

Deuteronomy 6:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand:

Analysis

The commanded response begins with personal testimony: 'We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt.' Starting with slavery emphasizes grace—salvation is deliverance from bondage, not reward for merit. The historical specificity ('Pharaoh...Egypt') grounds faith in objective redemptive events, not subjective experience or mythology. The verb 'brought us out' attributes deliverance entirely to divine initiative. This verse models gospel presentation: begin with humanity's enslaved condition, then proclaim God's gracious rescue. The Reformed emphasis on God's sovereignty in salvation appears clearly—redemption is entirely divine work.

Historical Context

Egypt enslaved Israel approximately 400 years (Genesis 15:13, Exodus 12:40), intensifying oppression with forced labor and infanticide before the exodus (Exodus 1:8-22). God raised up Moses, sent ten plagues demonstrating power over Egyptian gods, instituted Passover, and delivered Israel through Red Sea crossing (Exodus 1-15). This redemptive event became Israel's foundational salvation narrative, constantly rehearsed in worship (Psalms 78, 105, 106, 136). Christian preaching similarly proclaims redemption from sin's bondage through Christ.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does beginning the gospel story with bondage rather than human potential emphasize salvation as grace, not merit?
2. In what ways does the exodus serve as type and pattern for presenting Christian redemption from sin's slavery?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------------|----------------|--------------|-------|--------------------|
| Then thou shalt say | unto thy son | bondmen | H1961 | We were Pharaoh's |
| H559 | H1121 | H5650 | | H6547 |
| in Egypt | brought us out | and the LORD | H4714 | hand with a mighty |
| H4714 | H3318 | H3068 | | H2389 |

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:2 (References Lord): I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 15:15 (References Lord): And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.

Deuteronomy 5:6 (References Lord): I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.