

October 4-8, 2021 Edition

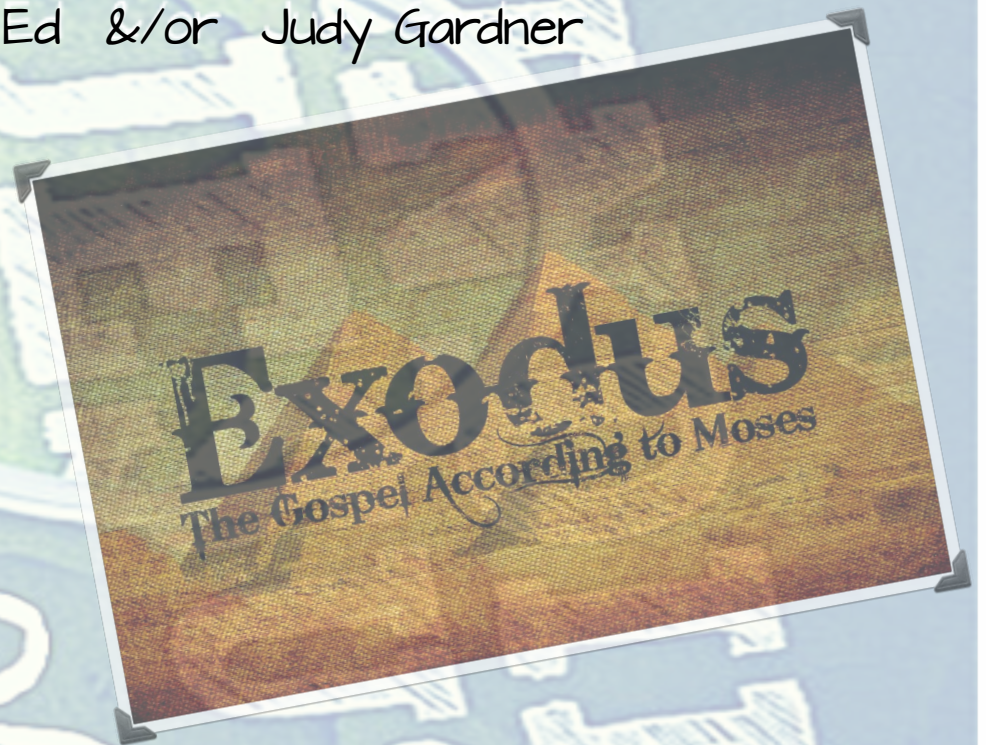
# The "BIG Story" Of The Bible #70

## The Gospel According To Moses #2.3

### Prepping For Salvation

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When you read the Bible ask yourself if there's anything you're reading where God is speaking to you personally... anything that you need to start applying in your own life. Then try to reflect on what you read... what you heard from God throughout the day and we know you'll be blessed.

\*\*\* These are EXTREMELY rough drafts so if you see typos... well yuo knew the rest ;0) These are essentially the ramblings of thoughts running through Ed or Judy's mind the week before Ed teaches a lesson on these concepts. They are pretty much how Ed gets ready for the weekends. They are not necessarily coherent so if they don't make much sense... sorry about that.

\*\*\*\* Also these devotionals are the product of both Judy & Ed's experiences and education. Figuring out which are from Judy and which are from Ed (sometimes both are contained in a single day) is half the fun.

You can also get these devotionals on Riverside's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside](http://www.facebook.com/EagleRiverside)). You don't have to have a FB account to read them but if you do have an account if you "like" the Riverside page and click the box to get updates the devos will show up on your wall every weekday (along with other news and event updates).

**Monday Reflection:** This wee we will begin looking at the book of Exodus in these reflections (we aren't always on the same track as the weekend messages with the reflections but for this week we are). I'm calling this part of The BIG Story Of The Bible lesson series, "The Gospel According To Moses" because whether I knew or not growing up- the gospel isn't only found in the New Testament.

When we finished with Genesis Joseph and his whole family were living in Egypt working with the Egyptians to make life better for everyone. It's almost an and-they-lived-happily-ever-after moment. There have always been skeptics that will tell you that's impossible. If you know anything about the Egyptians then you'd know they would NEVER allow a foreigner to rise to such a place of prominence as Joseph does in Genesis (they say). And you know what? They're almost assuredly right. No true Egyptian would ever allow such a thing to happen.

