

Dr. John Oswalt, Exodus, Session 1, Exodus 1-2

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This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Exodus. This is session 1, Exodus 1-2.

Exodus is a Greek word meaning the way out.

Ex is out and odos is way, the way out. Now, if I were to say the way out of what, what would your answer be? The way out of Egypt, yes. But there is one problem with that.

The problem is that they're out of Egypt by chapter 15. They're out of the bondage. They have experienced their deliverance, and they're out and on their way to the promised land.

So, we ask ourselves the way out. Way out of what? And what is it that comes next in chapters 16 through 24? Well, it is a revelation in chapter 16 to 18. It's a revelation of God's providence, God's caring for them.

They have seen a God of power in his deliverance from Egypt, but they really, it appears, don't know him very well. And so, in chapters 16 through 18, we have a revelation of God's providence. And then what comes next? In chapters 19 through 24, the giving of the covenant.

And in the covenant, God is revealing his character. He's revealing the creation order upon which all life depends. They are learning who God is in this covenant relationship.

God keeps saying to them, you must be holy because I am holy. Now, again, we tend to have a pretty warped idea of holiness. As I've mentioned to you before, most of us think that holiness is a little old lady with a flat black hat, long sleeves, long hems, a sweet smile, and a wicked umbrella.

And so, when we hear you must be holy for I am holy, that's what we think of. But that's not what God is talking about at all. He's saying the way you treat your slaves is a mark of your holiness.

He's saying the way you treat your animals is a mark of your holiness. The way you treat your neighbors is a mark of your holiness. And we ask ourselves, why would those things be a mark of holiness? Because it's a mark of God's character.

And so, in these chapters, we're discovering that they not only need to be delivered from physical bondage, they need to be delivered from spiritual darkness. They don't

know who God is. And so, we see the God of providence, we see the God of principles, but the book's still in nowhere yet.

What more could there be? They're out of Egypt, and they have a new understanding of who God is and what he's like. What more could there be? Well, there are 16 chapters more. And what are those 16 chapters? The 16 chapters are 16 of the most boring chapters in the whole Bible.

You have five chapters where God says, do it this way and this way and this way and this way and this way and this way. And then, after a little break, you have five more chapters that say, they did it that way and that way and that way and that way. What's going on here? What's going on is God wants to come home.

Why do we have two almost identical descriptions of the tabernacle? Because it's that important to God. It's that important that he now has the chance to come home, to come down off the mountain and live in the middle of the camp. The way out of bondage? Yes.

But as real as human bondage and suffering are, that's not our deepest human problem. The way out of spiritual darkness? Yes. How desperately we need to know God and who he is and what he's like.

But what's our real human problem? Our real human problem is that we are separated from the source of our lives. Like a plant pulled up out of the ground. It's not going to survive very long in terms of what it was intended to be.

And so, the ultimate problem is the problem of alienation. The way out. So, this book, in many ways, is the paradigm.

I saw a cartoon a while ago. The boy said, Dad, what's a paradigm? And the dad said, well, son, a paradigm is a paradigm. And the son said, you don't know either, do you? What's a paradigm? A paradigm is a model.

A standard model. And Exodus is the standard model for salvation. If you want to understand the biblical teaching on salvation, Exodus is the place to begin.

Just as Genesis explains to us the nature of the human problem and gives us the basic outlines of how that problem is to be solved, Exodus gives us the human need and how it is that God intends to solve that need. So, Exodus is the way out. And the outline that you have there gives this in a little more detail.

And you notice, on the outline, the prominence of the word revelation. Ten times in the book, between chapter 7 and chapter 14, you will find the phrase, Then you or

they will know that I am Yahweh. Ten times, you get the idea that maybe God has something in mind.

At the heart of all salvation is to know Him as He really is. Now again, we've talked about this before, but let me remind you, whenever you run into LORD in your Bible with small caps, not this way, but this way, that is the divine name. We tend to read this as it is in our English Bibles, then you will know that I am the LORD.

