

Story of the OT Lesson 4 Part A - Formation of God's Kingdom - Exodus and the Birth of a Nation

Welcome back to The story of the Old Testament. We are in lesson 4, that focuses on the Formation of God's kingdom as we look at the Exodus and the Birth of a Nation. This lesson begins on page 22 of your handout. Looking at the introductory notes, the time period for this portion of the story covers about 100 years, from 1500 to 1400 BC.

There's no recorded history for the people of God, the Hebrews, the nation of Israel, for about 275 years from the death of Joseph in 1804 BC up until the time of the birth of Moses in 1525 BC. The time of the people of God in captivity in Egypt spanned 430 years, from 875 BC to 1445 BC.

There are a few themes in this section of the OT story ...

In Exodus, the theme is redemption, as well as the revelation, the revelation of God's law at Mount Sinai.

The theme in Leviticus is holiness.

In the book of Numbers, the theme is trust. People are learning how to trust in the Lord their God as their King.

Deuteronomy, the theme is renewal. It's a renewal of the covenant that was established all the way back in Exodus.

And in Joshua, the theme is promise. The promise of God to provide this promised land to His people is fulfilled as Joshua leads the people into the land that God had promised to Abraham more than 450 years earlier.

Some of the key characters in this part of the story are Moses and Aaron, Pharaoh, Caleb and Joshua, even Rahab. We'll talk a little bit more about them as we go through this lesson. Some other key thoughts, we see God as the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus is the ultimate Redeemer.

This lesson emphasizes man and his sin and rebellion, yet at the same time, he's highly valued by God. And then, more than anything, there's a clear picture of salvation, of the substitutionary atonement that is a picture of what Jesus offers to us. The outline for this lesson at the bottom of page 22, you can see that in Exodus, there's a theme of coming out of bondage.

The people of God are redeemed from slavery in Egypt. A family of 70 becomes a nation of many millions of people. The books of Exodus through Deuteronomy tell the story of the nation under Moses' leadership coming to the promised land.

The message of the book of Joshua is the people of God coming into or receiving God's promise and blessing. More than anything, there's a picture of salvation in Christ through these five books, redemption from bondage and entering into God's promise of rest.

Turn to page 23, you can see a map of the world of the patriarchs, and we'll just use this as a quick summary of this whole lesson, and then we'll come into the details.

You can see that the story begins where God's people, Jacob's family, are in Egypt. Over the next 275 years, the people grow, and God raises up Moses to deliver the people out of Egypt, out of slavery to sin, and they travel across the Red Sea. They travel to Mount Sinai where they receive the Ten Commandments and the law from God.

They are then sent off to head towards the promised land at Kadesh Barnea, right on the southern border of the promised land, the land of Canaan. Twelve spies are sent into the land. They explore the territory. They come back. Ten of the twelve spies give a bad report. Two spies, Joshua and Caleb, give a good report, but the report of the ten sway all the people to reject God, to rebel against God. As a result, God says, you're going to wander in the desert for 40 years until all of those people who were 20 years of age or greater die in the wilderness. And this is where the book of Deuteronomy ends, with the people of God, led by Moses, at the edge of the promised land on the Jordan River, waiting to enter into the promised land. Moses will die on that side, east side of the Jordan.

Joshua will lead the people into the promised land and divide the land among the twelve tribes, right? Moses lived to be 120 years, and there were three 40-year segments to his life. 40 years living in Egypt, 40 years living in the wilderness in Midian, and then 40 years leading the people of Israel out of Egypt and then wandering in the desert, bringing them ultimately to the edge of the promised land. Let's begin by looking at some highlights from each of these books, starting with Exodus. We'll highlight a few points, and we'll leave this to you to study and read some of the references on your own.

At the top of page 24, here's a short summary of the book of Exodus. It says, when God redeems his chosen people, Israel, through his servant Moses, he entered into a covenant relationship with them and instituted his dwelling with them through the tabernacle, or the tent of meeting. When we think of Exodus, we see a picture there of Moses as a baby in a little basket that was put into the Nile. God saved Moses and prepared him to become the deliverer of God's people.

