

Synthetic Bible Studies

Containing an outline study of every book of the Bible
with suggestions for Sermons, Addresses and
Bible Expositions

By

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LESSON FOUR

EXODUS, CHAPTERS 1-19

Genesis has sometimes been called the book of beginnings, *which is the real meaning of the word*, because of the nature of its contents, which give the origin of things. We have in it the beginning of the world, of man, of the Sabbath, marriage, sin, prophecy, and sacrifice, as well as the beginning of the nations and Israel. This brings us down to the twelfth chapter, but after that practically there are no beginnings, but only a recurrence of :what has gone before.

Exodus in the same way has sometimes been called the book of the departure or the going out, *from the etymology of the word*, and also because it gives the history of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt.

The Israelites entered Egypt when Joseph was in power, seventy souls in all (Genesis 46:27). They left there 215 years afterward, according to the chronology in the margin of our Bibles, when their men of war alone numbered 603,550, not counting women and children, not counting men under 20, and also leaving out of consideration the whole tribe of Levi (Numbers 1:44-50).

During this period their experiences had varied.

While Joseph lived and the Pharaohs of that period, they were happy and prosperous in the land of Goshen. But by-and-by a change of dynasty occurred, and political revolution took place, and the new government viewed their increasing numbers and influence with alarm and jealousy. In consequence they began to subject them in every possible way, and it is at this point in their

history the book of Exodus begins (1:7-10).

Proof from Recent Explorations

Allusion was made in an earlier lesson to the way in which recent explorations in Bible lands throw light upon these historical statements in the Word of GOD, and this is particularly true of the present period. "It would be easy," says an authority on the subject, "to multiply illustrations from the ancient records of Egypt of many circumstances in the life of Joseph."

The situation and limits of the land of Goshen are now known, as well as the history of the dynastic changes that resulted in the exodus of the Hebrews. It is ascertained that Rameses II, the Pharaoh of Moses' time, was, like his predecessor, a great builder, corroborating 1:11. His mummy has recently been discovered as well as that of his daughter, the princess who saved the infant Moses from perishing in the river Nile, and brought him up as her own son.

How near these circumstances seem to bring the history of that time, and how real it is made to appear!

In like manner, careful examinations have now "put the route of the exodus beyond all reasonable doubt."

We know also the real character of the desert through which the Hebrews passed. Shur is a rolling plain where shrubs and herbs give pasturage to cattle. Water courses cross it. Charming spots like Elim are found here and there, indicating how they found sustenance during that period. There is a plain at the foot of Sinai now called Er-Rahah, two miles long, and half a mile wide, where a multitude of 2,000,000 souls could easily have assembled, and the sights and sounds described could easily have been seen and heard by all. The site of Kadesh-Barnea too, is now definitely settled. Thus, without going further into detail, is the accuracy of the story we are about to consider wonderfully confirmed.

The Facts of the Chapters

We are now ready to consider the facts of the chapters, which will be brought before us in a series of questions.

The first great fact is clearly suggested by the one word, "bondage."

But what were the sub-facts that entered into this bondage, what are its elements referred to in the text? Were there not chiefly two, their rigorous service under the hard task-masters, and the decree for the destruction of male issue?

What is the next fact?

- the birth of Moses. But that naturally includes the further facts of his life to the time when he has fled from Egypt and Pharaoh's palace.

- the third fact: His call, including the story of the burning bush, the revelation to him of the Lord, his hesitancy to respond, and the collaboration of Aaron.

- the fourth fact is the story of the plagues, including what led up to them in the return to Egypt, the demand on Pharaoh, and his obduracy.
- the fifth fact is the Passover, growing out really from the last plague;
- the sixth is the crossing of the Red Sea;
- the seventh, the entrance upon the wilderness journey.

This last fact might be subdivided for convenience by the number of places at which they stopped. Try to recall them, and the circumstances occurring at each. You will be aided here as in the instance of the dispersion of the nations, by consulting the map in the back of your Bible. It is described as the "*Peninsula of Sinai*."

- Observe Marah, and why it was so called.

Elim.

Rephidim.

- What great miracle occurred after leaving Elim, and in the neighborhood of Rephidim?
- What miracle at the last named locality?
- What battle was fought there?
- Who commanded the forces?
- What was done to relieve Moses of care?
- At whose suggestion?

Perhaps we would better make a separate fact of their arrival at Sinai.

- Whither is Moses now called?
- What distinction does the Lord bestow on Israel? (19:5,6).
- Describe what was seen and heard on and about the mount.

Things to be Explained

The class understands that interpretation and explanation are not among the things promised in these lessons for many reasons, but that does not exclude an allusion thereto if necessity seems to compel and space permit. For example, 4:24 and the following verses, may puzzle many who have no commentary at hand to examine.

The idea there seems to be that some great mental distress or physical illness came upon Moses which he recognized as a chastisement for the neglect of the circumcision of his son. This neglect perhaps was occasioned by his wife's aversion to the act, who now overcame her maternal feelings sufficiently to perform it herself, and thus bring relief to her husband. This critical experience was doubtless not only of value to Moses' own inner life, but had its influence upon him as the leader of and legislator for Israel in after years. Especially would it stir him to enforce the law of circumcision which was so peculiarly the mark of distinction for that people.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart, 4:21, and other places, is apt to be a stumbling-block to some, but it must be remembered that the divine messages and judgments were not the cause, but only the occasion of that hardening. Such passages must be interpreted in the light of the divine

character and the Holy Scriptures taken as a whole, and we know therefrom that GOD never deals unjustly or arbitrarily with His creatures, whose own free actings are always the cause of their downfall and punishment (II Thessalonians 2:11, 12).

