

Oppression and deliverance

Ex. 1-2

Series introduction:

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ. After being gone for two weeks, it is great to be back.

This morning, we start a new series on the book of Exodus.

The book of Exodus was written by Moses; and it describes Israel's redemption from Egypt around 1500 BC.

Why this series now?

I try to go back and forth between OT and the NT. Since we just finished a NT book, it is time for an OT book.

Furthermore, this book is incredibly rich in gospel imagery.

In addition, this book describes the greatest act of redemption in the OT.

A word about Scripture reading.

We are not going to have Scripture readers read very often during this series.

Why? the texts are very long, and I don't want to give the story away.

Instead, please read the text in advance every week...

Let me encourage you to buy the Exodus booklets in the bookstore for notetaking.

Prayer for illumination:

Please join me in prayer...

Sermon introduction:

Jason Ridington was big, and Jason Ridington was mean.

Whenever I saw him in the crowded halls of Sacagawea Junior high I flinched. Why? He loved to oppress people who were smaller and weaker than himself. And I happened to be smaller and weaker than Jason.

Several times he walked up behind me and "rednecked me." To "redneck" someone is to slap him or her in the back of the neck with an open palm so hard that it turns their neck red.

Other times he just shoved me.

I never knew what he was going to do.

One day, I sat in the front of my seventh grade science class. Jason sat right behind me. Over a period of 35 minutes, he placed roughly ten large stickers on my back, unbeknownst to me. The whole class was in on it. They all laughed and giggled. I left class feeling like an idiot. I was the oppressed, he was the oppressor.

A few years later, Jason tragically took his own life. He oppressed others because others oppressed him. He needed deliverance.

You may not be oppressed by a bully, but most of us are oppressed by someone or something. Some are oppressed by a boss, a parent, a coach, a neighbor, a classmate. Others are oppressed by politicians. All of us are oppressed by the flesh, the world, and the Devil.

Is there any hope for the oppressed? Yes, this brings us to Exodus chapters 1-2. In this story God delivers his oppressed people. Let me say that again—God delivers his oppressed people.

Two points...

Oppression
Deliverance

First, oppression.

Let's look at...

The subjects of oppression. (v. 1-7)

Exodus 1:1–7 (ESV) — **1** These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household: **2** Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, **3** Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, **4** Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. **5** All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. **6** Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. **7** But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

As the book of Genesis ends, Jacob's sons, which formed the fledgling nation of Israel, move to Egypt to escape a severe famine. Four hundred years later, they are still in Egypt, and Jacob's twelve sons have become a few million people. How do we know? Exodus 12:37 and Num. 1:46 tell us that 603,000 adult males left Egypt with Moses. 603K males, plus wives and children, equals at least two million people.

This is significant. Why? It is proof that God always keeps his covenant promises. Roughly 500 years earlier (Gen 13:16; 15:5; 17:2,6; 22:17), God promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

Application:

God always keeps his covenant promises, which means that God will keep his covenant promises to you. What has he covenanted to do for you? Under the new covenant, He has promised to remove the guilt and stain of all your sin, fill you with the Spirit, and write his laws on your heart. Furthermore, He has promised to work all things for your good. Plus, he has promised to bring you into the eternal promised land.

When God keeps his promises to bless his people, some get jealous, which leads to our next scene.

The subjects of oppression!

The nature of oppression! (v. 8-14)

Exodus 1:8–14 (ESV) — 8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.

Roughly 400 years have elapsed since Joseph and his brothers arrived in Egypt.

9 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.

Most scholars believe that the site of Raamses is located at Qantir in the eastern Nile delta about 12 miles south of Tanis. Excavations have confirmed this identification. During the second millennium B.C., a massive settlement of Asiatic foreigners lived here. (ESVSB)

Application—archaeology has never overturned a fact of the Bible. The deeper archaeologists dig, the more evidence we have for the Bible’s reliability.

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*.

According to verses 11-14, the Israelites were...

Afflicted with heavy burdens (v. 11)

Oppressed (v. 12)

Worked ruthlessly (v. 13)

Enslaved (v. 13)

Their lives were bitter with hard service (v. 14)

The author mentions again that they worked ruthlessly as slaves (v.14)

Each word or phrase is another crack of the oppressors whip...

No matter how hard you think your life is, the Israelites had it worse. They worked seven days a week, sunup to sundown, under the burning sun, with no rest, and no free time.