But what if the Pharaoh Joseph served wasn't an Egyptian? What would he be then you might ask? Why, a Hyksos of course. Does that clear everything up? Maybe not so let's explore that idea. The Hyksos (the name literally means "Rulers Of Foreign Lands") were a conglomeration of ancient semitic people that conquered and ruled Egypt about the time of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. They were from the lands north of what is modern day Israel and they took control of Egypt for about 150 years. Their kings became Pharaoh's and they pretty much just adopted Egyptian ways with one notable exception- they didn't care where you were from or what kind of blood was pumping through your veins- if you could do the job you got promoted.

The Hyksos would have had zero problems promoting Joseph to a place of power if he could save them from a famine. The Egyptians wouldn't have approved but until they had control back there was nothing they could do. I know what you must be thinking- if something like that happened in Egypt wouldn't there be a record of it? Wouldn't the Egyptian histories tell us all about it? Nope. The Egyptians never wrote a single thing that made them appear weak or cast them in a negative light. Read the Egyptian histories and you'll get the impression that nothing bad ever happened in Egypt. That their leaders never lost a battle or made a mistake. So what would they do with a period like the century and a half where the Hyksos conquered them and ruled? They used this fascinating literary device for just such occasions:

*And then, 150 years of darkness fell across the land... but then Pharaoh (fill in the blank) arose and brought light once again to the kingdom.*

Is that what happened with Joseph? Maybe. I might even say probably. There's no way to prove it one way or the other at this point but it is interesting what Moses writes in the opening pages of the book of Exodus:

*Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them. Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. Exodus 1:5-6 (NIV)*

It's a very similar phrase to the device used by Egyptian historians. Moses would have been trained in how to write historical narratives as he grew up a prince of Egypt in Pharaoh's own home. Is it proof? No. But it is interesting. Tomorrow we'll start looking at how God was setting things in motion to prepare for the salvation of Israel but for today maybe spend some time

thinking about how you and I sometimes use devices to cover over our own murky past when God has already prepared a way for us to be free from the guilt, regret and shame of our own pasts.

**Tuesday Reflection:** Ok so let's talk about salvation. What does salvation mean to you? We've all got our ideas but it's not a word that gets used very much these days in America unless you're in church. I am starting to think an awful lot of what ails the church and an awful lot of what brings confusion and frustration to Americans in the 21st century is the disconnect between Bible words like faith, grace, sin, life and salvation. All of these words are easy enough to look up on dictionary.com but does defining an English word that shows up in the Bible maybe cause more confusion and frustration than it does clarity and understanding? Let's talk about the word "sin". What does it mean to you? What is your definition of "sin"? Here is dictionary.com's definition:

**Sin (noun): transgression of divine law: any act regarded as such a transgression, especially a willful or deliberate violation of some religious or moral principle.**

That's pretty straight forward but does that definition do justice to the Biblical word hamarteeaa? Not really. I mean, sin is transgression of God's law but it's so much more than just rule breaking. The word for sin is all wrapped up in the legal concept of rule breaking but it's also wrapped up with the medical concept of sickness and the psychological concept of psychosis. Does that makes things clearer? Maybe not. So let's talk about what the word means in ancient Greek. The word for "sin" in Greek wasn't a religious word at all- it was used in archery competitions whenever someone missed the target they were aiming at. If they missed the target they were said to have "sinned" or missed-the-mark. Now that should give you a visual to hold on to when the preachers start yelling about sin.

When we "sin" we aren't just breaking a rule- we're missing the target that we should (emphasis on the word "should") be aiming for. In the Olympics if an archer missed-the-mark they were disqualified from the rest of the competition (there's some evidence that archers who missed-the-mark in the earliest forms of the Olympic Games were disqualified from life itself if you get my drift). "Sinning" in the Olympics meant you were out. So when the Biblical writers take the word "sin" and apply it to a person's walk with God people got a vivid picture in their minds:

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 (NLT)*

What hope is there if missing-the-mark in my own life means that I'm "disqualified" like the Olympic archery contestants? What hope is there for me? Well, Paul almost never mentions "sin" without mentioning grace, mercy and salvation. More Bible words that we can navigate over to dictionary.com to define if we are so inclined. But will that do us more harm than good?

