

## BIBLE OVERVIEW

### SESSION III: THE KINGDOM PARTIAL

#### What do you think?

1. What does freedom mean?
2. What factors influence people to oppress others?
4. In your experience, what is the cost of freedom?
5. What often characterizes the long term disillusionment with the expectations of freedom?

#### A People, but in slavery in a foreign land

##### **Read Exodus 1:1-14**

*These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family:<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> The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt.<sup>6</sup> Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died,<sup>7</sup> but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.<sup>8</sup> Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.<sup>9</sup> "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us.<sup>10</sup> Come, 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."<sup>11</sup> So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labour, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.<sup>12</sup> But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites<sup>13</sup> and worked them ruthlessly.<sup>14</sup> They made their lives bitter with hard labour in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labour the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.*

The book of Exodus opens where the book of Genesis closed . The sons of Jacob (Israel) are in Egypt. In this opening chapter we see how God's promise is getting on.

What evidence is there that the blessing of God introduced in Genesis 1:28 and reaffirmed in Genesis 12:1-3 is still operative?

In what ways is the promise to Abraham not yet fulfilled?



## God redeems his people.

The Biblical Pattern of redemption has its roots in what God did through Moses for the Israelites in Egypt. The act of redemption involves a deliverer and several other important aspects:

### **Read Exodus 6:2-8**

*God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD.<sup>3</sup> I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.<sup>4</sup> I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.<sup>6</sup> "Therefore, say to the Israelites: `I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.<sup>7</sup> I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.<sup>8</sup> And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD."*

1. What is the motivation for God's redeeming activity? (v3-5)
2. In redeeming, how does God deal with his enemies? (v6) (cf Gen 12:3)
3. What was God's purpose in bringing them out of Egypt? (v7)
4. What are they redeemed from, and what are they redeemed for? (v7,8)

There is also the pattern of being saved through death and substitution.

### **Read Exodus 12:1-42**

*The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt,<sup>2</sup> "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.<sup>3</sup> Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.<sup>4</sup> If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbour, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.<sup>5</sup>*



The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door-frames of the houses where they eat the lambs.<sup>8</sup> That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.<sup>9</sup> Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire--head, legs and inner parts.<sup>10</sup> Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> "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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD--a lasting ordinance....<sup>21</sup> Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb.<sup>22</sup> Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the door-frame. Not one of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.<sup>23</sup> When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the door-frame and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.<sup>24</sup> "Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants.<sup>25</sup> When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony.<sup>26</sup> And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?'<sup>27</sup> then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'" Then the people bowed down and worshipped.<sup>28</sup> The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.<sup>29</sup> At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well.<sup>30</sup> Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.<sup>31</sup> During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested.<sup>32</sup> Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me." <sup>33</sup> The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. "For otherwise," they said, "we will all die!"<sup>34</sup> So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing.<sup>35</sup> The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing.<sup>36</sup> The LORD had made the Egyptians favourably disposed towards the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.<sup>37</sup> The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.<sup>38</sup> Many other people went up with them, as well as large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds.<sup>39</sup> With the dough they had brought from Egypt, they baked cakes of unleavened bread. The dough was without yeast because they had been driven out of Egypt and did not



have time to prepare food for themselves.<sup>40</sup> Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years.<sup>41</sup> At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all the LORD's divisions left Egypt.<sup>42</sup> Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honour the LORD for the generations to come.

What is the terrible judgement that God brings on the Egyptians?

How are the Israelites to prepare for the Exodus? What do you think the details tells us?

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How are we spared God's judgement? (cf 1 Peter 1:18-21; 1 Cor 5:6; Hebrews 10)

## The Last Passover

### **Read Luke 22:14-23**

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.<sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the kingdom of God."<sup>17</sup> After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you.<sup>18</sup> For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."<sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."<sup>21</sup> But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table.<sup>22</sup> The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him."<sup>23</sup> They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

Why is it significant that Jesus uses the Passover meal as his last supper?



How does Jesus use the meal?

**Read Exodus 19:1-6**

*In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt--on the very day--they came to the Desert of Sinai.<sup>2</sup> After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.<sup>3</sup> Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel:<sup>4</sup> 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.'<sup>5</sup> Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine,<sup>6</sup> you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."*

The experience of Israel at Mt. Sinai was never to be forgotten. The goal of the exodus from Egypt was reached at Mt. Sinai: the people gathered before the mountain, having been brought there by God himself, and God meeting there with his people.

How is the special place of this people in God's purposes expressed here?

What do these words affirm?

In Exodus 20 God gives the Israelites the Ten Words (commandments): at what point in Israel's history are these given?

Given the passage above and 20:2 what are the ten commandments obviously NOT for?

What are the 10 commandments for?



## The downward Spiral

The events at Mt. Sinai and the laws which were given occupy the account from Exodus 19 to Numbers 10. Although the essential realities of Israel's redemption were experienced there at Mt. Sinai, they had not yet come to the place where their ongoing life as God's redeemed people was to be lived: the land which had been promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. The book of Numbers from 10:11 recounts the journey from Mt. Sinai through the wilderness to the plains of Moab (Num 22:1), which is on the borders of Canaan.

The presence of God which had been experienced at Mt. Sinai was now associated with the Tabernacle, a portable structure which the people carried in their midst on the journey. God made his presence known by a cloud over the Tabernacle by day, and fire by night (Exodus 40:34-38).

