

Genesis /  
Exodus  
Week 1

Exodus 6:2-8

Revealed to Abraham,  
Isaac and Jacob

**EL-SHADDAI**  
(GOD ALMIGHTY)

≡ TRANSCENDENT  
other than us

creator  
created

Revealed to Moses  
at the time of  
REDEMPTION

*Yaweh*  
"I am. I will be present.  
Eternal giver of life."

≡ IMMANENT  
within and among us



And they will call His name "Immanuel"; that is,  
GOD WITH US.

**Monday:** Genesis 43-47

**Tuesday:** Genesis 48-Exodus 1

**Wednesday:** Exodus 2-5

**Thursday:** Exodus 6-10

**Friday:** Exodus 11-14

## Introduction

As the last words of Genesis fade out and the opening of Exodus fades in, we quickly realize that we are no longer in the same Egypt that Joseph ruled. 400 years have passed and the children of Israel have changed in two significant ways. First, they have multiplied immensely. When they came to the country they were a small clan of 70 people. Now they were a vast nation of so many people that the Pharaoh had to take notice of them as a potential threat to Egyptian national security. This leads to the second major change. The people had become overpowered and enslaved by the Egyptians.

It is important to grasp the climate of the Israelites at the opening of this story. It had been over 400 years since their ancient ancestor Abraham had claimed that God made a promise to him. God had promised that He would make Abraham's descendents into a great nation and that all nations would be blessed through them. Yeah, right. Here they were, slopping around in the mud of the Nile river, making bricks for a pagan king. Everywhere they looked they saw the idols of the gods of Egypt. The Egyptians did not know Abraham's god. They didn't even care. And yet, those pagans were living in the lap of luxury. They were at the apex of human civilization while the "chosen people" were little more than cattle. The

Israelites must have been skeptical at best that the God of Abraham even existed. They were enslaved, disillusioned, and without any hope of ever being more than what they were.

The process of the next fourteen hundred years of Israeli history is the process of watching God slowly, lovingly, sometimes forcefully, demonstrating His nature and His desire for His people. It often takes a long time for people to unlearn bad theology before they are ready to learn the truth about God. As 21st century Christians it is easy for us to sit in judgment on the Israelites and mock them for their whining and narrow-minded attitude. But, we must remember that, as a nation, they were merely infants. They were thrust out of the womb and spent the next 40 years learning how to crawl.

Moses' job was to lead this infantile nation through a journey of discovery and discipline. They were discovering who God was through His direct revelation to Moses. They were discovering how to be a civil nation through the very detailed list of laws given to Moses. And, as any loving father would do, God took the nation through a narrow funnel of tight discipline and swift judgment in order to burn into their collective consciousness a framework for the concepts of right and wrong.

Exodus has two parts.

ch. 1-19 The story of Moses leading the people out of Egypt and to Mt. Sinai where God gave the Law to Moses.

ch. 20-40 This half of the book is the Law itself, specifically looking the Tabernacle.

This week we will be looking at the stories of part one and discovering how similar we are to the Israelites.

Next week we will begin looking at the Law and what, if anything, it has to do with our lives as Christians today.

# Monday: A Big Perspective

Genesis 45:1-15

What had Joseph's brothers done to him when he was young?(ch. 37)

What feelings would you have had toward your brothers if you were Joseph?

What emotions must Joseph have been experiencing when he revealed his identity to his brothers?

What emotions must his brothers have been experiencing when they realized that Joseph was the brother they had sold into slavery so many years before?

How did Joseph interpret the events of his life? (vv. 5-8)

What was the mood of the room once the big revelation was made? (vv. 14-15)

Read Genesis 50:15-21 and summarize it in your own words.

Are there any relationships in which you have been hurt or people toward whom you hold deep resentment? If so, how has the story of Joseph challenged you to rethink your attitude?

## Food for thought:

As human beings we like to get even. We flock to movie theatres to watch the good guy sock it to the bad guy in the end of the movie. We love vengeance! Of course we do. It only makes sense. If someone hurts us the only fair thing to do is to hurt them back to the measure that we have been hurt. Then everything will be even. At a gut level, this makes sense.