No worker’s rights, no unions, no pay, no benefits, no healthcare, and no retirement. Their lives were short and brutish.

Illustration: what is the worst job you have ever had? (weed whacking 8 hours a day, picking up garbage, delivering papers on Sunday mornings in the middle of a rainstorm, etc...)

I’m sure the Israelite slaves would have killed for one of those jobs, literally. They were sorely oppressed.

How did they respond to their oppression? Let’s keep reading...

The subjects of oppression

The nature of oppression

The response to oppression (v. 15-22)

Exodus 1:15–22 (ESV) — **15** Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, **16** “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” **17** But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. **18** So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” **19** The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” **20** So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. **21** And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. **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.”

This is state sponsored genocide.

Imagine being a pregnant mother during this regime. You would live in constant dread for nine months, wondering if it was a boy or a girl. If the baby was a boy, he was murdered.

How should we respond to oppression like this? Our text honors two brave women.

According to verse 17, Shiphrah and Puah (great names for your daughters) refused to practice infanticide. Why? The text says that they feared God more than they feared the king of Egypt. When the king of Egypt asked them why they are letting the male babies live? They say, “We can’t get to the laboring mother’s in time.” Were they lying? We don’t know. The text never says that they lied. Although some use this text as proof that it is ok to lie in certain situations. Be very careful with that ethic.

What the text makes clear is that God blessed them with their own children because they feared God more than they feared Pharaoh.

These were brave woman. Notice the text never names Pharaoh, but it names both women. Why? God is honoring them for their godly response to oppression.

Application:

God wants us to respond to oppression the same way.

In other words, when oppressed, we must fear God more than we fear our oppressors. Said another way, we must fear God’s consequences more than human consequences.

Let me ask you a few questions-

Is there anything that you fear more than God?

Is there anything you stand in awe of more than God?

Does God have as much weight in your life as he had in the lives of the brave midwives?

When oppression comes, we must fear God more than oppressors.

Oppression and persecution are the norm for God’s people.
Some Christians are oppressed by evil dictators.

Others are oppressed by evil bosses, coaches, teachers, neighbors, or evil people groups.

All of us are oppressed by the flesh, the world, and the devil.

We are just like the Israelites, we all need deliverance, don't we? But who will deliver us. This brings us to the second point.

First, oppression.

Second, deliverance.

What do we learn about Israel's deliverer? For starters, we learn that...

God preserved his deliver! (1-10)

Exodus 2:1–10 (ESV) — **1** Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. **2** The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. **3** When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. **4** And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. **5** Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. **6** When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." **7** Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" **8** And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the girl went and called the child's mother. **9** And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. **10** When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

The parents of Moses are terrified that their male child will be put to death. To spare his life, they put him in a basket and let him float away in the river.

He was in God's hands.

Notice how God preserved this child.

He was preserved from drowning.

He was preserved from starvation.

He was preserved from crocodiles.

He was preserved from Pharaoh's sword.

God sovereignly preserved this helpless child, who would eventually redeem Israel.

1500 years later, God sovereignly preserved another helpless child, who was sent to redeem the world.

Consider the similarities between Moses and Jesus.

Moses and Jesus were both called out of Egypt (Matt. 2:15).

Moses and Jesus both endured some "silent years" before their public ministry.

Moses would wander in the wilderness for 40 years, Jesus wandered in the wilderness for 40 days (Matt. 4:1-11).

Moses and Jesus presented God's law from a mountain—Mt. Sinai and the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7).

And... Baby Moses and baby Jesus were both preserved from tyrannical rulers (Matt. 2:16).

Is all this coincidence? Of course not. Moses is meant to point us to Christ.

Summary—***God preserved Moses and God preserved Jesus to deliver his covenant people.***

Here is the takeaway—nothing can stop God from delivering his covenant people. Nothing!!!

Application:

Think how much is at stake here. If Moses dies in infancy, Israel will not be delivered. If Israel is not delivered, Israel will cease to exist. If Israel ceases to exist Christ will not come.

In this basket rests the hope of the world literally.

Here is the good news, God was at work behind the scenes, using evil for good, to providentially bring about the deliverance of his people.

One scholar writes,

“But behind all of this, we are meant to see the providential hand of God. It is a remarkable sequence of events: the coincidences of Pharaoh's daughter coming, the pitiful cries of the baby, the provision of a wet-nurse. And it leads to a remarkable scenario: Moses being cared for by his mother and her being paid to do so. This means that Moses is raised a Hebrew with the privileges of Egypt.” (Tim Chester)

Nothing can stop God from delivering his people, not even the forces of darkness and evil. God providentially preserved his deliverer. Why? So that God could prepare his deliverer. Let's keep reading...

