

Jesus Our Savior

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When the people of Israel were enslaved in Egypt they were living under a very powerful government. While in Egypt they were forced to live under the rule of Pharaoh – who was not only king but considered by the Egyptians to be a god as well. The Israelites were oppressed by the laws of Egypt and the whims of its ruler – Pharaoh (Exodus 3:7). To escape the oppression of Pharaoh in Egypt, they needed a Savior.

Egypt typifies the rule of sin – the law of sin which operates in the flesh – and in the fleshly mind (Romans 7:23). This law, rule or dominion of sin which operates in the flesh is something we must overcome in order to please God.

Yet within our own flesh, within our fleshly minds, we simply do not have the power of and by ourselves to cast out the law of sin that rules us. The fleshly mind is too weak to exercise dominion and power over sin, even if it wants to. That's what Paul is referring to when he writes in Romans 7:23 about the law in our fleshly members warring against the mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin.

Just as without God – without a Savior – the Israelites were in captivity, in bondage to the law of Egypt, so our flesh without a spiritual savior is in bondage to the law, dominion and rulership of sin. Even with the Old Covenant, wherewith the laws of God were written on tablets of stone, but not written in their hearts and minds, the Israelites were powerless to break the dominion of sin in their lives (Deuteronomy 5:29; 10:1-5; Romans 2:27-29; Jeremiah 31:33; Mark 7:6). In the same way, our human flesh of itself is powerless to break the bondage of sin.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:3 that the law – that is, the Old Covenant – was “weak through the flesh.” Jesus, when he found his disciples sleeping after he had asked them to watch and pray with him just hours before his crucifixion, said to them, “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

It's not that the flesh is inherently evil. It is simply that the flesh is weak, and so apart from God the flesh naturally tends toward sin. Put that together with Satan's influence, and the flesh – apart from the Holy Spirit – is hopelessly locked up in captivity to sin.

But Jesus Christ at the time appointed intervened to redeem Israel from bondage to Pharaoh and the law of Egypt (Psalm 106:8-10). God is referred to as the Savior of Israel (verse 21).

The names and titles of God tell us a lot about who and what God is. We know one of the members of the God family by the name of Jesus Christ. The name Jesus tells us that God is our Savior. The name Jesus comes from the Hebrew *Jehoshua* or *Joshua* which means “saved of the Eternal” or the “Eternal Savior.” The word Christ comes from the Greek *christos* which is equivalent to the Hebrew *mashiyach* (Messiah) and means anointed one. The name Christ relates to Jesus Christ being the anointed High Priest and King over spiritual Israel, and ultimately over all creation. So the name Jesus Christ tells us that the Son of God is our Eternal Savior, King and High Priest. (See *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and*

New Testament Words; and the Companion Bible, appendix 98).

We have a Savior who can and will deliver us from bondage to sin, if we cooperate, just as he delivered Israel from Egypt. At the same time, however, we need to keep in mind that the roles of Savior, King and High Priest are all interrelated, and go hand in hand with one another.

The angel of God told Joseph that the son to be born to Mary was to be named "Jesus." Why? "...for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). So Jesus is not a dead but an ever living Savior – to save us from our sins.

The preposition used in the original Greek in the verse above is *apo*, which denotes motion away from. It's used of deliverance or passing away from any state or condition (*Companion Bible*, appendix 104; cf. *Basics of Biblical Greek*, Mounce, p. 60). So it does not say Jesus would save us **in** our sins, but **away** from our sins. It implies that we would become delivered and separated from our sins.

Israel came out of and away from Egypt. They were separated from Egypt (Exodus 12:31-33, 39-42; 13:8-9). The unleavened bread eaten during the Feast of Unleavened Bread not only reminds us that Israel went out of Egypt, but that they fled in haste. In the same way, we are to **flee** from sin. "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity," wrote Paul. And also, "Flee... youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:19, 22; cf. 1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14).

But even after urging them to go, as a consequence of God's intervention, and driving them out, Pharaoh pursued Israel (Exodus 14:5-9). And when the people saw that Pharaoh had not given up after all, and he was hot on their trail, they no longer regarded God as Savior, but actually began to accuse God of bringing them out to kill them (Exodus 14:10-12).

