

## **“Into Egypt”– Exodus 1:1-7**

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Take the Bible that brought you or the one in the pew and meet me in Exodus 1...

Last week we kicked off part one of a two-part introduction to Exodus. We explored how Exodus event points forward to Jesus. We looked at how the story influences the unfolding of the narrative in both the Old and New Testaments. And we considered several examples of how biblical authors allude to and unpack the ideas present in this book. But the main point was to see that Exodus, like the rest of Scripture, is meant to lead us to Jesus and the “New Exodus” He provides for His people through His life, death, and resurrection. Today we are going to explore how Exodus points us backwards to the narrative of Genesis. In other words, we are going to consider the context that sets the stage for the Exodus event. That’s a tall order, but we ought not neglect it. The series title is “Out of Egypt I Called My Son,” but today we examine how God’s people got “Into Egypt” to begin with. Before we get to that though, we will be in Exodus 1 so turn there in your Bible or the electronic device and Bible app you brought with you this morning. That still feels weird to say...

Technology excites me. I like technology. I’m a techy of sorts. How much we truly benefit from technological advancement, however, is subject to debate. We now have at our fingertips more information than the sages of old could acquire in a whole lifetime. But for every step forward there is a tradeoff. Social media allows us to be connected with people all over the world, but diminishes our capacity to connect and interact with people right in front of us. We have all had that awkward moment where everyone at the table is on their phones, sometimes communicating digitally with the very people we are sitting with.

One of the developments in technology that I am a fan of is the ability to stream movies and television shows in your living room. I’m so fond of this because, when it comes to entertainment, I can be a bit impatient. Don’t you just hate how shows tend to end their episodes? There’s always a cliffhanger. There’s always some twist they throw in at the end that sucks you in right as they pull the plug and the credits begin to roll. At best you have to wait an entire week to get your questions answered. A whole week! At worst several months until the next season begins. It’s so frustrating. But it works. We come back for more. But now, in the age of streaming, we can watch episodes from previous seasons back to back. We don’t have to wait. All we need is one sick afternoon or one lazy Saturday and we can watch entire seasons of entertainment without the agony of waiting.

But, of course, that only works for shows that have already been out for some time. Any season that is currently airing requires the wait, from week to week, season to season. They rely on cliffhangers to bring audiences back and recaps to welcome new audiences in. Almost every episode begins with “Previously on [show name]...”, followed by some clips from past episodes that catch up new viewers or give inattentive and forgetful viewers flashbacks of what has already happened in the story. Those flashbacks are very helpful, if you pay attention, because they give you some indication of where the story is heading in the current episode. They highlight which questions are going to be answered in the next hour or so. They alert you to what to look for.

The first paragraph in Exodus is one such flashback. It summarizes the end of Genesis with some of Genesis’ own words. It signals to new readers that this book is a sequel of sorts and it orients the returning audience to where we are in the story they are tuning in for, the story that previously left us with a number of cliffhangers. If the Pentateuch were a TV series, Exodus would be season two of five. Even if you are unfamiliar with season one (Genesis), you would assume that Exodus does not stand alone because it

immediately introduces you to a family about whom the opening verses give us no prior information.<sup>1</sup> Let me show you what I mean. Let's read the opening paragraph. Follow along as I read, beginning in verse 1...This is God's Word...

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

Today we will be doing a lot of background and Bible survey. We won't be very application heavy, but we will be once we are done introducing the book. In light of the verses we just read, it's safe to say that the author is clearly assuming you've read the prequel. We can see this through the number of Genesis allusions that we will explore in a moment. Even the first six words of the Hebrew text (which is the language that this was originally written in) are an exact repetition of Genesis 46:8 and both instances are followed by a list of Jacob/Israel's descendants. So there's that obvious connection.

