

Salvation – God rescues people

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[0 : 00] Please. Thanks, Alex.

Okay, if you could turn to your Bibles, please, to the end of Genesis. The very last chapter, I haven't got a page number, but it's the first book in the Bible.

And as always, you'll need your Bible. We're going to be reading quite a few chunks from the book of Exodus, so it'll help you to follow along to make sure that what I'm saying is what God says.

This is all part of our big series looking at God's big story, and central to that is his plan of salvation. So we're going to pray and ask for God's help as we look at this together. Let's pray.

[1 : 55] Father, we come to you and we ask. We ask things of you because you are a good and generous God, loving towards all that you have made.

And you love to give the gift of your Spirit to your children, to all who will come with open and empty hands, so that you may fill us afresh.

So we come to you completely dependent on you. We submit ourselves to you, to the authority of your Word and its truth, asking that by your Spirit, you would speak into our lives and help us to see the wonder of your salvation plan, not just for us, but for the whole world.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, you can't help but notice it.

The more that people rebel, the more God's determination to rescue. The more that people sin, the more God's desire to save.

[3 : 42] And that's the recurring theme of God's big story. We see it right at the very beginning of the story, where Adam and Eve disobey God, but yet God responds with a promise to crush the head of Satan.

As the story progresses, we see that wickedness and rebellion against God increases, yet God intervenes and saves Noah and his family.

But even with that act of salvation, the world continues to defy God, yet into the midst of the broken world, God announces his plan to bring the blessing of salvation to the nations through Abraham.

God is determined to save. And we also see this at the very end of Genesis in chapter 50.

You see, over the course of history, it seems that each new generation is worse than the one before. In fact, the story of Genesis ends with an out-of-control, dysfunctional family.

[4 : 57] The father, Jacob, who had lived a life of deception, sends his 11 lying and scheming sons to Egypt because there's been a severe famine.

Now, when the brothers arrive in Egypt, they get the shock of their lives. Why? Well, they come face to face with the youngest brother, Joseph, who they had hated and they had sold into slavery years before and told lies to their father saying that he'd been eaten by wolves.

Little did they know, but under God's amazing control, this younger brother who had been sold into slavery was now the second most powerful ruler in the whole of Egypt.

So God's plan of salvation is still being worked out. Look what Joseph says to his brothers when he meets them after all of these years. Chapter 50, verse 19.

So you can imagine Joseph, who's been put into slavery, now risen to the heights of great power, meeting his brothers. And look what he says.

[6 : 10] Verse 19 of chapter 50, But Joseph said to them, Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

You see, despite people's continued rebellion, God's salvation plan is still on course. the saving of many lives.

So let's see this plan of salvation in action. We might jump from Genesis to Exodus to continue the story, but we need to remember as we turn the page, 400 years have passed, and things are not

looking good.

Over time, this ever-growing family who have now come to be called the nation of Israel have ended up just as Joseph did.

They're all slaves. And they're now under a new ruler who's come to power, Pharaoh, who is a brutal oppressor and dictator. So look at Exodus chapter 1, verse 8.

[7 : 34] Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. Look, he said to his people, the Israelites have become too much, too numerous for us.

Come, we must deal shrewdly with them, or they will become even more numerous. And if war breaks out, we'll join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country.

verse 14. 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. And so ruthless was their slavery, and in an attempt to keep these people under control, look at verse 22.

Pharaoh gave this order to all his people. Every boy that is born to the Israelites, well, you must throw them into the Nile, into the river Nile.

[8 : 41] That's to kill them. But let every girl live. So this nation, this people, are in a complete mess, in a life of absolute misery.

And so we're asking the question at the very beginning, well, what about this saving of many lives? What about God's salvation's plan? Well, God has made a promise.

He knows our condition, and nothing will ever derail his plan. Look at chapter 2, verse 23. Chapter 2, verse 23.

During that long period, the king of Egypt died. And the Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out.

