

The Gospel: A Message of Deliverance from Slavery
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Introduction:

- A. The fourth of July is a time when we reflect on the freedom we have been blessed with as a nation. We also reflect on the price that was paid by our forefathers to secure this independence from the tyranny of a foreign ruler.

- B. But I would like to use this occasion as an opportunity to reflect upon the worst kind of tyranny. This tyranny does not enslave a person's land, but enslaves a person's soul.
 1. In John 8:34 Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."
 2. In describing his situation when he was an unbeliever the Apostle Paul says this: "but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin."
 3. In Romans 6, the Apostle Paul repeatedly describes the problem of slavery to sin. Four times the Apostle Paul uses the term "slaves to sin" (vv. 6, 16, 17, 20).
 - a. In fact, in Romans 6:19, Paul says that he is describing this problem in human terms, using the picture of a slave, so that they/we can understand just how weak we are in the natural man---how an unbeliever is so weak in the flesh he cannot resist sin and just gives himself over to ever-increasing wickedness.
 - b. In describing the control that sin exerts over the unbeliever in Romans 6, Paul uses terms such as "sin reigning" (Rom. 6:12). This presents sin as a king who exerts total control over its subjects. He calls sin a "master" (Rom. 6:14) that seeks to dominate and dictate every aspect of the life of its slaves.
 4. Throughout the New Testament, sin is presented as a cruel master and the unbeliever is presented as sin's slave, totally helpless, totally powerless to himself from

this terrible, tyrannical bondage.

- C. Something that we need to recognize in our culture is that we can walk around proclaiming ourselves free men and living in a free nation, and we thank God for all of that, yet as so-called free men and women, most Americans live every day of their lives in a bondage far worse than any British King could have ever imposed on them. And the saddest part about it is, like the Jews of Jesus day (John 8:33), they are enslaved to the cruel master of sin and don't even know it.
- D. That is why, my friends, one of the great motifs, in fact the most dominant picture of the Gospel and what it does that is presented in the Bible is that of freeing men from slavery. Think of it for a few moments and you will quickly realize this-----
1. In Matthew 1:21---the angel tells Joseph in a dream that Mary is going to have a Son and that his name is to be called "Jesus" because He will save His people from their sins.
 - a. The very name "Jesus" which comes from the Old Testament Hebrew name *yehoshua* or Joshua means "deliverance" or "salvation"---one who rescues someone who is in bondage, powerless to save themselves. Thus, Jesus throughout the New Testament is called our "Savior."
 2. In Matthew 20:28, we are told that the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.
 - a. The picture is that of purchasing a slave from the auction block. In the case of sinners, Jesus is presented to have paid the price to redeem helpless slaves with His own blood. Thus, Jesus is called throughout the New Testament our "Redeemer."
- E. Thus, when the Apostle Paul wants to describe what happens to a person when they come to faith in Christ, he describes it in Romans 6:18 as being "set free from sin." My friends, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is the spiritual equivalent of the Emancipation Proclamation for everyone who believes!

- F. I'd like to consider this picture of the Gospel as a message of deliverance from slavery in the context of an Old Testament event that was designed to serve as a prophetic picture of redemption: The deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt.
- G. For those who may not be familiar with the story, let me briefly review it for you.
1. In Genesis 12, the nation of Israel is born with God's calling of Abraham and His promise to make of Abraham a great nation and to give that nation its own land, the country of Israel. Abraham subsequently had a son named Isaac, who subsequently had two sons, one of them named Jacob.
 2. Jacob, then, has 12 sons who became the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel. During the lifetime of Jacob's family, a terrible famine struck that part of the world and there was no food. Through a series of amazing events, which includes the story of one of Jacob's 12 sons, a young man named Joseph (Gen. 37-50), Jacob and his family leave Israel and go down to Egypt because it is the one place where the famine has been anticipated, food has been stored up in preparation, and food is now plentiful and available. That is how the Israelites got to Egypt in the first place.
 3. Rather than returning to the promised land as they should have, Israel's 12 tribes remained in Egypt. They stayed for 400 years. During those four centuries, the families of the 12 sons of Jacob grew into a very large nation. Finally, a Pharaoh assumes the throne of Egypt who is not friendly to the Hebrews. Just as God promised Abraham's descendants have become a large nation and Pharaoh is worried that they might someday unite with one of his enemies and help overthrow him. So Pharaoh moves to enslave the entire Hebrew nation and forces them into harsh, terrible slave labor in order to keep them under his thumb and in his control. By the time we get to the Book of Exodus, as we have said, Israel has been in Egypt for 400 years. They are slaves. They are helpless. They are not allowed to leave Egypt and return to their homeland.

4. It is at this point that a truly incredible story that becomes the defining event of the entire Old Testament begins to unfold. This event becomes a powerful prophetic picture of the future work of God in delivering men and women from slavery to sin.

