



## Lesson 3. The God Who Sets You Free

1. There is no doubt that we are living at a time when uncertainty and anxiety are very high. Most of us, one way or another, live in stressful environments. What are some areas of stress in your life today? Circle one of the statements below:
  - A. Work/school
  - B. Finances
  - C. Health
  - D. Bad habits/addictions
  - E. Relationships
  - F. Uncertainty
  - G. Fear
  - H. Conflict
  - I. Spiritual attack
  - J. Inadequacy
  - K. Inauthenticity/Living a double life
  - L. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. While we see slavery as a tragic relic of the past, what most of us don't realize is that we still live in some kind of bondage today, often to these stressors in life. This is mirrored in the lives of several of the main characters of *The Chosen*. What kind of bondage do you think these characters are experiencing (before their encounter with Jesus, if any)? Draw a line to match the character on the left with their source of stress on the right:

Mary (Lilith)	Finances
Peter	Relationships
Matthew	Uncertainty
Nicodemus	Spiritual attack
Quintus	Inauthenticity

Whatever their position in society, it seems like the bondage of stress and insecurity was a common thread for most of the characters.
  
3. The history of Israel was inextricably linked to bondage. After Jacob, whose name became Israel, had moved with the rest of his sons to Egypt to avoid the famine in Canaan, his family enjoyed the favor of Pharaoh due to the high rank and loyal service of Jacob's son Joseph. However, this favor soon came to an end several generations later. Read what happened in Exodus 1:8-11.
  
4. After 400 years of cruel enslavement, Exodus 2:23 records that, "their cry came up to God because of the bondage." Through God's miraculous intervention, the Israelites were able to escape from their slave masters and make the journey to freedom, crossing the Red Sea and traveling through the barren Sinai desert to the promised land of Canaan.

5. With this new beginning, the nation of former slaves had a lot to learn about trusting in God! One of their early lessons came in the form of the mysterious food, *manna*. What was *manna*? Exodus 16 tells us that it was a light flaky bread “like wafers made with honey” that “rained from heaven” for the people to collect and eat. They were to collect this bread daily for the day’s portion, except for Friday. Read Exodus 16:19-21.

6. But something interesting happened at the end of the week. Read Exodus 16:22-26.

Imagine for a moment you were there with the Israelites...and that from Sunday through Thursday, God rained down bread that would go bad by the next day, but said to collect double on Friday so you could rest on Saturday. What would you do?

- ☐ That’s suspicious. I’ll take my chances and go out again on Saturday morning. I mean, it’s been coming every day, it’ll obviously come again on Saturday. What’s the point of collecting double on Friday if it will just go bad the next day?
- ☐ I’ll collect a little extra on Friday just to be safe, but I’ll probably go out on Saturday morning just to see if there’s a fresh supply.
- ☐ Yay, a day off from food collection! I’ll be sure to collect double on Friday so I can rest on Saturday.

7. Read Exodus 16:27-30 to see what happened with the Israelites. Despite what Moses told the people, some of them still went out to find food on the seventh day! For generations, the slaves had been programmed to toil all day every day just to survive. All they knew was hard labor and self-sufficiency.<sup>i</sup> God used the basic need for food while in a barren desert to ‘reprogram’ them to trust that He would take care of them.

“Moses [led] the enslaved children of Israel out of bondage. But getting the bondage out of the children of Israel proved to be a much harder task... It is evident that **Yahweh wasn’t merely trying to get the people out of slavery; He was also trying to get slavery out of them.**”<sup>ii</sup>  
– Ty Gibson, “The Exodus” (blog post)

8. It’s interesting that God referred to His *commandments and laws* here in Exodus 16. That is because it isn’t until a few chapters later in Exodus 20 that God delivers the Ten Commandments to Moses. This demonstrates that even before the children of Israel received the commandments on the tablets of stone, the Israelites had knowledge of the laws of God.

9. Take a close look at the ten commandments in Exodus 20:1-17. What is the specific reason given for remembering the Sabbath in the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:8-11?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

10. The Sabbath commandment in Exodus 20 brings to mind the creation story. Read Genesis 2:1-3.

11. While these laws are also repeated in Deuteronomy 5, and they are pretty much identical, there is a place where there is an important difference. That difference is found in the fourth commandment, the commandment about observing the Sabbath. Read Deuteronomy 5:12-15, NIV. What is the specific reason given for remembering the Sabbath in the fourth commandment in Deuteronomy 5?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Episode 2 of *The Chosen* brings together these two reasons. You can see them in Mary’s Sabbath reading in her home. Scan the code on the right to watch.



SCAN ME

13. Sabbath is a reminder of at least 4 things:<sup>iii</sup>

**I. God is our Creator.**

The seventh-day Sabbath is a memorial of God's creation (Exodus 20:11) and reminds us that He alone is worthy of our worship. One author writes, "Had the Sabbath always been sacredly observed, there could never have been an atheist or an idolater."<sup>iv</sup>

**II. God loves and longs to spend time with the people He created.**

God's seventh day was Mankind's first. The fact that God ceased from His work of creation in order to enjoy the company of the person God has created speaks volumes about the value of human beings to God.<sup>v</sup>

**III. God is our ultimate Provider.**

Inherent in the command to stop working lies the promise that God is sufficient—He will provide for His children when they rest in Him.

**IV. God sets us free.**

The Sabbath was a celebration of God's deliverance of His people from slavery (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). The Sabbath is the most distinctive mark of the experience of freedom. As the people are set free from the dictatorship of Pharaoh, they are not merely exchanging the capricious rule of Pharaoh for the benign dictatorship of God. On the contrary, it is precisely the kind of rule that sets the two systems apart—one a system of slavery, the other system of freedom. Just like how God's invitation in the Garden of Eden to "freely eat" (Genesis 2:16) was misrepresented by Satan, often today the Sabbath invitation to "freely rest" becomes misrepresented to be something other than the invitation to set aside the worries of life and rest in God's presence and provision.<sup>vi</sup> Today, God still offers to each of us the gift of the Sabbath and with that the promise to free us from the bondage of self-sufficiency, legalism, workaholism, competition, uncertainty, and unnecessary stress.

14. When the Israelites came out of bondage, God invited them to keep Sabbath. When Mary was freed from her spiritual bondage, she desired to keep the Sabbath too! Scan the code on the right to watch.



15. Jesus gave each of us not just permission, but an *invitation*, to rest. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28, NKJV. Today, Jesus makes that same invitation to you. Would you like to find peace through resting on God's Sabbath?

- ☐ I understand that the Sabbath is God's gift of rest for humanity and especially for me.
- ☐ I would like to begin keeping God's Sabbath day of rest.
- ☐ I would like to renew my commitment to experiencing true Sabbath rest.
- ☐ I have questions and would like more information about the Sabbath. (Scan code below.)

**"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."** Galatians 5:1, NKJV



<sup>i</sup> Sigve Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*, page 85.

<sup>ii</sup> Ty Gibson, *The Exodus* (Blog post). <https://lightbearers.org/blog/the-exodus/>

<sup>iii</sup> Adapted from Sigve Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*.

<sup>iv</sup> Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 336.

<sup>v</sup> Sigve Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*, 34.

<sup>vi</sup> Sigve Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*, 90.