And think, oops, yeah, then we'll know you, the boss. But it means so, so, so much more than that. And we'll be talking about that, especially next week.

Because the name is I AM. We'll be talking, not only next week but throughout the study, about what it means to know the I AM, what it means to be, and again, personally acquainted with.

We've talked about this before, and we'll talk about it again. To know, in the Bible, is not merely intellectual knowledge. But it is intellectual knowledge on the basis of personal experience.

I know who Obama is. I do not know Obama. I can tell you that I know Karen Kennedy Oswald.

Not as well as I intend to, but I've been working on it for a year or two now. God wants to be known, and He wants to be known in the fullness of His character and His reality. And that's what this book is about.

Salvation is about personal acquaintance with God in the fullness of His reality, which has some very, very profound effects concerning human bondage and the suffering that humans impose on others.

We don't minimize this at all. But we don't stop there. Salvation must involve the whole person.

It must involve all of us. And so, in that regard, this book is about knowing God. We begin with the need for deliverance in chapter 1. Chapter 2, the preparation of the deliverer.

Chapters 3 and 4, the call of the deliverer. Chapters 5 through 1236, the events of deliverance. The crossing of the sea, 1237 to the end of chapter 14.

And then, we conclude with one of the great hymns of the Bible. Chapter 15, actually, verses 1 to 21, the Song of the Sea. The book of Revelation refers to this: the Song of Moses.

And it's coupled with the song of the Lamb, there in the book of Revelation. From chapter 15, verse 21, we move into the second section, the evidence of divine providence. The revelation that God cares.

Yes, yes, He is all-powerful. Yes, the gods of this world can't hold a candle to Him. But does He care about us? Or are we just sort of pawns on His chessboard? No, He cares.

Water, food, protection. And the last one is the most fascinating to me, chapter 18, organization. Moses' father-in-law comes along and says, Man, you've got a problem.

You've got a whole bunch of people here all hanging on you. You need to get organized here. And that's part of God's providence.

We move then to the revelation of His principles. And that's in chapters 19 to 24. You have an introduction to the covenant in chapter 19.

Then the presentation of the terms of the covenant in chapters 20 to 23. And then the sealing of the covenant, S-E-A-L-I-N-G. When the people are invited to participate now in this covenant.

And then chapters 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. I said five chapters, seven chapters on the tabernacle.

And then in chapters 35 to 40. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40. 36 chapters.

We do it all again, just changing the verb tenses. From you shall to he did. But part of the importance of that duplication is what falls in between.

The golden calf. Chapters 32, 33, and 34. And that's very significant for understanding what this section is really talking to us about.

God is up there on the mountain with Moses. Supplying their need for his immediate presence. But down in the valley, they say God doesn't know our needs.

God doesn't care about us. We don't know what happened to that fellow Moses. We need God.

Make us a God, Aaron. So, Aaron does what he learned in seminary in Egypt. He makes a God.

What a tragic, tragic failure. In place of the tabernacle, in all its gorgeous beauty, its variety, and its complexity, what does he make? A calf. The thing was probably a bull, but the Bible mocks it when it calls it a golden calf.

That's what happens when we supply our own needs. So, they did it right. And in the end of the book, if you have your Bible there, let's look at it.

It is truly a climactic moment. Chapter 40, verse 34. Then, the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Now, of course, I said this is the paradigm. This is the model.

The New Testament gives us the fulfillment of the model. When the Holy Spirit takes up residence in his tabernacle. That's where the whole thing is headed.

Okay. Questions on the outline? Or what else I've said here? Hang on to that outline, please. I'll be trying to refer to it as we go along.

The study guides will also try to follow that as well. Any questions? It was Dr. Kinlaw who said to me years ago that if they don't have any questions after you've lectured, you know one of two things. It was either so clear there are no possible questions remaining, or much more likely, it was so confusing, nobody knows what to ask.

Yes, yes, yes. I had one of the funniest things of my whole life appear yesterday in an email. This person wrote to me saying he had read two great books in his life.

