

Coming Out of Egypt – Lessons for Today

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Greetings to everyone. This time of year we come together for the spring holy days, and we usually refer back to the Old Testament. That's where we start. We review Exodus 3 and work our way to chapter 13 and 14. We especially look at chapter 12 where the Passover is instituted. That's kind of an inset there, just before the death of the firstborn. Sometimes we look at the plagues that came upon Egypt, the Israelites coming out and all that we have in the records.

In the context of coming out of Egypt, many instructions were given to the Israelites. We sang a little about that in the opening hymns. It's funny how that works out.

What I'd like to do today is look at a few of the commands, the instructions and the laws that God gave to our forefathers as they were being brought out of Egypt and see the lessons that are there for us. We will see how these things apply to us and what they mean for us today. The title of the sermon is:

Coming Out of Egypt – Lessons for Today

How do we apply those things today? How does that work for us? When we get to this time of year and we start looking back to the accounts of the Old Testament people, we review those scriptures pertaining to the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. We may think that it's Old Covenant stuff, and really would prefer to have New Testament messages. We forget that we have the record in Hebrews, especially in chapter 10, that the sacrificial laws were the ones replaced and we tend to overlook the lessons that we have in these scriptures.

I'd like to start today's message by looking at a New Testament scripture. We'll try to cover everything here and make everyone happy. Turn to Acts 13. In this scripture, Paul kind of sets the framework for how to view Old Testament scriptures relating to the law. It's actually tied into that event of coming out of Egypt. We have the middle of a sermon and readings that are taking place in the synagogue. After they read from the law and the prophets, they ask if anyone wants to say anything or does anyone have something to contribute. Paul said, "Yes, I do." He proceeded to go through a big history lesson for them. He did that in a number of places as we can see in his epistles and in the book of Acts. He is pointing to God and using that history as it comes to the time of Jesus Christ.

Acts 13:16. *Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:*

17) The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. (NKJV)

He brought them out of Egypt. It's directly in the context there.

*38) Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man [Jesus Christ] is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;
39) and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. (NKJV)*

If you look in the commentaries, you're going to be led down the path right away of the law of Moses, the Mosaic law. Those Old Testament laws were done away if you listen to the commentary. They say that you don't have to pay any attention to them because we are all justified now by faith. Most of them say that. They also use the statement that we are freed from the law now. But God doesn't say that anywhere in His word. Scripture doesn't say that.

We don't look to the Old Testament to take the place of what we see in the New Testament, but we go back to these scriptures and we understand that they are the foundation by which we come to the New Testament. So there's no way we can discount these Old Testament scriptures, because they help us understand the mind of God, how He thinks, how He wants us to act and behave in our lives. We know that God has not changed His mind. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He just changed the way that He administered things. That's what the book of Hebrews is all about. God never changes the core of who He is, and we can learn much by studying these Old Testament scriptures.

Turn to Exodus 12. Let's look at a few of these Old Testament instructions and laws and how they revolve around the whole idea of coming out of Egypt. You know where I'm going with this, because in a sense, we came out of Egypt too. We will review some of these Old Testament scriptures relating to this and see how they apply to us. I'm sure we are familiar with the parallels and typology. We should grasp these lessons as we go through. We reviewed much of that at the Passover service, especially the first part of Exodus 12. We will start with verse 51.

Exodus 12:51. *And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies. (NKJV)*

So here they are. They're starting out of Egypt. Even before they get to the sea, God begins to give instructions, what they were to do. Now turn to Exodus 13.

Exodus 13:1. *Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
2) "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine." (NKJV)*

So they had some behavior to do right away. Why did they have to do that? We kind of wonder about that. Again, this is part of the sacrificial instructions that God was giving to the Israelites. He had a reason for that. He begins to tell us that in verse 3. They were told to remember this day.

3) And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. (NKJV)

Because they came out of Egypt, God had these instructions for them. They were to sanctify the first born, and they also did not eat leavened bread for a certain number of days.

4) On this day you are going out, in the month Abib.

5) And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. (NKJV)

He begins to tell them what they should do in verse 6. They were supposed to have seven days where they did not eat leavened bread. We practice that today in our observance of this spring holy day season.

6) Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD.

7) Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. (NKJV)

It was to be put out of your property and the home. We can pick up some symbolism there. You will see that the firstborn were actually chosen. They became the priests to pass on God's instructions to the people. They became, in a sense, the teachers before it was given over to the Levites. That became their job.

This represented moral purity, which God wanted for His people. He still wants that for us today, right? Purity in regard to God's laws and instructions.