Exodus means departure or going out. Exodus 1:1-7, provides for a transition from the time of Joseph, as the story of Genesis ends, to the beginning of Exodus. In Exodus 1: 1-7, it says, these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulon, and Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

All the descendants of Jacob were 70 persons. Joseph was already in Egypt, and Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation. But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly. They multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so the land was filled with them.

So, that was a transition. That was a time from Joseph up to the beginning of this lesson.

We continue reading in Exodus chapter 1, that a different Pharaoh rises up, and he was not as favorable towards the Hebrews as the prior Pharaohs under Joseph. He began to oppress

the people, and they lived in slavery to Pharaoh, and their lives were very difficult. They began to cry out to God, and God heard their cry, and eventually calls Moses as the deliverer.

And Moses would live 40 years in Egypt under the training in Pharaoh's household, learning, being educated in the world of the Egyptians. That was from 1525 BC to 1485 BC. During that time Moses, defends His people and kills an Egyptian to protect the Hebrew. This is discovered and reported to Pharaoh. Moses flees to Midian, and far away desert land. He lives in Midian for 40 years, from 1485 to 1445 BC. He marries and has children. At the age of 80, God calls Moses to be the deliverer of his people.

Moses meets God at the burning bush, and Moses responds to God's call on his life, and Moses leads the people of God, the nation of Israel, for 40 years, from 1445 BC up to the point of Moses' death in 1405 BC. There's much in the book of Exodus. You can refer in your handout on page 24.

A key chapter in Exodus is chapter 12, verses 1 to 13. This was just after all the plagues. It's time for Moses to lead the people out of Egypt.

God instructs Moses regarding the Passover. Let's read Exodus chapter 12: 1-13

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, in the land of Egypt, this month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the 10th day of this month, every man shall take a lamb according to their father's house, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbors shall take according to the number of persons, according to what each can eat. You shall make your account for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male, a year old.

You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the 14th day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight, and they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts on the lintels of the house in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night and roast it on a fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall eat it, do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roast it, its head with its legs and its inner parts. You shall let none of it remain until the morning. Anything that remains until the morning, you shall burn. In this manner, you shall eat it, and with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover, for I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both male and beast, and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am the Lord. In verse 13, the blood shall be a sign for you, and the house where you are. When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

In what way does the Passover provide a prophetic picture of our redemption in Jesus Christ? Here is another red thread. The Passover is obviously a red thread of Jesus, 1 Corinthians 5:7, tells us that we have been purchased with the precious blood of Jesus.

Jesus is our Passover lamb. This Passover in the Old Testament in Exodus was just a picture of Jesus as our true Passover. The story continues then as the death of the firstborn passes through Egypt.

Pharaoh says, leave, and the Hebrews celebrate the Passover. Moses leads the people. They come up with their backs against the Red Sea. Pharaoh has a change of heart.

He sends his army out after the people of God, the Hebrews, and God delivers them again. He splits the Red Sea, and his people walk through on dry ground as promised. The Egyptian army is advancing on the Israelites. After the Moses and the people of God cross the Red Sea, the waters crash on Egyptians, and they are all drowned, and God provides a victory for His people.

There's another red thread, much like the ark was a red thread in Genesis related to Noah, where the people were saved through the ark. Here, deliverance or salvation, is provided through the Red Sea. The Red Sea is like the salvation that's provided through Jesus

You can see that there are some things we can learn about redemption from this story, where redemption means deliverance from bondage. And here, it's basically bondage from slavery, bondage from slavery to sin in a spiritual way. Redemption can only be accomplished through death.

The forgiveness of sin, without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sin. So, for true redemption, a price had to be paid, and we can see looking ahead as a red thread, the price to be paid to be redeemed from our sin was the blood of Jesus. Redemption can only be accomplished through a substitutionary sacrifice.

And here in the big story of Exodus, it was a perfect lamb that was sacrificed for the people. Jesus is a lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is our ultimate substitute and sacrifice.

Redemption offers the opportunity for new life. There's a newness of life that comes out of this, and that's the picture of the resurrected life that we have in Christ. Just as the people of Israel were looking forward to a new life in the promised land that was to come to them.

