

Learning from Failure Exodus 2:1-25

Several major themes that run throughout Scripture have already revealed themselves in Genesis and Exodus: primarily, creation and redemption. These two themes are tied together because God originally made everything good, it has fallen, and he is presently redeeming it all.

God began that redemptive ministry through the death of that first lamb to cover Adam and Eve, and now by providentially caring for Moses, Israel's future deliverer, through the midwives who rescued his life.

Exodus 1:17 - But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.

Whereas sin brings death (James 1:15), God sustains life, even when it requires miraculous intervention as it did with Sarah and Abraham and will with Israel in Egypt.

Moses' salvation from Pharaoh's death decree, prefigures Israel's deliverance from their bondage in Egypt and, of course, a greater deliverance one Passover night several thousand years later.

(What God is doing personally in Moses, he is doing nationally in Israel. What God is doing nationally in Israel, he is doing cosmically with all creation. The narrative of creation/Fall/redemption constantly repeats itself in the little stories in order to constant reveal and remind us about the big story).

First: Moses, Israel and a New Creation

V 1 – Both of Moses's parents were from the tribe of Levi, making Moses a priest.

Numbers 3:12-13 - Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine, ¹³for all the firstborn are mine. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the firstborn in Israel, both of man and of beast. They shall be mine: I am the LORD."

The last plague which the Lord brought upon Egypt, was the death of the firstborn. After Pharaoh lost his own child, he finally relented and let the Israelites go (Exodus 12:29-31) When this plague came upon the land, the firstborn among Israel were spared only because of the blood of the sacrificial lamb which was placed on the doorposts and lintels of their homes (Exodus 12:21-23).

As a result of God's deliverance of Israel's firstborn, the firstborn of all Israel belongs to God (Exodus 13:2) But, rather than taking the firstborn from their families, God calls the Levites to serve him as priests, representatives of Israel's firstborn. Just like the sacrifice that Cain was supposed to make, God is once again, reinforcing the concept of a substitute sacrifice.

V 2 – "*beautiful = "towb" = Genesis 1:10 – "And God saw that it was good/towb."*

This is another indication that God is 're-creating,' starting again with a people whom he is going to call to be faithful to him as Adam and Eve were unfaithful. And it works –

For example:

Genesis 1:28 - *And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..."*

Exodus 1:7 – *But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.*

(Insofar as Moses is concerned, he is the child who represents that new beginning in the world for Israel!)

- God's original creation was 'tobw,' good or beautiful,
- Adam and Eve sinned against God and thrust creation into bondage
- Israel in Egypt represents that bondage
- and so God has birthed a 'beautiful' child who represents what God is redoing with Israel

Throughout Genesis, you have read and watched the God-fearing line of people who have now ended up in Egypt through Jacob's sons. And it is in them, that God is going to demonstrate his power to fulfil his original design of not just Moses or Israel, but all the earth being 'beautiful.'

Moses is a representative of God birthing a good creation in the midst of a world of death.

Moses = "draw out" in Hebrew. Just as he delivered Moses through the Nile, he is going to deliver Israel by drawing them out of the Red Sea.

But until then...

Vs 3-10 - In providence, that child is welcomed into the Pharaoh's house as his own. (We saw this previously in Joseph. Both examples speak to the eventual "dominion" (Gen 1:28) or enthronement of God's people over all the earth – Rev 3:21). God is indeed, reconciling (to restore with more) all things to himself.

Second: Failing to Rightly Represent God. 11-15

Since God called us image bearers and to 'image' God means to represent God, **sin is the failure to rightly represent God.**

On their own, Adam and Eve could not become more than God created them. Their attempt ended in disaster.

Multiply ten generations of that until you reach Noah and –

"The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

Even after the flood, people are still trying to be like God as the Tower of Babel demonstrates –

Genesis 11:4 - *Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves*

What did we learn from Jacob? What we strive for and cannot obtain, God intends to give as a gift. Those things we need most, the matters of the heart, the deepest concerns of our lives, are not things we can earn or buy but must be given by grace.

Only grace makes those things permanent. If we earn or buy them, they are as fleeting as our ability to earn or buy them.

But when God gives us something, it is irrevocable (Romans 11:29) because God's gifts are resourced by the cross (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Just as we've seen it before, we now see it in Moses –

Read vs 11-15.

By this time in Moses's life, he understands that he is a Hebrew

V 11 - One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.

And so, Moses, like A&E, Abraham and Jacob before him, takes up the arm of the flesh in an effort to do what God has promised to supernaturally do

V 12 - He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

One day in the not-so-distant future, God is going to hide the whole Egyptian army in the sand under the Red Sea. But, Moses, acting on his own, can't even hide one Egyptian in the sand.

V 13-15 - When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?" ¹⁴ He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known."

As a result, Moses ends up on hiding on the backside of the desert – v 15

But God is God and as we saw in the book of Job, God employs Satan's work and our mistakes, for our good. And we all know that Moses's time in the wilderness of Midian will prove profitable for him.

