

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series, you will have an opportunity to learn to know the Bible. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Last week we learned how the book of Exodus came into being, its character as history, its division into two main parts and its main contents. Today we will learn about the main messages in the book of EXODUS.

POINT 5. THE MAIN MESSAGES OF EXODUS.

As a whole, the book of Exodus is a revelation from God. The goal and theme of Exodus is the adoption or acceptance of Israel as God's people. It describes the rescue (redemption) or salvation of Israel from the house of slavery and the renewal of God's covenant of grace with them on a national basis.

First. Exodus teaches the redemption from the house of slavery.

Especially the first part of Exodus describes how God redeems his own people from the house of slavery in Egypt. Exodus teaches three important truths about redemption: God redeems people from their enslavement to sin; God redeems people by coming down to them on earth and God redeems people by passing over the house that is marked by blood.

One. God redeems people from their enslavement to sin.

The book of Genesis related man's failure under the perfect circumstance of Paradise. It related man's failure when the world was still a unity and all people had one culture and one language, and a developing commerce and technology. It related man's failure even after God had given them a new start after the flood. It related man's failure even when he belonged outwardly to God's covenant people, to the descendants of Abraham. *Genesis described man's failure in all circumstances!*

While the book of Genesis describes man's failure, the book of Exodus describes God's redemption or salvation.

Salvation from what? The house of Egypt was a country worshipping many abominable idols, which is the first great sin in the eyes of the living God. Moreover, the house of Egypt was a country that made slaves of people. "The house of Egypt" is a type or symbol of "sin". *Sin* means to be independent of the God of the Bible, the Living God, and serve dead gods or even yourself as a god. And when you live in sin, sin makes you a slave. You cannot free yourself from sin! Jesus Christ says, "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (Jn 8:34). The book of Exodus describes God's salvation from the house of sin and from slavery to sin!

Two. God redeems people by coming down to them on earth.

In Exodus 3:8, God says to Moses, "I have come down to rescue my people from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey." God has come down to the people on earth! It is not people who journey up to God, but God who comes down to people. Although many people try to journey up to God or use the ladder of religion to try and climb up to God by their own effort, they will not succeed. The Bible says, "God lives in unapproachable light" (1 Tim 6:16). Nobody can climb up to the exalted God of the Bible! Only God himself can come down to man. If God did not approach man, man would never have been able to know anything about God. But the Bible says, God has come down to man! He came down to people on earth to reveal to all people on earth who he is and to save his own people, the people who believe in him.

Three. God redeems people by passing over the house that is marked by blood.

When God came down to punish the oppressors, he commanded that believers should put the blood of a lamb outside on their doors. In Exodus 12:23 we read, "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." God will pass over and not judge certain people! When God sees the blood he himself prescribed, then he will pass over that house and not kill the firstborn in that house. This means that God has come down to people not only *to save* certain people, but also *to judge* other people! Those he does not pass over, he judges. And those he passes over, he saves! This also means that God will only pass over Israel's sin when he sees the blood of a lamb on their door.

Many years later, pointing at Jesus Christ, the apostle John said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29) The God of the Bible will pass over your sin only when you believe that Jesus Christ died and shed his blood for your sins!

Second. Exodus teaches the renewal of God's covenant of grace on a national basis.

Exodus clearly teaches three important truths about God's covenant with Israel: The basis of God's covenant is grace. The condition of God's covenant is faith shown in obedience. The purpose of God's covenant is to glorify God by holy living.

One. The basis of God's covenant is God's grace.

In Genesis chapters 12, 15 and 17, God made a covenant with Abraham, that he would multiply the descendants of Abraham, that he would bring his descendants into the Promised Land and that he would bless all the nations in the world through one descendant of Abraham. God made these promises to Abraham, not because Abraham deserved them, but by grace only. And Abraham believed God. He believed that God would keep his word and that God was able to do what he had promised. Hebrews 11:10-16 teaches that Abraham and all the true believers in the Old Testament looked forward, not to an earthly country, but to the heavenly country, to the New Jerusalem, of which God himself is the architect and builder. They welcomed from a distance the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They believed in the future Messiah, through whom God would bless all the nations in the world. God renewed this covenant with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Exodus 6:7 God promised, "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." And in Exodus 19:6-7 he promised, "Out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me *a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*" God made these promises to Israel, not because Israel deserved them, but by grace only.