In addition to this, we should note that the very first word of the Hebrew text is a one-letter word that isn't reflected in most English translations. The letter is *waw* and it's commonly translated "and."<sup>2</sup> So if you're sitting in English class and your teacher tells you it's not right to begin sentences with conjunctions, you can inform him or her that the Holy Spirit does and it stands to reason, then, that maybe those legalistic rules of grammar are not all that biblical. Just saying. Actually don't say that. I don't want to get blamed for smart alec students.

But, seriously (if you'll forgive me for starting this sentence with a conjunction), this is an important observation. Exodus begins with "and." It's continuing the thought we find on the previous pages. Genesis ends with a cliffhanger. Joseph makes his children swear that they would carry his bones from Egypt and assures them that God would "visit" them in the future. Then he dies (Gen. 50:22-26). See you next season. So both the ending of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus highlight the connection between the two. The very first word of Exodus, "and," serves as a bridge between them. This story is in development.

Therefore, Exodus cannot be understood in a vacuum.<sup>3</sup> We must read the book in light of what happened in Genesis. You can't skip the prequel (this isn't Star Wars!). Before we can understand the significance of God delivering these people out of Egypt, we have to understand how it came to be that they found themselves in Egypt. That's what we will do today. I wish we had time to read the whole book of Genesis this morning. Instead we will have to settle with some remarks on four key parts of Genesis which help us make sense out of Exodus, all of which are echoed in the opening verses we read moments ago.<sup>4</sup> So let's dive in. The first order of business is...

### **The Creation**

Genesis (and by extension, God's Word) begins with these words: "*In the beginning God...*" (Gen. 1:1). What follows those words is the creation account, a description of how God made all that is in existence. But these opening words make a fundamental point, namely, that the creation account is about God. He's the center, not that which He created and not even mankind. Mankind is special, but they are still part of God's creation. God is the central character, not any created thing. The Psalmist later recognized this when he wrote, "*The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork*" (Psalm 19:1). Creation exists to highlight His glory.<sup>5</sup> It points to its Creator.

Genesis explains how God did it, though not in scientific terms. It's poetic and lyrical. There is rhythm and structure, repetition and balance. It leaves much to the imagination and burden of science. But what it aims to communicate is quite clear. God is the Creator of all things and His creative work was effortless. By a mere word He can bring about existence. He created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*, as theologians sometimes say). A God who can do that will have no trouble orchestrating the wonders we will encounter in Exodus. He is not constrained by any "laws" of nature. Creation is the outworking of a sovereign God who is both Creator and King.<sup>6</sup>

As I said, last Sunday we emphasized how the book of Exodus points to Jesus because all of Scripture was meant to point to Jesus in one way or another. If that is true, then we would expect the creation account to be no different. It's not. The New Testament fills in some of the gaps for us, by telling us that the Son of God was the agent who brought forth all of God's creation. Paul wrote of Jesus, "*by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together*" (Col. 1:16-17). Jesus is the One through whom all creation came into existence, Paul says, and all creation exists "*for him,*" that is, for His glory. This is not the only place these ideas can be found in the Bible. For instance, John speaks of Jesus as the Creator of "*all things*" (John 1:3) and Paul told the Corinthians that even the first man, Adam, was meant to point to Jesus, "*the last Adam*" (1 Cor. 15:45).

So the creation account does indeed point to Jesus. But how does it point to Exodus? In a number of ways. For now, let me just mention some of the literary connections that relate to the first paragraph of Exodus. In verse 7, we read that "*the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.*"<sup>7</sup> Verbs like "be fruitful" and "multiply" and "fill" are all present in the creation account. After God created mankind He gave them a series of commands, called "the creation mandate." That mandate begins with the same language: "*Be fruitful and multiply and full the earth...*"

We find those same verbs used later in Genesis at the conclusion of the story of Noah and the flood. When you read that story, we find a lot of the same language found in the creation account, to the point that it's generally held that the flood is a "re-creation" of sorts. When Noah steps off the boat, God blesses him, and reiterates the creation mandate: "*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*" (9:1, 7). And now we see that combination of words in the opening paragraph of Exodus. That's not a coincidence. But it is a different context. The language is presented not as a mandate of what is to happen, but rather as a description of what is happening among the Israelites. In other words, Israel is presented as fulfilling the creation mandate that God originally gave to Adam and then later to Noah. This family descending from Jacob is being fruitful, multiplying, and filling the earth.<sup>8</sup> Do you see the connection?

