

# It's the Relationship

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[ 0 : 00 ] Exodus chapter 4 and we ended up in verse 23 last week.

And there he will present himself to the elders of Israel and explain to them what God has done and what God has said.

And show to them some miracles that God has already shown through Moses. And then also he is to go to Pharaoh and speak to him.

And so he'll do that after a while. But that's kind of what we saw God beginning to do. So Moses now leaves his father-in-law, takes leave of him, and then goes and takes his wife and the kids and head back toward Egypt.

God told him then, when you go, when you go back to Egypt, he said, you're to go before Pharaoh with all the miracles and things that I'm going to give to you.

[ 1 : 26 ] And some of them I have already given to you. And you are to perform those before Pharaoh. And so we, of course, we'll see later on what happens in all of that.

But again, realize we kind of left off last week with the idea that God said that he's going to harden Pharaoh's heart. And the reality that not only does God harden Pharaoh's heart, but we see indications in some of that, that Pharaoh hardens his own heart.

And that's kind of manifested by the reality that he doesn't care what God says. He pays no attention to what God has said through Moses and Aaron.

And he's just totally oblivious to what they said. And so he's hardened his heart. There's no sensitivity at all in him toward the things of God.

And that's a dangerous place to be, is it not? When God cannot get through to your spirit, and you're just without any sensitivity to what God has said at all.

[ 2 : 33 ] So Moses heads back to Egypt, looking like a poor shepherd, no doubt. But he has the staff of God in his hand. Remember the shepherd's crook, the shepherd's staff that he had, that God turned into his staff, if you will, by which he began to perform some miracles through Moses.

And the reality we see is this. One of the things that shows the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, well, we haven't gotten there yet, but in chapter 9, I think it is, when he begins to do these things before Pharaoh, he throws his rod down on the ground, and again it becomes a serpent.

But then Pharaoh's magicians are there, and they throw their rods down, and they become serpents.

So if they can do what Moses does, it's no big deal what Moses does. But what happens, remember, is that the rod of Moses, which became a serpent, then swallows up the serpents of the two magicians from Egypt.

And that's when some of the servants of Pharaoh begin to say, wait a minute, this must be the hand of God. And so even in spite of that, in spite of that, Pharaoh's still totally oblivious to anything God has to say, because he just doesn't care.

[ 3 : 57 ] And of course, he just doesn't know God and doesn't care to know Jehovah. So in verses 22 through 23, remember, he said, Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn.

And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me. And if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn. Now, God says, Tell Pharaoh that Israel is my son, and you are to let him go.

He's my son, that is, he is my firstborn. So let him go, that he may serve me. And if you refuse to let him go, then behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

Now, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, of course, it will be. But he's going to have to get a reality here. He's going to have to face some reality.

He needs to realize how solemn this charge of God is toward him. And show also what his relationship to the people of Israel is, the Israelites.

[ 5 : 15 ] And so that's where he begins to say here, Israel is my son. If you refuse to let him go, then I will slay your firstborn, your son, as well.

Now, remember, Israel was God's firstborn by virtue of the election of God upon the people of Israel to be a people of a particular possession to him.

We see that in Deuteronomy chapter 14, verses 1 and 2. The first part of verse 1 says, ye are the children of the Lord your God.

In other words, you are the children of Jehovah your God. And then verse 2, for thou art an holy people unto Jehovah thy God. And Jehovah hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself above all the nations that are upon the earth.

So it's in lieu of that reality that they are going to become the particular possession of God. Now, that all began with Abraham, of course, with the call of Abraham.

[ 6 : 28 ] What did God call Abraham to do and to be? Okay, very good. The father of many nations, all right? In particular, one nation in particular, and that is the nation through whom the Messiah would come and that in such he would be the father of those, that would be a blessing, if you will.

Remember Genesis 12, would be a blessing to every nation in the world, all people on the face of the earth. All right? And so that's where the process of election for Israel has begun.

When that began with Abraham back in Genesis chapter 11 and chapter 12. So now, the promise is about to be realized.

They are not yet that particular possession. Now, they are in the heart and mind of God. But literally, they are not there yet because that will take place later on when they get to Mount Sinai.