8) And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.' (NKJV)

"That's why I'm doing this." That's the answer for the children to pass on. No internet, no facebook, no twitter or any of those things. He's reminding them and telling them to pass these instructions along because they owed God everything for bringing them out of Egypt and releasing them from bondage. It's the same with us. We owe God everything for bringing us out of the Egypt, the slavery that we find ourselves in today.

9) It shall be as a sign to you on your hand [what you do] and as a memorial between your eyes ... (NKJV)

It's what you think about. There are some religions in the world where they strap a little box to their forehead and strap another little box to their wrist. That's a literal interpretation of this. But it's talking about your hand (what you do) and between your eyes (what you think about). All that is in accordance with God's word.

9b) ... that the LORD's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. (NKJV)

The law here again is the teachings that were for their good, things to do, things to think about to enable them to unlearn the influence of Egypt. Remember, they repeatedly wanted to go back to that. It was a whole lot easier than what God was bringing them into.

I hope we can see the comparison there. They were in Egypt under the influence of Pharaoh, which is a type of Satan. It's the same thing we have come out of. We are under that influence and if we're not very careful we can slip back into that. It is a form of spiritual slavery. God brought us out of the world, and He gives us instructions and laws to live by. Again, we can see these parallels in these historical accounts.

10) You shall therefore keep this ordinance [Days of Unleavened Bread] in its season from year to year. (NKJV)

The point there is, that's why we do this. That's why we keep the Days of Unleavened Bread. That's why we keep the holy days. It's as a reminder, and we rehearse those things. Sometimes, if we've heard it for years and years, we might get a little numb to hearing that; always looking for something different. But that's why we do that, to remind us of God's plan.

Again, we have to consider that the reason they did that was because of this very significant event, which is what that was. It actually happened there in the Old Testament. They were being led out of Egypt, coming to the sea. This was one of the most defining events actually in the Bible, if we think about it. So, we have this record to review and focus on at this time of the year. Again, it's about coming out of Egypt.

Today we don't sacrifice the firstling. We don't do that today. We have instructions in the New Testament about these things that were done in the Old Testament, so we can learn from them. They were a shadow. Hebrews 10, as mentioned at the Passover service, they were a shadow of things to come, the reality to come, which was Jesus Christ. We can then meditate on those things and say, "Okay, if God gave these instructions to our forefathers, how does it apply to me and what can I learn from this huge significant event?" It was a very defining event that took place there. There are many scriptures that we could take note of, but let's start out with a very familiar one.

Turn to Exodus 20. We should be quite familiar with what is in Exodus 20, but have you ever really taken note of how that chapter begins?

Exodus 20:1. *And God spoke all these words, saying:*

2) *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. (NKJV)*

Then He proceeded to give the Ten Commandments, those laws that we live by. There is no Old Covenant relevance to that. We apply those today. The reason they were given was because God wanted to apply that. They were freed from Egypt and that influence, just like we are freed. So that statement right there at the beginning of the chapter brings us the account of the Ten Commandments, and it should have great significance for us today.

Remember, we came out of bondage due to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We have to ask ourselves how the Ten Commandments fit into our lives. They should be a major part of our thinking. Again, the forehead and the hand; they should be the major part of what we do, how we conduct ourselves in the world. We need to understand all of this because it has to do with coming out of Egypt.

Turn please to chapter 23. Here are more instructions that are relevant to us today. How do you deal with strangers, the fatherless and the widows? Again, this is directly in the context.

Exodus 23:9. *"Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (NKJV)*

This points out a concept about how we treat people. He is telling them that they should know how that felt to be different, someone that doesn't belong to a particular nation or group. If you look at that word in the Hebrew, it just means that *the stranger was a sojourner*, a foreigner actually. To them it meant it was someone who was not of the nation of Israel.

Today, what does that mean for us? The stranger to us is everyone else out there in the world. They're not part of us, God's people, at this point. Hopefully they will be some day. So we can think about that. We can learn many lessons, and most of the lessons we learn in life are not especially from our experiences with people in the church. They are experiences with people in the world. I get a bit distressed at times when I see church folks who want to isolate themselves from the world. There might be reasons for that, but I've also seen people do that on purpose. They have no use for people in the world. God doesn't look at it that way at all. He is reminding them that when they did this to Israel, when they've been cruel to you Israelites, you should get a lesson from that. You should understand and feel that.