I love the way Terrence Fretheim teases out the implications. He writes,

"The point here is that *God's intentions in creation are being realized in this family*; what is happening is in tune with God's creational purposes. This is *a microcosmic fulfillment of God's macrocosmic design* for the world (cf. 40:34-38). Israel is God's starting point for realizing the divine intentions for all."<sup>9</sup>

In other words, we see Israel doing what mankind was intended to do from the beginning. They are fulfilling this larger (macro) plan on a smaller (micro) level.

Interestingly, even the language that describes their proliferation of offspring is found in both the creation and flood accounts. The word translated "*increased greatly*" in Exodus 1:7 literally means "to swarm" or "teem." They were so fruitful that the land of Egypt was swarming with Hebrews (cf. 8:3). In Genesis 1,

the verb is used to describe the creation of all the creatures that live in water. “*God said, ‘Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures...’*” (Gen. 1:21). That’s a fisherman’s dream. The teeming in Exodus is a Pharaoh’s nightmare. In the flood narrative, God instructed Noah to release all the animals from the ark that they might “*swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply*” (8:17). Clearly Exodus is borrowing this same language.

The fact that the author makes all these connections through his deliberate word choices at the beginning suggests that the story of Exodus relates to the creative design of God. As we study this book we will see the creation account echoed in a number of places.<sup>10</sup> The connection between the creation of Genesis and the deliverance of Exodus will become even more explicit when we study the description of the plagues and the parting of the sea and the reordering that the law brings and the glimpses of Eden found in the tabernacle.<sup>11</sup> We’ll get there. But the point is, the opening verses are already inviting us to read Exodus through the lens of the creation account. When we do we will see repeatedly that “*God un-creates in judgment and recreates in salvation.*”<sup>12</sup> In a sense, Exodus is the story of God creating a nation.<sup>13</sup>

Now, second, the background of Genesis helps us to understand the conflict in Exodus.

### **The Conflict**

Genesis 3 describes “the Fall,” which is the story of mankind’s fall into sin. Adam and Eve (the first two people on earth) were given every tree in the Garden of Eden to eat from and told to refrain from eating from only one tree. The devil slithers onto the scene as a serpent and entices to eat from that forbidden tree after inviting them to question the kindness of God. Eve eats of the fruit and then Adam follows suit. Their innocence was lost. Sin destroys the harmony of their relationship with God and His creation (which we know all too well as a result). They were removed from His presence and from Eden after God issues a number of curses. These curses shape our experience in the world.

For instance, the curse levied at the serpent anticipates ongoing strife between the people of God and the people who follow the devil (consciously or unconsciously). God said to the serpent,

*“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”* (Genesis 3:15)

The word enmity is emphatic in the original.<sup>14</sup> There are multiple layers to that enmity in this verse. First, of course, there is the hostility that will exist between the woman (Eve) and the serpent (the devil). The second stage of this enmity is between her “seed” and his “seed.” This is not referring to physical descent, but spiritual descent. There is no evidence in the Bible that Satan can bear children (cf. Mark 12:25). Yet there is evidence that people can be children of the devil. Jesus said that Satan was the “father” of the Pharisees, for instance (John 8:44). So though they were physical descendants of Eve, they were spiritual descendants of the devil (and so were all of us at some point, if not now). The conflict between these two seeds is seen immediately in Genesis, the very next chapter in fact. Cain kills his brother Abel. In the New Testament, Cain is said to be “*of the evil one*” (1 John 3:12) and Abel is described as “*righteous*” (Heb. 11:4). So already, even in the second generation, these two “seeds” are duking it out.<sup>15</sup>

