

Exodus for All the Earth

by John Piper

John Piper's sermon explores God's purpose in the exodus of Israel, emphasizing His commitment to glorifying Himself and redeeming humanity through faith.

Scripture: Genesis 1:27, Exodus 9:16, Isaiah 43:7, Romans 5:12, Hebrews 11:31

Topics: "Gods Glory", "Redemption Plan"

Description

John Piper preaches on God's purpose in creating humanity in His image, to reflect His glory and fill the earth with His praise. Despite the entrance of sin through Adam, God initiated a plan of redemption through Abraham, demonstrating His faithfulness and love. The exodus from Egypt, a pivotal event in Israel's history, was orchestrated by God to display His glory, fulfill His promises, and draw all nations to worship Him. Through these events, God's ultimate aim was to magnify His own glory in the world and bring salvation to His people.

Transcript

November 8, 1981

"God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them and God said to them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it' (Gen. 1:27,28). The reason God made us in his own image and told us to fill the earth is that he intends that "the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21). God made us in his image so that angels above and demons below might see in us and in the way we live our lives a reflection of the glorious divine image. The image of God was not so much intended to draw attention to the glory of man over the animals, but to the glory of God over man. We bear the stamp of an infinitely higher Being upon us and we are to live that He might be magnified and that His glory might fill the earth.

But, as we learned from Genesis 3 and Romans 5, "sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all men sinned " (Romans 5:12). "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). That is, everyone of us is prone to seek his own glory rather than the glory of God. We are bent on self-reliance rather than God-reliance. And from this root grow all the sins of the world. "A bad tree cannot bear good fruit" (Matt. 7:18). Ever since the fall of Adam into sin, the bent of all humanity (apart from renewal by the Holy Spirit) has been to frustrate God's purpose to fill the earth with his glory (Romans 1:20-23).

But God with a double view, to his glory on the one hand and to the salvation of his people on the other, took steps to reclaim his creation. He planted a mustard seed. That is, he chose one man Abraham and made him an astonishing, free and utterly certain promise: "I will bless you so that you will be a blessing ... by you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:2,3). "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you ... to be God to you and to your descendants after you." (Gen. 17:7). And an amazing transaction happened between God and Abraham: Abraham believed God and God justified Abraham (Gen. 15:6). Abraham took God at his word and rested in his promise--so much so that he was ready to obey God in sacrificing his own son through whom God had promised to give Abraham a great posterity! Abraham banked wholly on the promises of God for his security and happiness and God justified him: he acquitted him of all his sins, past, present and future. Which meant that he was for him and not against him. Now all the galaxy-sustaining power of God was in the harness of his mercy toward Abraham and not the harness of his wrath.

The New Testament picks up on this transaction and makes it the model of how men and women get right with God in every age. If we have the faith of Abraham (Rom. 4:16), that is, if we give up self-confidence and bank on the promises of God for our happiness and security, God forgives all sins and engages to pursue us with goodness and mercy all our life. We stand justified and clean and free before the judge of heaven and earth.

All the precious gifts of justification, persevering sanctification, and final glorification were purchased by Jesus Christ as he took our punishment on the cross and repaired once for all the injury that all our sins have done to the glory of God. The death of Christ purchased Abraham's redemption 2000 years earlier and Abraham Christian Piper's redemption 2000 years later. We know that today, and so our faith and hope are in Jesus Christ. But Abraham did not know how God could acquit sinners and still be just. He left that in God's hands and simply banked on God's word of promise.

Between the election of Abraham and the coming of Jesus Christ to purchase (by his substitutionary death) the blessings of Abraham, there were 2000 years of history in which God dealt with the people of Israel in a way that he dealt with no other people. Why did God wait 2000 years to send his Son into the world to die for sin? Why did God limit his redemptive dealings almost entirely to this one people Israel for those 2000 years?

The answer suggested in the New Testament is that the long history of Israel was necessary in order to make some things plain to the world and in order to enable us to grasp most fully the meaning of the incarnation of God's son, his substitutionary atonement, and justification by faith apart from works of the law. The events of Israel's history are treated as types or examples to help us grasp and follow the way of salvation (1 Cor. 10:6,11; Rom. 15:4). For example, in Romans 3:19 Paul says, "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law (that is, the Jews), so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable before God." In other words, in his dealings with Israel, God always had a view to the world. Israel is an example and her history (the O.T.) is a lesson book for all the world to read. Therefore, when we read the history of Israel in the Old Testament we should ask ourselves: How did God aim to benefit the world, and us Gentiles in particular, by this or that series of events?

Let's keep this question in mind as we focus our attention briefly on one of the most important and memorable events of Israel's history: the exodus from Egypt. The story leading from Abraham to the exodus is familiar: Abraham had a son named Isaac according to promise; Isaac had two sons, Jacob and

Esau and, again according to promise, the younger--Jacob, gained the birthright and the blessing. Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, had twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel. Through an amazing turn of events Jacob's whole clan--about 70 in all--moved to Egypt and in the next 400 years multiplied into a great nation. Eventually, Pharaoh felt threatened by this foreign people and subjected them to slavery and abuse. The people begin to cry out to God for deliverance and God sends Moses and Aaron to lead them out of bondage and into the land promised to Abraham centuries earlier.