God preserves his deliverer! In addition...

God prepares his deliverer!

Let me summarize verses 11-23.

Forty years after Moses's birth, Moses is still in Egypt. One day, he watches an Egyptian beat a Hebrew. Moses strikes the Egyptian, and the Egyptian dies. Pharaoh finds out and wants to kill Moses. Naturally, Moses flees Egypt. He eventually ends up in Midian, a long way from the corridors of power in Egypt. He settles in with the Midianites and marries Jethro's daughter Zipporah. Together, they have a son.

After this, forty more years elapse. And the pharaoh who wants to kill Moses dies. During this season, Moses learns the ways of the shepherd in the desert.

Moses' life is divided into three equal periods: forty years as a prince in Egypt; forty years as a shepherd in Midian; and forty years as leader of Israel.

How does God prepare Moses to deliver Israel during this 40-year period? He weans him from the world.

How do we know? Hebrews 11:23-26 provides us with a divine commentary on this period of Moses's life.

Hebrews 11:23–26 (ESV) — 23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. **24** By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **25** choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. **26** He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

Application:

According to **Acts 7:22** Moses "was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds."

In other words, Moses was a big deal in Egypt. Which means that his choice to leave everything behind in Egypt was very costly.

He left the comfort of the king's palace.

He left the wealth of the king's palace.

He left the relationships and the connections of the king's palace.

He left the prestige of the king's palace.

He left the freedom of the king's palace.

Why?

He was living for the world to come.

He was living for his heavenly reward.

He realized that life is very fleeting.

All of us must decide which world we will live for! We will live for this world, or will we live for the life to come? We must never forget that this world is not our home.

We must choose...

Which world will set our priorities?

Which world will shape our behavior?

Which world will define our standard of living?

Will we choose the "pleasures of sin" and "the treasures of Egypt"? Or will we choose "to be ill-treated along with the people of God"?

God was preparing his deliverer by weaning him off this world. Although Moses was prepared to deliver Israel, he can't deliver us. Who will? Let's keep reading....

God preserves his deliverer!

God prepares his deliverer!

God provides the deliverer! (v. 23-25)

23 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.

God heard.

God remembered.

God saw.

God knew.

God is deeply concerned about the welfare of his covenant people. God had intimate knowledge of their suffering and oppression. He is not uncaring. He will act to deliver them. Why?

V. 24... “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham...”

God always keeps his covenant promises. This theme will come up again and again in Exodus. Maybe the best definition of God’s covenant is found in the *Jesus Story Book Bible*. According to the author, God’s covenant is “a never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love” (Sally Lloyd-Jones, Story Book, 36).

God promised to make Abraham a great nation and God always keeps his promises.

God still hears, God still sees, God still knows, and God still remembers his covenant promises to his new covenant people.

When God saw you oppressed by the flesh, the world, and the devil, he acted. He sent a deliverer far greater than Moses. He sent his own son to deliver us, his new covenant people. Jesus delivered us from ultimate oppression through his life, death, and resurrection.

1 John 3:8 (ESV) — 8... The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

Hebrews 2:14–15 (ESV) — 14 ... that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, **15** and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Colossians 2:14–15 (ESV) — 14 ... This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. **15** He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Application:

Jesus delivers us from slavery to the fear of death.

Jesus delivers us from slavery to the devil.

Jesus delivers us from slavery to sin. (expand).

Enslaved to spending money.

Enslaved to fear of man.

Enslaved to porn.

Enslaved to anxiety.

Enslaved to

Not only that, but through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, someday we will be delivered from every form of oppression. Wow!!! What will that be like? No more oppression forever!

In the meantime, we long for that day.

In the meantime, we still experience forms of oppression. So, what do we do?

We fear God more than the oppressors (like the midwives).

We live as if this life is not our home (like Moses).

But hear is the good news, we can experience deliverance from our greatest oppressors now—in the present tense. The moment you become a Christian; you are delivered from your greatest oppressors.

You can be delivered from the fear of death.

You can be delivered from slavery to Satan.

You can be delivered from slavery to sin.

Someday, you will be delivered from everything.

How? You must decide to turn away from your sins and trust Jesus Christ to deliver you. Let's pray...