

## International Conversation Café

Bible Topic: Deliverance from Slavery: Exodus

Take a moment to look over the vocabulary before reading through the discussion.

*Exodus* – a way out of a country or slavery

*Oppression* – hardship caused by other humans

*Exaltation* – to be in a high position

*Obstinate* – to be stubborn

*Yield* – to give up one's right or power

*Intervene* – to enter a situation to stop it

*Resonate* – to touch one's heart or soul

*Plague*- in the Bible, a disaster that is caused by disease or natural or supernatural phenomenon

Different peoples have longed to be free from *oppression*. Notable among them were the African-Americans who suffered under the slavery system in the US in the 17th and 18th centuries. The southern economy was dependent on slave labor so that agriculture would be profitable to the white farmers. The southern farmers strongly resisted the efforts of people to free the slaves. Because of slavery, the African-Americans related to the book of Exodus and the slavery of the Jewish people under Pharaoh. The phrase used by Moses to Pharaoh was, "Let my people go." This thought *resonated* with African American slaves.

1. *Where is slavery a problem in the world today?*
2. *Describe what slavery looks like today.*

### The background of the book of Exodus

The book of Genesis tells how the people of Israel ended up in slavery in Egypt. Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, had twelve sons, the second to last being Joseph. Joseph had dreams that predicted his *exaltation*. When he told his brothers about the dreams, they hated him for what they felt was his attitude of superiority. The brothers became jealous of him. So strong was their jealousy that Jacob's brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt. In time, Joseph rose to become second in command to Pharaoh. However, much later, a new king came to power who did not know Joseph or his children. He oppressed the Jewish people by enslaving them to his building projects. They were forced to make mud bricks.

Exodus tells the story of God's faithfulness to His people Israel. God saw Israel's hardship as slaves in Egypt. He wanted to save them and bring them back to freedom in the land He had given Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

*Retell the story thus far.*

### The story in Exodus

In time, God brought a rescuer for the Jewish people. A Jewish mother and father in Egypt gave birth to a baby who was later named Moses. At this time, Pharaoh had ordered the Jewish midwives to kill the Jewish newborn sons. They refused. Moses' parents tried to hide him and finally put him in a basket in

the Nile. From there he drifted to shore where the daughter of Pharaoh found him and brought him up as her own son. As a grown man, Moses tried to intervene and stop an Egyptian boss from beating his people, the Jews. Moses killed the Egyptian and then had to flee to Midian, a desert area. After 40 years God called Moses to rescue the Jews and lead them out of Egypt.

The Lord said (to Moses), "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 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

*Take turns telling this part of the story.*

*God used Moses to rescue Israel from the oppression of slavery in Egypt. What role do people have to free people from slavery? Give an example.*

*What role do you think God has to free people?*

God warned Pharaoh through Moses that *plagues* would come to for Egypt if he did not release the Jews. Ten plagues rocked Egypt. God patiently warned the king of Egypt to release Israel. But Pharaoh was *obstinate*; he would not *yield* and release the Jews. The final judgment on Pharaoh was the death of the firstborn son throughout all the land of Egypt. At this Pharaoh set Israel free, but then he pursued them. When Israel approached the Red Sea, Israel through it on dry ground. When Pharaoh's soldiers followed in the path of the Israelites, the waters returned to their natural place and all his troops drowned. Israel was finally free.

*Tell the story in your own words how God delivered Israel from Egypt.*

### **God values all people**

God never intended that people live in slavery. Read the following passage from Genesis 1 and explain how God intended people to live in relationship with each other.

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,<sup>[a]</sup> and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

<sup>27</sup> So God created humanity in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26-27

*What do you think is the significance of people being created in God's image, as his representatives on earth?*

*Do you think God sets people free from slavery today? Why or why not?*

