

The Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent

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[0 : 00] from his holy word, as we see in Exodus chapter 1, as you see in the heading there, the seed of the women and the seed of the serpent. We'll explore that theme even in this first chapter and the headings that you see there that we'll be working through, as it were, going through, continuing through the legacy of Joseph, the labor of slavery, lawlessness of evil and the lawful resistance to evil. And I'm sure you've maybe worked out that as we've begun in Exodus chapter 1, God willing, for the next, well, for the next few months, we're going to, as it were, be with the children of Israel in their experience in Egypt from the time of their oppression under the, severe oppression under Pharaoh to the time when they leave Egypt.

Fourteen chapters of Exodus, this great book, this great book written by Moses, it's reckoned after the Israelites left Egypt. This is a great book. We can't obviously go through it all. We're going to go through the first portion of it together as we explore, as we study, as we hear God speak to us through these great chapters, because they are great chapters and a great book, this divinely inspired book. We read there of how God deals with his people, how God fulfills his covenant promises to his people. But we've got to see the big picture as well. I'm sure most of us, if not all of us, when we first read Exodus, when we first heard the story of the experience of the Israelites in Egypt, and then their exodus out of Egypt. I'm sure that was really all that we took from it, just the story of the Israelites in Egypt and then leaving Egypt. But of course, there's much more to the story than simply what happened at the time. Because the story of Exodus, the exodus of the people away from Egypt, away from the oppression of slavery, really points us to the great deliverance of God's people from the slavery of sin. The story of Exodus points us to the Lord Jesus Christ. It points us to him, our great mediator between God and man. Jesus, who's rescued us from that oppression of sin, the oppression of Satan. We've got Moses here, the central character in Exodus. Moses, the mediator between God and man. But of course, there's the greater than Moses, the Lord Jesus, in his being our ultimate mediator, our intermediary between God and man. Jesus, who's made it possible for God's people to be released from the slavery of sin and know our exodus from the bonds of Satan. And so it's really this big picture that we want to keep in mind as we seek to understand more the wonder of our salvation.

And that as we study this together, that you'll see your deliverance from slavery, your deliverance from the slavery of sin, so that you're enabled the more to worship God, enabled the more to, yes, to appreciate the work of the Lord Jesus in his perfect mediatorial role in coming before God and saving his people.

And so it's a story that we can't just see and read from a one-dimensional perspective. We've got to see the big picture. We've got to see that this story points us to the ultimate fulfillment of Exodus in the rescue act of the Lord Jesus for his people. And that surely should spur each one of us on to the more to worship God, to thank him, to give him praise, and well, to thank him, you thank him, for his rescuing you from the power of sin. If you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior.

And if you don't yet know Jesus, the Lord Jesus as your Savior, this account here in Exodus is going to challenge you. It's going to challenge you as to your allegiance. Are you going to remain on the side of, well, of all that the Pharaoh of Egypt represented in his enmity against God and his people?

[4 : 43] Or are you going to find your allegiance with the Lord's people because of your coming to know the Lord Jesus as your Savior and know that deliverance from evil and come to his kingdom and know eternal life in him? Where is your allegiance? Well, as we turn to the passage here, we want to look first of all at the legacy of Joseph, certainly the first seven verses and even beyond.

Because you can't read Exodus without reading Genesis. I mean, the book of Exodus doesn't just appear, as it were, out of the blue.

Genesis sets the scene for Exodus. Because in Genesis, the book of Genesis, we read of sin coming into the world. We read of the time when man sinned. Man sinned against God and sin came into the human race.

Sin separated man from God. But God gave a promise. God gave a promise of one to come who'd remove that barrier of sin, the barrier between man and God. The promise that you read of in Genesis 3, verse 15.

You read of the enmity between the seed or the offspring of Satan and the seed or the offspring of the woman. And that prophetic telling of the conflict between Satan and Jesus, the conflict between the followers of the evil one, the followers of the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate seed, the offspring of the woman.