I chose to use the word "sin" to discuss how difficult it is for Biblical concepts to be understood by those of us who don't speak and think in the original language because it's one of the easier concepts to try to explain. Imagine trying to explain rush-hour to someone from deepest darkest Paupua New Guinea (where modern culture hasn't yet penetrated). Or Netflix Binging (I started to write something about "chilling" but was warned by the hip teens never to talk about that word in conjunction with the word Netflix unless I want a bunch of snickering in the audience).



There are some Bible words/concepts that take much more than a single reflection to try to truly wrap our brains around them. For instance, if you want to understand the Bible word for "faith" you ultimately have to immerse yourself in the life of Abraham. Word studies are great but the Bible does SO much more than just define words- the Bible uses these words and then dedicates itself to defining them with stories. Whenever a New Testament writer or speaker tries to come up with an example of what a life-of-faith looks like they never talk about Moses or Joshua or David or Ruth or Esther- they ALWAYS point back to Abraham.

And if you want to understand the Biblical concept of salvation you can't just do a word study- you have to immerse yourself in the story of Moses and the book of Exodus. And that's exactly what we'll be doing for the next few months. Immersing ourselves in the Moses' story. When we're done I guarantee you will have a firmer grasp on what Biblical "salvation" is and what it is not. So maybe for today we can spend a few minutes thinking about how often we miss-the-mark in our own lives and how thankful we all should be for God's grace, mercy and salvation.

**Wednesday Reflection:** So let's start off today trying to "define" Biblical salvation by looking at what it is not- Biblical salvation is NOT freedom.

At least not in the way we as Americans think of freedom. What do you think of when you think of the word "freedom"? Most of us think of it as meaning nobody-can-tell-me-what-to-do. Nobody is the boss of me. I'm free to do whatever I want. And that is political and social freedom (kind of) but it's NOT Biblical freedom. So what is Biblical freedom?

*It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Galatians 5:1 (NIV)*

That verse always confused me. It's for freedom I've been set free? Well, duh! What else would freedom be for? Well it's not a license to do-whatever-I-want. That kind of "freedom" generally leads us back into slavery. If you've ever watched the movie The Prince Of Egypt then you might have a better understanding of this than the rest of us because throughout that movie we're reminded that salvation is never only about freedom "from" something. It is partially about freedom "from" something but it's always paired with freedom "for" something else. In other words freedom isn't about not serving anyone other than yourself- it's about serving the right "someone". In the opening pages of Exodus Moses says this about the Israelites slavery:

*So the Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. They made their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their demands. Exodus 1:13-14 (NLT)*

In those two short verses Moses uses one particular word 5 different times. Did you see it when you read that verse? If not go back and read it again. Go ahead- I'll wait. Ok, no did you notice the same word used 5 different times? No, it wasn't the word "the"- that word only appears 3 times. We could spend all day playing this game (but you wouldn't because you'd get bored and move on to some other more interesting stuff on the internet) so I'll just tell you what the word used 5 times in that passage of scripture was- it was the word "serve". Huh? Don't see the word "serve" anywhere in that passage? It's there in the original Hebrew but it doesn't make its way into the English translation. Why not? Because it wouldn't make much sense. I've provided here my own literal translation of Exodus 1:13-14- we'll call it the Revised Ed Version:

So the Egyptians forced the Israelites to serve them. They made their lives better with serving in brick and mortar and with every kind of serving, with every kind of serving, they made them serve. Exodus 1:13-14 (REV)

Ok now we see it. What's the deal with all those "serves"? And why didn't the English translators translate that verse exactly the way Moses wrote it? Well, English translations of the Bible are mainly about making the scriptures accessible to all of us. It's a beautiful thought and I'm so grateful that they exist. But (and as a friend of mine likes to say this is a VERY big "but") would you read for long if the whole Bible was a literal rendering of the text as my Revised Ed Version does with verses 13 and 14?

