“In slaying the Egyptian, Moses had fallen into the same error so often committed by his fathers, of taking into their own hands the work that God had promised to do. . . .

“Infinite Wisdom called him who was to become the leader of his people to spend forty years in the humble work of a shepherd. The habits of caretaking, of self-forgetfulness and tender solicitude for his flock, thus developed, would prepare him to become the compassionate, longsuffering shepherd of Israel” (Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 247, 248).

“The Lord said, ‘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.’”

(Exodus 3:7, NIV)
Sometimes people do bad things because they themselves have had bad things done to them. Keeping this in mind, in which of the following scenarios would you be most likely to comfort and/or deliver the victim from the oppressor if you had the power to stop what was happening? How would you intervene?

A 14-year-old is beating a 5-year-old.

A mother is being beaten by her husband.

An adult is verbally abusing a child.

A girl is being sold for prostitution.

A boy is being sold into slavery.

The Israelites weren’t the only people God delivered from bondage. Amos 9:7 says that He also rescued the Cushites, the Philistines, and the Arameans. We are also in bondage—slavery to sin that the devil has captured us in. God loves us and wants to rescue us. He promised in Matthew 1:21 that Jesus will “save his people from their sins” (NIV). Some of this deliverance can happen right here on earth; the rest will happen in heaven. But God will deliver. Why does God bother to deliver people? Because He sees, He hears, and He knows what they are going through.

The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. . . .

God called to him from within the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’ And Moses said, ‘Here I am.’ ‘Do not come any closer,’ God said. ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.’ Then he said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’ At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, ‘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 to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. . . . 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.’ But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ And God said, ‘I will be with you.’”

(into the story)

“One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, ‘Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?’

“The man said, ‘Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?’ Then Moses was afraid and thought, ‘What I did must have become known.’

“When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian.”

“During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.”

(Exodus 2:11-15, 23-25; 3:1-12, NIV)
punch lines

“Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God. . . . He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. . . . The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow” (Psalm 146:5-9, NIV).

“The Lord Jesus Christ . . . who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age” (Galatians 1:3, 4, NIV).

“Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear” (Isaiah 59:1, NIV).

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matthew 5:4, NIV).

“The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:18, NIV).

“God is not a deceiver, that He should offer support to us, and then, when we lean upon Him, should slip away from us.” —Augustine of Hippo, 5th-century Algerian theologian of the early church.

OUT OF THE STORY

What parts of the story are key? (Underline them.)

What aspects or details of the story are new to you? (Place an arrow beside them.)

What words or phrases capture the various emotions of this story most? (Circle them.)

What emotions, actions, or adjectives enrich this story? (Place a rectangle around them.)

Highlight the promises God makes to the Israelites.

In the story, identify the reason God cares about the Israelites.

Draw an ear or an eye beside the statements God makes about hearing or seeing the Israelites.

What does it mean to you to have a God who hears, sees, and knows what you are doing?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Why do you think this story is included in the record of Scripture?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

List other major lessons that you see emerge in this story.

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

If you were to capture this story in five words or less, what would you say?

_____________________________________________________________________

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_____________________________________________________________________

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_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

“Other eyes”

“How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these.” —George Washington Carver, American scientist, botanist, educator, and inventor.
Sabbath
In the What Do You Think? section you were asked to choose one situation from the list in which you most wanted to intervene. As you completed the exercise, what did you feel? Did you imagine the situation and how angry or upset it made you feel? Why did you want to intervene? Can you think of any reasons that you wouldn’t intervene? Why did you pick the one you did? How could you intervene in a way that would bring healing to both the oppressor and the victim? Consider how God feels when He sees, hears, and knows about the terrible results of sin that are happening all the time. Do you think God wants to intervene? How do you think He does it? When do you think He does it?

Monday
Read the Key Text and think about what God means when He says He knows our sorrows. Have you ever wondered if God really knows what it feels like to be really sad? Or to be a victim? Or do you think that this text simply means God knows about our sorrows? Jesus is God; think about the times in Jesus’ life when He was on earth and would have felt sorrow. Take time in prayer to empathize with God.

Tuesday
Read the quote in the Flashlight section. It isn’t easy to trust in God sometimes, especially when we want to do things ourselves. In this week’s story Moses wanted to deliver the Israelites, but he got ahead of God. God had to humble Moses by teaching him to look after sheep in the desert for 40 years! Can you think of times when you have wanted to do something for yourself without asking God how He wanted to do it? How did it take humility to do it God’s way?

Wednesday
Read the Punch Lines for this week. Some of the texts talk about God helping with hunger and prison, others talk about Him freeing us from sins, and another talks about God simply comforting those who mourn. God doesn’t always do the same thing for every person; He treats us as individuals. Which text speaks most to you at the moment? Why? Claim that text in prayer, and find a way to live it today.

Thursday
Read chapter 22 in Patriarchs and Prophets and see if you can see any parallels between the story of redemption of the Israelites and the story of Jesus and your redemption. The first might be that both Moses and Jesus were to be like shepherds, or that Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness and Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness. Once you have finished, thank God that He is the same today as He was yesterday, and that He will always be a God who loves to redeem people.

Redemption of the Israelites

Jesus and my redemption

Friday
Have you, or someone you know, ever experienced God’s redemption? If so, talk to them about it, or write them a letter and ask them to tell you about it. If you have personally experienced God’s redemption, tell someone else about it. Let them know that God hears, sees, and knows what they are going through. Tell them what God has done for you and what He can do for them.


this week’s reading*
Patriarchs and Prophets (or Beginning of the End), chapter 22.

*Beginning of the End is a special adaptation of Patriarchs and Prophets, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.