There is a huge amount of detail for the design of the Tabernacle based on the heavenly tabernacle (Hebrews 8:3-6; Exodus 25:40). It needs God's revelation, or man will design what reflects his own evil inclination rather than God's character. The purpose of the tabernacle is to symbolise God's dwelling (Exodus 29:45). The barriers to the inner place mean that man cannot come directly into God's presence. The tabernacle is replaced by the temple under King Solomon. (For NT fulfilment see John 1:14 - lit. the word tabernacled; Heb 10:19-22; 1 Cor 6:19; Rev 21:22!)

The Israelites keep stumbling and rebelling against God, so it takes them 40 years to make a journey that should only take 11 days! Deuteronomy still has Israel in the land of Moab (1:5), and is a series of addresses delivered there by Moses to the people of Israel. Moses rehearses what God has done for them up to this point, and exhorts them to remember, and to be careful to respond rightly as they begin their new life in the land which God is about to give them (4:1-40; 8:11-20). Chapters 12-26 contain detailed applications of the law given at Mt. Sinai to life in the land. The addresses conclude with a moving appeal (30:15-20) - at this point history seems poised between the two possibilities presented here: obedience and b There is little in Israel's track record to suggest any thing but the disaster of Deut 30:18. However we must not lose sight of the persistence of God's faithfulness which has already brought Israel to this point, despite her repeated unfaithfulness. Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses in chapter 34.

The people that God brought up out of Egypt were not allowed to enter the promised land because of their rebellion against God. Only Joshua and Caleb were allowed because they were the only two who had confidence that God would bring them into the land (Num 13-14). The book of Joshua tells the story of the Israelites conquest of the land; or rather God's conquest of the land.

Joshua 1:1 marks the beginning of a new era. Moses was a channel of God's revelation to the Israelites and Joshua leadership begins with his obedience to all that is written in this book (1:8). The role that Moses had of mediator of God's will is now fulfilled by the 'book of law'. Joshua 1-12 deals with the conquest and moving into the promised land, beginning with the fall of Jericho. Chapters 13-21 describe the detailed division of the land between the 12 tribes of the Israelites. Although it is indicated that the conquest is not yet complete (13:1-7; 15:63; 17:12), the emphasis of the book is on the fulfilment of God's promises (21:43-45). In the same way that the grace of God experienced at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:4) called for a response of trusting obedience (Exodus 19:5), so the further experience of God's grace which has been the subject of the book of Joshua can only be enjoyed in obedience.



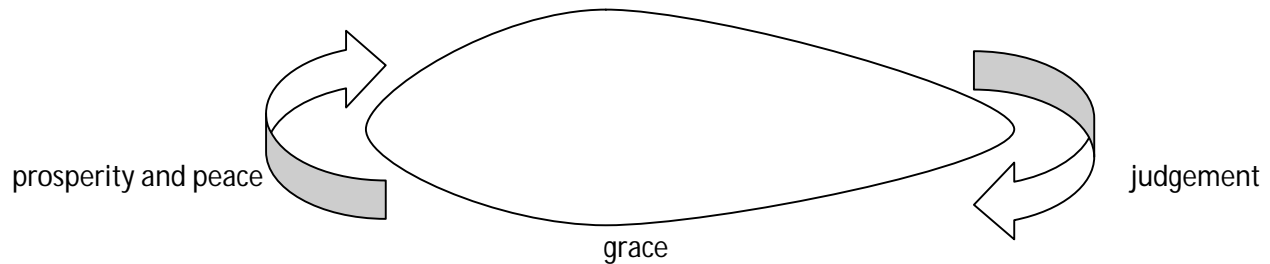
As at Mt. Sinai, the people affirm their initial eagerness: "we will serve the Lord, for he is our God" (Joshua 24:16-18). The covenant is renewed at Shechem (Joshua 24), and Joshua is afraid that they won't keep serving God. Nevertheless at the end of Joshua we are shown a people who have received from God what he had promised so long ago, and who at this point serve him.

The book of Joshua ends with the people of Israel in the Promised land, and promising to serve God, and him alone.

The book of Judges recounts the beginning of life in the land, and there are two recurring themes.

- Firstly being in the land doesn't solve Israel's main problem of having a wandering heart.
- Secondly there is a repeated cycle of events: Israel sins (3:7), so God judges them (3:8); Israel then repents (3:9), and God sends a judge or saviour (3:10); and this is followed by a period of prosperity (3:11); but Israel soon sins and the cycle repeats itself. Judges ends with 'In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.' (21:25) This verse looks forward, the promises to Abraham have not been entirely fulfilled, things were not working out and Israel need a ruler to keep them on the straight and narrow. There is a constant cry for a king (17:7; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

### The Downward Spiral



Samuel was the last of the judges (1 Sam 7:15-17) and the first of the prophets (3:19-4:1). His most notable actions were in relation to the first two kings in Israel, Saul and David. In old age Samuel appointed his sons to succeed him as 'judges' of Israel. They however, were corrupt (8:1-3), and this led the elders of Israel to ask Samuel to appoint them a king 'like all the nations'.

This request for a king was another instance of the people's sinfulness, as it amounted to rejecting the Lord's kingship over them (8:1-6). The phrase 'like all the nations' is particularly telling as it is a rejection of God's purposes for them to be 'my own possession among all people... a holy nation'. (Exodus 19:5-6)

### Think through it

The 'Arab Spring' saw the demise of many governments that came to power by popular uprising.

Revolutions have always tended to bring hope for emancipation and the realization of dreams for many nations. Sadly, the excitement has almost always been short lived and a counter revolution springs up.

What is the cause of Israel's national disillusionment?