So what does this have to do with Exodus? Simply put, Exodus tells the story of this same conflict playing out generations later. Now the banner of the serpent’s seed is carried by Pharaoh, who afflicts the children of Eve. It’s important for us to understand the conflict between Pharaoh and Israel in these cosmic terms. New story. Same conflict. Every generation knows this conflict. It is materializing every time the people of God are persecuted in the world. Same conflict. New act. The adversary roams around like a lion seeking people to devour and he will use anyone he can get his mouth around to do harm to God’s bride,

the church. And as we saw from our Revelation series, he often uses people from within the church to hinder kingdom work. It's not a matter of if we will experience this conflict in the world today. It's a matter of which side of the battle line you find yourself on when it's happening. Are our words, actions, and inactions being leveraged by God to build His church and unify His people around our Gospel witness or are they being used by the evil one to destroy her and diminish that witness?

But in Genesis 3:15 God does more than just predict this ongoing war. He also plants a seed of hope. He says to the serpent, "*he [meaning the seed of the woman] shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*" Theologians call this statement the "*proto-evangelion*," meaning the "first gospel." This verse points us to Jesus and the good news ("gospel") of His victory over Satan. Luke introduces Jesus by tracing his lineage back to Adam and Eve. He is the "seed" that Genesis 3:15 hoped for. He is the One who came to do battle with the serpent and deliver us from this enemy. He experienced on the cross the full fury that Satan had to offer. Satan beat the life out of Him, stretched Him out on a splintering beam, and hung His lifeless body for the world to see. But three days later, Jesus came back to life. The resurrected Jesus had conquered death. The resurrection was the decisive blow to the head of the evil one after the heel of our Lord was struck.

Through faith in Christ, we too can have victory over sin, death, and Satan. Doesn't that sound like good news! It is. It's the Gospel. Satan has tried to destroy the church and prevent the preaching of the Gospel, but somehow, somehow, with God's sovereign care the global church has been fruitful and multiplied (to borrow the language of Exodus 1:7).<sup>16</sup> God's ultimate plans will not be thwarted by the attempts of Satan, or any Pharaoh he wields in the world. God will fill the earth with the glory of Christ and He will build His church such that the gates of hell will not prevail against it. God is on the throne, church. Christ is risen. And He has secured the exodus of His people from their bondage to sin and Satan. That's why we have so much hope, even amid this age-old conflict. Even in the midst of our struggle with temptation and failure. We have hope because we look up and see an empty cross. And we have hope because God is faithful, which brings us to...

### **The Covenant**

The covenant I have in mind here is the one God made with Abraham. As the story of Genesis unravels, we eventually encounter a man by the name of Abram (whose name God would eventually change to Abraham).<sup>17</sup> This name came from a idolatrous family, but God, completely out of grace, calls him to leave his family so that He can bless him in a number of ways. God invites Abraham to have faith in him, trusting that these things would come to pass. That's exactly what Abraham did. "*Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness*" (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23).

The promise that God made to Abraham is known as the Abrahamic covenant and it really does set the trajectory of the rest of the Bible (Gen. 12; 15; 17).<sup>18</sup> This covenant is "God's response to the sin and rebellion seen in Genesis 3-11."<sup>19</sup> The covenant assured Abraham that God would do four basic things:

- He would give him many descendants.
- He would give those descendants a land.
- He would bless and curse others, depending on their posture toward Abraham.
- He would bless all nations through Abraham.

When God makes this promise this man possess none of these things. He was asked to leave behind every advantage that might help him attain these things in his own strength. Even his own wife was barren and beyond the age of bearing children. It's an impossible proposition, where it not for the One who made the promise. With God, nothing is impossible.<sup>20</sup>

During the life of Abraham, the tension is on the fulfillment of that first promise. You can't have many descendants, until you have a first. Eventually God opens the womb of his wife Sarah and she gave birth to a son Isaac. God would reiterate Abraham's covenant to His son Isaac, telling him that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars he saw in the sky (Gen. 26:4, 24). Isaac would father a couple boys, Jacob and Esau. Jacob (who was also called "Israel") is mentioned in the first verse of Exodus. He too was the recipient of the promise God made to his grandfather. God tells him that a "*nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your body*" (35:11). Twelve of Jacob's descendants would eventually constitute the twelve tribes of Israel, the nation that the Old Testament follows.

