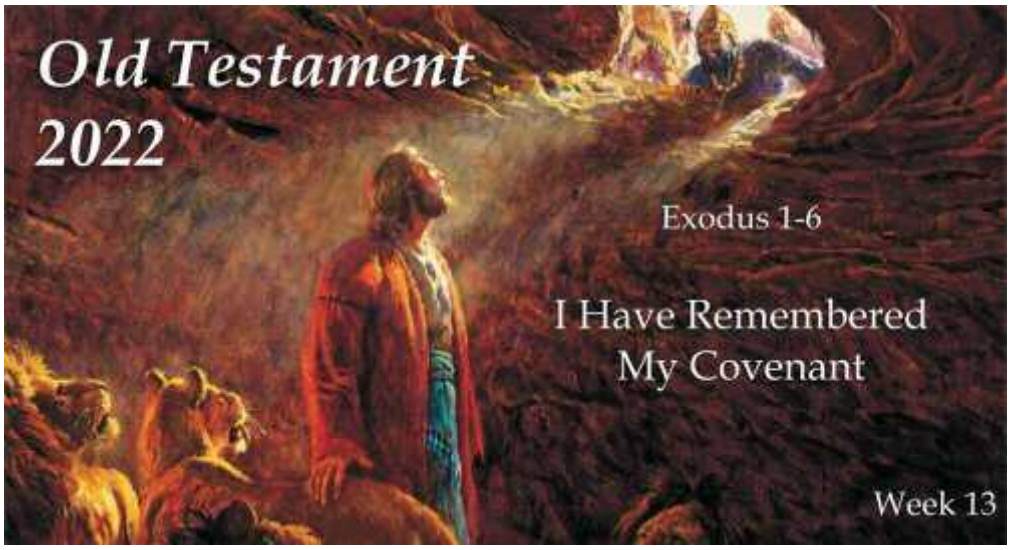


Week 13 is scheduled for study March 21-27, 2022. These chapters in Exodus 1-6 are grand examples of the Lord's love for His people, his sense of timing, and his respect for everyone's agency.

# Day 1

*Begin your study with a prayer, and ask for help to find messages in Exodus 1-6 that are relevant to your life and to your service to God's kingdom.*

**Exodus 1-2 - Jesus Christ is the Deliverer.**

I have mentioned a number of times in the past that God frequently gives us physical examples of His spiritual doings to help us understand what He is about. The entire life of Moses, his experiences and work as the deliverer of Israel is a type or likeness of Christ delivering us from the bondage we may personally be experiencing. Moses was the physical example of deliverance, and Christ is the spiritual example. We are asked to look to Moses to see how the Lord did His work through Moses then look to Christ to better understand what he is offering us in the way of spiritual deliverance.

Here is an article I just wrote that discusses the reasons for God allowing Israel to go into bondage in the first place. Reading this article might help you in your efforts to compare the deliverance Moses offered with the deliverance Christ offers. Why Did God Allow Israel to Be Slaves?

As pointed out in the article, God knew, and told His prophets that the day would come when their posterity would be slaves in a foreign land. He also promised to send their posterity a savior (not the Messiah) to deliver them from bondage. From the reading in Exodus 1, it appears the people were able to handle being in bondage in Egypt, until they got a Pharaoh that was particularly suspicious of them, and did all in his power to crush their spirits. It was their cries to God that caused the Lord to declare that the time of their deliverance had arrived. The people finally had a "good reason" to want to leave Egypt. They had been in one of the most fertile parts of Egypt for four centuries. They were settled and comfortable, until Pharaoh made sure they hated being there.

Are you seeing your life in this story yet? I sure am (my life, not yours). Speaking from personal experience, sometimes I get settled in a rut that slowly leads me away from the Lord. Because I am comfortable I don't recognize my own precarious position before the Lord. But when life gets hard, and I am feeling beaten down, suddenly I remember my God with more earnestness than before. Now I am in a better position for Him to bless me and lead me away from my spiritual bondage, no matter what form that bondage comes in.