As is always true of God, he is doing more than one thing with one thing:

- a) 16-22. Moses is hiding in the backside of the desert but meeting God-fearers, the priests of Midian, his father-in-law (Reuel 2:18/Jethro 3:1) and gaining a family whom God will use in Moses's life and ministry of leading Israel out of bondage.

FYI: Midian was a son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen 25:1-2). Midian is about 285 miles from Egypt, in the northwest Arabian Peninsula on the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea.

- b) 23-25. God is making Israel all-the-more miserable; something necessary to motivate them to leave Egypt.

Remember: Egypt is not a prison for most of Israel's existence there. It was a womb. Seventy people went into Egypt and about 2 million came out. God birthed a nation in Egypt's womb, the safest place on earth for Israel, but, some years after Joseph died, turned the new Pharaoh's heart against Israel. This was labor pains for Israel; time to leave Egypt. But if God had not made their lives miserable, they would have remained content in Egypt; slaves of the Egyptians and not God's representative (image-bearers) people to both Egypt and the 7 nations where they are going. For instance, think about Rahab's confession on behalf of her people -

Joshua 2:8-11 - I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you

and to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction.¹¹ And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.

That is a right representation of God by Israel and a right view of God by unbelievers.

It is something that Moses, as a representative of Israel, tried to do and failed. It is also something that Israel will repeatedly fail to do. It is something that God himself will do.

Third: The Church as God's New People

Genesis 1:26 - *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion..."*

Genesis 1:28 - *And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion..."*

Dominion = rule, dominate, and prevail

God has given you a place to exercise dominion. What is that place? (First, your own life)

How are you, in the power of the Holy Spirit, exercising dominion = rightly representing God?

The point of reading the Bible, i.e., leaving our world and entering into the biblical world is not to escape our world but to see our world differently; as God does, through the lens of the Bible. We are supposed to, after reading about that world, re-enter our world as different people, with a different agenda. Reading Scripture is supposed to change us because in it, we are interacting with God, just as the biblical characters before us, also interacted with God for their good or bad.

- We learn like Adam and Eve learned, that disobedience brings schism
- We learn like Job learned that even the righteous suffer and for good reasons
- We learn like Abraham and Sarah learned that God keeps his word
- We learn like Jacob did that God gives as a gift what we need the most
- We learn like Joseph did that God has a plan that is bigger than ours
- We learn like Moses that only God can do for us, what we try and cannot do

Reading the Bible is like planting seed in our souls. The Holy Spirit wets that seed and brings it to life. And the life the Holy Spirit produces is the life of Christ...in us.

Why? Because Jesus is the perfect image of God. He represents God perfectly. And in so doing, we reap the benefits of knowing, loving and following God, which is what God has intended since he created Adam and Eve.

We do this, in our own lives, in our homes, on our jobs, in our social environments, in our educational institutions; everywhere we are is an expansion of God's kingdom into that world. God has given us dominion and in that, he is exercising dominion over the whole earth.

But, just like in every occasion in the Bible, whole and permanent dominion over the whole earth will require God's personal, supernatural intervention – the second coming of Jesus.

Conclusion:

1 - Do you see how Moses prefigures Jesus?

*Miraculous birth (escaped being killed)

- *Son of a king
- *Choosing common people
- *Backside of the desert in preparation for ministry
- *Freed people by the blood of a lamb
- *Came out of Egypt
- *Gave the law from a mountain

(For more: read <https://www.compellingtruth.org/Moses-and-Jesus.html>)

2 – How's your dominion?

Sin is misrepresenting God. For instance, if God is represented by the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22-23, how is that fruit being displayed in my life?

Are you on task with God in showing him off in your own life?

Community Groups:

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- 1 – What are you most enjoying about reading through the Bible?
- 2 – What is most difficult about reading through the Bible?
- 3 – How are you reading through the Bible? At night? In the morning? In your car? Are you reading or listening or reading and listening? What tips can you offer others for reading through the Bible in a year?
- 4 – What new thing have you seen for the first time?
- 5 – What is your greatest Bible-truth takeaway at this point?
- 6 – How does Moses' being kept alive foreshadow Israel's deliverance?
- 7 - What about his being 'drawn out' of water?
- 8 – How does the word 'good' (towb) in verse 2 give us an indication that God is remaking a people as he intended in the Garden of Eden?
- 9 – How is Moses a representative of God creating and saving life in the midst of a culture of death which is the result of sin?
- 10 – Thinking about the last question, how then does Moses' birth and preservation point us toward a greater picture of what God is doing in the world and with all creation?
- 11 – Recount how Moses tried to rescue an Israelite from Egyptian persecution.
- 12 – What does his failure to 'hide' the Egyptian tell us about doing God's work, our way?
- 13 – How does Moses' backside-of-the-desert experience work out for his good?
- 14 – How is Israel's time in Egypt more about birthing a nation than enduring a prison?
- 15 – How did Israel's deliverance from Egypt witness to the nations in the Promised Land?

16 – What ‘dominion’ has God given you to represent him?

17 – What does that look like? How do you do it?

18 – How does Moses’ life represent Jesus?