There is a problem with that kind of thinking, though. If a person cuts off your arm, and then you cut off his arm out of vengeance, has justice really been served? Has the problem really been fixed? Not really. All you have is two people missing an arm.

A deep truth of the Kingdom of God is that repaying evil with evil is stupid. All you are doing is spreading evil. The story of Joseph is the first of a series of stories -- ultimately culminating in Jesus Himself - - that demonstrate the truth of God's Kingdom. The only thing that will overcome evil is the love of God. Notice that I didn't burst into a rousing chorus of "all we need is love." The love culture of the 60's was a distortion of truth because the 60's kind of love was a human, self-gratifying love. The love of God is a selfless, other-oriented kind of love. It is love that has an eternal, God-lens perspective.

Here's what it looks like at a very practical level. Perhaps you have heard this phrase: "hurting people hurt people." Why did Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery? They were jealous. Why were they jealous? Because their father, Jacob, played favorites among his children, and he played favorites among his wives. Why did Jacob play favorites? Jacob spent

most of his life lying and cheating and wrestling with God. What we have here is a classic dysfunctional family system. These boys were hurting units.

Does that excuse their behavior? Not at all. Does it explain their behavior? Quite a bit.

Joseph, by the grace of God, was able to rise above the physical pain and the physical perspective of his situation. He was able to allow himself to see life through spiritual eyes. When Joseph saw his brothers, he didn't see his own pain that they had inflicted on him, he saw their pain and took pity on them. He also saw the hand of God moving in the middle of the whole mess bringing about a greater good that no one could have ever imagined.

All of us have been hurt by someone at some point in our lives. You, also, have hurt someone at some point in your life. One of the first steps towards experiencing the joy and freedom of God's Kingdom is to throw away the score cards and stop seeking vengeance and payback for our pain. Give that one to God. If someone truly deserves to be punished, let God handle it. If you can find the love of God for the person who hurt you, and then let God's love pour out on that person, do you know what will happen? Instead of two people standing there missing an arm, you will find two people who have been healed by the mysterious grace of God!

## Tuesday: To Obey or Not Obey?

Exodus 1

What changed in the story and the political climate in Egypt between the end of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus?

What was the situation of the Israelites in this chapter?

What did the Pharaoh order the Israelites to do? Why?

What did the midwives do? Why?

What was God's reaction to their actions? Why?

Has this story raised any ethical questions in your mind?

## Food for thought:

A friend of mine recently returned from a short term missions trip to a communist country. It was almost surreal to hear her description of the state of affairs for the Christians in that place. As in most communist countries, it is strictly forbidden for an individual to mention the name of God or Jesus or to hold religious meetings outside of the state-sanctioned church. To do so meant certain imprisonment. Yet, the state-sanctioned church does not preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and is under the authority and control of an atheistic system.

This oppressive communist system places the follower of Jesus in a precarious situation. To meet or not to meet, that is the question. To meet would be to break the law. To not meet would mean to deny one of the fundamental purposes and sources of life for the church. Yet, to meet would be breaking the law and violating the New Testament's encouragement to obey the human government under whose authority God has placed you. (1 Peter 2:13-17) What should a Christian do?

Shiphrah and Puah have some answers for us. These midwives were faced with the same dilemma. Should they obey the Pharaoh, or should they disobey the Pharaoh? Sometimes the right thing to do is to disobey. When the human political system is upholding a value that contradicts the value system of the Kingdom of Heaven then it is time for the child of God to break the law.

This scenario may seem a distant abstraction to those of us who are fat and complacent in our religious freedom, but it is not as far away as we may think.

In the not too distant past a young, courageous black woman named Rosa Parks defied the laws of her state and refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white person. Her disobedience led to a wave of civil disobedience led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Sometimes unjust systems require radical acts in order to be reformed.