I also recognize that it is often the case that in order to leave our bondage, much must be left behind. In the case of the Israelites, they had to leave their homes, jobs, and the land of their forefathers in order to find freedom from bondage. My freedom may mean I need to change who I hang out with, a change in friends, my job, my recreational activities - I may even need to change my personal habits at home, like including scripture study, prayer, and pondering daily. Change is rarely a comfortable thing. But these kinds of changes also bring the Lord's blessings. He makes the offers, but we have to accept them and do what is necessary to receive them.

# Day 2

*Begin your study with a prayer, and ask for help to find messages in Exodus 1-6 that are relevant to your life and to your service to God's kingdom.*

**Exodus 3-4 - God gives power to those He calls to do His work.**

Moses was a convert. He was raised by gentiles. He only learned of his own heritage as an adult. Coming to learn of the ways of those who worshiped Jehovah had to be

learned from the ground up. Moses didn't know anything about God and how He works with His children. He had to learn that from his family. Since his father-in-law was a high priest, my guess is that Jethro taught Moses a lot about worshiping the Lord. After the Lord revealed Himself to Moses, it was the Lord who did a lot of the teaching.

Just because Moses had spoken with God in his burning bush experience, it doesn't mean that he was "tight" with the Lord. Moses was supposed to have circumcised his son, but for whatever reason didn't do it. God became angry with him for stalling. He even threatened to kill Moses because of his disobedience, but his wife stepped in and did the deed herself, saving her husband's life. She wasn't very happy with him either. How many times do we have favors given us from the Spirit, a testimony, an insight, or a vision of how things could or should be, but then lapse back into our old ways and betray what we have been given? This is the very process by which we lose many converts to the Church. They don't understand that these temptations happen, and that their life will be happier if they seek the Lord and settle their debts with Him. Moses finally learned his lesson in this regard.

When Moses was given his assignment to go to Pharaoh, Moses balked at the charge. He had some sort of speech impediment and was very uncomfortable with speaking in front of people. We may know Moses as this great spiritual mountain of a man, but when he was first called to be a spokesman for God, Moses was little more than a mouse of a man. So the Lord did for Moses what He always does for us, He compensated to help Moses achieve what had to be done, despite his own limitations (Moses, not God). The Lord gave Moses a mouthpiece in the form of his own brother, Aaron. So Moses received the word of the Lord from God then communicated it to his brother, who then told the people, because Aaron was good with words and was comfortable speaking in front of others.

I once knew a Bishop who was a tenderhearted man. He was so tender that every time I saw him he seemed to be crying. I think the calling of a Bishop was probably the most difficult one he had ever been given. Can you even imagine spending eight years weeping with every person who came and confessed something to you? He felt everything deeply. He never did overcome his own tenderheartedness. I don't think he stopped crying until he was released.

We aren't always prepared for what the Lord has in mind for us. Often we must grow into the calling. New skills may also be needed. I am in my mid 60's and was just called to teach music in the Primary with my wife. Any rational person would have assumed I would play the piano and my wife would lead the singing. But my wife doesn't sing, and we already have a pianist. So every week those poor children get me up there teaching them how to be a snowman tall, tall, tall. I've learned that any song or activity that requires us to spin around more than once causes me to fall over, so I don't do that any more. My point is that I am completely out of my comfort zone. The Lord is having to instruct me one experience at a time on how to teach these precious little ones the gospel of Christ through music.

What experiences have you had where the Lord has placed you in an uncomfortable position that required you to grow and change to fulfill your calling?