You can see another picture on this page. The picture of Moses holding the Ten Commandments. The Mosaic Covenant is part of this story. It's the giving of the law, and we can see the beginning of that in Exodus 19 and 20. It says that Israel escaped physical bondage or slavery in Egypt, but still had much to learn about being a people set apart for God's purposes.

Days after reaching Mount Sinai, God called Moses to the peak of the mountain, where he once again established his covenant with his people. God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses yet there were three parts to the Law.

There is the moral law that we can read about in Exodus chapter 20:1-17, including the Ten Commandments. There was the civil law, how people were to engage with each other. And then there was also the ceremonial or religious law that explained the feasts and sacrifices that the priests were to oversee for the people of God.

The purpose behind these laws was, number one, to protect God's people from evil. Two, to guide their thinking and feelings and behaviors, and then to reveal sin. The law was to be a mirror for us to show us our need of a Savior. In the Jewish mindset, they saw God's laws as instructions or terms of a marriage contract between God and his people.

God's purpose was never to hold them or us to an impossible standard, but instead to reveal his character and to show us the way to live for our own good and invite us into a deep relationship with him. The first four commandments emphasize his love for us and our undivided loyalty to him. And the following six of the Ten Commandments show how we live in relationship with others.

On page 25, you can see a summary of these five books. Let's highlight some of these key points and then we will look at some specific examples in each of these books in the second part of this lesson.

This chart provides a one-page summary of the main thoughts from Exodus all the way to Joshua. You can see the title of each book and a keyword for each of the books.

The numbers shown below each book represent chapter numbers and the main points or activities in that chapter. For example, in Exodus, the key word is redemption.

It's redeeming the people of God out of slavery and bringing them into the new life, into the promised land. Chapter 1 talks about the growth of the people, God's people, and then the oppression that Pharaoh brought on God's people and how they were forced into slavery. Chapters 2 through 6 focus on the deliverer (Moses).

Chapter 2 speaks about the birth of Moses.

Chapter 3 is God meeting with Moses at the burning bush and God calling Moses to be the deliverer.

Chapter 4, we can see Moses after 40 years in Midian, returning to Egypt.

Chapter 6 is God renewing the covenant with Moses, just as he had promised to Abraham and to Isaac and Jacob. Moses would lead the people to the land that God had promised to Abraham.

Chapter 7 - 18 are the focused on deliverance.

Chapter 7 - 11, we read about the 10 plagues.

Chapter 12, we read about the story of the Passover. Again, another red thread of Jesus.

Chapters 13 - 14, the crossing of the Red Sea, the picture of salvation, another red thread.

Chapter 15, the story of how God provided for His people. He fed these millions of people for many, many years with manna and quail. It's another picture of a red thread where this manna that came down every day. Ultimately, we see in John 6, Jesus was the true bread that came down from heaven. He is the bread of life.

Chapter 17, even if you're in the desert, you need water to drink. God provided water from the rock. Later, throughout the story, we're told that Jesus represented that rock. When we put our trust in Jesus, the scriptures say that streams of living water will flow within us.

Chapters 19 - 40, are the giving of the law as well as the instructions for the building of the tabernacle, the place where the presence of God would reside and God's people would meet with their God.

If you look at the Leviticus, there's an easy outline. It's divided into two parts. You have chapter 1 to 10, the way to the Holy One.

Chapters 11 to 25 is the way of holiness. So, 1 to 10 is how do we come into a relationship with a holy God. How do we come into the presence of a holy God? Chapters 11 to 27 reveal, now as we are the people of God, how do we live a holy life in relationship with a holy God?

The book of Numbers, the key word is trust. The people of God are going to learn how to trust in God.

Chapters 1 to 10 are relate to God's direction.

There's a census of the people. This is another reason why the book of Numbers was called Numbers. It's a numbering of all the people of God.

God's going to begin to give them the direction of how they can fulfill the promise that God gave to Abraham to come into the promised land. Chapters 11 to 14 say, it is time to move. Move out from Mount Sinai and begin to take over the land.