Now, later in Genesis, because we're still in Genesis, later in Genesis, in Genesis chapter 12, God revealed to Abraham, He revealed to Abraham that from Him would come a great nation.

[6 : 38] And from that nation, all the families on the earth would be blessed. And of course, these words speaking prophetically of the coming of the Lord Jesus in His human descent from Abraham. But a nation was going to be formed from Abraham's offspring. And from that nation, yes, the nation of Israel, from that nation, one will come, the Lord Jesus, who'll be that blessing to the earth. He'll come to bring about, as it were, the solution to the problem of sin.

That solution to the problem that came from man's sin and fallen, Eden. Now, as we say, we're still in Genesis. Move forward some 200 years from the promise that God gave to Abraham, and you find the descendants of Abraham coming into Egypt. They come to settle in Egypt.

Joseph was already there. Joseph had been made prime minister in Egypt. He'd saved Egypt from famine. His father, Jacob, you know Jacob, another name for Jacob is Israel. Jacob came into Egypt to escape from the famine. He came with his sons, 11 sons, Joseph's 11 brothers. And they settle in Egypt.

And the tribes of Israel, from the sons, they settle in that land. Seventy people altogether. And for a long time, the Israelites settled there. They flourished. They knew God's blessing in that land. And you see that in verses 6 to 7. After Joseph dies, after Joseph's brothers die, the Israelites know a lot of blessing. They know much blessing in that foreign land.

[8 : 21] They multiply greatly. We're told that they're fruitful. They're numerous. The land's filled with them. The promise that God made to Abraham that God would make him into a great nation has been fulfilled there in Egypt. But the success of the people of Israel in Egypt brings about a great reaction, a contrary reaction from those who are in power in Egypt. So we're told there in verse 8 to 10, a new king comes to the throne. A king, a pharaoh who doesn't know, never heard of Joseph.

We're moving on about 250 years from the time that Joseph and the family came to Egypt. And this new king isn't recognizing Joseph. He doesn't like the Israelites in his land. He sees them as a threat to Egypt. He thinks that because there are different people, then they're going to cause trouble in Egypt. If Egypt fights against another country, then the Israelites, he thinks, are going to join up with that other country. And so the king is worried. The pharaoh's worried.

He sees the people of Israel, the Israelites, as different and a threat, a security threat. And he's going to take drastic measures to quell this further growth of the Israelites.

And you know, it's that hatred against the Lord's people because the Lord's people are different, different to the prevailing values of the world. And well, it's that hatred that's persisted over the millennia, over the centuries. You know, we've entered 2021. And we might say that in many ways, the pressures against God's people, against the Lord's church, the pressures are continuing, they're deepening. We see it, the trajectory of moral values that are contrary to God's word, God's law. The trajectory continues. I've been ministered here, well, apparently this year, it'll be 12 years. 12 years come this summer. And even in these 12 years, the changes that have happened, even in that relatively short time, the changes in society have been immense. The Lord's people continue to be under attack from a secular mindset that seeks to erode the rock of the word of God and replace it with the shifting, sinking sands of a secular mindset.

The out with the old and in with the new. It's much more than simply a new year resolution, as it were, a new year rite of passage. The out with the old, in with the new, in many ways, is a desire to seek from our land the old ways, the old ways of the gospel, and to replace these ways with the

new dawn of a godless age. And those who are the seed of the serpent will bruise the heel of those who are the seed of the woman, but they will not prevail, even though they might try with all their might to gain that victory as the king of Egypt here tried to gain victory over the Israelites. But no, because God was with his people. And so we see how the king of Israel, the pharaoh, tries to overpower the Israelites, tries he might, and he fails. But as we'll see his attempts there, the labor of slavery, as we see certainly from verse 10, 8 onwards. I mean, the people of Israel have been living peacefully in Egypt for certainly over 250 years. They've caused no trouble, but because they're hated by Pharaoh, this new pharaoh, they're put into forced labor.

