

Not Alone: God's Relentless Pursuit
Exodus: God Rescues His People

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We are about to begin an epic journey that will carry us through much of this summer, and that journey is in the Word of God. Pastor Dan designed and assigned an 11-week series to survey the entire Old Testament (minus Genesis, which Dan preached through just months ago)—and then he left town! In eleven weeks, we are to cover 38 Old Testament books, comprised of only 879 chapters, which is 21,612 verses. When we do the math, we only have to cover 1,965 verses each week. No problem. When we think of the content of the entire Bible, 77% of it is Old Testament and 23% is New Testament. Basically, three out of four pages is Old Testament—and those 21,612 verses have something to speak into our lives for our good.

We must remember what Paul said to the believers in Rome. Christians in first century Rome were suffering profound persecution; from imprisonment to execution, Christians ached for hope. Paul wrote, “Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us so that through endurance and the encouragement of Scripture, we might have hope” (Romans 15:4).

Paul was referring to what you and I call the Old Testament. Notice two words in Paul’s statement: “written” and “Scripture.” Paul used ONE word for these words in Greek, and that word is *graphe*, meaning “written.” The written Word encouraged suffering believers then and it does the same now. This entire book encourages, which is a word that means to give strength, to give courage. Remove the “en” from encourage and we are left with courage! People then—and now—need courage. We need hope. Hope is not found in the government, in big business, in the economy, in higher education, in sports or entertainment. Our hope is not found in friends or family. Hope is found in our Lord. As Isaiah says, “But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, walk and not grow weary, walk and not be faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

For these eleven weeks, we are going to find hope through the encouragement of Scripture, through everything that has been written in the past! How will we possibly cover 21,612 verses? Think of doing a “fly-over.” Just as when we are on a flight and the plane takes off, it reaches cruising altitude at 35,000 feet (or so) and on a clear day, we can see an enormous amount of land, water, mountains, or cities below, and something will capture our attention. In the same way, we will look at this expansive amount of Scripture each week and see FOUR distinct ways the passage speaks into our lives, and the good Lord willing, something will capture our attention. Using the word **LIFE**, here’s the sermon outline for all our note-takers for the next eleven weeks.

- L** → Literal (what is the original meaning/message of the book)
- I** → Incarnational (how is Jesus reflected in the book)
- F** → Formational (how does the book apply to our lives)
- E** → Eternal (how does the book point us to heaven and eternity).

LITERAL

As we make our fly-over of Exodus, the first thing we notice is that many of its events as described by Moses, the author of Exodus, happened in Egypt roughly 1,450 years *before* Jesus was born. At that time, Egypt was:

- ➔ **Powerful** There was no greater nation on the face of the earth. Their military power was unrivaled. Just as the Roman Empire was powerful in the time of Jesus, the same can be said of Egypt in the time of Moses.
- ➔ **Prosperous** In the days of Moses, Egypt was at its peak, its zenith, as the wealthiest nation on earth. Their architecture was second to none with pyramids being built as burial tombs of the pharaohs to contain their enormous wealth.
- ➔ **Polytheistic** Egypt had a wealth of gods and goddesses in addition to its gold. Egypt worshipped many idols, from frogs to the sun and even the Nile River.
- ➔ **Paranoid** In the opening chapter of Exodus, there came to be a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph (of Genesis). A few hundred years had passed since the time of Joseph, who saved Egypt from starvation. Joseph's children, his children's children, and beyond had all died and the Israelites (i.e., the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) had grown prolifically in number to an estimated 3-plus million people! Though they increased in population, they decreased in popularity. The pharaoh feared the Israelites, thinking they would overpower Egypt. So, the pharaoh pressed them into slavery and further oppressed them by having newborn boys thrown into the Nile River to drown the moment they were delivered. The Israelites suffered greatly.

The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to **rescue** them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." (Exodus 3:7-10)

So began the **rescue** of God's people from their bondage in Egypt. This second book of the Bible is rightly named Exodus, as that word means "to exit, to depart." It was God to the rescue. Think:

➔ **P Promise**

It was God to the rescue! God made a promise and He kept it. God kept His word.

