

Epic – Egyptian Sojourn to Desert Wandering

Ex 1; We're working our way through an overview of the Bible these days, in a series called Epic; Tracing the history of God's work of redemption, from creation to eternity. A study intended to help us see the big picture, by highlighting the parts. And thus far, we've covered 4 – Creation, Fall, Flood, and Patriarchs.

Which brings us to the . . .

Egyptian Sojourn

A sojourn being a stay of undetermined length; Longer than a visit but shorter than forever. And this particular sojourn lasted 430 years (Ex 12:40); From . . .

Time Period – 1876BC-1446BC

It started with Jacob's move to Egypt, with 70 members of his extended family – and ended when some 2 million Israelites left Egypt, by way of the Red Sea.

Key People – Pharaoh, Moses, Miriam; The sister of Moses who suggested to Pharaoh's daughter that her mom nurse him.

Key Places – Egypt, Midian

Midian being a desert area (**Map**) east of the Red Sea & Egypt, w/ the Sinai Desert in btw.

Main Events – Israelite Enslavement, Call of Moses, Plagues, Release

But 430 years before the release, was the enslavement; Found in Ex 1:7-14.

Joseph and his generation had died . . .

[7] But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them. [8] Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. [9] And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. [10] Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land."

[11] Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. [12] But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. [13] So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves [14] and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves. That's the Israelite enslavement.

And in the midst of it, a child named Moses was born; And through a series of divine appointments, he grew up as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter; But . . . At the age of 40, he killed an Egyptian for mistreating an Israelite, and fled to Midian.

And while he was there, after another 40 years (Acts 7:30), God spoke to him from a burning bush, and told him to go back to Egypt to win the Israelite's release. So he did, and after a series of 10 plagues, Pharaoh eventually agreed.

But not before the **Passover**, the final plague.

Where God instructed the Israelites to secure a lamb without blemish or spot, kill it at the appointed time without breaking any of its bones . . .

Apply the blood to the door frame of their homes, and wait safely inside for God to pass over them, sparing the lives of their firstborn; Found in Ex 12:29-32.

[29] At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock [from the greatest to the least, no one was exempt]. [30] And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead. [31] Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, "Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. [32] Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!" Bless me by getting out of here!

And so ended the Egyptian Sojourn, after 430 long years of slavery; Amazing.

➤ But it's more than just a good story; And certainly more than just happenstance. B/c God had some purposes in mind (**God's Purposes**); The first of which, was . . .

To preserve his people (Ex 3:7-8)

God saw their affliction, he heard their cry, and set about to preserve them.

Just like he did in bringing them to Egypt in the first place, in the middle of a famine. The whole thing was one great big preservation project, b/c God's trustworthiness was on the line; Was he going to keep his word or not? Was he capable, or not?

2nd, God intended . . .

To show his power and proclaim his name (Rom 9:17)

Which comes straight from **Rom 9:17**.

[17] For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

One of God's purposes in all this, was to show just how powerful he was; Powerful to not only release them, but bring about the circumstances that bound them in the 1st place. Including the hardening of Pharaoh's heart; And making him stubborn beyond belief in order to further show his power in the plagues.

Not only that, but God intended for this time period to make himself known; To declare his name in all the earth.

To be feared, worshipped, and glorified more and more, by more and more*****
It wasn't just about power, but fame.

3rd, God's purpose for the Egyptian Sojourn was . . .

To picture our salvation (Ex 12:13; 1 Cor 5:7)

The Israelite slavery to Egypt, pictures our slavery to sin; While their release from slavery, pictures our salvation; Being released from the bondage of sin . . . And spared its consequences; Which is seen best in the Passover; Ex 12:13.

God is speaking and says – *[13] The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And 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.*

Just like God saved them through the blood of a lamb, God saves us through the blood of Jesus; Who Paul refers to as our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7); It's a picture.

Especially so, when you consider the parallels.