One was by C.S. Lewis, and the other was by John Oswald. Oh my goodness, you poor man. That's not good.

That's not good at all. Okay. Let's turn to chapters one and two.

Chapter one. The need for deliverance. I'm not going to go over this background because our time is gone and going.

But it's there for you if you want to look at it as we go along. Verses one to seven of chapter one presuppose something. What is it that they presuppose? Genesis.

Exactly. Who are these people? Who is this Israel? And who is this Jacob? And what's Jacob got to do with Israel? And Reuben, Simeon, who are those people? Yes. This book is built upon the assumption of Genesis.

Now, what does that tell us about the Bible's understanding of human experience? And I could say, I should say, human-divine experience. The fact that we need Genesis to understand Exodus. What does that tell us about the Bible's understanding of human-divine experience? It is sequential.

It is, in fact, historical. If you're going to understand who God is and what he's doing, you've got to understand that in the context of time. I dare to say that's unique to biblical religion.

Oh, with the gods, every experience is new. It doesn't matter what happened yesterday. It certainly doesn't matter what happens tomorrow.

You're having a mystical experience with him right now, and it's totally, totally disconnected from everything. Not the Bible. If you want to know who God is, you have to see what he has done with real human beings in time and space, in sequence.

We matter to him. That is a profoundly important point. No other religious book reveals its deity in the context of connected human experience.

Because humans really don't count in the world of the gods. We're just here to feed them. All right, let's move on.

But the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful. They multiplied greatly, increased in numbers, and became so numerous the land was filled with them. How does that relate to Genesis 12:1, and the following? Exactly.

This was the third point in the covenant. You are going to have children more than the stars of the heavens or the sand of the seashore. And God is keeping his promise.

Now there again, you see, if you're really going to understand that statement, you've got to understand it in the context of Genesis. Otherwise, you just say, oh, well, they were really fertile, and that's interesting. Oh no, no, no.

God is keeping his promise to them even though they're far away from the promised land. All right, let's move on. Now again, I'm pushing hard trying to get through here tonight, but if you've got a question, don't hesitate to ask.

Your friends will be interested. Okay, 1, 8 to 14. According to verse 10, the Egyptians were afraid of two things.

Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they'll become even more numerous and if war breaks out, we'll join our enemies, fight against this and leave the country. What are the two things the Egyptians are afraid of? What does it say? They'll join the enemy, and when they beat us, they'll get out of here. Now, I said I wasn't going to talk about background, just a word.

Remember that probably the reason that Joseph was able to rise to the position he was because for about a 200-year period, Semites were ruling the northern part of Egypt and they were playing Egyptian, but they were really Semitic. In 1550, the native Egyptians rose up and threw out the Semites back into the land of Canaan. So why is this Pharaoh, why is he afraid that the Hebrews might join their enemies? The same bunch.

Hey, those people are Semites, and suppose those other Semites come back in here again, they'll join them, and we'll be in big, big trouble. But, suppose they do win the battle and leave the land. What's the problem with that? No free labor.

Now, these Pharaohs, between 1550 and 1200, were basically military dictators. And their major concern was Canaan because, as we've talked a little bit before, Egypt is well defended on the north, you've got the sea on the west, the Sahara on the east, the wilderness between the Red Sea and Egypt, on the south, again, you've got desert running right down on either side of the river, and you've got four serious falls down there that people have to get out of their boats and portage around and while they're portaging, you Egyptians are killing them. The big hole is right there.

Again and again, Israel has been conquered through the Sinai Peninsula. And so, these Pharaohs decided, sort of like Russia decided in 1945, twice now, these rotten Germans have taken a run at us, and there's been nothing between them and us but Poland, and that's not much. So, from now on, the border of Russia is going to be west of Berlin.

That ought to slow them down a little bit. Same thing here. The border of Egypt is going to be as far up the Canaanite coast as we can possibly push.