No. You wouldn't. And neither would I. The translators have to do some fancy footwork to make the ancient text flow in a way English readers will put up with. But it does mess with subtle meanings that we'd miss if we hadn't done a deep dive into the literal words Moses used. So what was Moses trying to get across with using this one word (abodah is the Hebrew word for serve or worship and there's another issue with understanding the Bible- one Bible word like "abodah" can have multiple English words that translators use when translating the scriptures)? Well you have to keep going in Exodus to really understand what Moses is trying to do. So let's go just a bit further with him, ok?

Later when God sends Moses to Pharaoh do you remember what Moses says to him? You do if you watched the Prince Of Egypt or the old Charlton Heston movie, The 10 Commandments. What does Moses keep saying to Pharaoh? Let's say it together- LET MY PEOPLE GO!

But that's only part of what Moses says to Pharaoh. Here's the rest of the story:

*The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me in the wilderness." Exodus 7:16 (NASB)*

What God actually says to Pharaoh (through Moses) over and over is, "let my people go that they may serve **ME**". Turns out that it's God's belief that if you're serving anything or anyone other than Him then you are a slave. You can never be free just but being allowed to do whatever you want with nobody to tell you what you can or can't do. Like Bob Dylan said so many years ago, "you're gonna serve somebody". All of us. Every. Single. One. Of. Us.

In the song Deliver Us from the movie Prince Of Egypt there is a recurring plea to "deliver us" but there's one moment in the middle of the song where the Israelites sing, "deliver us, FROM this slavery... and... deliver us TO the Promised Land." You can't just be delivered FROM slavery- you have to be delivered for or to something else or you will just fall back again into the slavery you were saved from. Addicts understand this better than most. If all you get is salvation FROM your addiction but you are never saved FOR or TO something else that will fill that empty void that addiction left behind you will fall back into your addiction over and over again.

That's why the first half of the book of Exodus is constant action and special effects. Moses is a super hero in the first half of the book. Then the people of Israel are saved from their slavery and they leave Egypt and the second half of Exodus slows WAY down and it's all about the design of the tabernacle and the garments the priests of God will wear and how to make sure you're ceremonially purified. It's kind of boring and when you read that part you'll think to yourself, "when they make a movie out of Exodus they'll leave the second half out". Why?

Because it seems so boring. But it's making a point. The point is that the first part of Exodus is all about salvation FROM slavery but the second half of Exodus is about what they were being saved FOR- they were being saved for worship. In other words, if you're not serving/worshiping God then you're either serving/worshiping something else or you're in danger of falling back into the slavery you were saved from.

So. Who or what are you serving?

**Thursday Reflection:** The second thing we learn about salvation in Exodus chapters 1-2 is that it's usually clandestine- God is at work but He is often working behind the scenes. It's interesting to me that the first two chapters of Exodus cover about 400 years of history but God is only mentioned twice. It's almost like He's not on the job. Like He doesn't care. But one thing we learned from the last 12 chapters of Genesis is, even if God doesn't seem to be doing anything on your behalf it doesn't mean He's absent or doesn't care. In fact Genesis gives us the assurance that it is often when God seems to be the most absent that He is often working the hardest.

In the first 38 chapters of Genesis God is everywhere. He is walking with Adam & Eve in the cool of the evening in Eden. He is in close contact with all the patriarchs including Noah, Abraham, Isaac & Jacob. All of these men had personal encounters with Yahweh. But when we get to Joseph's story God seems to be on vacation. Yes Joseph has dreams (that he can't interpret) and has been given the ability to interpret other people's dreams (how frustrating must that have been, am I right? You can interpret other people's dreams and help them but your dreams will remain a mystery to you) but as far as we know from the text Joseph never meets Yahweh face to face like his father, grandfather and great grandfather.

