

God Remembers: Set Free, Bought Back, Adopted Heirs

Exodus 6:1-9

By [David Strain](#)

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Now let me invite you to take your own copy of God's holy Word in your hands or turn with me in one of the church Bibles to page 48. Exodus chapter 6; Exodus chapter 6. We're going to be reading the first nine verses together. Before we do that, would you bow your heads with me as we go to God and ask Him to help us understand and believe His Word? Let's pray.

Our Father, the summons of Scriptures is to 'Come, all who are thirsty, to the waters, without money and without price, to buy and to drink.' The Gospel of grace, the Word of God, is the wellspring, and we would come and drink freely of the good news to the everlasting satisfaction of our souls. Jesus said that the water that He gives will well up within to become a fountain of living water welling up unto everlasting life so that if we drink it we will never thirst again. O Lord, as Your Word is read, send us the Holy Spirit that Jesus' promise might be fulfilled in our lives and hearts today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Exodus chapter 6. You will remember the context. God has sent Moses and Aaron after their sojourn in the wilderness back to Egypt with a message, a promise that God was going to set His people free. They began to preach it first to the elders of Israel in chapter 4, at the end of chapter 4, and the elders received it with joy. Then they went to preach to Pharaoh and instead of joy, Pharaoh's heart was hardened and things, instead of getting better for Israel, got worse and worse and worse, so that by the end of chapter 5 both Pharaoh and the people of Israel have rejected both the message and the messengers of God, Moses and Aaron. And in verses 22 and 23 of chapter 5 we see Moses deeply discouraged, crying out to God for an answer. And we pick up the reading as God responds in the first verse of chapter 6. This is the Word of Almighty God:

But the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land."

God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the

LORD I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.'" Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.

Amen, and we give thanks to God that He has indeed spoken in His holy Word.

The Gospel: From the Beginning to the End of the Christian Life

What is the Gospel for? What is the Good News for? Well if you're not a Christian today, the Gospel is the only hope you have, the only hope. It is life itself to you. It is a message of salvation available to sinners only in Jesus Christ. That is therefore the most vital news you will ever hear. But if you're a Christian, is it irrelevant for you? No, understood correctly, the good news about Jesus Christ should be both a source of life and a fountain of ongoing encouragement and a resource of equipping and strengthening you as you seek to live for His glory no matter the discouragements that face you. Moses is confronted by profound discouragement at the end of chapter 5 and the Lord responds in chapter 6 by a string of promises, all of which are Gospel promises. He speaks, God speaks and preaches the Gospel to Moses to dispel his discouragement and to encourage His servant and through him, Israel.

When I was training for the ministry in the Church of Scotland, which is the mainline, largely liberal Presbyterian denomination in Scotland, I was appointed to serve as an intern in a small urban parish with a very liberal female minister. She was lovely. We got along really well. We had a good relationship. But I'm not sure she believed much of what you could call orthodox, historic Christian doctrine. And we would take turns in preaching on alternate Sundays. One Sunday she would preach essentially, "Jesus was a nice guy. You should be nice too." It wasn't heresy; it just wasn't much of anything. And then I, on the following Sunday, would attempt to preach the call of Jesus Christ to sinners to repent and believe the Gospel. And we went on like this for some weeks, back and forth, back and forth, until she came to me with a complaint. Her complaint was that she felt preaching the Gospel within the church was unnecessary and redundant. After all, it's only full of Christians, right? They don't need to hear the Gospel

preached. Well of course that assumption is never safe to make, that all who gather within these four walls are certainly bound for heaven. There are some of you here today who do not know Jesus Christ, and unless the Gospel takes hold of your heart and you turn to Him you will be lost forever. It is never safe to assume that everyone who comes to church goes to glory. But of course if I had had my wits about me, I'm not sure I could have done any better to give a reason for preaching the Gospel to Christians, even given her assumption that everyone who heard were Christians, than to turn to Exodus chapter 6 because that is what God is doing with Moses, isn't it? Here is Moses, not a rebel lost sinner, but the mighty prophet of the Lord. Here is Moses, God's appointed deliverer for Israel and God comes and proclaims the good news of His purpose to save His people, to encourage Moses not just to be the substance of his message to others, but to be the grounds of his comfort and encouragement for his own heart. God preaches the Gospel to Moses.