Chapter 13, the people of God begin to explore the land. Twelve spies are sent out into the promised land to explore it. They come back and 10 of the 12 give a bad report.

Chapter 14, we read about the rebellion of the people saying, they are not going to listen to the two spies that gave a good report. Those would have been Joshua and Caleb. The people were going to listen to the 10. We don't know the names of the 10 who said "No"! The people rebelled against God and that sent them into an extended season of discipline, chapters 15 to 26.

Chapters 15 to 20, represent a period of 38 years of wandering into wilderness. God continues by His grace and mercy to provide for them. He's still with them.

He's feeding them. He's giving them water. Their shoes never wear out.

He's going to fulfill His promise to build His kingdom. But there's discipline that has to take place. Chapters 21 to 36 in the book of Numbers covers a period of about five months. Some other key events that you can read about in Numbers in chapter 20, we read about another example of water from a rock, and this was where Moses, in his anger, disobeys God and God says, you won't be leading the people into the promised land just for one sin.

It's an emphasis of the need for leaders to live holy lives. God loved Moses, yet there was disobedience even on the part of Moses that had consequences.

In chapter 20, we see another red thread, the bronze serpent. People were disobeying God. A plague came on them. Snakes were biting them.

God said, lift up a snake on a pole. And when you look to the snake, they will be saved. That was a picture from John 3. Just as the serpent was lifted up on the stake, so the Son of God will be lifted up on the cross, for God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Chapters 22 to 24 talk about Balaam.
Chapter 25 is the sin of Peor.
Chapter 26, the second census of the people.

Towards the end of the 40-year period, there's another census that's taken to count the number of people prior to entering the promised land.

In Deuteronomy, the word is renewal, and it represents the second telling of the law. The theme of Deuteronomy is really three sermons, three messages by Moses to the people to prepare them to enter into the promised land.

Sermon #1: Chapter 1 through chapter 4:43. It's a reminder of what God has done for Israel.
Sermon #2: Chapter 4:4 – chapter 26 focuses on what God expects from Israel.
Sermon #3: Chapters 27 - 34 speaks about what God will do for Israel.

This serves as an outline for the book of Deuteronomy.

Chapter 28, summarizes the blessings for obedience and the cursing for disobedience.

As you live in a relationship with a holy God, there was a conditional covenant that God had with the people of God through Moses saying, when you walk in obedience, there's a blessing. When you disobey God, there are consequences for that.

The same principle holds true in our life, but that was a very specific principle, a part of the covenant, a conditional covenant that God gave to his people through Moses. Then in chapters 29 to 34 of Deuteronomy, you can see the renewal of the covenant, and this is where God is saying this generation that survived the wilderness time, they started the 40 years in the wilderness as 20 years of age or younger. Now 40 years has passed.

It's a chance to remind them of the covenant promises of God, so as they're prepared to enter in to the promised land. This Deuteronomy ends in verse chapter 34 with the death of Moses, and God raises up Joshua as a transition to the last book of this lesson is Joshua in the book of promise. Joshua 1 says, God says, Moses is dead.

Joshua, now you lead my people into the promised land. In chapters 1 to 5, it's the story of Joshua leading the people across the Jordan to enter the land. Chapters 5 through 12, it's the story of how Joshua is leading people to conquer the land, to drive out the inhabitants of the land.

Chapters 13 - 21, it's the story of Joshua claiming the land, dividing up the land amongst the 12 tribes, and then the last three chapters, chapter 22 - 24, is Joshua consecrating the people. They are reminded of the covenant, and they have an opportunity to say, we will follow God. God is our king.

This is the theocracy. The people were to live in submission to the Lord God, and our their desire is to walk with Him, and that's how the book of Joshua ends. What we'll do when we continue with part B, is look at some specific things out of each of these books that will help us, identify where we see red threads and highlight some of the key parts of this Old Testament story that show God to be a faithful God.

He's going to build His kingdom. There's a conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man that continues through this part of the story, that God is providing all that's needed for His people to bring them into the promised land and sustain them, and give them opportunities to reflect God's character to the nations around Him. So, we'll continue in a moment with part B of lesson four focused on the Exodus and the Birth of a Nation.