It's a cry of salvation. And their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

[9 : 49] So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them. You see, God in his love does not give up on his people.

Another 400 years of rebellion had passed, but God is still in pursuit. God is relentless in his desire to rescue us.

He has made a promise to save, and he will keep that promise to save. So we're going to look at three things about God's salvation plan in action.

Here's the first one. God frees us from our slavery to sin. Look at chapter 3, verse 7.

The Lord said, I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

[10 : 51] So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of the land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites.

And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. Did you hear what God said to them in verse 8?

He says, I will bring them up out. It's the language of redemption. In other words, God is going to free them from their slavery.

slavery. You see, Israel's physical slavery under Pharaoh is just a picture of their spiritual slavery to sin.

Generation after generation, this people have pushed God out of their lives. And when we live in rebellion against God, we don't just gain our freedom, we lose our freedom.

[12 : 05] Just like Israel, we live under the control of an evil oppressor who wrecks our lives, who holds us in bondage to our sin, Satan himself.

And we've followed in his ways and we've joined in this rebellion against God. And the problem is, like Israel, we're enslaved to sin. We're under a brutal oppressor and we cannot save ourselves.

That's why this book is called Exodus. Exodus simply means exit or departure. In other words, God is going to come and defeat the oppressor so that they can be released.

They will exit their slavery and live life in a new land as God intends. Now, the way in which God is going to save his people is through his chosen servant, Moses.

Have a look at chapter 6, verse 1. Chapter 6, verse 1. Then the Lord said to Moses, Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh.

[13 : 23] Because of my mighty hand, he will let them go. Because of my mighty hand, he will drive them out of his country. Chapter 6, verse 6.

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.

I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, with mighty acts of judgment. 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 I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hands to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord. You see, God is going to work his plan of salvation through his servant Moses, but let's not miss the point.

[14 : 26] It is God who is going to save. Look what it says in those verses. I will bring you out. I will set you free.

I will redeem you. I will take you. I will bring you. Salvation is something that we cannot achieve on our own.

It is something that God does for us on our behalf. Now incredibly, what God does for one nation, freeing them from slavery, God has promised to do for all nations through his servant son, Jesus Christ.

Listen to what Jesus said about us. It comes from John's Gospel, chapter 8. He says, I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. forever. So if the son, that's Jesus, sets you free, you will be free indeed.

[15 : 47] Do you see? Jesus is our true and ultimate exodus. He is the one who brings us out. He is the one who sets us free from our bondage to Satan and our slavery to sin, freeing us from the oppressor Satan, crushing him through his death and resurrection, so that we can be free people and live in a relationship with God.

So he sets us free from our slavery to sin. Second, he sets us free from the judgment we deserve. You see, to bring about Israel's freedom, God promises to bring his judgment. And what follows through Exodus in the next section is a series of ten plagues.

We've probably heard about it, we may have even seen it on a film on television. Each plague that God sends is a response to Pharaoh's stubborn refusal to let the people go.

So have a look at chapter 7, verse 14. Then the Lord said to Moses, Pharaoh's heart is unyielding.

[17 : 15] He refuses to let the people go. So go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes out to the water. Verse 16. Then say to him, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you, Let my people go so that they may worship me in the desert.

But until now you have not listened. This is what the Lord says, By this you will know that I am the Lord. With the staff that is in my hand, I will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be changed into blood.

The fish in the Nile will die, and the river will stink. The Egyptians will not be able to drink its water. And that's what happens.

But even though that happens, Pharaoh refuses still to let the people go. So in response to that, the plagues intensify, one after another, and with that the severity of judgment increases with each plague.

each one is carefully delivered to provoke a response so that the people would wake up to the situation they are in and turn back to God.

[18 : 35] And we see this most clearly with the plague of hail. Have a look at chapter 9, verse 13. Then the Lord said to Moses, Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, this is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews says, Let my people go so that they may worship me.