Sometimes I think we conceive of the Gospel, the good news about Jesus, if we're Christians, we conceive of it rather like a harbor from which we depart on the voyage of the Christian life. We conceive of it like safe shores from which we set sail to explore deeper waters elsewhere. That is entirely the wrong conception of the Gospel. The Gospel is not a starting points for the Christian life which you will leave behind you as you look for deeper truth. No, the Gospel, a better metaphor is the Gospel is soil, rich and fertile, and you are a seed sown into that soil and when you begin to live and put down roots and shoots, you sink those roots and shoots ever more deeply into the Gospel so that as you grow you derive more and more nourishment from the good news. You don't grow past it, you don't grow out of it; you grow more deeply down into it. The good news about Jesus is vital truth for you no matter how mature or how far in advancement you have come in the Christian life. You need the encouragement and the nourishment of the good news preached to you. And that is the lesson that God has for Moses and for us in the passage that we've read together. Would you look at it with me please?

We're going to focus on verses 2 to 8. Notice how the passage is put together. In verse 2 and then again in verse 6 and then again in verse 8, the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, God makes this declaration, "I am the LORD. I am the LORD" - at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. And that does two things for us. First, it helps us understand the big point, the purpose, the ultimate goal and terminus of the message God has for Moses isn't first about Moses nor is it first about Israel; it is first about God. The Gospel itself is about fixing your eyes, captivating your heart, enflaming your soul with delight in and passion for God. God wants to know you and He wants you to know Him. "This is eternal life," Jesus said, "that you might know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent." The purpose of the Gospel is that you might know God. The good news has an end in view and that end is to give you to God and to give God to you. And so beginning and in the middle and at the end of our passage, as God outlines His saving purposes to Moses, He repeats the assertion, "I am the LORD."

I. God's Promises in the Past

But the second thing that three-fold repetition of the divine name does for us is it gives us some structure to the passage. It splits it into two. Each section beginning with the declaration, "I am the LORD," and then the whole thing ending once more with the declaration, "I am the LORD." And so verses 2 to 5, we see God looking back to His promises in the past. And then in verses 6 to 8, we see God making a series of promises for the future. And I want us to focus largely on the second of those two, the promises for the future.

God Reveals Himself

But do notice verses 2 to 5 first of all that God sets the foundation for His plan to save His people, He rests that plan entirely on the foundation of His faithfulness to His covenant promises in the past. If you look at verses 2 to 5 you'll see first that God reveals Himself and then God remembers. God reveals and God remembers. "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them." Now that doesn't mean that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew nothing of the divine name, the LORD in all caps, Yahweh. We know, for example, from Genesis 4:26 that in the days of Enosh people first began to call on the name of the LORD, Yahweh. We know from Genesis 15:2 that Abraham himself prayed to Yahweh, the LORD. This was the name Abraham used. What God means here is that when He revealed the name Yahweh in Exodus chapter 3 to Moses He was doing so in a new context and would do so in a way that would demonstrate this is not one name among many others but rather this is a name that captures the essence of who God is and how He shall be towards His people. And the subsequent history of God's saving work in the remainder of the story will underline that fact.

God Remembers His Covenant

So God reveals Himself, and then secondly, God remembers His covenant. Verse 4, "I established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves and I have remembered my covenant." God had made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to give them the land and He has not forgotten His covenant promises. And so the salvation that will shortly ensue in the exodus and all the revelation that came to Israel through Moses and indeed all subsequent, redemptive acts of God in the Scriptures, each new covenant that God gives with David and with the prophets, climaxing in the Lord Jesus Christ, all of it is given in fulfillment of this covenant promise. There is one plan, one purpose according to which God is working to save His people across history. That is the foundation for everything else that

God says. He reveals Himself and then He remembers His covenant.

II. God's Promises for the Future

But then look at the second section of the passage with me. Verses 6 to 8 begins, once again, with a declaration, "I am the LORD," verse 6. And here He turns from remembering the promises of the past to making seven promises for the future, each of them beginning with the statement, "I will." There are seven, "I will," statements here. The first three are all in verse 6 - "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; I will deliver you from slavery to them; and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment." And then the next two, verse 7, "I will take you to be my people; I will be your God." And then the sixth and seventh are in verse 8, "I will bring you into the land; and I will give it to you for a possession." So there are seven "I will" statements regarding how God is going to save them from bondage and slavery in Egypt. God's roadmap for salvation. We can summarize it under four headings. God will set us free, God will buy us back, God will adopt us, and God will make us His heirs. God will set us free, God will buy us back, God will adopt us, and He will make us His heirs.