But in the heart and mind of God, it's already a reality. And so, as far as what we see here in chapter 4, the reality of that is now a process that is beginning because God is making the preparations and starting the process of bringing the people of Israel out of Egyptian bondage.

[ 7 : 55 ] So, he calls them thus his son. Israel is Jehovah's son. Now, in Exodus chapter 19, we see he says, Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.

For all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

So, he tells them there that, no doubt, at Sinai. All right? Now, realize as well, something else here. Go to Genesis chapter 17. Genesis chapter 17.

We will take a look at God initiating all of this with Abraham. Or Abram and whom, whose name he changes to Abraham.

Genesis chapter 17. Verse 1. When Abram was 90 years old and nine, Jehovah appeared unto Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God, the El Shaddai, walk before me and be thou perfect, or be thou upright, or sincere.

[ 9 : 17 ] Wouldn't you love to start out on a mission like this when you're 90 plus years old? Amen? Wouldn't you love that? Just wait. Just wait and see what God does.

All right? Now, he said, I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, as for me, that is, as far as I'm concerned, and for my part, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee.

And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generation, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

[ 10 : 29 ] Now, notice that. That's going to be established with him as an everlasting covenant. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.

God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, and their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee.

Every man, child among you, shall be circumcised. Now, we'll stop there, because we'll get into that after a bit. So, it's an everlasting covenant.

That covenant between Israel and God still exists, all right? It's kind of like, it's kind of, it was not kind of like nothing. It's just like, you remember when the Maghurt ruling came down?

When the Indian tribes determined that, it said, this, that our nation, or our nation, Indian nation, and our reservation has never been changed throughout the thing.

[ 11 : 42 ] Ever since that treaty was made, that treaty has never been changed. And the Supreme Court said, you're right, all right? Same thing with Israel and God. God made that covenant with Abraham and all of his seed.

And that, of course, will come through Jacob. And that will never change. He said, it's an everlasting covenant.

So, that covenant still holds today. That's why every nation on the face of the earth needs to be careful how they treat Israel. Amen? Yeah, they need to be careful. You ever wonder why Israel's got one of the greatest air forces in the world?

Amen? Amen? Greatest armies in the world. Yeah. I could go on with that, but I'm not going to. All right. So, it's an everlasting covenant.

He begins in chapter 19 at Sinai, and then it continues forever. Now, so, recognize something here.

[ 12 : 43 ] Israel is my firstborn. My firstborn son. Israel makes the idea here that that relationship between Israel and God, of course, is spiritual in nature.

The election upon which it was founded came through acquiring or buying, making, founding, or establishing that covenant.

Deuteronomy chapter 32, verse 6. God says, Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that bought thee?

Hath he not made thee and established thee? So, you see the reality there, that spiritual nature in that relationship. Now, all of that, of course, comes through the grace of God by adoption that comes through the free grace of God.

We don't have time to get into this, but I'll just make note to you that in Ezekiel chapter 16. Ezekiel chapter 16. God through Ezekiel paints a beautiful picture here of what God did in establishing the nation of Israel.

[ 14 : 08 ] Now, that's not, it's in that, in that chapter, we don't see a relationship of a father to a son, but it's more of a father toward a daughter by adoption.

All right? Beautiful picture. Because it not only shows what he did for them, but it shows his nurture, his care, and his love for her, even though she rebelled against that.

All right? He still claimed her and made her his. Beautiful story. You might want to read that and look at that and study that out because it's a tremendous picture of what we see God speaking of here in that relationship he has with the nation of Israel.

So, it's that fatherly love that constituted that relationship. Remember, Malachi chapter 1, we looked at this a good while back in our Malachi study.

A son honoreth his father, God says to the nation. A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master. If I then be a father, where is mine honor?

[ 15 : 21 ] So, in other words, they were dishonoring God, but he claims here that he was their father. If I be a master, where is my fear? Saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priest that despise my name.

Now, again, that's the essence of the covenant relationship between God and Israel that God makes with him. He treated it with love, with mercy, with goodness, with grace.

And Hosea, in chapter 11, verse 1, says, When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt. So, as a father, he pitted his children.