Even at the time of Exodus, we are told, that the descendants of Abraham have "*multiplied*" (Exod. 1:7). So what you have to see in that opening page of Exodus is that the current situation is evidence that God has been faithful to His promise to Abraham. He promised him many descendants. He has given him many descendants. That was not taken for granted in Genesis. The wives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all endured bouts of infertility. But we turn the page into Exodus, things have changed. As Victor Hamilton writes: "In Genesis the problem is too much infertility. Here [in Exodus] so much fertility will arouse the paranoid fears of Pharaoh. Apparently there are few, if any, Sarahs or Rebekahs or Rachels in Goshen."<sup>21</sup>

So no one is doubting the offspring aspect of the covenant at this point. But remember that was only one dimension of the Abrahamic covenant. What about the land?<sup>22</sup> As we begin Exodus we are told in verse 4 that the Israelites are in Egypt. By chapter's end we learn that they are slaves in Egypt. Far from having their own land, they are captives in another's. So there is a new tension. Their very existence is threatened. Will God preserve them? Has God forgotten His promise to Abraham? Will God be faithful and give them their own land? These are questions that Exodus confronts us with.

We'll have a lot more to say about this covenant as we go along in Exodus. But while we're at it, let me offer a few more thoughts. We may wonder why God didn't just give Abraham and his first descendants the Promised Land immediately. Genesis actually answers that question for us. The answer is the kindness of God. The Lord could have given them the land immediately, but He doesn't because, according to Genesis 15:16, He is patiently allowing the sins of the Canaanites to accumulate. For hundreds of years, more time than America has existed, God was patient with the Canaanites. When He eventually sends His people in to wipe them out, it was an act of judgment that was hundreds of years in the making. It's a picture of God's patience. And it's a warning to those who test its limits. In the end though God would give them the land.

What about the blessing language in the covenant? Well, on the one hand, God's blessing is seen on Abraham's life and the lives of his descendants in more ways than we can count. But the promises included blessing that would extend to the nations. That hasn't happened by the end of Genesis. The book of Exodus is needed.<sup>23</sup> The story still awaits a climax. How would God fulfill that? The New Testament answers that in its very first verse. God would bring blessings to the nations by sending Jesus, His Son, "*the son of Abraham*" (Matt. 1:1). By offering Himself on the cross in the place of sinners, He has provided the only way for us to have our sins forgiven and our salvation secured. If we will trust Christ for salvation and not our own efforts, He will save out of His free grace. All who believe are given eternal life. That could be your experience today. You could have your sins forgiven and your guilt removed. Whatever you have done, however far you have fallen short, there is a way to God. That way is Jesus Christ. Those who trust Him are given eternal life. Just like Abraham, we believe and righteousness is credited to our morally bankrupt account. Those who trust themselves or their religion will never take hold of such life. "*Believe in Jesus and you will be saved*" (Acts 16:31).

To the glory of God, there will be people from every nation, every people group, who do just that and will be numbered along the redeemed before all is said and done. In this way every nation will be blessed through Abraham. Jesus, the “son of Abraham” *par excellence* will bring that promise to fruition. This is such a beautiful fulfillment that I wish we had more time to sink our teeth in. If you are interested in exploring more about how Jesus fulfills the Abrahamic covenant, let me recommend that you go to our church website ([www.welovethegospel.com](http://www.welovethegospel.com)) and read or listen to the first sermon I preached at this church called “Jesus, the Christ: King of Nations and Nobodies” in a series titled “Enter the King.”