When Joseph is thrown in a pit by his brothers Joseph cries out for God. He never hears a word from Heaven and he is sold into slavery and taken to Egypt. I guarantee you he continued to cry out to God the entire way and maybe it seems like God has heard his prayers when Potiphar buys him and things start to go so well for him. But then he is falsely accused of attempted rape by Mrs. Potiphar and ends up in prison. For years. And years. Every time things start to look up Joseph has another door slammed shut in his face. Until one day he's brought before Pharaoh and finally Joseph's life turns around. And at the very end of his story Joseph would say this:

But Joseph replied, "Don't be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. No, don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children." So he reassured them by speaking kindly to them. Genesis 50:19-21 (NLT)

Moses points out that while God seemed to be absent, it turned out that He was hard at work the whole time. He just worked differently with Joseph than he did with his ancestors. Why? I have no idea. Maybe so that when we have the same experience as Joseph and God seems to be absent during our toughest times we can find some hope and comfort in his story. Whatever God's reasons Moses is brilliant in the way he finishes Genesis with this idea and begins Exodus with the very same concept. The Israelites can't sense God's presence in Exodus chapters 1-2 but we the readers know that that doesn't mean He's not at work.

As the curtain rises on the book of Exodus the people of God have been enslaved and that's bad but things quickly get worse as Pharaoh (remember this is the Pharaoh who didn't know Joseph) decides to institute a policy of ethnic genocide by quietly enlisting the midwives in his evil plan:

When you help the Hebrew women as they give birth, watch as they deliver. If the baby is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live. Exodus 1:16 (NLT)

Can you imagine that those words ever came out of a human being's mouth? What is wrong with us (humans I mean. I know most of you would never dream of something as monstrous as that but we're all messed up and if we forget that by saying "well at least I'm not as bad as that Pharaoh guy that didn't know Joseph" then we're in danger of missing the opportunities God gives us to grow by seeing our own flaws and taking steps to improve ourselves but this is a bit of a rabbit trail so back to our story)? But that was Pharaoh's plan. Like I said, things are going from bad to worse. But then the midwives defy Pharaoh which only leads to him going public:

Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls live." Exodus 1:22 (NLT)

And the people of Egypt joined in with their Pharaoh attempting to extinguish the Jewish race from the face of the earth. Now it isn't just Pharaoh and a couple of midwives quietly embarking on a policy of ethnic genocide- it's an entire nation. Infant boys are being ripped from their mothers arms and tossed into the Nile river where they are eaten by crocodiles or drown. It's a horrific image and it's an image we need to keep before us as we continue with the book of Exodus because when we get to the plagues and see how harsh Yahweh is with Pharaoh and all of the Egyptians we might start to wonder how He could be so mean? When that happens don't forget the cries of the Israelites as their baby boys are systematically euthanized because God doesn't forget. Why do you think the first plague was turning the Nile to blood? I think God was just showing Pharaoh what he had already done by tossing all those babies into that river.

Then there's a shining moment of hope when Moses is born and he (and his mother Jochabed) find salvation in a basket made of reeds sent down the Nile to be found by Pharaoh's daughter. Moses is raised in Pharaoh's house and would have been trained to be a Pharaoh. He would have learned economics, administration, justice, law, diplomacy and of course, war. With the birth of Moses we have hope that the one person who is uniquely qualified to lead Israel out of slavery is in place. And then he is banished from the kingdom for killing an Egyptian guard:

Pharaoh heard what had happened, and he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian. Exodus 2:15 (NLT)

And the reader who understands what the Israelites must have been feeling has got to be saying, "are you freaking kidding me??? When will God act?!?!?!" Well, He has been. God has been at work. I am starting to wonder if Moses had to go to Midian in order for God's plan to work or if that was "plan b" that God put into effect after Moses stupidly and arrogantly killed an Egyptian guard. Turned out Moses did need Midian in order to become a person God could use. Why? Because as it turned out Moses was missing the most important quality a leader in God's kingdom needs in order to successfully lead- humility. That was the one trait Moses would never have learned in Egypt because they didn't value it. Really the world doesn't think much of humility but it's a non-negotiable for God. You don't have humility? Then you're not a leader in God's kingdom.