Two. The condition of God's covenant is faith shown in obedience.

God's covenant is not without conditions. In Exodus 19:5 God says, "If you obey me fully and keep my covenant", then "you will be my people". Abraham *believed* God's covenant promise and God credited it to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). And by faith Abraham *obeyed* (Gen 22:18; Hebr 11:8). If Israel really *believed* in God's words, then they would *obey* God's words. The principle condition of *faith shown in obedience* is the only condition for salvation in both the Old Testament and the New Testament! That is why the apostle Paul later says, that God gave him the task "to call people to the obedience that comes from faith" (Rom 1:5) and that the gospel is proclaimed "so that all nations might believe and obey" Jesus Christ (Rom 16:26). That is why the apostle Peter later says, "God chose you ... through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:1-2). And that is why James says, "His faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did" (Js 2:22).

Three. The purpose of God's covenant is to glorify God by a holy life.

The purpose of *choosing* Israel and calling Israel to be God's own people is that they would be *a holy people* that would glorify the God of the Bible among the nations of the world (Dt 7:6)! In Exodus 19:4-6 God says, "I brought you to myself ... to be for me ... a holy nation." *Holy* means *separated from sin* and *dedicated to God alone*. God wanted Israel to be a nation who would be separate from sin in all its forms and separate from the idols of Egypt and Canaan. He wanted Israel to be a nation dedicated to worship and serve the living God alone.

The reason why God *chooses* people in the Old Testament and in the New Testament is exactly the same. The apostle Paul says, "God *chose* us in Jesus Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Eph 1:4). And the apostle Peter says, "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'" (1 Pet 1:14-16).

Third. Exodus teaches that God uses human instruments to save people.

Moses is God's human instrument and servant in redemption. Exodus teaches us two great truths about Moses: God uses ordinary people who have both strengths and weaknesses; and Moses is a type of the coming Mediator, Jesus Christ.

One. God used Moses with his strengths and in spite of his weaknesses.

For the first forty years of his life Moses thought he was *somebody important!* Acts 7:22 relates that Moses was educated at Pharaoh's court in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and he was powerful in speech and in action. In this way he learned to read and write and was brought in contact with the form and contents of the ancient laws of nations. Moses was a hot-tempered man, killed an Egyptian in anger and fled to Midian in Northern Arabia.

Then, for the second forty years of his life Moses learned that he was *nobody important!* There in Midian God disciplined his character and revealed himself to Moses. Moses married and had two sons. Between his fortieth and eightieth year of age, Moses lived in the desert. It seemed as if the Egyptians and his own people in Egypt had forgotten him completely.

Finally, for the last forty years of his life Moses discovered *what God can do with an unimportant man*. Moses was a courageous man. After his many years in the desert he regarded speaking to other people as something very difficult. Nevertheless, he spoke to the mightiest people in the world. When Moses led Israel out of Egypt through the desert of Sinai to the borders of Canaan, we see both his shortcomings and his virtues.

He was a hot-tempered man, striking a rock to make water come out of it instead of speaking to it as God had commanded. He would throw down the tables of the Ten Commandments and shatter them because he was angry with the idolatry of Israel.

But he was also a meek person (Num 12:3), bearing the many grumblings and criticisms of Israel against his leadership.

Moses was an unselfish person. After the idolatrous nation of Israel had made a golden calf as their idol, God wanted to destroy Israel and make Moses into a new nation of God. But Moses pleaded with God to spare Israel.

Moses was a faithful person. Sometimes he was very disappointed with Israel. Nevertheless, he persevered to serve God and serve God's people year after year.

Moses was a man of faith. Because he believed what God said to him, he obeyed and did what God said to him. In Hebrews 11:24-27 we read, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible."

Two. God made Moses a type of the coming Mediator, Jesus Christ.