He chastened it according to its sins. But he did not, as a result, withdraw his mercy from them, but simply trained as a son, a holy nation, by the love and harshness of parental discipline.

Recognize something important here. Why does he say he is my son? Israel is my son, my firstborn.

[ 16 : 30 ] There could be an allusion here to Messiah coming, but I think there's something else we need to recognize here. And that is the fact that all this is based on a relationship.

All right? Based on a relationship. A father to a son. Now, go over to the book of Romans. There's something here we have to recognize.

Romans chapter 8. While you're turning in there, let me ask this question. What is the importance of God making that statement that Israel is my son, my firstborn?

When you consider the idea that he's said that he's established a covenant relationship with them. So, we know now, we see now, that that covenant relationship is going to be established. Why is it important for him to show Israel as his son? Any idea?

[17:41] Any thought? Any thought? Okay? I'm going to show you. In Romans chapter 8, take note. Now, this relates to us here.

But there's the same principle, if you will. So much of the time, people think of salvation as simply Jesus dying for us, which is a reality, and forgiving us of our sin, which is true, and getting us to heaven.

Okay? Now, think about this just a moment. Go to your unbaptistic mind.

Okay? All right? Jesus died for us. Okay, we know that's true. That will never change. He forgave us of our sin.

There are some denominations, of course, that believe you can lose your salvation because of more current sin in your life. Okay? So kind of lay that down in there, if you will.

[18:52] All right? Heaven is a reality for us because of the forgiveness of our sin. But what happens if we sin more and more without more forgiveness?

Is heaven taken away from us? Okay? That's an argument that's been going on down through the centuries. But when you realize that it's not just the idea of freedom from sin and freedom from the presence of sin and an eternity in heaven, but that salvation for us through faith in Christ is a relationship.

All right? It's the relationship. And that adds the greatest strength to the reality of salvation. Same thing with Israel and its relationship with God.

It's not just the idea that he's made a covenant with them that's an everlasting covenant. But in that covenant relationship, he has established them as his son.

A relationship. Now, Romans chapter 8 speaks of that for you and I in the day of grace. Let me get there real quick. Romans chapter 8.

[20:13] Remember what he says here. Verse 14. Yeah.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Now, that, of course, is the reality. Those that have been saved, truly saved, possess the Spirit of God, thus the Spirit of God directs them.

So, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear. In other words, the spirit of a slave that has nothing but fear. And that fear here is being the idea of being a slave to sin, if you will. All right? You have not received, again, the bondage of fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, which literally means spirit of adoption is the idea of the placing as adult sons.

All right? That's what you've received through faith in Christ is the making of adult sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

[21:25] Let me read that to you in the Amplified because it's beautiful. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For the spirit which you have now received is not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, the spirit producing sonship in the bliss, I love this, in the bliss of which we cry, Abba, Father.

Amen? We cry that in bliss, all right, because of the relationship he's made with us. The Spirit himself thus testifies together with our own spirit, assuring us that we are children of God.

And if we are his children, then we are his heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, sharing his inheritance with him, only we must share his sufferings if we are to share his glory.

Now, with that in mind, turn over to Galatians chapter 4. Galatians chapter 4. Verse 4, But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

All right? That ye may receive the adoptions of sons. And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart, crying, Abba, Father.

[22:59] Where before thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. That's what we are in Christ.

It's not just the idea of going to heaven when we die. Not just the idea of having our sins forgiven, which we do. But it's the idea of a relationship.

And that relationship is an eternal relationship. Because you recognize, especially in Romans chapter 8, in the Roman economy, the adoption of children was considered even stronger. That relationship was even a stronger relationship than a natural born child. All right? That could never be changed. And that's the relationship we have with Christ.

So when we talk to people about being saved, you know, yeah, again, freedom from sin, forgiveness of sin, forgiveness of the guilt of sin made righteous in Christ to get us to heaven, but more so to bring us into a relationship with God through Christ.

[ 24 : 17 ] A relationship as sons that never can and never will be changed. Amen? I don't care what a child may do, how much it may disobey his father or his mother, he's still the son.

Amen? He's still the son. Yeah. Yeah. Warts and all. Amen?

Still a son. Think about children in particular. Young children that have been abused by one of the parents.