How many times has someone done something cruel to you? I think it has happened to all of us in one form or another. Someone has been hateful towards us or does

something mean, in the church and out of the church, unfortunately. I hate to say that, but it happens. However, we learn something from that. Mainly what we learn is not to return that in kind, because we know how Christ suffered, and He did not revile back. He didn't seek revenge. He didn't do any of that.

Another way of looking at that is how many times you've been discriminated against because of your beliefs. Usually it turns out for your good. It's happened to us a number of times. We either didn't get a job or we lost a job because we had different beliefs, but it usually turns out better for you. We should thank God for those lessons.

Again, the principle here is that because you were in Egypt as a stranger, you knew what that felt like. You knew you were different. So you transfer that over to other people and you treat them accordingly.

Almost all of us had some form of bondage in our lives. We had to deal with that spiritual slavery in our head and in our heart. One of the purposes is that it helps and prepares us how we can go through and experience those things and deal with others in a different way. If you think back, you'll see that quite a few of those lessons you've learned from life you have applied in your own life. I know that I certainly approach things differently than I used to. You have to watch that Irish temperament and all of that.

In Exodus 23, we're still in the context of coming out of Egypt.

Exodus 23:15. *You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); (NKJV)*

The point there is the emphasis on that. We keep the feast as a reminder of coming out of Egypt.

Exodus 29:45. *I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. 46) And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the LORD their God. (NKJV)*

Again, that is a powerful lesson for us. God is revealing Himself to them and to us, pointing back to that significant event, coming out of Egypt. It's not like we came out on our own power. We didn't do that. God brought us out. He brought us out and wants to be our God so we can have a personal relationship Him, because He delivered us from sin. He is offering us salvation. He is offering us the way to salvation. It all comes back to being released and delivered from that bondage and slavery, because God offers us real liberty. He offers us genuine freedom. The more you think about that, the more deeply we remember those things, the more God will be dwelling with us. We will be closer to God.

With that same thought, let's turn to Leviticus 26. God wants to dwell among us.

Leviticus 26:11. *I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you.*

12) I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.

Then emphatically what does it say?

13) I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright. (NKJV)

Think about that historically and how to transpose that to our lives today. Does God set up a tabernacle among us? Is there a physical building? Of course not, because God is in us. We are the temple of God today. God did and is still delivering us from bondage, bringing us out of that land of Egypt, breaking us away from those yokes we had before we were converted so we can go upright and live God's way of life. So we can actually seek that moral purity in our lives. We can go forward because God is with us and in us. He works with us emotionally, spiritually, physically, and every other way.

We were talking about that before services. Sometimes if we have just simple physical needs and pray to God, He will deal with those things and help us. We've seen it repeatedly.

We still have many challenges in our lives. If we go to the source for help with those issues, we can get that. So it's a wonderful thing coming out of Egypt, not being in that bondage, because God is with us.

In the following scripture, Moses is repeating everything in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 6:10. *"So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build,*

11) houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full— (NKJV)

When you are really content and happy:

12) then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. (NKJV)

That certainly applies to us today. What a valuable instruction that is. We should learn from that when life gets really good. We have a tendency to forget God, don't we? When life gets really good for us and life is comfortable and cozy. We're warm, we're

not cold, not hungry. We forget about that land of Egypt and that bondage. We're talking about a spiritual bondage and slavery and all of that. It's easy to forget that.

We're in an election year. Don't you love it? We hear about all these entitlements. You know, the greatest entitlement plan ever devised was the one by Satan. Everything is free. All you have to do is go back to it. We were delivered from that. We have a lot better promises and entitlement coming now.

But when things are going smoothly, we forget where we were and what we might slip back into. We forget how we made that escape. We start thinking that maybe we escaped on our own. Maybe we think that we parted the waters and walked through. We might even think we came up with the laws to live by to get the right results in our lives. We forget all that. Maybe we read a self-help book and figured it all out.

We tend to forget that it is God who delivers when things are going well. We forget what He has done for us, like the Israelites did repeatedly after all the wonderful and great things that God did for them. We've all done that. We can fall into this, but usually it's reflected in our behavior, isn't it? Especially if we pause and look at ourselves, especially in bad decisions that we might have made. We've done it, even though we are warned over and over to remember coming out of Egypt. Also we must remember to give honor and credit and glory to God for what we enjoy. If we don't do that, we will always get ourselves in trouble. If we forget that God brought us out and freed us.

13) You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.

14) You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you. (NKJV)

There are lots of them today. Just look at what people are looking to for deliverance. Again, it's an election year.

15) (for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

16) "You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah.