Now before we close, there is one final piece of context from Genesis that I want to mention...

### **The Commute**

Exodus begins by telling us that Jacob and all of his descendants have died. The author goes out of his way to highlight the death of Joseph. Who’s Joseph? He was one of the descendants of Jacob. In fact, he was Jacob’s favorite son, which, as you might expect, led to a lot of jealousy and animosity. That sibling rivalry came to a head in Genesis 37 when his brothers threw him in a pit, brought him up only to sell him to some traveling Ishmaelites, and staged his death before their devastated father. So...maybe your siblings are not so bad after all.

Those travelers carried Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh’s guard. For years Joseph served Potiphar faithful and rose up the ranks, eventually made the overseer of Potiphar’s house and entrusted with all the officer possessed. Things were looking up. Then came Potiphar’s wife. She attempted to seduce Joseph, but Joseph refused her. In her rejection, she falsely accused him of rape and Joseph was thrown into jail to live out the rest of his days. But God had other plans.

While in jail, God allowed Joseph to interpret the dreams of some of the prisoners. One of those prisoners was eventually released (as Joseph foretold) and was restored to service as Pharaoh’s cupbearer. The cupbearer was a trusted member in Pharaoh’s court because he would taste the food to ensure it had not been poisoned by someone trying to assassinate the Pharaoh. So the cupbearer was highly trusted. Years later when the Pharaoh was troubled by some dreams he had, the cupbearer had the ear of Pharaoh and he told him the story of how a prisoner named Joseph interpreted his dream and everything came to pass as he said it would. Intrigued, the Pharaoh brought Joseph from his cell to interpret his dream. Joseph does just that. The particular dream related to a famine that would come on Egypt and Joseph gave Pharaoh wise advice on how to prepare for that famine. This pleased the Pharaoh and he appointed Joseph to make preparations. Joseph was given more authority than anyone in the land, save Pharaoh himself. He was second in command.

Sure enough the famine came and Egypt was ready because of the actions of Joseph. But you know who wasn’t ready? Jacob and his sons. Because of the famine his sons were sent to Egypt to seek out provisions. They had no idea Joseph was there. Joseph has various exchanges with them designed to get them to bring his newest brother (whom he has not met), all the while no one recognizes Joseph. Eventually there is a big reveal and Joseph is reunited with his whole family and forgives their hostile actions towards him. His father and all their family are brought to live in Egypt. All is well. The brother feared revenge from Joseph, but it never comes. The punch line comes when Joseph says to his brothers,

*“Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. <sup>21</sup> So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.”* (Genesis 50:19-21)

In other words, even through the wicked acts of Joseph’s brothers God was sovereignly moving to position Joseph in a place where he could bring about the deliverance of Abraham’s descendants. It was

not coincidence that these things happened. And the relief they were experiencing was not the byproduct of chance. God was sovereignly moving behind the curtain to orchestrate His purposes. Why? Because that's what He promised Abraham He would do. The whole story is being driven by God's faithfulness to that covenant. God is on the move. He is the Lord of history. "He is not any less the Lord of history in times of trouble, nor do good times suggest a mere temporary spasm of control over events", writes one scholar. "He is steady and sure and the Israelites are to see their prolonged enslavement in light of God's character rather than to make conclusions about God's presence or absence on the basis of their circumstances."<sup>24</sup> They have to read their circumstances through eyes that have been trained by the events of Genesis.

That's such an important lesson for us as well. As we study Exodus 1 there's not a lot of God talk. He seems curiously absent.<sup>25</sup> But He's not. Even if it looks that way. But how would they gain that reassurance? By looking backward. By reminding themselves of who God is and what He has done for their people through the centuries. In this way, the character of God can shape their perspective on the day and not the gloom of their circumstances. The same is true for us. What you see before your eyes is not a sure guide of how things are. We must learn to see with the eye of faith. We must see in God's Word who God is and has always been so that we can gain the assurance that He is the same God in this moment, in this crisis, in this loss, in this set of fumbled circumstances. He's still God. He's still working His purpose. He's still positioning things to result in the greatest good for His people, even if those purposes take centuries to manifest. He's still good. Whatever cards you have been dealt, He's still good. In the end, "neither our present circumstances nor our perception of God's absence determine reality."<sup>26</sup> God does.