Invariably, no matter what that parent has done to that child, emotionally, physically, whatever, that child still has a deep-seated love for that parent.

Yeah. Police come and take that parent away, that kid balls. Yeah. Because of that ingrained love. Same thing between God and the redeemed.

[ 25 : 34 ] Amen? Yeah. Yeah. Especially God toward us. Amen? Yeah. So always keep that in mind. And that's a great picture here that we find in God's determination here that Israel is his firstborn son.

All right? Not only a son again, but a firstborn son, the firstborn son. Not to be his only son, of course, as we are sons as well.

But as the firstborn, he had certain privileges above the others. So, in that privilege, then, the idea is God was about to exalt Israel as a nation above every other nation on the earth.

Deuteronomy 28, verse 1 said, It shall come to pass if thou shalt hearken diligently under the voice of the Lord thy God to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.

Now, what does that do for Moses here? It's a great instrument to strengthen the faith of Moses here in the mission that God's given him because of this.

[ 26 : 58 ] If Israel is God's firstborn son, has that relationship, then if Pharaoh's determined that he would not let God's firstborn depart, then he would pay a heavy penalty with the life of his own firstborn.

So, that's a strength for Moses here because of what God said he's going to do. now, if Israel is God's firstborn son, God could not relinquish him to Pharaoh.

He has to deliver him. Amen? He's got to deliver him. It's a son. He's not going to let that son stay in captivity forever.

So, he's going to bring him out. He's already promised Moses that's what he's come to do. And what a great picture here and what a strength that has to be to Moses and then to the people of Israel.

Now, was Moses always obedient to the Lord. Think about Moses and his life in Midian.

[ 28 : 29 ] Now, we've already mentioned the idea a while back that that brotherhood of the Jews to one another is a strong tie. Even Moses as a son of Pharaoh's daughter still held that tie of being a Jew.

That's one of the reasons he went and defended the Jewish brother that was being abused by the Egyptian. He ends up killing the Egyptian. That's what in essence brings him into Midian.

All right? So, that's there. But, don't know how long Moses had been in Midian as a shepherd for his father-in-law until God sends him back here to Egypt.

But, in that time in Midian, he has to recognize who he is as a shepherd, as employed for and by his father-in-law, who is a Midianite, married to his daughter, a Midianite, living in the midst of all the customs and so forth of the people of Midian.

Now, that's pictured in the next few verses here. All right? Verse 24 through 26.

[ 30 : 02 ] It came to pass by the way in the inn. Now, remember, they're on their way to Egypt. Evidently, they've come to spend the night at the local holiday inn.

All right? And it was while they were in the way, by the way in the inn, that the Lord, that Jehovah met him. God meets Moses once again.

All right? But look at the next phrase. And sought to kill him. God seeking to kill Moses.

That seems kind of strange, doesn't it? Kind of out of place to me. But, hey, then Zipporah, that's his wife, remember, took a sharp stone, cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me.

So, he let him go. That is, God let Moses go. Then she said, saying to Moses, a bloody husband, or bridegroom, literally, thou art because of, or in relation, literally, in relationship, or in relation to the circumcision.

[ 31 : 21 ] All right? Now, if Moses, the one that's going to carry out the work of God to bring Israel to Sinai, the place where God's going to establish his covenant with Israel, if God, if Moses was going to be able to secure that and do that well and right, he's going to have to find, he's going to have to prove himself, rather, faithful in his own household here.

But what has happened? Moses has neglected, we've seen this a good while back, Moses has neglected to circumcise the younger son.

All right? Now, recognize something, if you will. God had already instituted in Genesis chapter 17, the reality that they were going to need to circumcise the sons.

And verses 13 through 14 of Genesis 17, it says, He that is born in thy house and he that is bought with thy money must needs be circumcised and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He hath broken my covenant.

[ 32 : 59 ] Now, the reason God sought to put him to death was simply this. the penalty for those men, sons, boys, not being circumcised was death.

Now, this one was a child that penalty is passed off to the father. All right? whatever the means was that God used to threaten death to Moses, though now it didn't tell us, it was to serve as a wake-up call, if you will, to Moses as to the severity of following the will of God completely in order to be used of God to satisfy the purposes of God through him.