The Word Study Dictionary says that Massah is a name of a place where the Israelites tested God. Whenever we forget where we came from, forget how we got here, forget how we escaped, isn't that tempting God to slip back into that? Certainly it is.

That is recorded so the Israelites would not act that way again.

17) You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. (NKJV)

None of those things that are for our good have changed, not a single thing.

18) And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers, (NKJV)

What is the good land that we are looking forward to if we follow God's ways and do these things? God's kingdom is the good land for us. That is the promise for us.

*19) to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.
20) "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?'" (NKJV)*

Notice the emphasis again in verse 21.

*21) then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand;
22) and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. (NKJV)*

God did these wonders right before their eyes. If we're just half alert, we will see the prophecies that are unfolding right before our eyes. If we think about that, it is miraculous. God tells us to be alert to those things.

*24) And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.
25) Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.' (NKJV)*

The whole point again is that God gave us those instructions and we need to look back at those. That's the reason we observe the holy days year after year. If we didn't rehearse them, it would slip away. That has happened to people. When people leave the church, pretty soon it's not the holy days anymore, it's back into the world with holidays and all of that. We've seen that happen.

If we are familiar with these things, the historical context of them, we think about how they apply to our walk with God today. Please turn to Deuteronomy 7.

Deuteronomy 7:7. *The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; (NKJV)*

It kind of reminds you of where it says in 1 Corinthians, that we are the weak and base things. When I read that scripture and this one, I think back to Ezekiel 16, where God

basically picked up an unwanted child out of the dirt. He uses that image of how He chose Israel. Nobody would ever choose us as future God beings in God's family.

8) but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage [just like we've been redeemed], from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (NKJV)

In all of this we can see the mind of God. We can understand what He did and why He did it the way He did. He gave certain laws, statutes and judgments. We can follow those things. Let's turn to Deuteronomy 24. We see this coming out of Egypt idea flowing through all of these scriptures.

Deuteronomy 24:16. *"Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin.*

17) "You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow's garment as a pledge.

18) But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore, I command you to do this thing. (NKJV)

Once again, it's very important to God how we treat people, how we do the things that we do, how we conduct ourselves.

19) "When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. (NKJV)

God wants us to be generous in a right kind of way.

20) When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

22) And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore, I command you to do this thing. (NKJV)

The more we remember that we were in slavery, the more we are kind to others. That's the way it should work. The more we think about these things and make them a part of us, the more we should cut people slack, because things happen all the time.

Think of the Pharisees. They clearly forgot that their forefathers were bondmen. They said, "We're Abraham's seed. We're the best and we know it all." Any wonder that they couldn't show compassion for the people? They were supposed to be serving God's people, helping and teaching God's people. They didn't do that.

Again, the more we remember that we were bondmen, the more kind and compassionate we should be with other people.

It's hard to do that sometimes. I was in a Walmart parking lot just the other day. I was going one direction and another vehicle was coming towards me. A lady was walking between me and the parked car, so I went to the center a little bit. The driver of the other vehicle thought I was crowding him. We didn't touch mirrors or anything, but he flipped me off anyway. That's just the attitude of the world. You don't repay that in kind. That's the way things work in the world. We don't do that.

If you think about that principle of, "forgive and you'll be forgiven" that Christ magnified in a powerful way for us; the more you understand how forgiven you were, the more you will forgive others. That's the way it should work.

***Deuteronomy 29:1.** These are the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.*

2) Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land—

3) the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders. (NKJV)

A lot of things have happened miraculously in our lives, if we think about it. They may seem like little things, but if you added those up, there are a lot of things going on just for the folks in this room. That's not even taking into consideration the greater Church of God. We're a very small representative group here.

6) You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or similar drink, that you may know that I am the LORD your God. (NKJV)

In other words, this is real.

7) And when you came to this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we conquered them.

8) We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh.

9) Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do. (NKJV)

Again, as we escape Pharaoh, as we escape the land of Egypt and that bondage, we focus on this covenant that God has made with us.

I hope you will consider these scriptures that we've reviewed from the Old Covenant, the laws and statutes that should mean so much to us and actually see the beauty that God put in place. Look at these scriptures where it talks about coming out of Egypt. I

hope you will understand and appreciate that history and think about how that affects our lives today. Perhaps this helps to appreciate that wonderful Old Covenant that we have, because we have a covenant now with better promises. It's built on those things.

I hope you will use these things as a foundation, and finally, during these Days of Unleavened Bread, I encourage you to look at these wonderful scriptures, these reminders of coming out of Egypt.