This scenario may not be too far off in the future either. The United States was founded on religious freedom, yet, as the polar extremes of radical, fundamentalist religious factions increasingly entrench themselves and lob verbal and literal bombs at one another, the skeptical world looks on in disdain. It is very possible that the non-religious world, out of fear and self-protection, and in an attempt to gain peace, may target religion itself as the enemy of peace and make it very difficult for anyone who claims to speak for or about God to continue in this freedom. Even those who understand the danger of the extremists and proclaim the peace of Jesus will be lumped into the “religious threat” and targeted as an enemy of the state.

What then? If such a time ever came about in America, the church could find itself in a similar situation as that of the church in communist Asia. What would you do? Would you be willing to give up your job in order to obey Jesus? Would you be willing to be imprisoned, tortured, or even killed in order to not violate the principles of the Kingdom of God? I am not trying to be an alarmist. However, these questions are everyday realities for many Christians in other countries this very day. It could happen in our lifetime. If it does, will we be ready to obey God, no matter the cost?

As Christians we must remember that human political systems are not our home. We are not Americans, or Russians, or Chinese. We are not black, or white, or Asian. We are followers of Jesus. We are a universal church that is united under the leadership of Jesus Christ, the King of all Kings, and we are citizens of the eternal Kingdom of God.

## Wednesday: What's in a Name?

Exodus 5:22-6:8

What was Moses' mood in the beginning of this passage? Why?

In what way, and under what name, did God appear to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

In what way, and under what name, did God appear to Moses?

What does God promise to do...

in v. 6...

in v. 7...

in v. 8...

In what ways does God seem different in the way He revealed Himself to Moses from the way He revealed Himself to Abraham? Why do you suppose this is?

## Food for thought:

In order to grasp the depth of this passage it is important to define some terms. To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God revealed Himself as *El-Shaddai*. Read this definition of that Hebrew word. I am printing the actual Strong's Enhanced Dictionary listing so that we do not run the risk of reading too much into the meaning of the word.

7703 [*shadad /shaw ·dad/*] 58 occurrences; AV translates as "spoil" 30 times, "spoiler" 11 times, "waste" eight times, "destroy" twice, "robbers" twice, and translated miscellaneous five times. 1 to deal violently with, despoil, devastate, ruin, destroy, spoil. 1a1 to violently destroy, devastate, despoil, assail. 1a2 devastator, despoiler 1b to be utterly ruined. 1c 1c1 to assault. 1c2 to devastate. 1d to be devastated. 1e to violently destroy. 1f to be devastated.<sup>1</sup>

7706 [*Shadday /shad ·dah ·ee/*] 48 occurrences; AV translates as "Almighty" 48 times. 1 almighty, most powerful. 1a *Shaddai*, the Almighty (of God).<sup>2</sup>

*El* means God. When you put *El* in front of *Shaddai*, you get the name of God; *El-Shaddai*. In other words, God presented himself to Abraham as "God, the mighty, powerful destroyer." Take a few minutes and meditate on that definition. How do you feel about God in light of His name, *El-Shaddai*?

Now look at the definition for the word LORD.

*I*. is given Ex 3:12–15 as the name of the God who revealed Himself to Moses at Horeb, and is explained thus: I shall be with thee (v 12), which is then implied in I shall be the one who will be it v 14a (i.e. with thee v 12) and then compressed into v 14b (i.e. with thee v 12), which then is given in the nominal form He who will be it v 15 (i.e. with thee v 12). Other interpretations are: I am he who I am, i.e. it is no concern of yours; I am, (this is my name), inasmuch as I am; I am who I am, he who is essentially unnameable, inexplicable.<sup>3</sup>

Yahweh (translated LORD in the NIV) means, *the God who is and the God who will be with you*. Another way to say it is “the God who is present.”

This was a radical concept to the ancient mind. In the ancient world the concept of God was that of a fierce being who lived on top of a mountain somewhere and was in charge of making the crops grow and would hurl thunder bolts at mortals that displeased him. God was “up there” and “out there.”

