

Jesus & the Exodus

Andrew Kneeland, February 27, 2022

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I want to start this morning by doing something a little bit different. We're going to learn something together! Before we look at these verses about the Transfiguration I'm going to teach you some Greek.

Don't panic! This won't be hard. Just one word this morning, can you all handle that? Let's all say this word together: "ἐξοδος." This word means "leaving," or "exiting." ἐξοδος is where we get the word Exodus, the second book of the Bible.

Do you remember the story of Exodus? God's people—the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—had gone to live in Egypt. But while they were in Egypt they grew in numbers so much that the Egyptian pharaoh was worried they would become too powerful and take over, so he enslaved the Hebrew people. He made them slaves.

For 400 years God's chosen people were slaves in Egypt. For 400 years they suffered as slaves to their Egyptian masters. And for 400 years they wondered if they really *were* God's chosen people, they questioned whether God really *had* given them special promises. They came to even doubt if there *was* a God who cared about them.

But then their rescuer came. Moses was a member of Pharaoh's royal household; he had all the rights and privileges of the ruler of the entire Egyptian world. But he chose to leave his royal throne and join his people—the Hebrews—in their slavery. A prince became like a slave, because he cared about his people and was called by God to rescue them.

Over the course of the book of Exodus, God uses Moses to bring the people out of the land of Egypt. To bring them out of slavery, out of captivity, and away from their former oppressors.

Moses leads the people out of Egypt and they journey to the Red Sea. But they have a crisis at the Red Sea. They were trapped; behind them the vengeful Egyptian army—one of the most powerful in the world—was chasing them, trying to recapture their slaves and take God's people back into bondage. In front of

them was the impassable Red Sea. They were trapped.

But Moses cried out to God for deliverance, and God said: “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

Moses used his staff in the water and the Red Sea parted, and the once-trapped Hebrew people walked through the middle on dry ground. This was an *exodus*. A truly miraculous and wonderful exit from Egypt. But it wasn't just an exit from Egypt, was it? As they crossed the Red Sea, and as the Egyptian army was stopped and killed behind them, this was also an exodus from slavery, from oppression, and from hopelessness. They were FREE. They had a future.

Everyone say ἐξοδος again. Ἐξοδος.

This was the great Exodus in the history of the Israelites. This was the event the Jews looked back to and remembered how God saved them. But there was another *exodus* in their history, too; an ἐξοδος that we don't talk about very often.

Hundreds of years after Moses led the people through the Red Sea and to their freedom, God's people were living in the promised land of Israel. They had fallen back into sin, though, and had forgotten about how God had rescued them from slavery.

To help guide and correct the people God appointed judges and He called prophets. One of these prophets—one of the most famous ones—was Elijah. Elijah was a prophet who brought God's Word to God's people. Elijah reminded the Israelites about God and his promises and who they were as the promised children of God.

At the end of his ministry Elijah took his companion Elisha out into Israel so God could take him into heaven. Do you remember this story? You might not have! It doesn't come up very often; maybe it should.

In 2 Kings 2, Elijah and Elisha are walking toward their destination and then find themselves at the Jordan River. There's no way around it... so what does Elijah do? Verse 8: “Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go

over on dry ground.”

Isn't that incredible? That's just like the first exodus! The water was parted and Elijah and Elisha walked across on dry ground. When they got to the other side, Elijah asked if there was anything that Elisha needed before he was taken into heaven and Elisha continues the work of reminding the Israelites about God and His promises.

Verse 9: “Elijah said, ‘Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you.’ And Elisha said, ‘Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me.’” And Elijah responded: “It shall be so.”

Elisha could have asked for anything. A private militia? A dynamic speaking presence? Supernatural charisma, or wisdom? Those things would have been helpful to a prophet, right? But Elisha asked for Elijah's spirit. He wanted the things Elijah cared about to be what HE cared about. He wanted the mission and purpose and drive of Elijah to be HIS mission and purpose and drive.

He wanted to continue Elijah's work with the same spirit Elijah had. And Elijah gave him this spirit.

But then came Elijah's exodus. Listen to verse 11: “And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

Everyone say ἐξοδος again. Εξοδος.

Now, this part looked very different than Moses' exodus. THIS was a glorious exit, a triumphant departure. Can you imagine it? I'm not even sure it's possible for us to picture what this must have looked like. Heavenly horses and chariots made out of fire. Elijah ascending into heaven in a supernatural whirlwind. This would have been an amazing sight.

So the first exodus was a miracle of salvation. It was an exodus that rescued God's people from slavery and oppression and delivered them to freedom. The Hebrews didn't do anything to earn this rescue, they just had to go forward and let God take care of what they needed.

The second exodus was majestic and glorious. It showcased the incredible

power and majesty of God and the ascending servant of God leaving his spirit behind so the mission to God's people would continue.