In their minds, God was not delivering them from the mastery of Pharaoh, but delivering them to death at his hands. Do you ever look at weaknesses and sins which seem to pursue you, and begin to doubt that God has the power to deliver you? Some years ago, a man told me in a conversation that it seemed to him God was just out to get us. He thought God wants to kill us, not save us.

Did Jesus Christ call us out of spiritual Egypt to kill us or to save us? God tells us plainly that his will is to save everyone of us. It's not God's will that any should perish (Ezekiel 33:11; John 3:14-17; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 2 Peter 3:9).

It was not God's will that Israel in the flesh should perish, but they looked at the giants in the land God had promised to give them and began to doubt God's power to fulfill his promise (Numbers 13:25 – 14:4). We can fall into the same trap spiritually if we concentrate too much on the problem and not on the solution. God has not told us to seek him in vain. He is able and ready to save us if we seek him (Isaiah 45:19, 21-22, 24; 2 Chronicles 15:1-4, 7-15).

Of course there are going to be problems. The main problem we must contend with is sin, often our own stubborn sins that we need to overcome. But the Passover and the Feast of

Unleavened Bread teach us how God can and will save us if we believe, have faith, and persevere. God has the power and he has the way to save us out of sin.

The Passover signifies the death of Jesus Christ through which we may be released from the bondage of death (Hebrews 2:14-15). The death of the Passover lamb in Egypt meant life for the people of Israel (Exodus 12:5-7, 13).

The death of the Passover lamb also meant freedom for Israel, because on that same night the power of Pharaoh to continue to hold the people of Israel in captivity was destroyed. Similarly, the death of Jesus Christ destroyed the power of sin and Satan, the author of sin, to kill us, subject to our repentance and faith (Mark 1:15; John 5:24; John 16:11; Acts 2:38; Colossians 1:9-14). We are delivered from the bondage of the fear of death. The power of sin to destroy us is abolished through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as long as we continue walking after him in faith (Colossians 1:21-23).

Having been delivered from death upon our initial repentance and baptism, we must continue walking with Jesus Christ in faith. The Israelites, though they had been saved from death in Egypt, failed to continue walking with God in faith. That's all they had to do to receive the inheritance God had in store for them. But they refused to follow him in faith and rebelled instead (Hebrews 3:16-19). So they died in the wilderness. But we don't have to fail. We can succeed.

Even though we are still flesh, Jesus showed that he has the power to overcome the flesh, and he has been given authority over all flesh, including our flesh, that we may be given eternal life (John 17:2). With the power of Jesus Christ, the weakness of our flesh can be overcome. Without God we can do nothing. With God, we can do anything (John 15:4-5; Philippians 4:13; 2:12-13). An outstanding lesson of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is that as the Father and Jesus Christ live in us through the Holy Spirit we become new creatures, no longer enslaved to our fleshly nature and the law of sin, but with the power to become spiritually minded and subject to the righteousness of God's commandments (Philippians 2:5-8; Romans 8:1-15).

To set our minds on the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5), requires an act of will and effort on our part. Studying the Scriptures daily and meditating on them will help you set your mind on the things of the Spirit (Deuteronomy 17:18-20; Psalm 1:2; Acts 17:11). The word of God is likened to food that we eat to sustain our lives (Luke 4:4). Most of us eat physical food every day, unless we're fasting or in some unusual circumstance. How much more important it is to partake of the spiritual food of God's word through daily Bible study.

Daily prayer also helps us focus our minds on the things of the Spirit. Jesus said, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation" (Matthew 26:41). David said, "Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17). Daniel customarily prayed three times a day (Daniel 6:10).

Fasting, also, done for the proper motives, can help us be spiritually minded (Isaiah 58:3-12; James 4:6-10). These are important tools we ought to be using to enable us to set our minds on the things of the Spirit, and, with God's help, overcome the fleshly nature.

Knowing that Jesus Christ has the will and the power to save us, we must never give up the fight to overcome. We must never allow mistakes, failures, weaknesses, or discouragement to overwhelm us. If God chastens you, accept it and learn from it. But never give in, keep fighting, keep moving forward and eventually you will, with the help of Jesus Christ, prevail (Hebrews 12:1-13).

Israel had a Savior with the power to deliver them from the dominion of Egypt and Pharaoh. We also have the same God and Savior – Jesus Christ – who has the power to deliver us from bondage to sin and death. Let's remember this, and rejoice in the salvation of Jesus Christ – our Savior, King and High Priest.

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