B/c what the Israelites did with the lamb, God did with Jesus – he put him to death, broke no bones, and shed his blood for our sins
And it happened, on the *remembrance* of Passover, to the day, 1476 years later
So that by faith, God could apply the blood of Jesus to the home of our *heart* – forgiving our sin, and saving us from death; It's a picture

And therein lies . . .

Our Response – Faith

As a picture of our salvation, the Passover *pleads* for a response of faith

Faith that God will save *us*, just as the Israelites had faith he would save them; Even after 400 long years; It's all about faith; And I want you to see it in Heb 11:23-28

[23] By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. [24] By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, [25] choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. [26] He considered the reproach of Christ [the criticism of living for God] greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward [the reward of life to the full and life forever]. [27] By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible [he persevered, by keeping the eyes of his heart on the One who couldn't be seen]. [28] By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them.

It was all about faith; All about *the assurance of things hoped for*, [and] *the conviction of things not seen* (Heb 11:1); And still is

This part of God's epic is meant to inspire our faith

Faith in God's power; Faith in God's promises; Faith in his salvation

Faith that he'll preserve us; Faith that he'll protect us; And faith that he'll bless us

The Israelites had it; Moses had it; How about you? Got faith? **(Summary)**

Are you assured in your heart of things hoped for, things found in the Bible?

Are the promises of things not seen part of your conviction?

I hope so; And I hope all this solidifies it even more

And if you haven't yet taken that step of faith, I hope you do so now

B/c *without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.* (Heb 11:6)

No faith, no reward; No faith, no nearness; No faith, no pleasing him

The Egyptian Sojourn is meant to bolster our faith

Next, came the time of . . .

Desert Wandering

A period of 42 years – from the time they left Egypt, to the time they crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land; That's 2 years at Mt Sinai, and 40 more in the desert

Time Period – 1446BC-1404BC

Key People – Moses and Aaron; Brothers

Key Places – Mt Sinai, Desert Wilderness

Main Events – Crossing the Red Sea, Provision of Food, 10 Commandments

Major events that the writers of the Bible refer to time and time again

Starting with the Israelites crossing the Red Sea on dry ground, with the Egyptian army on their heels; And then God's provision of manna every morning

A bread-like substance they picked up off the ground; And how about water from a rock? And clouds of quail? (Ex 16:11-12; Nu 11); God provided

And eventually, they reached Mt Sinai; Where several *more* main events took place, including the establishment of another covenant; The . . .

Mosaic Covenant

Sometimes referred to as the *Old Covenant*, it was made with the nation as a whole, and is found in Ex 19:5-6

God is speaking, and says – [5] *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; [6] and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*

He made a covenant with them, dependent on their obedience; And did so for 3 reasons:

1. To take them as his own – to initiate a loving relationship with them, where they would be *a treasured possession* to him
2. To make them ambassadors – people who would convey his message and presence to a watching world; That's the idea of *a kingdom of priests*
Where those who are *close* to God extend his blessings to those who are *far* from him
3. To set them apart for his purposes – as a *holy nation*

➤ And the best part, is that we have *become* that holy nation; We *are* God's kingdom of priests; We *are* his treasured possession – the church
IOW the very thing God promised to the *Israelites* in the Mosaic Covenant, has now been applied to the *church*, in the New Covenant

It's found in **1 Pet 2:4-5**; Where speaking to believers, Peter says . . .

[4] *As you come to him . . . [5] you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* And then in **v9** . . .

[9] *You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* That we might be his ambassadors

In one place, and with the same language, Peter implies that the blessings and promises of God first given to the *Israelites* in the Mosaic Covenant, *now* apply to the church
That *we* would be his treasured possession; And *we* would be his kingdom of priests;
And *we* would be his holy nation
Comprised of believers from *every* tribe, tongue, and nation*****

But in Moses' day, that was 1500 years in the future; For now, it was the 10 Commandments and the *Law* that occupied their attention

The Law, referring to God's expectations for their obedience, and his instructions about how to live, how to relate to each other, and how to worship

➤ And if the first bombshell wasn't enough, that the promises made to the Israelites in the Mosaic Covenant now apply to us, try this one
The *principles* of the Law, still apply; True; B/c Jesus said in Mt 5:17 . . .