I. THE STORY BEGINS WITH A PICTURE OF THE SINNER'S HELPLESS CONDITION.

A. Exodus 1:8-14----

⁸Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. ⁹“Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. ¹⁰Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.”

¹¹So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. ¹²But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ¹³and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.

1. Surely this pictures the life of slavery to sin—bitter and hard.
 - a. King Solomon would later write in Proverbs 13:15:
“The way of the transgressor is hard.”
 - b. In Psalm 38:3 David writes: *“My bones have no soundness because of my sin.”*
 - c. In Psalm 51:3 David declares: *“My sin is ever before me.”*
 - d. In Psalm 106:43 the enemies of the Lord are said to:
“waste away in their sin.”
 - e. In Proverbs 5:22 we are told: *“The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him and the cords of his sin hold him fast.”*
 - f. In Proverbs 29:6 we are told that *“The evil man is entrapped by his own sin.”*
 - g. And finally we are told in Ezekiel 18:4 that *“the soul who sins, it shall die.”*

- B. Now consider the helplessness of a slave. Israel could do nothing to free herself from bondage to Pharaoh and the sinner can do nothing to free himself from bondage to sin.

1. In Galatians 3:22 Paul declares that *“the whole world is a prisoner to sin.”*
2. In Ephesians 2:1, Paul says that we are born into this slavery and declares that we are *“dead in trespasses and sins,”* we are incapable of doing anything to free ourselves from bondage.

C. And so the story of Israel in Exodus presents to us a picture of the terrible, helpless condition of the sinner.

II. THE STORY OF THE EXODUS PRESENTS TO US A PICTURE OF THE GOD WHO HEARS THE SINNER’S CRY FOR DELIVERANCE FROM BONDAGE.

A. Exodus 2:23-24: ²³*During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God.* ²⁴*God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.* ²⁵*So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.*

1. In Psalm 4:3 David declares: *“The Lord will hear when I call to Him.”*
2. In Psalm 18:3 David writes: *“I call to the Lord, Who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.”*
3. In Romans 10:11-13, the Apostle Paul declares:
¹¹As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ¹²For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

B. The story of the Exodus is a story of slaves helpless to free themselves. Their only hope is to cry out to God. This is a marvelous picture of the state of the lost, helpless in their slavery to sin. Their only hope is to call upon the name of the Lord. And we see in the story of the Exodus another powerful picture of the Gospel message.

III. WHEN THE HELPLESS ISRAELITES CALLED OUT TO GOD, HE RAISED UP A DELIVERER.

A. Moses, a prophetic picture of Jesus.

B. Similarities between Jesus and Moses.

1. Moses, born in obscurity and hid from Pharaoh.
 - a. Jesus, born in a stable and hid from Herod.
2. Pharaoh orders all of the Hebrew boy babies to be killed.
 - a. Herod orders all of the boy babies in Bethlehem under 2 years of age to be killed.
3. Moses, placed in the basket in the Nile River to escape death at the hands of Pharaoh.
 - a. Jesus, taken by Joseph and Mary into Egypt to escape death at the hands of Herod.
4. Moses spends 40 years in obscurity on the backside of the desert in Midan tending sheep.
 - a. Jesus spends 30 years of obscurity as a carpenter's son in Nazareth.
5. Aaron goes with Moses as his spokesman.
 - a. John the Baptist goes before Jesus as His Herald.
6. Moses performs signs and miracles before Pharaoh as proof that he represents God. These signs are rejected by Pharaoh.
 - a. Jesus performs many miracles and signs as proof to the people that He is the Son of God. These signs are rejected by the Jews.
7. The climactic event that brought about Israel's deliverance from Egypt was Moses' declaration that God would kill every firstborn son in Egypt.
 - a. The climactic event that brought about man's deliverance from bondage to sin was Jesus' repeated declaration that God would put to death His only begotten Son as payment for the penalty of sin.

C. When Israel in their slavery cried out to God for help, God raised up Moses. In anticipation of the cries of helpless slaves to sin, God raised up His Son Jesus to redeem them.

IV. THE PROTECTION OF ISRAEL FROM THE DEATH ANGEL WAS THE BLOOD OF A LAMB ON THE DOORPOSTS.

- A. Exodus 12:5-13: ⁵*The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.* ⁶*Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.* ⁷*Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs.* ⁸*That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.* ⁹*Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire—head, legs and inner parts.* ¹⁰*Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.* ¹¹*This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD'S Passover.*
- ¹²*“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.* ¹³*The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.*

- B. The children of Israel were protected from death by the blood of the lamb.
1. Later on John the Baptist when he saw Jesus coming would declare: *“Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”* (John 1:29).
 2. The Passover lamb used by the Israelites was not to have any defect. This was a prophetic picture of the sinlessness of Jesus, the Lamb of God.
 - a. Note the words of 1 Peter 1:18-19---¹⁸*For you know that It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,* ¹⁹*but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

C. I want you to note what Christ's shed blood is said to have accomplished in Revelation 1:5---*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*