

E100 4.1 - Exodus Overview Barrowby & Gonerby Feb 2011

Exodus 1:1 -- 14, (Exodus 12: 1 – 14)

Exodus

The book of Exodus is the story of the birth of Israel as a nation. It is an epic dominated by the central figure of... (Charlton Heston !!) Moses. It was Moses who led the people out from Egypt, - the exodus which gives the book its name. Through Moses God gave the law. The book falls into two main parts

Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt chapters 1 to 19
(which we look at in this block of five readings)

The giving of the law and construction of the tabernacle in Sinai chapters 20 to 40. (Which comes in the next block of readings)

Why Egypt and Slavery?

It seems strange, that God led the people He loved into slavery.

As we have covered, God had appeared to Abraham, and had given him great covenant promises.

Abraham was to become a great nation. Through his offspring all of humanity was to be blessed. And the chosen people were to enjoy God's favor and His protection.

What's more, the family of Abraham was to inherit a land that, at that time, was particularly rich. Canaan was to be a Jewish homeland, a perpetual possession set aside for them.

But after just three generations, God, under Joseph, led the 70 people of that family out of Canaan into Egypt.

There, as God knew, they would rest and multiply—but would also become enslaved. God's leading of the people of Israel into Egypt was unquestionably leading them into slavery.

Yet there were reasons for the detour into Egypt. (briefly mentioned when we looked at Joseph)

During the years that the Children of Israel lived in Egypt, the Promised Land of Canaan was a battlefield. Invaders from the north, Hurrians and Hittites, had surged south. During the decades when Egypt's power was great, Egyptian

armies had flowed north. Palestine, a bridge between the two areas, knew the continual march of foreign armies, and often the devastation that war brings.

The Jewish people could hardly have multiplied or have developed national strength in such a land.

But in Egypt the people grew. We read -- they “the people of Israel became so numerous that the whole region of Goshen was full of them” ([Exodus 1:7](#)). [Exodus 12:37](#) reports that when the Jewish people left Egypt, there were some 600,000 men, plus women and children; plus other people's -- God-fearing Egyptians and people from other nations -- a total of at least 2 million people.

Interestingly and conveniently, when Israel left Egypt, both northern and southern world powers were weak.

TV programme in January -- Ancient Worlds - at this time, the old superpowers had collapsed --there was a “dark ages” - as at the end of the Roman Empire. A [power vacuum existed](#), which permitted time for the Jews to become established as a nation.

Another reason for the time spent in Egypt is found back in [Genesis 15:16](#). In making the promise to Abraham, God told him that his descendants would be enslaved and oppressed in Egypt for some 400 years. Following that experience of slavery, they would return. And then this puzzling note is added: "For the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."(NIV)

The Amorites were the people who lived then in the land God had promised to Abraham and to Israel.

Archeological research tells us much about them—particularly about their depravity. They were a people whose moral and religious decline was marked by cult prostitution, and even involved the sacrifice of babies, who were burned alive to their nature gods.

For 400 years God, in grace, held back His judgment and permitted His own people to suffer.

Only when the iniquity of the Amorites was complete—when they had reached a point of no return—did God use Israel to judge and to destroy this depraved civilization. (Comment on ours ?)

And so for centuries Israel waited in Egypt. For centuries their suffering deepened. Only now, looking back, can we sense some of the reasons. (So for us)

Timescale

Abraham about 1900 BC

Joseph entered Egypt 1850 BC .

But when did the people leave under Moses?

The Book of Exodus nowhere gives us specific enough data to definitely link biblical events with Egyptian chronology.

Neither is there external evidence in Egyptian records of Moses or the Exodus That is not surprising really -- empires tend not to major on recording their defeats. Our children don't learn too much about the American War of Independence -- when we lost our colonies!

Archaeological evidence for dating tends to look at the time just after the Exodus -- when the Israelites re-entered the promised land. These show evidence of the burning of the cities of Jericho and Hazor toward the end of the c15th BC.

So let us date the Exodus at about 1450 BC. This would also fit with the statement that there were 480 years (1 Kings 6:1) from the Exodus until the fourth year of King Solomon (= 967 B.C. according to Thiele) and that according to (Judg 11:26) 300 years had elapsed since Israel had entered Palestine until commencement of Judge Jephthah's rule.

Significance of Exodus

The exodus records the true great points in Israel's history -- the deliverance from Egypt and the giving of the law.

This was the time when God acts clearly in history, and does great things to rescue his people.

It's been an inspiration not only for Jews but for oppressed people everywhere (Negro spirituals)

You could say it is the central act of the Old Testament.

And, of course it looks forward to the Central act of the new Testament -- God's salvation enacted for all people in Jesus.

And the Passover meal when God passed over those who had marked their door posts with the blood of the Passover lamb is, an example - a type of what we will soon remember in this service here today.

the Passover lamb provides the type for our Lord's sacrifice, and the Passover feast is adapted to serve as the commemoration of our redemption.

The lamb and the blood were symbols of a much greater salvation to come. Jesus was the Lamb of God who shared his own blood to take away the sins of the world. In fact, Jesus specifically applied all the imagery of the Passover to himself in the last supper.

God had said to the Israelites "*When I see the blood I will passover you*" 11:13. And those Israelites who obeyed were saved.

(Those who did not, shared the same fate as the Egyptians-- this wasn't automatic salvation. They had to do something -- just as we do)

When we come to Christ in repentance and faith, and claim his cross and his death as our forgiveness-- then God's wrath is turned away -- he looks on us and sees no sin -- he sees Christ's righteousness.

God has acted twice in the Bible in a great saving acts

-- The Exodus and the Cross.