Therefore, say to the Israelites: "I am the Lord, and **I will** bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. **I will** free you from being slaves to them, and **I will** redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. **I will** take you as my own people, and **I will** be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who

brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And **I will** bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. **I will** give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.” (Exodus 6:6-8)

Not once or twice, but seven times, God said, “I will” in these few verses. God said it and that settled it. He would rescue His people from bondage.

➔ **Power**

Miracles happen throughout Exodus. From beginning to end, God suspended and overshadowed the laws of nature and did the impossible. God spoke to Moses from a burning bush (Exodus 3-4). God gave power to Moses to perform miraculous signs, proving to Pharaoh that the Lord alone is God. God, in His power, brought ten plagues against Egypt for refusing to release the Israelites from slavery (Exodus 4-11). God divided the Red Sea so that His people walked between two towering walls of water on a dry seabed (Exodus 13). God provided water and food for His people, while giving them military victory and more. It was God to the rescue, providing power to the person of Moses.

➔ **Presence**

Not only did God “come down to rescue His people” from the Egyptians (Exodus 3), but He stayed with His people in a most conspicuous manner. “By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night” (Exodus 13:21).

All the Israelites had to do was to look up! Any and every hour of the day and night, they could see with their eyes the active presence of God moving among them. Moreover, this pillar of cloud protected the Israelites from the Egyptians, who came after God’s people with an army to force them back into slavery. In the middle of the night, the cloud moved from in front of the Israelites at the shore of the Red Sea to behind them, protecting them from the advancing Egyptian army. On one side, the cloud blanketed the Egyptians in darkness, yet on the reverse side, the cloud gave light to the Israelites by which to see their way through the Red Sea. God’s constant presence with His people was more than real!

➔ **Person**

Moses was an Israelite, born to a mom and dad who refused to throw their son into the Nile River to die. Instead, they put their infant son into a basket, and he was found by the daughter of Pharaoh, who then raised him as her son. Though he was an Israelite by birth, Moses grew up in Egyptian royalty, the grandson of Pharaoh. At age 40, Moses left Egypt and fled into the wilderness after killing an Egyptian. But 40 years later, at the young age of 80, God had a plan and that was for Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

Though he was raised in a king’s palace, Moses lived in poverty as a shepherd.

Though he was born to a godly family, Moses killed a man in anger.

Though he was raised to be courageous, Moses fled in fear for his life.

Though he was highly educated, Moses hesitated to answer God's call on his life. Though he was a man with a great work ethic, Moses struggled to delegate to others.

And the list continues. God, in His infinite wisdom and grace, called an imperfect person to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God shaped Moses in obscurity before working through him publicly.

INCARNATIONAL

So much for our brief fly-over Exodus and a quick, literal explanation of the events. Yet, how do we see, where do we find Jesus in this Old Testament book? More so than in any other way, Jesus is seen in the Passover, the tenth and final plague that God brought on the Egyptians.

So Moses said, "This is what the Lord says: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. (Exodus 11:4-6)

Death of the firstborn sons was plague number ten, and it is important to remember that the previous—plague number nine—was that of darkness. Because Egypt rejected God as God and refused to release the Israelites from bondage, God caused darkness to cover Egypt for three days, a darkness so deep they could not see their hands in front of their faces. God saved the death of firstborn sons in this way.

Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. (Exodus 12:3-8)

At midnight, when the death angel went throughout Egypt killing the firstborn sons, the angel "passed over" every home of the Israelites with the blood of a lamb on its doorframe. They were saved by the blood of the lamb. God gave them a way to be saved from death. That was then and the same is true today. God *still* gives us a way to be saved from death and hell—and it is to come under the covering of the blood of "Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). In Exodus, we read of the ten plagues inflicted on Egypt because Pharaoh refused to release God's people from slavery. Plague number ten was the death of their first-born sons, whereas plague number nine was darkness covering Egypt for three days, as God passed judgment on Egypt for rejecting Him—and it would cost them their firstborn sons. When Jesus

hung on the cross, darkness covered the earth for three hours, as God passed judgment on humankind for rejecting His Son—and that rejection cost God HIS firstborn son, Jesus! “God demonstrates His love for us in this that while we were sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Did you notice that the Passover lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast? Why? The bitter herbs reminded the Israelites of their suffering as slaves in bondage. Baking bread without yeast was hurried. They did not wait for the bread to rise before baking it. Similarly, the Israelites were to leave Egyptian slavery quickly, in haste, and with no delay! In the same way, we live in bondage to sin. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). As slaves to sin, we suffer under its grip, its stranglehold. Yet, when we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ and His blood—His death on a cross—we are free from sin’s bondage. Quickly, without delay, come under the blood of Jesus! No one wants to live in bondage. We want freedom—and Jesus alone saves.

Recently, I happened to be on a mission trip in New Zealand, a nation that is known for having more sheep than people. Sheep farming is a mainstay in New Zealand. Our team happened to tour a sheep ranch owned by a Christian man, who happens to be a devout follower of Jesus. He is expert at teaching people of all ages about sheep and their importance in Scripture. For example, when a mother ewe dies giving birth to a lamb, the rancher takes the now newborn orphan lamb to a mother ewe who has a stillborn lamb. But for the mother ewe to care for this lamb that is not hers, the rancher takes some of the blood of the stillborn lamb and rubs it on the newborn orphan lamb. The ewe who lost her lamb then smells that blood and will begin to nurse and care for that orphan lamb as her own. When God looks at us, He does not see our sin. He sees the blood of His Son, the blood of Jesus that covers and cleanses us of our sin. God loves and cares for us in ways we will never comprehend. “How great is the love that God has lavished on us that we should be called His children, and that is what we are” (1 John 3:1).

FORMATIONAL

How do we apply the story of Exodus to our lives? How does it help “form” us into spiritually mature men and women of God? Three things stand out as we fly over Exodus. Think A-B-C.

A for Admit

We must admit that we are flawed, broken with sin. One of the most perplexing moments in Exodus was golden-calf scandal. Picture this. In Exodus 32, Moses is on top of Mt Sinai, meeting with God. He’s been up there for forty days, and the Israelites are fed up with his absence, with his failure to lead. They turn to Aaron, the lead pastor (i.e., high priest/spiritual leader) and demand that he make some gods for them, and Aaron says, “OK.” This happened only three months after they escaped slavery in Egypt! What was high priest Aaron thinking? He saw the power of God in miracle after miracle—from the ten plagues conquering Egypt to the dividing of the Red Sea to water and food for millions of people to a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night! All of that in a mere ninety days and yet the spiritual leader of the Israelites handmade a golden calf for them to worship. The first commandment on God’s top-ten list was, “You shall have no other gods before me.” Then to make matters worse, Aaron blew this off when his brother Moses came down from atop Mt. Sinai and held him accountable (Exodus

32:19-24). The conversation went something like this: “Aaron, what were you thinking? You’re the high priest, our spiritual leader, *numero uno*, the big pig at the trough! How could you make an idol and lead millions of people astray into sin?” To which Aaron replied, “These people are so evil. They demanded that I make an idol for them and gave me their gold jewelry. I threw it into the fire and shazam—out came this golden calf!” Talk about pride, passing the buck, and failing to accept personal responsibility for his actions.

If we are to learn lessons from Exodus to be spiritually formed into the likeness of Jesus, we must admit that we are broken, flawed men and women. Every one of us has sinned and we need Jesus. And remember, God works through flawed people. Moses killed a man. David committed adultery and then killed the woman’s husband. Jacob was a liar. Noah got drunk and the list goes on—including us. God uses humble, flawed people. God’s mercy is greater than our failures and flaws. God pursues us even when we do not pursue Him.

