or that we'll plan for. So yes, we pray for healing. We pray for deliverance, we pray for freedom, we pray for a better financial situation, right? We pray for all kinds of things. And even when God promises he'll deliver it, and even when we know it's going to come, there will always be a difficult season to go through to get there. And the manner in which it arrives will always be different. And usually even the answer will be different than the answer we anticipated. But it doesn't mean that God isn't working. In fact, it's one of the proofs that it's God's way and not our way that's most important. So look for that as you go through this week.

There's so much going on. In fact, this may be one of those weeks that you want to read it really quickly in the first couple of days, so you can read it through again, slowing down and

just savoring every little bite. This is an amazing week. I hope you'll be encouraged. I know you'll be encouraged as you read through, and we will look forward to seeing you again next week.

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