God Will Set Us Free

Verse 6, first of all - God will set us free. That is the point of the first two "I will" statements here. "I will bring you out from under the Egyptians; I will deliver you from slavery." Salvation means release from bondage and liberation from captivity. In Luke chapter 9 verse 28 and following, as the famous story of the Transfiguration where Jesus takes the disciples with Him up onto the mountain, Peter, James, and John, and they're there and they see Jesus transformed. His majesty and glory as the only Redeemer of God's elect, the God-Man, the Mediator of the covenant of grace, blazes from His face before them, temporarily unveiled before their eyes. And we read, Luke tells us, with Him were Moses and Elijah and they're talking to Jesus, Luke says, about His departure that He was shortly to accomplish in Jerusalem. Now that word "departure" is significant. It is the word, *ἐξοδον*- exodus. What they're talking about is the cross. The language they use to describe the cross is Jesus' exodus. Here is the salvation to which the exodus story points. The exodus narrative is the Old Testament paradigm and template for salvation that points to its fulfillment at Calvary where Jesus redeemed from slavery and bondage, the bondage of sin, all who believe in Him. And so Revelation 1:5, Jesus is the one who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood. Galatians 5:1, it is for freedom; Christ has set us free. "If the Son sets you free," John 8:31, "you are free indeed." Jesus brings liberation from slavery and bondage. All of us want to be free.

And there are different kinds of freedom, aren't there? There's economic freedom and there's legal freedoms, constitutional liberties. And there's something more

profound even than that. There's a transcendent, spiritual, existential freedom that even those who enjoy every other material freedom and legal freedom and economic freedom long to possess. The philosophers across the ages have searched for it. Aristotle said, "He who has overcome his fears is truly free." Jean Paul Sartre said, "Freedom is what we do with what is done to us." They're recognizing freedom is more profound than something legal or economic. And the Scriptures teach us that true freedom is only to be found in one place; it is to be found in the liberation that the grace of God provides to His own covenant people, supremely in the blood of Jesus Christ crucified. Jesus can give you freedom - real freedom, true freedom. Liberation from slavery and bondage to sin is available to us in Jesus Christ alone. God will set us free.

God Will Buy Us Back

Then the second aspect of salvation is also there in verse 6. God will buy us back. God will set us free; God will buy us back. Verse 6, "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm." Freedom is still the theme of course but this word "redeem" and "redemption" highlights how God will make us free. He makes us free by paying a price to purchase our liberation, our manumission. And here too the redemption of Israel in the exodus is only a faint glimmer of the brighter light that shines in Christ. In both Ephesians 1:7 and in Colossians 1:14 we read the same statement. "In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of sins." In Jesus is true redemption. The price for your freedom is the cross of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9:12, speaking about the types and patterns of Old Testament sacrifice, all of them fulfilled in Jesus, Hebrews says, "He offered himself, his own blood, securing eternal redemption." We are slaves, the Bible says, slaves. We live by nature in bondage to sin. We are not free. But the good news is that the price of your freedom has been paid. Jesus can make you free. He was enslaved and mistreated and crucified that your debt of sin might be cancelled. When he said, "*Tetelestai* - It is finished," He meant, "Paid in full." Paid in full. Your debt's wiped clean. You are free by His grace if today you believe the Gospel. God will set us free. God will buy us back.

God Will Adopt Us

And then the third aspect of salvation is there in verse 7. The next two, "I wills." Do you see that in verse 7? God will adopt us into His family. Verse 7, "I will take you to be my people and I will be your God and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." When God saves He gives freedom from sin's tyranny and dominion in our lives by the blood of the cross. But He does much more, much more. He takes us and makes us His children. "I will be your God; you will be my people." The New Testament category for that is adoption. He brings us into His family. "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law that we might receive the adoption as sons," Galatians 4:4-5. Jesus sets us free when we believe the good news. He

does it by paying the price of our manumission at Calvary, and when we believe that Gospel we are adopted into His family, we are made children of God. "To all who received, who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but born of God," John 1 and verse 13. The Puritans, you know, said that adoption was the highest privilege of the Christian Gospel. There is no higher blessing in the Christian life than the blessing of adoption. It is the apex and the crowning benefit given to every believer. Don't go looking for blessings and experiences and power encounters elsewhere. There is nothing sweeter, nothing more glorious, no privilege higher than this. You are a child of God. A child of God. "Behold what manner of love the Father has given to us." You can hear the wonder, the awe, in the Apostle John's voice. "Behold what manner of love. What manner of love is this that we should become children of God?" 1 John 1 and verse 1.