Yeah. So what happens? Don't know how Zipporah awakened to the reality of what's happening here, but I've got an idea.

She realizes what's happening here, that God has laid something upon Moses that's going to bring death to him if that son is not circumcised. So she takes a sharp knife made out of a stone, cuts the foreskin off that boy, and what does she do with that?

She throws the foreskin at the feet of Moses, and says to him, you are a bloody husband, or literally, you are a bloody bridegroom to me, because of this thing of the circumcision.

[ 34 : 48 ] That shows what her attitude as a Midian was toward circumcision, because that phrase, because of the circumcision, is in plural in the original.

It's not because of this one act, and the idea that she had to do it, but she just despised the idea of circumcision altogether, much less having to do it herself to this young son.

yeah. Now, I have a good idea that the reason Moses neglected that was not willingly, but he was so caught up in what he was in the Midian household.

His position there, as a poor husband, the customs and traditions of the Midianites, and all of that, he just neglected, he failed to circumcise that youngest son.

And we get the idea from that phrase that she had to circumcise her son, gives us the idea that Moses had already circumcised the older boy.

[ 35 : 53 ] This is Gershon, the younger son, that had not been circumcised. You get the picture there. There are some that kind of stretch something out here in verse 23, and believe that verse 23 is not actually addressed to Pharaoh, but was the Lord speaking to Moses here.

And they paraphrase it this way. Let me read it to you here. This is how it paraphrased verse 23.

And I have said unto thee, Moses, send forth my son, Gershom, by circumcising him, that he may serve me, which he cannot do till entered into the covenant by circumcision.

But thou hast refused to send him forth. Behold, therefore, I will slay thy firstborn. And it came to pass, by the way, in the end, when he was on his journey to Egypt, that Yahweh met him and sought or threatened to kill him.

That's threatened to kill Gershom. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut away the foreskin of her son, caused it to touch his feet. Now, the idea here is to cause it to touch Yahweh's feet, probably as he appeared in a bodily shape as an angel, according to the Septuagint, and said unto him, a spouse by blood art thou to me.

Then Yahweh ceased from Gershom. Then she said, a spouse by blood art thou unto me because of this circumcision. That is, I, who am an alien, have entered as fully into covenant with thee by doing this act as my son has on whom this act has been performed.

[ 37 : 41 ] So, some believe it to be rendered that way more so, but I don't think so. I think it specifically speaks of the reality that God threatened Moses with death because he had not done that, and the response of Zipporah was toward Moses because she despised, you know, got to believe she despised not only the act of circumcision, but probably despised Moses to some degree because who he was as a Jew, having to have circumcision because that was enjoined upon him as a Jew in the covenant relationship with God.

So, that's the picture there. As a result then, we see that Moses then does not take them to Egypt, but sends them back to his father-in-law, her home, her dad.

And after all, think about that just a moment. Now, he doesn't forsake them forever. We see later on at Mount Sinai when Jethro, his father-in-law, realizes what God is doing and has done, that he brings them, brings Zipporah and the boys to Moses there.

Kind of wanting to get in on it, I think. But nonetheless, that's the case here. But realize, if she has that attitude toward circumcision and toward the reality of that, it has to affect the whole idea of the covenant relationship in her mind, she'd be a hindrance to Moses in what God's called him to do there in Egypt.

So, kind of get the picture there. Boy, that's why, well, we don't need to get into that, but that's why it's important for spouses and families to be in one accord when it comes to the matter of securing God's will in the relationship and in the life together.

[ 40 : 03 ] Amen? All right. Let's pray together. Father, again, we're grateful for your loving kindness to us today. Thank you, Father, that we can put our faith and trust in you even though we can't see ahead in the future except for what you've shown us in your word.

But in our present day, the things that are going on in our lives and around us and that affect our lives, we don't know the true outcome of all of that, but you do. So we can just replace our faith and confidence and trust in you and just go our way, serving you loving you and looking forward to the day you come to get us.

So, Father, we thank you for that and ask you to enable us day by day to keep our mindset on that. And again, we thank you for these that are here tonight and ask your blessings upon them now. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Amen.