Now of all the questions we could ask about the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the only one I want to focus on today is why God did it. What was the motivation that moved God to call Moses, pour out ten plagues on Egypt and finally deliver his people by a spectacular miracle, the dividing of the Red Sea? And keep in mind that not far in the back of our minds is the question how God, in dealing with Israel, had a view to the world.

There were at least three motives for God's delivering Israel out of bondage the way he did. And just like a tree with roots and trunk and branches is a unity (it is one tree) so these three motives are unified as root, trunk and branch. The root motive is God's passionate commitment to magnify his glory in the world. His aim in the plagues and exodus was "that his name might be declared throughout all the nations" (Ex. 9:16). But no one will glorify a God who can't keep his word. And therefore from the root motive grows the trunk, namely, God's commitment to his promises. He led the people out of Egypt because he had promised Abraham that his descendants would return to Canaan (Gen. 15:14). The exodus was a promise kept. Then out of the trunk of God's commitment to his promises grow the branches of blessing to his people which they experience as his love. God's promises are for their good. They are promises of his love.

I think it is tremendously important for us to keep this tree right side up. We live in a day when, even in evangelical Christendom, the tree is being turned upside down with the branches suffocating in the ground and the roots drying up in the sun. Do we not hear often that what moves God is the value of man? But how often do we hear that what moves God is the value of his own glory and his zeal to display it in the world? Yet it is precisely this root commitment of God that sustain and nourishes the loving value that he sets upon man. If we do not keep this order of things clear in our theology and in our prayer, it will be no wonder when the branches of blessing shrivel up, cut off from the deepest motivation of God's heart: his passionate commitment to magnify his own glory in all the world.

Let's look at these three motives in the Biblical record. Turn to Deuteronomy 7:6-8. Here Moses looks back on the exodus from Egypt and answers why God did this. "You are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord Your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." Verse 8 mentions the branches and the trunk of God's motive in delivering Israel from bondage. "Because the Lord loves you": the Lord aims to do good things for Israel; he has their best interest at heart. Therefore, he is bringing them out of slavery and into the promised land. But also: "He is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers." Very specifically in Genesis 15:13,14 God said to Abraham, "Know for sure that your descendants will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be slaves there, and they will be oppressed for 400 years; but I will bring judgment on the nation which they serve and afterward they shall come out with great possessions." God had promised he would do it and so the

integrity of his name hangs on the success of the exodus. His commitment to his word of promise brings the blessings of his love and these two motives (root and branch) move God to deliver Israel from Egypt.

But there is something deeper. The prophet Isaiah makes the deeper commitment crystal clear. God says in Isaiah 43:7, "I created Israel for my glory." In 43:21, "I formed this people for myself that they might declare my praise." In 46:13, "I will put salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." In 60:21, "Your people shall be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the shoot of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified." Israel exists, most basically, for the display of God's glory--both that Israel herself might know and worship an all-glorious God, and also that the world might see that Israel's God is the truly glorious God and worship him.

Turn with me to Exodus 10:1,2. Here God states his purpose to be glorified by Israel in coming generations for what he did in Egypt: "then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your son's son how I have made sport of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Lord.'" God aimed to free his people in such an amazing display of sovereign power and authority that all the successive generations in Israel would extol his glory as the only true God.

But not only was Israel in view, God aimed to wake up all Egypt to his glory as judgment fell on Pharaoh and his army. In Exodus 14, God leads the people in their escape precisely to where it looks like they are trapped and then says in verse 3, "For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are entangled in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' And I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." Again in verse 18, "And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen." God's purpose in delivering Israel the way he did goes beyond Israel: he aims to win the Egyptians to worship him as well for his incomparable glory.

But not only were Israel and Egypt in view. This is an exodus for all the world. In Exodus 9:15,16 God says to Pharaoh, "By now I could have put forth my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence and you would have been cut off from the earth; but for this purpose I have let you live (or: raised you up), to show you my power, so that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (cf. Romans 9:17). This event was not done in a corner. It was done for all the world to see so that hearts might fear and melt before the great and terrible God of Israel and surrender to him and accept him as Savior and Lord.

Hebrews 11:31 tells of a prostitute named Rahab who lived in Jericho, a city in Canaan, forty years after the time of the exodus. Hebrews says she had faith in the God of Israel and so helped Israel's spies and was saved. How did she come to accept the Lordship of Yahweh, the God of Israel? Here is what she says to the spies in Joshua 2:9-10, "I know the Lord has given you the land and that the fear of you has fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt." That's how she got saved. God's purpose was that his name be declared throughout all the earth. And so it was. His reputation ran ahead of his people to Canaan and brought Rahab to faith and opened the door to the promised land.

And here we are 4000 years later declaring the same glorious name because of the same mighty act of deliverance, just as God had intended. This is our God, now revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ. And I think

that God would be very pleased if we, in response to his great act of deliverance, join our voices now in praise and "ponder anew what the Almighty can do."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-piper/exodus-for-all-the-earth/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net