At this point we must stop and discuss a fundamental point about the nature of God. God always meets us where we are and then takes us to the place we need to be, in the right timing. I believe that God presented Himself to Abraham as *El-Shaddai* because that was the default understanding of God that Abraham was raised with back in Ur. In order for Abraham to recognize God as God, God had to use a name that Abraham could grasp. Then God took Abraham one step further into truth; God -- the “destroyer” -- made a loving promise to bless Abraham’s descendents. That was a radical shift in man’s idea of God. All the other gods of the world couldn’t care less about mortals. The Baals, as they were called, were wrapped up in their own agenda of fornicating with the goddesses and fighting with the underworld. Humans were insignificant “accidents” that were nothing more than pawns in the cosmos. Now, with Abraham, *El-Shaddai* broke the mold and gave value to the mortal. And yet, he was still “out there” and something to be feared.

In Moses’ encounter we see a new step towards a deeper understanding and a further revelation of the true nature of God. The God who is “out there” now

refers to Himself as *Yaweh*. In so doing He said to Moses, "Moses, I am not just out there or up on some high mountain. I am what I am. I am the giver and sustainer of life. I am present with you. Not only am I with you, I am for you. I am welcoming you to come into my presence and have a relationship with me. I will be your 'present God' and you will be my people." With this pronouncement the old theological paradigm was shattered. God told Moses that He was there for Him, walking with Him, guiding and protecting Him. God was now "in here".

Meditate on that definition of the 'present God' for a moment.

So, what's the point? All of us must pass through these levels of understanding that the people of Israel had to pass. Unfortunately, for various reasons, many of us are stuck in an *El-Shaddai* perspective of God. God is nothing but a big and powerful destroyer; a force to be feared; a perfection that can never be achieved. He is so far away that we cannot know Him, so He might as well not exist as far as my everyday life is concerned. The truly sad reality is that many of us learned this perception of God through "Christian" religious institutions.

One of the fundamental mile markers on the journey of Spiritual formation that we must pass is to join with Moses and meet the God who is present. *Yahweh* is the God who made you, who loves you, who wants your best, and who desires to guide and protect you like a loving Father and a caring Shepherd. Just say those words over in your mind..."God is with me"  
"God is for me, not against me."

As we study the entire Bible we will see that this “progressive revelation” of the God who is “out there” to the God who is “in here” will culminate in the person of Jesus. Jesus referred to Himself as “I AM” in other words, Jesus said that His name was *Yahweh*. In the person of Jesus Christ, the God who is “out there” (*El-Shaddai*) revealed Himself as *Immanuel*, God with us, *Yahweh*, the God who is “in here.”

Where are you today? Is God still “out there”, a cold and meaningless, somewhat scary notion? Or, is God “in here” through the person of Jesus Christ, giving meaning and purpose to your life?

Remember that God is with you today.

# Thursday: Clash of the Titans

Exodus 6:28-10:29

As you read through the story of the plagues, make a chart showing what each plague attacked. Also note who the plague was affecting.

Plague:

Who was affected?

## Food for thought:

From our perspective, the plagues of Egypt may seem like a horrific natural disaster. Or, more accurately, a horrific sequence of one natural disaster after another. The Nile River is polluted by the red sand of Ethiopia, which drives out the frogs, which causes and outbreak if insect infection, disease, and pestilence that affect the crops, the livestock, humans.

That is bad enough in itself. Now, just try to imagine how you would feel if each one of the waves of plagues that flooded over you represented one of your gods? The divine beings that you have spent your life worshipping are now turning on you and wreaking havoc among your people.

For the Egyptians, this wasn't just a natural disaster. This was a theological coup. This was a direct attack against the very fabric of the universe as they understood it.

The message was not just for the Egyptians. The Israelites, who had spent 400 years enslaved to the Egyptians and their gods, were watching. These Israelites had been told about the God Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but had never seen him in action. If Moses was going to lead these slaves into freedom, in the name of Yaweh, then they had to know that He was real, and, more importantly, that He was more powerful than the Gods of Egypt.

Even more importantly, He had to demonstrate to the Israelites that the Gods of Egypt weren't gods at all. They were man-made ideas based on created things. We call those idols.

Here's the main thought for today:

*God is bigger than anything that man can create.*

Most of human culture is based upon man's desire to build something in his own image and then worship it. The Egyptians did not worship the creator-God, they worshipped the creation (the river, the frogs, etc.) and gave a god-status to it. The one true, non-created, God will not stand for this. Ask yourself today, "What am I worshipping in my life other than the one true God?" Whatever it is, get rid of it before the river rises!