So where does that leave you and me as we wait for God to intervene in our own personal Exodus? Maybe you (like me) have cried out, "how long, O Lord?!?!!" and wondered where He

is and why He isn't at work? Then Moses would tell both of us to hang on because God is at work. Is there anything we can do to hurry Him? Not really:

*These things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed. Habakuk 2:3 (NLT)*

God will not be hurried. But when the time comes He will not be slowed down either. I know in the past I've accused God of being slow. I also know that when the time finally came and God did unleash His plan for my future I may or may not have begged Him to "slow down" because I realized I wasn't as ready as I thought I was and He was moving too fast! There is A LOT I can't tell you because I just don't know but as I type this reflection tonight it does occur to me that maybe Exodus chapters 1-2 do give us some advice about being ready when God's timing is finally ready- it occurs to me the only thing we can do while we're waiting is to work on our humility so that when the time does come we don't mess God's plan up and add another 40 years to His plan (like Moses did).

**Friday Reflection:** So today we'll look at the third observation on salvation that we looked at last weekend at Riverside- that's God's salvation is almost always shocking in the way that He brings salvation and the person He brings salvation through. Look throughout the Bible and you'll see God constantly using the least likely of people to work through and bringing His salvation to His people in the most unlikely of ways. In the one instance where He used the absolute most likely person to bring His salvation (Jesus) the way He achieves that salvation is perhaps the most shocking example of this tendency that we will ever hear about- the cross.

His salvation is always shocking and that is exactly the case in Exodus chapters 1-2. First of all the people He works through in the first two chapters of Exodus are shocking:

*But because the midwives feared God, they refused to obey the king's orders. They allowed the boys to live, too. So the king of Egypt called for the midwives. "Why have you done this?" he demanded. "Why have you allowed the boys to live?" "The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women," the midwives replied. "They are more vigorous and have their babies so quickly that we cannot get there in time." So God was good to the midwives... and because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. Exodus 1:17-21 (NLT)*

Women were second class citizens in the ancient world. Nobody cared much about them. But within the ranks of women, midwives were on the lower end of the pecking order. They usually didn't have families of their own (which is why they became midwives) and were looked down upon by other women because of it. But here is God using two midwives to bring His salvation to Israel. We even know their names from earlier in the chapter- Shiphrah and Puah.

WE KNOW THEIR NAMES.

That's crazy whether you know it or not. Nobody would have cared to know their names but God makes sure they will be remembered thousands of years later and he you are reading about them and remembering them right now. Crazy, huh? I wonder if Moses remembers them fondly because one of them was present at his birth and didn't do what Pharaoh asked them to do? How could they know that just by doing what they considered to be right that they would be a



part of God changing the entire course of human history? Shocking isn't it? Then we've got Moses' mom- a woman named Jochebed:

*She saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of papyrus reeds and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile River. The baby's sister then stood at a distance, watching to see what would happen to him. Exodus 2:2-3 (NLT)*

She sends Moses down the Nile in a basket praying that God will do something miraculous to allow her son to live. In what way was Moses a "special baby"? I have no idea- I imagine most moms would think their kids were "special" but whatever it was God uses this woman to be a part of bringing His salvation to Israel and ultimately the world. Moses' sister Miriam also plays a role as well as the daughter of Pharaoh. It's fascinating to me that in Exodus 1-2 we are introduced to 7 people. Two of them are men (who you would expect God to work through) and 5 are women (the least likely of heroes) and yet it's the women who are heroes and the men- well not so much.

Pharaoh is the villain obviously but even Moses is nothing more than an unlikely hero whose temper and foolishness may have doomed the Israelites to 40 more years of slavery than they would have had to endure if Moses had been willing to let God direct his steps rather than just reacting. This story begins shockingly and it never slows down. God works through the most unlikely of people in the most unlikely of ways to bring His salvation to the Israelites. He still works the same way today. The Apostle Paul had some kind of weakness that theologians have been arguing about for 2,000 years:

*That experience is worth boasting about, but I'm not going to do it. I will boast only about my weaknesses. If I wanted to boast, I would be no fool in doing so, because I would be telling the truth. But I won't do it, because I don't want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life or hear in my message, even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. 2 Corinthians 12:5-7 (NLT)*