But they were not only military dictators. They were also people with, you may have heard this, an edifice complex. All of them built things to satisfy their egos bigger and bigger and bigger. If you happen to have seen Albert Speer's drawings of what Berlin was going to look like after Hitler won the war, it's just unbelievable.

Buildings are just totally out of scale with anything around them to match the madman's towering ego. Same thing here. So, number one, we don't want to let these people join our enemies and open up this door again.

And number two, we don't want to let them go because then we won't have anybody to help build these huge monuments to our egos. So then, speaking of problems, what is the most basic problem the Hebrews have? Bondage. They are enslaved by people who are superior to them.

How does that relate to the promises of Genesis? What are the three promises that God made to Abraham? Number one, land. Number two, children. And number three, all of the nations will be blessed through you.

Those are three promises that you ought to sort of get fixed in your mind—the three promises made to Abraham. Well, if they are in bondage in Egypt, they're not in the promised land.

So, that's a problem. 1:15 to 22. Who is named in verse 15, and who isn't? Pharaoh is not named, but who is named? The midwives.

The most powerful man in the world is anonymous. And these two little ladies, I say little, maybe they were big, I don't know, but these two ladies, who from the world's point of view are pretty much insignificant, we know their names. To all eternity, we know their names.

That's significant. Does God know your name? If he does, then you will live forever. If God doesn't know your name, you're in big trouble.

Big, big trouble. Probably, they are representative of a bunch more. You couldn't name them all, so in order to name some, you pick two who will be representative.

Probably, that's what's going on. Pharaoh said, okay, okay, somehow or other, we thought we would slow down their birth processes by imposing this terrific bondage on them, but they still keep producing children, so we're going to have to do something else here. And that something else is, we're going to kill all the boy babies when they're born.

But the midwives refused to obey. Why did they refuse to obey the most powerful man in the world? Yeah. What does the text say specifically? They feared God.

Now, I've talked in the past about the fear of the Lord. Can anybody tell me, what is the fear of the Lord? It is awe, respect, and obedience. It is a recognition that there is a God to whom I am accountable.

It is not terror. It is not. Where is he going to hit me next? Absolutely not. The fear of the Lord is clean.

I love the psalm that says the secrets of the Lord are for those who fear him. Another version of that verse is, the friendship of the Lord is for them that fear him. So, we're not talking about some kind of abject terror where we're afraid that if we look at God cross-eyed, he's going to whack us.

That's not it at all. It is a way of living built on the realization there is a God to whom I am responsible. No, I've used them as an illustration in a sermon on the fear of the Lord.

Yeah. Let's look at Psalm 34—verse 11.

Come, my children, listen to me. I'll teach you the fear of the Lord. Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil, your lips from telling lies, turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.

Verse 6 says, this poor man called, and the Lord heard him. He saved him out of all his, and this version says troubles, out of all his fears. If you fear the Lord, you don't have to fear anything else.

So, these two women were not afraid of Pharaoh because they had a more important fear and that was the fear of the Lord. If our lives are built on the fear of the Lord, we can live with confidence in every situation that we might face. So, what did God do for the midwives? Back to Exodus.

He blessed them and gave them children. Isn't that interesting? They protected the children of the ladies of Israel, and God gave them children in return. God has a way of doing that.

When we are more concerned about meeting the needs of others, God has a way of meeting our needs. But when we focus on our needs, it seems like it puts a stopper in God's conduit of blessing. But when we forget about that and focus on the needs of others, the conduit is open, and God can pour out his blessings upon us, supplying our needs in his way and in his time.

You know, to me, it seems that these women have that courage because they are confronting an all-powerful man. Absolutely. They are just women.

Yes. And if you could have just committed the capital crime, Exactly.

Exactly, yeah. Off with your head. Yeah.

Yeah. So, I would wonder if in a few years, they say a few years, but I'm wondering if there wasn't a sort of an up-surf or a drowning. Yes, I think you're right.

As a group. As a group. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

I'll have to put to death a whole bunch of people, and that might have repercussions. I think you're right. I think that has a lot of merit.

Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah. This is what Jesus says.

Don't be afraid of him, who can kill your body. Be afraid of him, who can kill your body and send you to hell. Namely, God.

Exactly. Yes, there's great wisdom in obeying the Lord. Psalm 56 is another that is so significant on these lines.

The superscription says it was written while David was in prison with the Philistines. He had pretended to be crazy and they threw him in jail to talk about it and he's not sure what's going to come out of this. Very, very significant psalm.

Verse 3. When I am afraid, I put my trust in you in God, whose word I praise. In God, I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? And then down in verses 10 and 11. In God whose word I praise in the Lord whose word I praise in God I trust and am not afraid what can mere human beings do to me? In the one verse he calls us meat. Flesh.

What can flesh do to me? In the second one, he calls us Adam, which is related to the ground. What can a piece of meat do to me? What can a cloud of dust do to me? I trust the Lord. And that's these ladies.

So, according to verse 22 of chapter 1 what's the second problem? The first problem is they are enslaved out of the promised land. What does verse 22 say? Right. No more boy children.

Girl children are okay. No more boys. Now, what's the significance of that? Precisely.

We're going to put this ethnic group out of existence. The girls will marry Egyptian boys. And their children will thus be Egyptians.

And we'll keep some of this Hebrew energy going. We won't kill everybody. But we will destroy this ethnic group.

How does that relate to the promise? That's right. You will be a kingdom—a kingdom of priests.

Not if all those boys are killed. So, the human problem that we have is now, let me ask you, what question does this raise about God? Can God keep His promises? So, this problem is not merely a human problem. It is a divine problem.

And that's true of sin. Sin is God's problem as well as ours because He made us for fellowship. He made us for heaven.

And if the devil is able to persist and destroy us in hell forever, God has been defeated. So, sin is not merely a human problem. Sin is a problem for God as well.

Someone says, well, God doesn't need us. And that's certainly true. But God wants us.

So, the need for deliverance is a human-divine problem. Alright, let's push on to chapter 2. Why do you think they put the kid in the basket in the river? Now, again, I've said this before. I'll say it again.

There are lots of questions the Bible doesn't answer for us. So, I cannot stand before you and say I have the answer, and all your answers are wrong. No, I don't.

But there are many situations like this where the Bible invites us into the story to think about it and wonder. And that's entirely legitimate. What do you think? Why did they do that? Alright, alright.

The Nile was the mother of the Egyptians. So, there's some sort of logic in putting this baby on the breast of the mother. It was not that Jochebed and Amram necessarily believed that, but simply in terms of Egypt.

Yeah, I think that's a very real possibility. What else? I have often wondered that. If they didn't sit down and say, you know, you know what? That princess and her servants come down every morning to take their bath right over there.

What if we put... Yes, yes, yes. They are truly entrusting the child to the providence of God. They were supposed to kill the baby.

And they refused to do that. At the same time, they understood if they held on to him for themselves, he would be killed. And so, they really are trusting this child to the providence of God.

Not so much to the providence of the Nile as they are to the God who owns the Nile. Yes. Yes, God did that.

And that comes down here just in another set of questions. Yeah, yeah, yeah. See, the princess could say, that's a Hebrew baby, kill him.

Yeah. So again, it is... They have no assurance how this thing is going to turn out. Why did Pharaoh's daughter defy her father's command? Now look at the text, look at the text.

The baby cried. Yep, yep. If you don't believe there are differences between men and women, come see me afterward.

And one of them is right there. The kid is crying. Shut up.

Oh, he's crying. Her heart is moved with compassion. And the compassion of a woman's heart is greater than a father's command.

I can't absolutely say, but I'm all but certain that that's exactly right. This is the one place. So I think that's exactly the point.

If he hadn't been crying, maybe he wouldn't have survived. But because he was crying, her heart was moved. And once he was in her arms, that was the end of the story.