Moses and his exodus; Elijah and his exodus. And that brings us back to Luke 9 here on Transfiguration Sunday. We just read these verses before the sermon hymn, but listen again to the first couple of verses:

*About eight days later Jesus took Peter, John, and James up on a mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was transformed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly, two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus. They were glorious to see. And they were speaking about his exodus from this world, which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem.*

This is the Transfiguration of Christ. Three of Jesus' apostles—Peter, James, and John—had the chance to see Jesus in his glory. They could see that this was more than just a traveling teacher. This was more than just a wise and kind man from backcountry Israel.

High on a mountain, alone with Jesus, the apostles saw that this man was the bridge between heaven and earth. Fully God and fully man.

But then they suddenly weren't alone anymore! Two men had appeared when Christ was transfigured in glory, and the apostles miraculously recognized them as two of the most famous and important men in their history: Moses and Elijah.

Moses and Elijah appeared and were talking with Jesus. They weren't talking about the exodus Moses had led the people through, and they weren't talking about the glorious exodus Elijah had experienced. They were talking about the only thing they were interested in, the only thing that mattered: JESUS' exodus.

These two men had died hundreds of years earlier. They had been in heaven with God Himself for hundreds of years! They knew Jesus well. And these three friends were speaking together about the most significant event in the history of the world, which was going to happen in just a few short weeks in Jerusalem.

The exodus of Moses and the exodus of Elijah were both incredible and miraculous. But they both knew that they were only shadows of the *true* exodus

that Jesus was about to accomplish.

Jesus told Moses that *his* exodus would be similar. Just like Moses, Jesus was a member of a royal household; he had all the rights and privileges of the ruler of the entire universe. But Jesus chose to leave his royal throne and join his people—us—in our sin. A prince became like a slave, because he cared about his people and was called by God to rescue them.

And just like Moses, the Exodus of Jesus would bring salvation to God's people. It would rescue God's chosen sons and daughters from bitter slavery and cruel oppression. The exodus of Jesus would make a way when there was no way. It would cut off and destroy the people's enemies, and all they would need to do is trust, believe, and confidently go forward.

Jesus told Elijah that *his* exodus would also be similar. Just like Elijah, Jesus would conclude a ministry of telling and reminding God's people of who they were and what God's promises were. When his time on earth was finished, Jesus would be taken into heaven in a stunning and miraculous way. A victorious and glorious way. And he would also send his spirit so the mission would continue.

These three men were talking about Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension. Christ's exodus would be redemptive like Moses and glorious like Elijah.

But so, so much better than Moses or Elijah. Jesus doesn't rescue us from physical bondage or slavery, but from *spiritual* bondage and slavery. Without Christ we would be lost in our sin and destined for an eternity under the oppressive dominion of the devil. Satan and his fallen angels would have freely and completely ruled over our lives and our bodies so that we wouldn't be able to NOT sin.

Christ made a way when there was no way. Our backs were against a wall, just like the Hebrews in the first Exodus. There was no way across the impassable sea that kept us from the Promised Land of forgiveness and salvation, and the cruel and oppressive enemy was hot on our tail, chasing us, so close it felt like they could reach out and grab us and take us back to our chains.

But just like Moses, Jesus made a way. The waters of the Red Sea were parted,

God's people safely crossed through the danger, and the same water came crashing back down to kill the Egyptian army.

Jesus was falsely accused and unjustly tried, and sentenced to an undeserved death on the cross. Jesus made dry ground and we who believe and trust Jesus have passed through to the other side. And the same thing that saved us, destroys our enemies. The resurrection means we have a LIVING Savior. The resurrection means that we have a Redeemer who conquered death. He is on a mission to fulfill His promises to us and lead us safely to the heavenly promised land. And it's so much better than the promised land Moses led the people to. Christ is making all things new and taking away evil and sin and even making death come untrue.

But the exodus of Jesus was also like Elijah's. After raising from the dead, appearing again to his disciples and friends, speaking and teaching a few more times... Jesus finished his great exodus. He ascended into heaven and a cloud hid him and an angel announced that he would someday return in the same, glorious and victorious way.

But before he left, he promised to leave something with those who would continue his mission. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be with all believers. The Spirit of Jesus would make the things he cared about to be what WE care about. His mission and purpose and drive would be OUR mission and purpose and drive.

The exodus of Jesus was how undeserving people were rescued from their sin, and it was how a victorious servant of God gloriously ensured the mission would continue.

So today we live in what some people like to call the "already-but-not-yet." We already enjoy the salvation and forgiveness Christ won at the cross, but there's more to come. We're not in heaven yet! There are more things for us to do; more things to care for, more justice to accomplish... and more people to tell.

"God desires all to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." This isn't an easy mission! But we can faithfully and confidently press forward in whatever job or relationship or position God places us because we have a Savior who accomplished a magnificent *ἐξοδος*.

Verse 34, after seeing Christ transfigured in glory talking to Moses and Elijah: “A cloud overshadowed them, and terror gripped them as the cloud covered them. Then a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him.’”

Listen to Jesus. Amen.