We have to look to Him if we are ever to make ultimate sense out of our circumstances. We have to look to Him even to make sense out of ourselves. John Calvin once said, "It is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face, and then descends from contemplating him to scrutinize himself."<sup>27</sup> We are God's creatures. We must look to our Creator even to understand ourselves. This side of heaven, we may never fully understand why things have played out in our lives. But we can understand what has been revealed of the God who stands behind our circumstances. That's what will give us strength to persevere.

This will be so important to have in mind when we continue next week, starting in Exodus 1:8. Why? Because there were read that "*there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.*" With those words, things take a turn for the worse. That's where we will pick things up next week. And with that we are caught up. Introduction over. We've seen how Exodus points to Jesus. We've seen how the creation, conflict, covenant, and commute in Genesis lay the groundwork for Exodus. Now buckle up. Bring a friend. Next Sunday we officially will kick off the Exodus story. But hopefully these two weeks of introduction have prepared us to make sense of what lies ahead.

I love you guys. Let me pray for you....



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<sup>1</sup> John Goldingay, *Exodus and Leviticus for Everyone* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 4, 6-7; John N. Oswalt, "Exodus" in *Genesis, Exodus* (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary; Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2008), 386; J. Gerald Janzen, *Exodus* (Westminster Bible Companion; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 14.

<sup>2</sup> It should also be noted that the books of Leviticus and Numbers begin similarly for the same reason. Genesis through Numbers are thus viewed as one story, commonly referred to as a "Tetrarch." Concerning Exodus, Victor P. Hamilton notes, "the LXX [or Greek version of the Old Testament that was commonly used in New Testament times] does not start with 'and' and has its own name: 'Exodus.' These facts indicate that for the Greek translator(s) Exodus was considered a distinct book that could stand by itself". Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 3.

<sup>3</sup> John D. Currid, *Exodus – Volume 1* (EPSC; Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2000, repr. 2014), 38.

<sup>4</sup> These are by no means the only connections thought. James K. Bruckner, drawing on the work of J. Fokkelman, list several other examples (though by no means exhaustive either). "For example, beginning with Joseph's genealogy (1:1-5); the announcement of Joseph's death and a new pharaoh (1:6-8); God's remembering the promise to Abraham (2:24; 6:4-5, 8); the fruitful multiplication of the Israelites (Gen. 1:28; Exod. 1:7, 12, 20); the 'divisions' God made between waters (Gen 1; Exod. 14), between darkness and light (Gen. 1; Exod. 10:21-23), and between the Egyptians and the Israelites (8:23; 13:21-22; 14:19-20); the covenant of circumcision (Gen. 17; Exod. 4:24-26; 12:43-48); and the Sabbath (Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 20:8-11; 31:12-17; 35:1-3)." James K. Bruckner, *Exodus* (UBCS; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 6.

<sup>5</sup> John D. Currid, "Exodus" in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: Gospel Promised* (ed. Miles V. Van Pelt; Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 49.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 50; J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Living God's Word: Discovering Our Place in the Great Story of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 23.

<sup>7</sup> "This verse is intentionally redundant and in the Hebrew has five verbs that repeat the words of blessing and promise to the patriarchs (Gen. 1:28; 9:1, 7; 17:2; 18:18; 28:14; 48:4). The rabbinic commentators suggest that this repetition functions to interpret the verse in terms of the sequence of a child's growth. It can mean 'The Israelites were fertile (they conceived easily), the crawled, they grew (childhood), became very, very strong (adolescence), and the land was filled with them.' This kind of translation communicates a double meaning. The Israelites grew in number, as well as raising large and strong families. Their families were 'everywhere' as they fulfilled the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that they would be as the stars and the sands of the sea. The amazing fecundity of the people, despite continued and increasing oppression (1:12), introduces the central theme of the power of God's creation in Exodus." Bruckner, 20.