Exodus teaches us two important truths about Moses as Mediator. Only Moses could approach God and mediate between God and the people. And God gave all his laws to Moses to write in a book and to teach them to Israel.

Only Moses could approach God and mediate between God and people. In Exodus 19:7-8 God commanded Moses to speak all his words to Israel and Israel requested Moses to speak on their behalf to God. In Exodus 19:17-23 Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God and he spoke to God, and God allowed only Moses to meet him at the top of the mountain. Limits were put all around the mountain as a visible sign that ordinary people could not approach the living and holy God! In Exodus 20:18-21 we read how the ordinary people trembled with fear at the realisation of the reality and presence of the living God! Although God was high and exalted, God allowed only Moses to approach him. In Exodus 24:1-2 God commanded Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, but Moses alone is to approach the Lord; the others must not come near. And the (ordinary) people may not come up with him." In Exodus 33:7-11 we read that Moses regularly met the Lord in *the tent of meeting* outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud representing God's glory would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshipped each at the entrance to his tent. And "the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend."

God gave all his words and laws to Moses to write down and to teach to Israel. In Exodus 25:22 we read that later when the tabernacle was constructed, God commanded Moses saying, "There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites". In Galatians 3:19-20 we read that the Law was put into effect through angels by a mediator, who represented both God and the people. Thus, the Bible calls Moses *a mediator*.

In John 1:17, the apostle John says, "The law was given through Moses; but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ". And in Hebrews 3:1-6 we read, "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house." The service of Moses was to organise Israel as a people with God's laws and institutions. Moses was *a shadow or type* of the real Mediator, Jesus Christ. Everything Moses did in God's house, that is, in the midst of God's people, would in the future be *exceeded* by Jesus Christ. While Moses was only the servant in the house of God, Jesus Christ is the Builder of the house of God. In the Old Testament *the house of God* represented all the people who feared and believed in the God of the Bible. In the New Testament *the house of God* represents all the people of all nations who believe in Jesus Christ and who persevere in their faith in Jesus Christ!

Fourth. Exodus teaches that salvation is by grace through faith, not by works of the law.

Exodus teaches us two important truths about the Law. The Old Testament Law is given in the context of salvation. And God's everlasting Law is summarised by The Ten Commandments.

One. God's eternal Law is summarised by the Ten Commandments.

Exodus teaches that the Ten Commandments are the summary of all God's moral laws. Although Moses was commanded to record all the other laws in a book, it was God himself who wrote the Ten Commandments with his own finger on two stone tables. This fact is to show the value of the Ten Commandments above all the other Old Testament laws! In the New Testament, Jesus says that loving God and loving your neighbour as yourself is the greatest commandment of all God's commandments (Mk 12:30-31). And the apostle Paul teaches that love for God and your neighbour is the fulfilment of the whole Old Testament Law (Rom 13:10).

Two. God's Old Testament Law is given to Israel in the context of their salvation.

In Exodus 20:1-2 God says, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." God does not give the Ten Commandments to people so that they should do them as a condition to be saved. No, God gave the Ten Commandments to his people only AFTER he had brought them out of the house of slavery and thus saved them from their idols and sin. Only after God had saved his people by his grace and mercy he gave them the rules by which they should live as God's people.

The purpose of *the ceremonial laws* in the Old Testament was to teach God's people *how to approach God in worship*. The purpose of *the civil laws* in the Old Testament was to teach God's people *how to be an organised theocracy*, a state in which God is the King. And the purpose of *the moral laws* in the Old Testament was to teach God's people *how to live as God's holy people in this world*.

The first four of the Ten Commandments teach how God's people should love God. They should only worship the living and true God of the Bible. They should not make idols of any kind. They should respect God. And they should make time every week to seek, worship and serve God. The last six of the Ten Commandments teach how God's people should love other people. They should honour their own parents. They should not kill any human being. They should not commit adultery or be engaged in any sexual immorality. They should not steal, cheat or bribe anyone. They should not tell lies or give false testimony against innocent people. And they should not desire the possessions, power, fame or success of other people.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. During the next week, read Leviticus 16-27. Next week we will introduce the book of Leviticus.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and build Christ's Church" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".