For this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth.

Down to verse 19. give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every man and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field and they will die.

Now get this, verse 20, those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside.

But those who ignored the word of the Lord left their slaves and livestock in the field and they died. [20 : 03] Verse 27, Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, This time I have sinned, he said to them. The Lord is in the right and I and my people are in the wrong.

Pray to the Lord, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go. You don't have to stay any longer. Verse 34, When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again.

He and his officials hardened their hearts. So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had said, through Moses.

Do you see this defiance that continues against God and God true to his word delivered the tenth and last plague.

Now all these plagues that we see recorded here is God's just and fair response to those who continually rebel against him. And in case we think God is a bit too quick and a bit too harsh to judge, remember Egypt also has had 400 years to turn back to God.

[21 : 25] 400 years God has been patient. You see we can't continue to reject God and expect to get away with it.

This is God's world. He made us, we belong to him. It's not our life to do whatever we like. Now the problem with this last plague is the tenth plague is going to pass over the whole nation of Egypt. You see Israel may know of God's promise to save but they are no less guilty than the Egyptians. Christians. And the last plague is most serious because look at chapter 11 verse 4.

Chapter 11 verse 4. Moses said this is what the Lord says. About midnight I will go throughout Egypt.

Every firstborn son in Egypt will die. From the firstborn son of Pharaoh sits on the throne to the firstborn son of the slave girl who is at her hand mill and all the firstborn of the cattle as well.

[22 : 47] There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark or any man or animal.

Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. God will keep his promise to save not because Israel deserve it but because of God's intervening grace.

Now to experience this salvation they must do something that seems very strange to us. each family or home must go and take a lamb.

Look at chapter 12 verse 5. the animals you choose must be year old males without defect and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.

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. 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.

[24 : 19] Now that's really messy isn't it? Could you imagine getting a bowl of blood and painting it all round the door of your house?

What would your neighbours think? Why would God tell them to do such a thing like that? Well look at verse 12. On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn both man and animals and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt.

I am the Lord. 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 and no destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

God graciously provides a means and a way for the people to know salvation. You see God is teaching them and he's teaching us a really important lesson.

someone something must die for all this rebellion and this ongoing defiance. Remember what God had said to Adam and Eve right at the beginning of the story when they turned against God if you rebel against me you will die.

[25 : 53] You die. So when they took this lamb and they slaughtered this lamb they're in effect saying this lamb dies instead of me.

When they got that paint and they put that blood on the door they're thinking this is what should happen to me. This should be my blood.

of course no lamb could ever deal with the world's sin and God's judgment as the sins mountain as the rebellion continued God's judgment was still there but God's plan of salvation continues down through the generations and God did something that he said he would do and promise he sent his son Jesus our ultimate Passover lamb.

Listen to what the apostle Peter says For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from your empty way of life handed down to you by your forefathers but with the precious blood of Christ a lamb without blemish or defect Jesus Christ the sinless one comes and dies instead of you and for me just as Israel stood under the blood under the door frames and were in their houses so we come now and we stand under that blood spattered cross because at the cross the judgment of God passes over us and instead falls on the lamb Jesus his son he takes the blame for the guilt of all of our sin freeing us from the judgment that we deserve so he frees us from our slavery to sin he frees us from the judgment we deserve and he frees us to live in his gracious provision you see

God would set his people free from an evil oppressor but he would do more than that he would graciously provide for them all that they needed for their new life look what happens in chapter 12 verse 31 so the Passover has come the last plague has fallen judgment has come and we read in chapter 12 verse 31 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 take your flocks and your herds as you have said and go and also bless me verse 35 the Israelites did as Moses had instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing and the [29 : 28] Lord had made the Egyptians favorably disposed towards the people and they gave them what they asked for so they plundered the Egyptians you see not only are the people redeemed set free from their oppressor not only have they been rescued set free from God's just judgment they are now blessed they've been given all that they need for their new life gold silver clothing everything they've taken for the Egyptians and they've carried it with them as they go out to start their new life they're free people and God has given them every resource as they journey with him to go and worship him now what was material blessing for Israel our same great God has supplied us with every spiritual blessing as we continue to journey with him again listen to the apostle