<sup>8</sup> The word translated "*land*" in Exodus 1:7 is the same Hebrew word in the creation mandate of Genesis 1:28; 9:1, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Terence Fretheim, *Exodus* (Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 25. Currid writes, "It seems clear that at this point the Hebrews have become the sons of God and they are now blessed by him and are under his protection. That type of insight will richly bless the believer who diligently digs into the context surrounding Exodus" (Currid, *Exodus*, 39). "The climax of Genesis 1 is Exodus 1: the divine power to proliferate found its highest expression in the emergence of Israel" (Proten and Ruppaport 1971: 368; cited in Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011], 5).

<sup>10</sup> Fretheim, 9 (italics his). "God's work in creation provides the basis for God's work in redemption; God's work in redemption fulfills God's work in creation." *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Enns, *Exodus* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 41; Tim Chester, *Exodus for You* (Denmark: The Good Book Company, 2016), 9.

<sup>12</sup> Chester, 9.

<sup>13</sup> See Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus* (KEL; Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2014), 15. "Exodus resumes the story of Genesis and in the process signals that Israel is a new creation and the people of God" (*ibid.*, 147). "God is determined to make a people for himself. The original creation of humanity could have fulfilled this purpose, but it failed due to human sin. Rather than abandon the project, however, God resumed the work by means of Israel. They were to be the new people of God chosen for himself out from the fallen human race. Nothing, not even the sin of Israel itself, will thwart this plan. The whole book of Exodus after all, is about the creation of the nation of Israel, and the allusion to Gen. 1:28 in Exod. 1:7 demonstrates that this is the focus of the text" (*ibid.*, 150).

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<sup>14</sup> “The noun ‘enmity’ is the main topic of the verse because it appears as the first word in the Hebrew text. The term simply means ‘to be an enemy to.’” Currid, “Exodus,” 53-54.

<sup>15</sup> Currid, *Exodus*, 14-17.

<sup>16</sup> Chester, 16.

<sup>17</sup> “Abram” means “exalted father,” whereas “Abraham” means “father of a multitude.” Cf. Gen. 17:5; Duvall and Hays, 32.

<sup>18</sup> J. A. Motyer writes, “The covenant is the mainspring from which the action of Exodus flows.” J. A. Motyer, *The Message of Exodus* (BST; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), 20.

<sup>19</sup> Duvall and Hays, 38.

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37.

<sup>21</sup> Hamilton, 5.

<sup>22</sup> “God’s trustworthiness concerning the promise of children was frequently tested in Genesis 12-50 but now it is evident in Jacob’s seventy descendants. But God’s trustworthiness concerning the promise of land seems to be tested more severely with every successive move away from the land.” Janzen, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Oswalt, 287.

<sup>24</sup> Enns, 51.

<sup>25</sup> “If we are accustomed to look for God primarily in signs and wonders like those in Exodus 3-15 (or Psalm 78:43-55; 105:27-44), we may rightly conclude that God is *hidden* in chapters 1-2, and we may conclude further that God is *absent*. But if our eyes are trained by Genesis 12-50 to trace the marks of God’s activity in human life, then Exodus 1-2 is charged with God’s hidden presence working in and through the apparently primary actors there, in particular through the women.” Janzen, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Enns, 55-56. “However, the people might choose to view that present circumstance, the author reminds them that the full story is one that stretches back to their ancient ancestors and even to the beginning of the world itself. It is only in seeing their situation from the broad, divine point of view that the readers can hope to gain a full understanding of their lot in life... What the Israelites could come to expect from God in their present situation is directly related to how he dealt with the Israelites in the past.” *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>27</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion*, ed. J. T. McNeill; trans. F. L. Battles (LCC 20; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 37. Also cited in Enns, 54.