# Day 3

*Begin your study with a prayer, and ask for help to find messages in Exodus 1-6 that are relevant to your life and to your service to God's kingdom.*

**Exodus 5-6 - The Lord's purposes will be fulfilled in His own time.**

Have you ever noticed that when it comes to God things usually happen at what seems like a snail's pace? If God is anything at all, besides loving, it is patient. He knows how to wait until the time is right. When we decide something ought to happen, we get impatient and want it all to happen right now! But the Lord knows how to set small things in motion that will develop over time and eventually lead to what needs to happen. Many of His most famous projects developed over multiple thousands of years. Take the Book of Mormon as an example. Jacob promised his son Joseph that his posterity would write a book that when paired with the writings of the Jews would testify of Christ, resolve contention, and convert many people. It was more than a thousand years before the book was finally compiled from the writings of individual prophets. And it was almost another thousand years before it was translated into English by Joseph Smith. Yes, the Lord is patient, and He accomplishes great things by enacting innumerable little things.

This pattern of patience and small things leading to bigger things is happening in our lives all the time. The Lord gives us many, many small experiences that help us accept and deal with larger events later in our lives. It is mainly through hindsight that we see His hand in all things both past and present. We can only guess what we will see in the future.

One might wonder why the Lord would make Israel wait 400 years before leading them to the Promised Land. Agency is everything in this instance. The Amorite people weren't wicked enough yet to be destroyed, so Israel just had to wait until the Amorites were fully ripe in their iniquities. The Lord couldn't rightly have them destroyed until they had completely embraced the evil that would justify such a punishment. And if that meant Israel had to wait in bondage for a while, well, His blessings could recompense for all that. What is important here is that the Amorites not have their agency tampered with or violated. Isn't it nice to know that God respects the agency of even the most wicked as much as He respects our agency, or the agency of the most righteous? He is truly fair to all.

It is precisely because the Lord kno i s all, and doesn't jump into something before it is the best time for it to happen, that we need to practice patience with the Lord's timing. Trusting that our Father in Heaven always has our best interest at heart can be daunting at times, but when we count our blessings and remind ourselves of all the times He has been there for us in the past, it will help us find the trust and patience to lean on His wisdom and timing in the future.

# FHE/Personal Study

### Exodus 5:2 - What does it mean to know the Lord?

Exodus 5:2

> 2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

The scriptures have mistakenly been rendered into reading that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and that is the reason he wouldn't let Israel go to worship their God. We know that God never does such a thing. If anyone hardens anything, it is each of us

hardening our own heart. Pharaoh had no experience with the God of the Israelites, so he didn't trust Him or them.

I would like to share a personal example of what it means to know someone. My wife and I got married. For me it was a second marriage. It [i]as her first. She was 45 years old. My children and I came into her life when her life was already halfway over. All we knew of her was what we saw of her at that age. We've now been married more than twenty years. The other day she said to me, "The children don't know me, and I am afraid they never will. They don't know that I had a passion for travel, camping, cross-country skiing, and a love of the national parks. They only know me as someone who just had knee surgery, has heart trouble, and needs help. Our children will never know the real me."

In some ways I will never know the woman my wife used to be, because I never experienced her the way she used to be. The year she got married she got bifocals and four children. Those events were anything but what she would have anticipated happening to her the year before. When it comes to knowing our Father in Heaven, what we need to know is His eternal personality now. What He is now is, for all intents and purposes, He always has been and always will be. His personality has been perfect for eons of time, and these are the traits He wants us to come to understand.

Understanding the perfection of God comes with experience. Like Pharaoh, if we never have any experiences with God's love, His patience, understanding, timing, His sense of justice, or His great mercy and tenderness, how can we ever say we know Him? Like our children not knowing the habits of my wife, they also don't know her desires that drove her love of nature and beauty and made her desire to spend time outdoors. For our children to know her, they would have to do the things she did and try to appreciate what she saw and experienced that caused her to love the great outdoors as she does. How are we ever supposed to come to know God if we don't try to learn to be more like Him?

You've heard the oft quoted adage that to know someone you must walk a mile in their shoes. Well, getting to know God means we must practice His virtues, and try to emulate His sense of kindness, mercy, and tolerance. Without realworld, practical experience of what a life like His entails, yes, we will never understand Him or be able

to say we know Him. Without becoming more like Him, His attributes will always be shrouded in mystery.

Click the link below to

print a PDF copy of the article.

OT13-2022 – I Have Remembered My Covenant

Week 13