[12:16] Suppose the thinking is that, you know, that somehow the people of Israel are going to be so worn out with this oppression, their morale is going to sink, they're going to be reduced numerically because of this constant oppression of them. But instead of the population of the Israelites decreasing, as we're told, the fact the population increases, the plan of Pharaoh, the first plan of Pharaoh backfires. And because of that, he's going to bring in something far more ruthless, far more vicious. And, you know, even as we bring that even to our current context, let's be aware that those who hate the things of God, those who hate the people of God will continue to be ruthless in attack. Because the enemies of God leave no stone unturned in a brutal, ruthless attack on God's Word, God's Church, and God's people.

And, of course, that's to be expected. As we've already seen, those who are of the seed of the serpent will bruise the heel of those who are the seed of the woman. They will not prevail. Because even in that bruising, there'll be that constant attempt to hurt God's people. We see that certainly in these verses, the lawlessness of evil. Verse 15, 16, and 22. Because there in verse 15, this, as it were, this new attempt by the Pharaoh to destroy the Israelites. There's no more talk of forced labor. It's now infanticide, killing of newborn baby boys. As we saw there in the account of this occurrence, Pharaoh tells the midwives, if a baby boy is born to a Hebrew woman, it's got to be killed immediately. If it's a girl, let the girl live.

And you could say it's a purely pragmatic, practical thing that Pharaoh's deciding on. If the Hebrew male population dies out, they're not going to have a military force to join up with an enemy. There'll be no Hebrew males left. The population of Israel will disappear. The slaughter of the innocent, innocent children. You might say a convenient problem to deal with Egypt's own problems.

And I suppose from a one-dimensional approach to the plan of evil, what we're seeing, we're seeing the logic of Pharaoh, the evil logic from a political perspective. But of course, there's much more than just a one-dimensional approach to this.

[14:59] The seed of the serpent, even there in Egypt, the seed of the serpent was attempting to destroy the seed of the woman. So we do have to see here, Pharaoh as a pawn of Satan. Pharaoh trying to destroy God's people, even as Satan seeks to destroy God's people. And of course, in destroying God's chosen people, eliminating the generations to come. I mean, if Pharaoh's plan had succeeded here, there'd be no Apostle Paul from the tribe of Benjamin.

There'd be no Anna of the tribe of Asher. Anna, remember we saw last week when she acclaimed the advent of Jesus. Of course, there'd be no human descent of Jesus from the tribe of Judah. The prophecy of the Messiah to come from that tribe, the tribe of Judah, that prophecy would be negated. The covenant promise to Israel nullified. But that didn't happen. Under God's sovereign protection of his people, it didn't happen.

Pharaoh wouldn't be victorious. He wouldn't be victorious over God. He wouldn't be victorious over the Lord's people. Just this in our present time.

Satan will not have the victory because Jesus has won the victory. And yes, of course, we respond with horror to the plan of infanticide.

[16:32] But again, we have to see behind that plan the attempts of Satan to crush and destroy God's people. Even as we see that through the ages.

Now, we thank God that even this year of 2021, it may well see the elimination of the pandemic through the vaccine. But unless the Lord intervenes, unless the Lord brings that increase, we're not going to see the elimination or the attempts of Satan to eliminate God's church.

Yes, there is the pandemic of a virus that we pray will be solved this year. But the pandemic of evil will continue.

And so we prepare even now for these attacks of Satan, whether the attacks are going to happen locally, nationally, internationally. Because Satan will not rest till Jesus returns.

But remember, yes, Satan is like that roaring lion, that prowling lion seeking whom he'll devour. But we have one who's our very present help in times of trouble.

[17 : 46] Because he is with you. He's with his church. He's promised never to leave you, never to forsake you. He's conquered. He's already won the victory. And we rest in that, the assurance of his continuing blessing, his continuing protection for his people.