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

And the Apostle Paul said that the Law was written [entirely] for our sake (1 Cor 9:10) And went on to cite an obscure law about not muzzling an ox, to say we shouldn't withhold something that's rightfully due a person; IOW the principles still apply The principles of how to live, how to relate to each other, and how to worship

- But not the consequences or requirements; Like the commands to sacrifice animals, or wear certain fabric, or eat certain foods
In that respect, the Mosaic Covenant is *old*; It's obsolete; That what **Heb 8:13** says *In speaking of a new covenant* [the promise of salvation through faith in Jesus], *he* [God] *makes the first one obsolete*. Archaic; Superseded

Not only that, but Jesus *fulfilled* the righteous requirements of the Law by living a perfect *life*, and suffered the *consequences* for us, by dying a sinful death
Thus rendering the *commands* and the *consequences* obsolete, without abolishing the principles*****

So when you put it all together, the principles and blessings and promises of the Mosaic Covenant still apply, but not the consequences or commands

- But in Moses' day they did; And they failed miserably in keeping them; Especially so b/c of their grumbling and complaining; So God punished them . . .
By making them wander the desert for 40 years, until all those over 20 had died

Which is the first of . . .

God's Purposes

To punish their disobedience (Nu 14:26-34)

God was patient beyond patient, but enough was enough; So he punished them; That's the first purpose in all this; Second, was . . .

To manifest his presence (Ex 40:34)

And manifest it he did; First with a cloud to lead them by day, and a pillar of fire by night
Then, with his burning presence on Mt Sinai, *because the LORD had descended on it in fire* it says (Ex 19:18); And then there was the spiritual presence of *Christ*
Like Paul says in **1 Cor 10:1** – [1] *Our fathers were all under the cloud . . . and all ate the same spiritual food, [4] and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ*.
God manifested himself spiritually during that time*****

And last was the tabernacle cloud – the presence of God in and around the *tent* where they worshipped and sacrificed; In fact, Ex 40:34 says that . . .
The glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle; God manifested himself
And until Jesus, it was unequalled in the epic history of God's work

3rd, was God's purpose . . .

To keep us from evil (1 Cor 10:6)

Their punishment for evil, is meant to keep us from it; **1 Cor 10:6** says – *Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did*.
That we might learn the *easy* way, instead of the *hard* way*****

And then last, was . . .

To show us how to live (1 Cor 10:11)

1 Cor 10:11 says – *Now these things happened to them* [the Israelites] *as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come*.
One of God's purposes for the desert wandering in *their* day, was to show us how to live in ours (**Summary**)

Our Response – Righteousness

Righteousness in light of his holy presence; Righteousness to live his way
Righteousness in worshipping him alone
Righteousness in avoiding what's wrong, and doing what's right
Miss *that* from this part of God's epic, and you miss the point altogether (**Summary**)

- So as we share in **Communion**, keep those things in mind
Remember our Passover Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, and let him refresh your heart of righteousness; Or wash it clean in the first place

Either way, if Jesus is Lord of your life, if you've repented of your sins and received him as your Savior – join us
And when you're ready, go ahead and eat the bread on your own; Bearing witness to your *personal* communion with him, through faith
But hang on to your cup, and we'll drink that *together* – as a testimony of our *corporate* communion with him, and a proclamation of his name

- At the last Passover meal, Jesus said – *This cup is the new covenant in my blood*
Meaning that this cup and what it contains, is symbolic of the promise of salvation that Christ's blood bought and guaranteed
Do this [he said], *as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me*.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death [we proclaim the gospel, we proclaim his name] *until he comes*. (1 Cor 11:25b-26)

Pray – Thank you for giving your life as our Passover Lamb; Thank you for the righteousness we have in you, and the examples to live it out; And thank you for the faith to believe; Give us more; Especially as we give of our tithes and offerings now

Close – Discover Harvest – Sunday @ 1:15; Visitor Bags