What was this "thorn in the flesh" that Paul talks about? Great question. Like I said theologians have been arguing over it for almost 2,000 years. Some think it was a physical ailment like a debilitating and progressive form of sight loss or a club foot. Others think maybe it was people who made his life hard (I can sense some of you right now identifying with Paul and thinking about all the human thorns-in-the-flesh in your own life and wondering if it would be ok if you, like Paul, prayed that God take them away from you?). And still others believe maybe Paul's thorn-in-the-flesh was his own pride. If you read 2 Corinthians 12 and Philippians 3 you'll see Paul struggling with this paradox- I have SO much to boast about but I'm not supposed to but if I did (boast that is) I would have SO much to boast about and you'd all be mighty impressed. Philippians 3 is one of my favorites:

*We put no confidence in human effort, though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more! I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin-a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of*

the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault. I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. Philippians 3:4-11 (NLT)

Can you feel Paul's struggle? And at the end of it he says all of his accomplishments are "garbage" compared with the infinite value of knowing Jesus as Lord. But it's still not easy to remind ourselves that God's salvation is almost always shocking and comes through our weaknesses rather than through our strengths:

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me... For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 (NIV)

When I am weak, then I am strong. Why? Because when we work from a position of our own strength not much terribly miraculous happens. Sure things might get done but God's power flows mainly through our weaknesses and that's when the truly miraculous stuff happens. Paul learned it. So did Moses. How about me & you? Have we learned that yet?

**Saturday Reflection:** What? A bonus Saturday reflection?!?!? How did you get so lucky? Mostly because I had one more thing I REALLY wanted to share with you that just didn't fit anywhere else this week. What is it, you ask? Alright I'll tell you since you asked so nicely and everything. Today we're going to ask- how does this story in Exodus 1-2 point to the New Testament (we are still in this Finding-Jesus-In-The-Old-Testament series after all)?

So how does this story point to the New Testament? Ok let's talk about it for a minute. In Exodus chapters 1-2 we read about a brutal king who decides to kill all the male babies. But because of his mom and dad the baby is saved. When he returns to bring God's salvation he is rejected by his people and goes out into the wilderness only to return when the time is right bringing God's miraculous salvation with him.

Sound familiar? Yeah, yeah, maybe that sounds a bit like the Christmas story with Jesus and King Herod wanting to kill all the male babies in Bethlehem and because of Mary & Joseph He is saved but when He returns His own people reject Him but after a time in the wilderness He returns and brings with Him God's salvation.

Come on Pastor Ed (you might be thinking to yourself)- that's a bit of a stretch, isn't it?

I don't think so.

When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration knowing that the time had come for Him to go to Jerusalem for the last time and that He would stay there until the Jews got so mad that they'd kill Him a couple of visitors arrived for what I think is pep rally to encourage Him as He started that final journey wherein the most likely of people would bring about God's salvation in the most unlikely of ways (the cross). Let's look what Luke writes about that encounter:

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Luke 9:28-31 (NIV)

So what? How does that connect Jesus' birth story with Moses? Well, do you see that little word that Luke uses in the last sentence there? The word "departure"? Moses and Elijah show up to talk about Jesus' "departure". Guess what the Greek word that Luke uses there is? No guess? Ok, I'll tell you- it was literally the word "Exodus". Moses shows up and discusses Jesus' "exodus" which he was about to bring to fulfillment.

Still think it's a stretch connecting Jesus' story with Moses'? What was Moses' "exodus"? It was a literal exodus (or exit) that brought literal freedom to the people of Israel who were literally enslaved by the Egyptians. What is Jesus' "exodus" going to be? A rescue promised from Genesis chapter 3 wherein Jesus delivers all of mankind from the eternal enemies of hell and death freeing us to live the lives God dreamed of us living when He created us. Moses' "exodus" was a courageous story where he risked his life to bring God's salvation. Jesus' "exodus" is the most courageous story ever told that would cost Him His life in order to bring God's salvation to all mankind. It's one thing to risk your life knowing you might die but maybe not. It's another to go willingly to your own death knowing that God's salvation would cost you your life.

He did all of that for you and for me. I hope that helps you understand how much He cares about you. His salvation ALWAYS comes in shocking ways. It did then. It still does today. So let Jesus work in your life through your weaknesses so that together you and He can continue bringing God's salvation to the people of this world who still need it so desperately.

Jesus is AWESOME!

Have a great weekend everybody.