Peter his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who has called us by his own glory and goodness so that we may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by its evil desires do you see that god has given us all that we need as we follow him we no longer have to turn back to sin for its momentary pleasures we no longer have to listen to satan and his lies and live under his oppression we no longer have to live under the fear of god's judgment why because we've been set free and in our freedom we now run to christ so that we can participate in his divine nature and know the power of his holy spirit in our lives working within us and through us so that people like you and me can escape the corruption in the world caused by its evil desires he has supplied us with everything to live life his way so how does all of this become a reality for us how can we know god's full and free salvation and experience it on a daily basis well

I want you to imagine for a minute imagine your family home on the night of that last plague there you are in your house you watch your children playing on the floor and then your eldest son walks in he knows something's not right but he doesn't quite understand all that's going on he can feel the tension and you look at your wife standing motionless the blood drained from her face in worry and anxiousness what are we going to do and then you remember what god had said read chapter 12 verse 22 take 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 this house until morning when the lord goes through the land to strike down the

Egyptians he will see the blood on the tops and the 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 you go outside and then you take one of those lamps it might seem harsh but you cut its throat and your son is there looking at you what are you doing dad well son it's like this it's me who deserves to die we all deserve to die but the death of this lamb means it dies instead of you and then you begin to paint and put that blood on the door frames and when you finish you gather all your children and all your family and you come inside the house and you close the door and then you wait you see it's all an act of faith they are simply trusting in what

God said he would do they are putting God's word into practice and doing what God said and trusting him to do what he says he will do that no one will come to any harm and this wasn't just for Israel have a look at verse 38 as they all make their way out of slavery look what we read in verse 38 you could easily miss this many other people what many other people not just the Israelites but other people Egyptians those who perhaps had heard about it who the Israelites had told their

neighbours or their friends they also did the same or came in under the house of an Israelite and they were saved you see faith is trusting not in what you can do or who we are or our privileges or our backgrounds but it's simply coming in complete and utter dependence and resting in all that [36 : 27] God has done for us so we are a people who live by faith yes like Israel we continue to rebel yes we fall and we fail but in faith we are a people who continue to look to Jesus who provides us with all that we need to live life his way who gives us the resources to say no to sin and yes to his way of living Jesus is the doorway to our salvation not just for us but for the world and like Israel we should be gathering others into the homes in under Jesus Christ who gives us salvation that is full and free let's pray together our father god we stand back amazed at just how great your salvation plan is that you would persist and pursue us as you have done setting us free from our slavery and oppression setting us free from the guilt the judgment we deserve setting us free to live life your way providing us with every resource in

Christ so that we might walk with you and worship you as we should we thank you that under Jesus we have all that we need and we pray that you would help us and encourage us that we may be people who also invite others and bring in others under the cross of Jesus so that they too may experience this salvation that comes from you father help us and we ask this in Jesus name amen we we're going to go straight into sharing a meal together we're going to sing a song that helps us to reflect what we're going to take part in and as we've just said

God's salvation is immense it's great and if we know the story of the exodus God said to the people you are to remember God's salvation with a meal the Passover meal it was a way to recall everything that God had done his liberation his freedom his redemption for this people and that meal that they celebrate now finds its fulfillment in Jesus and so we gather today as a people who have come under Christ and we have this simple meal that Jesus has given to us to share the bread representative of his body the juice representative of his blood shed for us he is the ultimate lamb who was sacrificed for us and we come to him to know that freedom and to know that forgiveness so we're going to sing a couple of verses we can stand as we sing this behold the lamb who bears our sins away slain for us and we remember let's stand as we sing words we we and we we we we we we we we