Yes, that's a possibility, too, that she was already opposed to this idea. Yes, I think very much so. Now then, the arrangements in verses 7, 8, and 9. What do those tell us about God and his providence? Perfect timing.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Protect her and deliver her. Yes.

Jochebed, and by the way, Jochebed means Yahweh is glorious. Jochebed gave up her baby, and God gave her baby back to her. She got paid for doing what her body desperately needed to do.

And that's like God. That's like God. Now, verse 10 says that when he was weaned, they gave him back to the princess, and he became her son.

Why would God choose to have Moses raised by the oppressors? He had to know the culture and speak their language. Wrong? Okay. Yes.

Now, Egyptian pharaohs were expected to prove their fertility by fathering as many children as physically possible. Some of the pharaohs are reported to have had 80 and 90 children. They had a special festival every seven years to re-up the pharaoh's fertility.

An early version of Vulgate, I think. Well, what are you going to do with all those royal children? You populated the civil service and the military and the priesthood with them. So, a son of pharaoh would have been trained in civil administration.

He would have been trained in military operations. He would have been trained in all of the arts of the Egyptians. Again, that's so like God.

Now, what does this tell us about God, anyway? He said that he would use the oppressors to train the deliverer. Sense of humor, yes. He plans ahead.

He did it with Paul. He is very economical. Nothing is wasted if we allow it.

Everything that comes into our lives can be used by God for his good purposes. Yes. He doesn't choose the able.

He enables the chosen. Yes, yes. Gather the pieces that are left over.

Let nothing be wasted. Yes, yes. And we can look back on our lives and see moments of sorrow and futility where it seemed that all of that was just a by-road.

But keep your eyes open. God is able to use anything if we'll let him. Chapter 2, verses 11 to 15.

What qualities of Moses come out of this incident? Compassion, yes. He sees an injustice being done, and he's moved. What else? He's a soldier.

Love for his own people. Confidence. How about impetuous? He knew when to run.

What was his idea of delivering his people? Brute force. Whose brute force? Moses' brute force. Done without cost to himself.

Done in secret. Done one by one. God had different plans.

That he was training God. He did not know that was so strong that it kept him in that place. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

The Jesuits said, give us a boy till he's seven, and we have him forever. We don't know how long it took to wean the child. Maybe a long, long time.

But yes, yes. He did not forget what his real heritage was. So, what does verse 14 tell us about the Hebrews? Were they grateful? No.

Were they responsive to what Moses was trying to do? No. No. Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me like you killed the Egyptian? As I read that, I thought, oh brother, that's them, and it's going to be them for the next 40 years.

Yeah, I think it's a good question. I don't think they necessarily were, but again, what right have you to tell me what to do? Verses 16 to 22, especially verse 21, what does this tell us about Moses at this point in his life? I'd be interested at some different translations of verse 21 as to the verb about Moses. I've got the NIV here.

It says, Moses agreed to stay. Anybody got a different one? Moses was content to stay. He was willing to dwell.

He accepted the invitation. He eventually decided, yes. All of those are trying to convey that idea that Moses was settling down in this situation.

I tried and I failed. What else could a guy do? A guy offered me a job. He offered me his daughter.

Why not? Pardon? Well, if he had a real concern for his people, he could have said, I'm sorry. I've got to find some way to get back to Egypt. I don't know how it'll work, but I've got to get back somehow for the sake of my people.

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. It's just I don't see that God saying anything here.

Oh, unquestionably. Unquestionably. But I think he was at work in spite of Moses.

We may say it took him 40 years to get to the point where his work was finished, and I wouldn't dispute that, but simply. I don't know. I mean, suppose he had said, oh God.

I'm just so broken over my people's bondage. Here I am in freedom in Midian and my people are suffering making bricks.

God, is there some way you could use me? No, no. He was content to stay right where he was. I, I, I was going to say I have the slightest idea.

I've got a slight idea. I think it was very much a kind of historical thing. We'll talk next week about God identifying himself as the God of your fathers.

