

Lesson 4 – The Exodus from Egypt

Text: Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers 1-13

Significant Figures and People: God, Moses, Aaron, Pharaoh, Miriam, Joshua, and Caleb

Key Passages:

- Exodus 3 – Moses was called by God to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptian oppression.
- Exodus 12 – God established the Passover to help the Israelites to remember how He had saved them.
- Exodus 19 – The nation of Israel agreed to obey and serve the Lord and to be His special people.
- Exodus 20 – The Ten Commandments were given to Moses by the Lord on Mount Sinai.
- Numbers 13 – None of the twelve spies believed they could take Canaan except for Joshua and Caleb.

Transition from Patriarchs:

The end of Genesis describes the events surrounding Jacob's and Joseph's deaths. The beginning of Exodus talks about a new pharaoh who did not know Joseph. All of the good that Joseph had accomplished in Egypt was forgotten. The new pharaoh felt threatened by the growing nation and took drastic measures to make sure that his great empire was not in any danger from this unknown people, the Israelites.

Main Storyline:

Over the course of the Israelites' time in Egypt, they grew quickly as a nation, and Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, worried that they would join with Egypt's enemies and defeat the Egyptians in war. This new pharaoh began trying to bring children of Israel under control in several ways. First, he put them to work as slaves, putting taskmasters over them, and forced them to build great cities in Egypt. He hoped that afflicting the Israelites in this way would slow down their growth as a nation. Unfortunately for Pharaoh, the more the people were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew.

Pharaoh amplified his efforts by forcing the Israelites to work under very difficult and cruel conditions. He also commanded that all sons that were born to the Israelites be killed. Despite the Pharaoh's wicked commandments, a couple from the descendants of Levi had a son and hid him until they could not any longer. The child's mother made a basket and placed him in the Nile. Ironically, Pharaoh's daughter found the child and adopted him as her own, naming him Moses.

When Moses was about 80 years old, he met God in a burning bush in Midian and was told to lead the Israelites to freedom from Egypt. After God sent ten plagues, culminating in the death of all the firstborn amongst the Egyptians, Pharaoh begged Israel to leave. God led the Israelites out of Egypt, parting the Red Sea so they could escape from the pursuing Egyptians. Despite the Israelites frequent complaining and lack of faith, God protected and provided for His people as He led them back toward the Promised Land (Canaan).

At Mount Sinai, the people agreed to be God's special people (a kingdom of priests and a holy nation), pledging to do all that the Lord spoke. Moses went up on the mountain to receive God's directions, including the Ten Commandments and instructions for the construction of the tabernacle, the Israelites' place of worship to God. While Moses was on the mountain, the people rebelled against God and constructed a golden calf to worship. God punished the Israelites for their rebellion but did not abandon them.

The Israelites continued toward the Promised Land until they stopped in Kadesh-Barnea to send twelve spies to scout the defenses of the Canaanites. When they returned, ten of them reported that they could not take the land from the Canaanites. However, the other two spies (Joshua and Caleb) stood with Moses and Aaron and declared that, with God's help, the people could defeat them and conquer the land.

Transition to the Wandering in the Wilderness:

The people listened to the ten unfaithful spies and refused to go into the land to accept the promises that God had given to the patriarchs. Thus, God sentenced them to wander in the wilderness until the entire generation (not including Joshua and Caleb) died as a punishment for their lack of faith (40 years).

Overview of Significant Events in the Exodus from Egypt Time Period:

- Pharaoh began afflicting the nation of Israel in order to stifle their growth (Exodus 1).
- Moses was born and was called by God to deliver His people from Pharaoh and Egypt (Exodus 2-3).
- God sent ten plagues on the Egyptians to convince Pharaoh to release the Israelites (Exodus 7-12).
- God instituted the Passover feast to help the Israelites remember how He had saved them (Exodus 12).
- The Israelites were commanded to redeem their firstborn to remind them of God's strength (Exodus 13).
- God divided the Red Sea to deliver the Israelites from the pursuing Egyptians (Exodus 14).
- The Israelites complained about food and water, but God took care of them (Exodus 15-17).
- The Israelites pledged to be God's chosen nation at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19).
- Moses received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20).
- The Israelites built and worshipped a golden calf because they tired of waiting for Moses (Exodus 32).
- The tabernacle was constructed, and the glory of God filled it at its completion (Exodus 35-40).
- God gave the various points of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai (Leviticus).
- The people complained again about food, and God punished them (Numbers 11).
- The twelve spies were sent into Canaan to scout it; none of them but Joshua and Caleb believed that they could defeat its inhabitants and conquer it (Numbers 13).

The Ten Plagues (Exodus 7-12):

1. Water turned to blood
2. Frogs
3. Lice
4. Flies
5. Death of the livestock (disease)
6. Boils
7. Hail
8. Locusts
9. Darkness
10. Death of the firstborn

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20)

1. No other gods before the Lord
2. No graven images or idols
3. Do not take God's name in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy
5. Honor father and mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not bear false witness (lie)
10. You shall not covet