## Friday: Blood on the Doorposts

Exodus 12

What was going to happen after this meal was over?

What kind of lamb was to be used for this meal?

What was to be done with the blood of the lamb? (v. 7) Why? (v. 13)

How were the people supposed to view this meal in the coming generations? (v. 14-20)  
Why? (vv.26-27)

## Food for thought:

This story, called the Passover is one of the most foundational stories for both the Jewish and the Christian identity. While the story is real, meaning it literally happened, there is also deep symbolism and allegory that can apply directly to our lives.

The people of Israel were lost in the darkness of slavery. It is true that they were inheritors of the covenant that the God “out there” (refer to Wednesday’s devotional) made with Abraham, yet their experiential reality was that of being surrounded by the pagan gods of Egypt. They were cut off from their God, they were cut off from their land, they were cut off from their own identity, and they were bound by the chains of slavery. That is how we were at the beginning of our spiritual journeys. We were cut off from God, we were cut off from healthy relationships, and we were in bondage to our own desires, addictions, self-deception and self-destructive patterns.

Perhaps you are still in that dark place of slavery today. If you feel alone and cut off from truth and life, if you are not experiencing a healing and meaningful relationship with God and others, then perhaps today could be the day for your own “Exodus” to begin.

While God’s people were wallowing in slavery, He had not forgotten them. He called to a man named Moses and revealed Himself to Moses as *Yahweh*; the God who is present. *Yahweh* sent Moses into the darkness to confront the powers that held His people in bondage, to demonstrate God’s supremacy over all humanly constructed powers and religions, and to display his compassion for His people.

Then God instructed the people to take a perfect lamb, to kill it, and to take its blood and smear it on the door posts of their house. When the death angel saw the blood of the lamb it would recognize the sacrifice that had been made and the faith that was demonstrated in the placing of the blood on the doorposts, and it would pass over the house. The next morning the people would be free.

1400 years later God sent His Son out into the wilderness and told Him to head into the darkness of Israel where the people were being held in slavery to their own self-righteousness, self-deception, and sin. Jesus was another Moses. He was sent to confront the powers of darkness and lead God's people into freedom. When Jesus entered into the region, John the Baptist took one look at Him and proclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world." Not only was Jesus another powerful prophet like Moses, He was also the lamb itself. By the shedding of His blood freedom from death and slavery was possible.

Remember, however, that it wasn't just the shedding of the blood that set the Israelites free, it was the faith behind placing the blood on the doorposts that demonstrated to the death angel that this family was to be spared. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who became the human prophet of God to proclaim God's truth to the world. He also became the lamb of God to use His own blood to pay for the sins of the world. God offers to us the opportunity to be free from bondage, to experience the fullness of life with Him that we were created to experience. Yet, we cannot know this freedom unless we "place the blood on our doorposts." In other words, unless we believe that Jesus' sacrifice is able to save us, and unless we

proclaim to the world that we have placed our trust in the person and the sacrifice of Jesus, we will still be stuck in the darkness. But if we say “yes” to Jesus’ gift of salvation -- place the blood on the doorposts -- then we can walk with the Israelites, cross the Red Sea, and step into the journey of Spiritual Life and Growth.

Now, if you have already stepped into that life you may be tempted to dismiss this devotional as not pertaining to you. Not so. Remember that God instructed the people to observe the Passover feast for years to come. Why? He knew that we have the tendency to forget. As we will see in the rest of the Old Testament story, the people continually battled with their own sin and the threat of being enslaved. As Christians we must never lose sight of the fact that the blood of Jesus that once set us free is still on our door posts. It is only through Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit that we can walk in freedom each day. Remember the Passover...never forget.

**(Footnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> Strong, J. (1996). *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon (H7703)*. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Brown, F. (2000). *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon. Strong’s, TWOT, and GK references* Copyright 2000 by Logos Research Systems, Inc. (218.1-2). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems.