And I think that it was like, if I may dare say it, being a United Methodist, like a lot of United Methodists. Grandpa used to go to this church. That's why I'm here.

That's my guess. Is that it was a kind of a historical memory. And that, yes, yes.

But I doubt that it was very much more than that. Yeah. Yeah.

And again, again, it is, God never loses anything. Now, see, where I would draw a line, some people would say, yes, so God intended him to be in the desert in order to prepare him. I'm not willing to go there.

I'm more inclined to say he spent that 40 years in the desert because he didn't want to go back to Egypt. But God was able to use even that for his good purposes. That's the kind of God we serve.

Even, even if we should be out of his will, that doesn't mean God can't use that time for his good purposes. Plans God already had? Don't know. Don't know.

But I'm confident that Moses did not ask God while he was in Egypt. God, how do you want to use me with my training and background to deliver my people? I'm confident he did not ask that question. He said, I'm going to save my people one at a time and it's not going to hurt me. And then he discovers it is going to hurt him.

He's out of there. Oh, yes, yes. Oh, absolutely not.

We'll talk about that next week at length. He's determined not to go back. Those people are going to try to kill me.

What do you think, God? And, but yes, by the time it's over, Jethro, I need to go back to Egypt. Okay, we need to wrap up here. I want to look at the last two verses of chapter two, which are very important in this whole account.

During that long this is verses 23 and 24. During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God.

Now, God, what? Heard their groaning, and he, what? Remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and Jacob. So, God looked on the Israelites and acknowledged them. This says he was concerned about them.

I don't think this is the best translation. God knew them. God didn't try to deny who they were to him and who he was to them.

Now, those verbs are so significant. God heard and saw. What does that tell us about God? He's aware.

He is sensitive. He remembered. What does that say? What does he remember about these people, do you think? He hadn't forgotten them, yeah? He remembered his covenant.

He is faithful. He keeps his promises. I can't leave these people in Egypt.

I made some promises back there three, four hundred years ago. Man, God, that's four hundred years ago. Yes, it is.

But I made promises. He couldn't get Moses' attention. And he acknowledged them.

He knew them. What does that tell us? Omniscience? Somebody comes to me and says, hey, you know, Joe Blow, he was drunk. He wrecked his car.

He's in jail. Do you know him? Joe Blow? No, not me, I never heard of him. In fact, he's my next-door neighbor.

What's God saying? He's not ashamed to call them his own. He has compassion. He cares.

So, thanks for your patience, patience. What is the cause of deliverance? God's character and nature. Doesn't matter about how well Moses has been trained.

It doesn't matter how appropriate his character and nature might be for the task that's eventually going to be given to him. If God was not the kind of God he is, the Hebrew people would still be in Egypt. The problem is they weren't.

No, I think we're going to see in these next chapters, we're going to see the Hebrews telling Moses, leave us alone. We like making bricks. But I understand what you're saying and certainly it's true.

There has to be this underlying memory. Who is the God of our fathers? What has he been like? So that ultimately, yes, you're right. There has to be some sort of a platform that ultimately faith can be created on.

But it was a long, slow haul to get that platform reconstructed. Yes. Exactly.

Exactly. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah, I think that's exactly right. I talk, I guess, next time about the probable dates of the Exodus. I tend to take the early date and if that's so, then Moses' birth would be very near the beginning of this new kingdom.

The Pharaoh who knew not Joseph. And so, yes. Yes.

They've been very comfortable. They hadn't felt any need to go home until things turned bad and then they weren't able to go home. Oh, I do.

Yes. Again, I think their religion was very, very nominal. I think if you had said to them who do you worship, they would have said, oh, we worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Who's that? We don't know. But we worship him. Again, I've met some of those people.

Okay, friends. Thanks so much for your faithfulness. We'll try to do better next time and stick with the hour.

Thank you. Thanks for being here. Look forward to seeing you as you're able through the rest of the spring.

This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Exodus. This is session 1, Exodus 1-2.