The borrowing of the Egyptian jewels by the Israelites has given rise to questioning, but the word "**borrow**" in that instance means *to demand or require*. The Israelites who had been kept in great poverty and denied their just wages by their persecutors, now insisted upon full remuneration for their labor which was thus paid in silver articles adapted for convenient carriage. The dread of them inspired in the Egyptians by the Lord made it comparatively easy to obtain what they asked (Genesis 15:13, 14; Psalm 105:37; Ezekiel 39:10).

Exodus 12:40 presents a difficulty where the period of their sojourn is given as 430 years, while as we have seen the Bible chronology calls for only 215 years spent in Egypt. Galatians 3:16, 17, throws some light upon it as showing that the period began to be reckoned from the date of the promise to Abraham, which makes precisely 430 years. As bearing upon this the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Old Testament, makes that verse read, "*The sojourning of the children and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt.*"

Things to be Noticed

In all our studies thus far the attention of the reader has been called to certain special features which it were well to particularly notice by way of suggestion, even though their explanation were not called for.

In the present instance the promptings of faith on the part of Moses' parents as well as himself should be dwelt upon (Hebrews 11:23-29). There was nothing haphazard either in the hiding of the babe in the Nile, nor in his own renunciation of Egypt afterward. The whole thing was profoundly religious and born of the same undoubting belief in GOD that justified Abraham.

Notice again the command for Moses to write certain things in a book (17:14; 34:27). This has an important application to the theory of some that Moses is not the author of the Pentateuch or the first five books of the Bible. If you carefully observe the number of times in which he is said to write this or that, or in which the statement is made that the Lord spoke directly to him, you will perceive that to remove those passages from the Pentateuch would be to leave little as a remainder. The inference is very plain - to plain people.

Notice, too, the typical character of the Passover.

The Passover itself is a remarkable type of redemption through CHRIST, while the central feature of the Passover, the lamb, is equally impressive as symbolizing CHRIST Himself (I Corinthians 5:7, 8). We shall enlarge upon this later.

Notice finally, certain important particulars about the miraculous plagues.

There are two kinds of miracles, absolute and providential.

The latter are those which are not miraculous in themselves, but in the circumstances attending

their performance. Such were some of the plagues of Egypt. They were the natural phenomena of that land, only in this instance they came at an unusual season and in an unusual degree of intensity, as well as in immediate response to the prophet's command. The Nile which was turned into blood was the patron god of the Egyptians, a fact which greatly added to their humiliation in that circumstance. The same thing was true in some measure of several of the other plagues; one of their gods, for example, was represented with a frog's head. They also worshipped flies, reared temples in honor of the ox and the cow, and idolized the sun which was turned into darkness.

Observe the reference to the magicians in this case, found in II Timothy 3:8. That they represented Satan as Moses represented GOD, there can be little doubt. Their defeat under the circumstances was an impressive illustration of the supremacy of the latter, which they themselves acknowledged (8:16-19). While they appeared by their enchantments to be able to reproduce two of the plagues on a small scale, it is notable that they attempted to go no further, and that even in those instances they could not undo what they had done as in the case of Moses.

The Passover a Type of Redemption

The next chapter will deal with the types more particularly, but we shall avail ourselves of the present opportunity to dwell on the one most distinctive and comprehensive type of redemption found in the Old Testament.

What are the points of similarity that suggest themselves?

Be careful to begin at the beginning, and school yourself to think orderly and logically throughout. We may differ as to what constitutes the beginning here, but it strikes me that the need of the Passover is the first thing. What was its need? The condition of the people, their bondage and suffering.

The analogy between their condition and that of the sinner in bondage to sin, Satan and death, and the suffering entailed, is not difficult to trace.

What then is the next thought?

The origin of the Passover. It originated in GOD, in His mercy and purpose to deliver. Its revelation as well as inception was divine, bringing to mind the fact that we are not only indebted to GOD's grace for our deliverance from sin, but for the inspired Word and authenticated messengers through which the same has been ministered to us.

The next thought might be the means of the Passover with all the suggestiveness of the slaying of the lamb and the sprinkling of its blood, as brought before us in New Testament teaching in I Corinthians 5:7, 8; Romans 3:24-26; I Peter 1:18-20, and other places.

Another thought might be the effects of the Passover, seen to be at least threefold, e. g.,

- salvation from death,
- deliverance from bondage, and

- entrance into Canaan,

symbolizing at once salvation both from the guilt and power of sin, and rest in the fulness of CHRIST.

And then there is a final thought in the application of the matter, since the effects or blessings of the Passover were for all who believed and obeyed GOD in making the necessary provisions in the slain lamb and sprinkled blood, without reference either to the question of character or the degree or quality of faith.

The New Testament Scriptures which form the parallel to this are, of course, very numerous and familiar.

- **"Whosoever believeth,"**

- **"Whosoever will may come,"**

- **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done,"** etc.

For such places as these consult the marginal references in your Bibles Or *Cruden's Complete Concordance*.

~ end of Lesson 4 ~
