

Journey to Freedom

PART 2 - A SENSE OF DIRECTION



Welcome to Part 2 of our "Journey to Freedom" series in which we will be delving into the book of Exodus in the Bible and journeying together through the accounts of Moses and the Israelites as God takes them from a place of restriction and immobilisation to one of freedom and fulfilment.

This week we're going to get our first glimpse of this amazing journey; it's quite remarkable what we can glean from the purpose of a book simply by looking at the mood it begins with.



Read: Exodus 1:1-22 (Keep your Bible open here - we'll refer to this throughout)



***Looking only at the passage above; what do you think the 'mood' of Exodus is?
What do the opening lines speak to you about the author's intention for this book?
Do you think the overall feeling is positive or negative? Why?
Do you think the overall feeling is looking to the past or the future or both? Why?***

Exodus begins with the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham that he would have many descendents but within a few lines quickly moves to reveal that the fulfilment of God's promises to us do not always mean an end to trouble. In fact, here we will see that moving on and into the things God has for us can actually be the catalyst for opposition to rise up against us. Thankfully, again within a few lines, Exodus reveals that when we remain faithful God will protect us and the end result often leads to an even greater experience of or fulfilment of God's promise and blessing.

For the purposes of this *Journey to Freedom* series; we're going to break this passage into a series of short 'day-trips'. The Bible can be approached from several different angles depending on the context of the scripture we're looking at. Obviously, all of it can be taken at face-value and much treasure can be found even with a casual read; however, we can also learn much about the way God works and the way in which we are to interact with Him by looking for patterns in the accounts recorded. This week we're looking for a pattern...

PART OF THE PROMISE (EXODUS 1:1-7)

The first section that we're going to look at this morning. It's our first point where we see Part of the Promise fulfilled. Our first point is that Exodus begins with the evidence of the fulfilment of God's promise to the Israelite's ancestor, Abraham. Keep your finger in Exodus and turn back a few pages to Genesis...



Read: Genesis 15:1-7; Genesis 22:17-18; Exodus 1:6-7

It was roughly 600 years from the time of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis to the time of the opening lines of Exodus, this includes 430 years living in Egypt - around 200 of these as slaves.



***What pattern can we see here in regards to the timing of God?
What can we understand about the perspective of the author of Exodus, beginning the book with the fulfilment of a 600 year old promise?
It can be tempting as Christians to see our relationship with God as a one-on-one deal. Does the ongoing and progressive nature of God's purposes require us to re-think this? How/why?***

What we can also take from this is the consciousness of God's ongoing and continuing thread of relationship with His people throughout history. Exodus was not written as a diary but was written by Moses after the events had taken place. In Moses' mind is the ongoing dialogue which God has continued with His people throughout time.

It can be tempting to view our lives and our relationship with God and our experiences with Him as an individual thing; but even though God does interact with us personally and uniquely – what He desires for us and to achieve through us is part of what He's doing in the lives of everyone who ever has, is, and ever will seek to follow Him.

PRESSURE OF THE PROMISE (EXODUS 1:8-14)



Read: Exodus 1:8-14



What happened to the lives of the Israelites and why?

Does this seem to put a bit of a dent in the fulfilment of God's promise to them?

There are two things we can understand from this stage of our journey:



- (i) The fulfilment of God's promises to us doesn't mean an end to our troubles
- (ii) At times we will discover that the fulfilment of God's plans, purposes and promises to us are a catalyst for pressure against us.

We may often be holding onto the promises of God and it would be easy to think that when God fulfils these in our lives everything will be wonderful, and it is, however – the fulfilment of God's plans, purposes and promises in our lives does not mean the pressures of life will disappear. Indeed, if we look at this passage in Exodus we can see that it was actually because of the fulfilment of God's promise that the Israelites faced pressure. It wasn't until the Israelites began multiplying and flourishing as God had promised that the Pharaoh began to turn against them.

PERSEVERANCE FOR THE PROMISE (EXODUS 1:15-19)

There are actually degrees of Pressure that we may encounter. Initially the Israelites merely faced discomfort and restriction. But the Pressure increased:



Read: Exodus 1:15-19



What changed about the level of pressure?

How did the midwives respond to the increase in danger? What was their reason for doing so?

There will always be challenges to meet, obstacles to overcome, doors to kick down and walls to climb – but do so we must. Perseverance for the plans, purposes and promises of God is essential if we want to experience these things, not just in part, but in every increasing measure.

PERFECTION OF THE PROMISE (EXODUS 1:20-22)

What we see here in Exodus is the result of Perseverance.



Read: Exodus 1:20-22



Do you think it would have been easy for the midwives to stand up against Pharaoh's orders?

How did God respond to the midwives' faith and honour of Him?

We can be sure that standing up against Pharaoh's order was not an easy thing for the midwives to do, but their faith and conviction in God was enough to persuade them to do so.

Standing firm against the Pressures of the Promise is not an easy thing for anyone to do, but what we see here is that doing so releases an even greater fulfilment of the plans, purposes and promises of God.

God's kindness ensured the protection of the midwives and as a result we see not simply that these babies were spared in this case, but that the Israelites "became even more numerous".

God's promise would not be completely fulfilled for another 80 years, more if we include the time it took to settle in the Promised Land, but what we see is a clear pattern of progressive fulfilment. We see God's promises being fulfilled in ever increasing measure.