But it's still, still you fight. It's that call that God gives you to fight the good fight of faith, even with the weapons that God gives us, the spiritual weapons to enable you to resist evil.

And to obey God rather than man. This we see in the response of the midwives here and there, obeying God rather than man. As we read there in verse 17, But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live, the lawful resistance to evil.

You know, over the years, the centuries, the millennia, so many heroes of faith, relatively unknown individuals, people who are not in positions of leadership, people who aren't, as it were, the front page headliners.

But so often the heroes of faith in God's church have been the quiet people, those who are behind the scenes, believers who remain faithful to God, believers who serve him with honor.

[19 : 16] If I mentioned, if I said to you even at the start of the service, the names Shifra and Pua, I'm sure very few of us would recognize these individuals. But bear in mind, these are the two individuals, these Hebrew midwives, who might say, under God, saved Israel.

They were key to the survival of the generations in their refusal to obey the command of Pharaoh. They would not kill the baby boys.

Even though these two women, they were in a foreign land, even though God hadn't spoken directly to his people, for generations. Nevertheless, these two women, they feared God.

And they wouldn't resort to obeying the demands of a tyrant. Yes, they truly believed in the dignity of human life. And of course, Pharaoh had no respect for human life.

And certainly, as we see in the reply, we're not going to condone an evasive answer. But what we can say this is, God blessed them. God blessed them.

[20 : 25] Not so much because of their answer to Pharaoh, but he blessed, God blessed them because they feared the Lord, as we're told there. God blessed their courage, their courageous actions in resisting Pharaoh.

And their courage wasn't anything of a natural ability in themselves. But because they relied on the one true God.

They feared the Lord. They obeyed God rather than man. And yes, that principle is maintained through the years.

And that's what we do have to maintain, even when governments act beyond the law of God. Of course, we're to obey the authorities that God has sent over us.

But there are times, there will be times, when God's law conflicts with man's law. And if you're a Christian, you obey God's law rather than man's law.

[21 : 23] When man's law conflicts with God's law. It's what Peter commanded when he spoke to the, when he was commanded by the authorities not to preach the word of God.

And his reply was, we must obey God rather than man. And there'll be times, maybe even this year, there'll be times when you really do have to examine particular approaches to particular aspects of legislation that's passed, even in our own land.

And you're going to ask yourself, do you fear God rather than fear man? And certainly these Hebrew midwives, they feared God. They feared God in honoring God's law.

Rather than man's law. Well, as we look forward to this new year, we've got to be prepared. We've got to be equipped.

We've got to be on our guard. You've got to be on your guard. And always, always fear God.

Because that fear of God, that trust in God, that reliance on Him, that's going to prepare you for every circumstance.

[22 : 30] Prepare you for the circumstances that you face in your life, the church faces in its life. So don't allow the fear of man, don't allow that fear to gain the upper hand in your life.

But fear God. Fear God and give Him the glory. Fear Him. As the Hebrew midwives feared God. As they exercise courage in a strange land, even as we in many ways are living in a strange land, in strange times.

But continue to fear God. Give Him the glory. As you seek to serve Him with all your might. For His glory. For His name's sake.

Amen. And let us pray. Our Heavenly Father, as we continue through this year, as we continue to wait upon You, Lord, renew our strength.

Renew our faith. Help us to be courageous. Help us, Lord, to take that stand for truth. When all around, there's a seeking to demolish truth.

[23 : 35] Lord, be with Your people. Be with those in positions of authority who love You and know Your name. Be with them, Lord, as they seek to serve You and honor You.

And be with, Lord, all who seek to serve You, even the many in our own land. Names we know not of, but names known to You. Be with them, Lord.

Be with Your church. Help us, Lord, in all that we do to honor You, to glorify Your name. Hear us, Lord, as we continue before You now. Bless us in our worship, we ask.

In Jesus' name. Amen.