It might have been enough, surely it was enough that at the cross Jesus would wipe the slate clean and pay our penalty and purchase our forgiveness and our freedom. Surely that would satisfy all the demands of love and generosity and grace. That wicked rebels might not be condemned but pardoned. Surely that's enough. It is not enough for the love of God. The love of God takes us, wretched slaves of our own sinful passions, destitute of any worthiness of our own, filthy in the rags of our selfishness and our pride, He takes us and He does much more than wash us clean, much more than forgive our sin, much more than set us free. He calls you, "beloved child, precious son or daughter of Mine." He fixes His delight upon you. He calls you by name. He sets His name, the triune name, the family name upon you. And you go to the one enthroned in majesty and glory, the one of infinite might and perfect purity, and you call Him, "Abba Father." Behold what manner of love! Look at the shape and the contours of it. Take it in! Stand in awe! Here is love. You, believer in Jesus, by the blood of His only begotten Son, have been adopted and made a child of God by His grace. Set free. Bought back. Adopted.

God Will Make Us His Heirs

And then finally we are made heirs. That's a consequence of becoming a child of God. You see that in verse 8. Verse 8, "I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession." They're going to inherit the land. Canaan was the land in which the fathers sojourned. God promised to give it to their descendants. Now He's going to keep His word. And the land of course is another picture, isn't it? A picture of the fullness of Gospel blessing and benefits that come to all who trust in Him. If we are forgiven and set free and adopted, we stand to inherit the blessings of the promises. As Paul puts it in Galatians 4:7, "You are no longer a slave but a son, adopted, and if a son, then an heir through God." Or Romans 8:17, "If we are children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ." Fellow heirs with Christ! That is a staggering statement. God the Son and you are His fellow heir, a

co-heir. You stand to inherit with Him the glory that is His. He has done all the work, all the labor, He has paid all the price, borne all the penalty, the inheritance is His by rights, and into His glorious inheritance you have been swept along, made heirs by grace on the merits of another because of Jesus Christ. We have an inheritance if we are believers that can never spoil or fade, kept in heaven for us - 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 4. We will one day, Matthew 5 and verse 5, one day we will inherit the earth. Colossians 1:12, the Father has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. One day the reality dimly pictured by the promise of the land, a place of their own, a place to rest, one day the promise where sin is done, where suffering is over, where you will be face to face with the glorified and exalted Christ, radiant in the reflection of His perfections, your place among the vast and countless assembly of the saints, surrounded by the praises of heavens angels, one day the inheritance will be yours - a new heaven and a new earth; the home of righteousness, a place to rest and to rejoice.

From Exodus to Calvary: It is Finished

Here in Exodus 6 is the whole Gospel set before us in summary, isn't it? From its foundational blessing - forgiveness, freedom from sin's curse and condemnation, to its highest privilege - adoption into the very family of God, to its fullest outworking and realization - inheriting the world to come, heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ. Philip Ryken puts it this way commenting on these verses. He says, "All that is required is to trust in Jesus believing that He has turned the 'I wills' of salvation into the 'I have done it' of the Gospel." From Moses' vantage point, this was all to come. It was all "I will. I will. One day it will be true." From ours it is all, "It is finished. The work is done. I have done it. Rest on Me," Jesus says. If today you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, you remain in the bondage of your sin. You face today the wrath and curse of a holy God and it will destroy you one day unless you flee to the only safe place available, the only one who can break the chains and give you liberty and more who will make you a child of God, an heir and a co-heir with Christ. You must flee to Jesus and you must do it now. But if today you are a Christian, if today like Moses you find yourself languishing in discouragement and disillusionment, even in disappointment and despair, preach again to your own heart the Gospel, remember who you are and what has been done for you. You are a beloved child of God, made so by the wounds of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Fight your discouragement with the good news of the Gospel of grace and you will find that the flames of joy and peace in believing are rekindled in your heart to the glory and praise of God.

Amen. May He bless to us the ministry of His Word. Let us pray.

Our Father, we thank You for the Lord Jesus. Would You forgive us for running to counterfeit gospels, to ways of salvation of our own making, for trying to fix ourselves, trying to deliver ourselves, trying to solve the puzzle of our bondage? Help us instead, O work by Your Spirit instead, to give us the gift of freedom, the liberation that Christ alone provides. And for all who cling to Him, who have been

set free, would You give to us the joy of believing the Gospel, of proclaiming and standing on and reveling in the inheritance and the promises that are ours through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

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