B for Be

Moses made multiple trips to the top of Mt. Sinai to meet with God, not just one trip. He also erected what was called the “tent of meeting.” “Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the “tent of meeting.” “Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp” (Exodus 33:7).

Throughout Exodus, God pursued **being** with His people and He wanted His people to **be** with Him. The Israelites left Egypt, but there was a lot of Egypt left in them. The Egyptian culture was all about building and achieving, and that way of thinking was rooted in the minds of the Israelites. Nothing has changed. We live in a culture that is addicted to achievement where more is never enough. We live frenzied lives of doing, with places to go, people to see, and things to do. As Christians we struggle with simply **being** with God. Our formation, growing more spiritually mature, demands that we do nothing but **be** with God, enjoying His presence.

Have you walked through an airport terminal or a mall and suddenly got a whiff of cinnamon rolls baking? You weren’t even hungry but now suddenly you crave a hot cinnamon roll—and the craving is real! You were just minding your own business when suddenly some molecules of sugar, melted butter, and warm spice collided with your face and you wanted that hot, delicious cinnamon roll now. What if you and I had a hunger, a craving to **be** with God suddenly and frequently? We are human **beings**, not human doings. We don’t simply work for God; we walk with God.

C for Courage

Moses was eighty years-old when God called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Though the people who wanted to kill Moses in Egypt had died by this time, Moses did not want to go back to Egypt. He wanted nothing to do with this assignment. It took courage to go back to Egypt and lead millions of Israelites out from slavery. Think about the many times Moses and the millions would need courage during their escape.

Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.” (Exodus 14:13-16)

With the armies of Egypt quickly closing in for the kill, it took courage for the Israelites to not only move out of Egypt but to move on into what appeared to be the waters of the Red Sea. Faith often requires stepping into waters that haven’t yet parted. The late Nelson Mandela said, “Courage is not the absence of fear but the triumph over it.”

ETERNAL

How does Exodus point us to heaven and eternity? It has everything to do with the word tabernacle. In several chapters of Exodus, God instructed Moses to build a tabernacle, a place for the worship of God to take place. The tabernacle was like a big tent that could be set up and taken down as the Israelites moved from place to place through the wilderness. It had two parts: the holy place and the holy of holies. In the holy of holies, the ark of the covenant was placed which represented God’s presence among them. Now get this: God directed Moses to have the tabernacle put directly in the middle of the twelve tribes. The people, tribe by tribe, surrounded the tabernacle with God in the very center. [View the online sermon to see a depiction of the tabernacle.]

The Hebrew word for “tabernacle” (*miskan*=mish-kawn) means “dwelling place.” The word tabernacle first appears in Exodus 25:9 and is then used 47 times in the next 15 chapters! No less than 48 times, God said to His people, “My dwelling place,” and then He had Moses put His dwelling place smack-dab in the center of His people! Fast forward to Revelation, the last book of the Bible. Check this out.

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” (Revelation 21:1-4)

Notice the phrase, “God’s dwelling place.” In Greek, that word means tabernacle, tent! God will be with us on a new earth for all of eternity! This is not a picture of camping in a 40-foot McMansion on wheels, but a tent, even a pup tent! God is going to “wipe every tear from our eyes,” which indicates tremendous compassion for us and intimacy with us. The tent of God’s presence with His people in Exodus points us to eternity when the tent of His presence will be with us forever.

Conclusion

When we do a fly-over of America while in a plane and something stands out, the same happens when we do a fly-over of Scripture. What stood out to you from Exodus? How did the Lord speak to you through His Holy Spirit? Remember, God Himself said, “I, the Lord, do not change” (Malachi 3:6).

The Artemis II crew recently flew to the moon and back (April 1-10, 2026). While in space, the four-person crew took thousands of photos and here is one of the earth, taken on day two of the mission. Seeing the photo [view the online sermon to see the photo], I was reminded of Job 26:7, “God suspends the earth over nothing.” What indescribable power of our ever-present God.

“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will **rescue** him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.” (Psalm 91:14-16)

God *still* **rescues** His people. You and I are **not alone**.