

## Old Testament Survey: 4

### The Great Escape

#### Exodus - Deuteronomy

#### Exodus

Exodus is an important book in the Old Testament. If we fail to understand what is taking place then we will not fully appreciate what happens in the rest of the Bible, including the death and resurrection of Jesus.

As the book of Exodus opens we see some of God's promises to Abraham already starting to come to pass. God's people are growing and have become very numerous although there is still a long way to go before they get to the place where all of those promises are fulfilled

#### Exodus 12.1-41

Exodus records the start of the Jewish nation and outlines the start of their journey to the land of their own – the Promised Land, promised to Abraham. This journey begins with a miraculous escape from Egypt. This great escape is the focal point for everything that is to come, and every Jew identifies themselves with this event, even today. The Exodus also marked the start of the Jewish calendar (see vs 2)

There are certain characteristics of the events leading up to the moment where Pharaoh finally lets the people go.

- **Lamb is sacrificed** – God instructs His people to kill a lamb and apply the blood to the doorposts and lintels of their homes. On the night of the Passover, when God saw the blood on the doors of the houses He passed over their homes and did not allow the destroyer to enter. The death of the innocent lamb took the place of the death of their own firstborn.
- **God did it** – The nation of Israel came into existence not through struggling to achieve greatness, nor through winning a war with Egypt. Israel was set free because God did it.
- **From slavery to freedom** – For approx 400 years Israel had been in Egypt and they had become oppressed and enslaved. God heard their cry and remembered His promise to Abraham. When God set them free, they were free indeed, the shackles of slavery were broken.
- **From poverty to riches** – The Exodus also meant going from a state of poverty to great riches. The Israelites didn't just get out with what they were wearing, as is often the case when people escape from oppressive regimes. They left with the treasures of Egypt which the Egyptians willingly gave to them.

Already we can see the Old Testament pointing towards Jesus and the pattern that God establishes for salvation.

### **Exodus 19.3-8**

After God's people had been freed from the bondage of Egypt, God gathers them at Mount Sinai and gives them His plans for them. He says that He is going to make them into a holy nation, a nation that is peculiar [separated] to Him. In response to His promise they agree to be obedient to His commandments.

God also gives them certain laws relating to their life and conduct. As you skim through the next few books of the Bible you will see that the Israelites fail to keep their promises, but God remains faithful to them.

### **Exodus 24-40**

The next few chapters of Exodus deal with God's plan for the construction of the Tabernacle – this is a portable tent in which God would dwell and meet with His people as they journey to and into the Promised Land

### **Leviticus**

God's laws carry on through Leviticus as Moses teaches the people of God how to stand in proper awe of His mercy and holiness. There are a number of things which they must observe if they are to be a theocratic nation with God as their King.

### **Numbers**

In Numbers we see that God's people leave Sinai and move to the fringes of the Promised Land. Moses sends 12 spies into the land to survey it and plan the invasion but they return with a bad report – only two Joshua and Caleb believe they can enter and possess the land. But God's people listen to the ten spies and refuse to enter into what God said belonged to them – don't forget this land was promised to Abraham and his descendants.

This refusal is basically an act of unbelief and mistrust in God. As an act of punishment they were made to wander in the wilderness for forty years. During this period, although their sin is judged, still we see God remains faithful to them – He provided food, drink, shoes and clothes that did not wear out.

At the end of these forty years Israel gathers once more at the edge of the Promised Land for a second attempt at entering – Moses dies and Joshua leads God's people.

**Deuteronomy** is made up of three appeals that Moses gives the people of God just prior to this.

### **Deuteronomy 7.7-9**

In these verses we see why God is doing all that He does. He is a God who is faithful to His covenant. He wants to keep the oath that He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

### **Deuteronomy 6.4-15**

Here we read what the response of God's people should be. They are instructed to continually talk over God's promises so as to remind themselves of what God was doing for them and to remember where they had come from, so that they did not chase after other Gods or forget the Lord. They are to keep God's words right at the heart of their lives.

### **Deuteronomy 7.1-4**

They were not to enter into covenant with an enemy or show them mercy. They were not to marry or give their daughters in marriage with these people from other nations, as these heathen nations would turn their hearts from following after God.

### **Deuteronomy 30.15-20**

Moses gives the Israelites the option to choose between life and death, blessing or cursing, good or evil. Even after Adam's bad choices, God still gives His people the option to serve Him or not. They still have freedom of choice.

What do these books each us about Jesus?

By using the four characteristics of the Exodus we see that:

- *Lamb is sacrificed* – The whole of the Levitical system of offerings, cleansing and atonement were based on a blood sacrifice. Jesus is the Lamb of God and He was sacrificed to take away the sins of the world.
- *God did it* – We are saved not because of any works or merit on our part. We do not buy or earn salvation. We didn't struggle with God and overcome and receive it that way. We are saved by God's doing – His grace. All we have to do on our part is accept what He has done and believe, and receive it by faith.
- *From slavery to freedom* – We are no longer slaves to sin because Jesus died to pay the ransom price for our freedom. Sin no longer has any dominion or hold over us. The shackles and yoke of slavery have been broken by Christ and we are not in debt to the devil.
- *From poverty to riches* – We now have exceeding riches in glory which are ours in Christ Jesus. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing and belong to a family which own the wealth in every mine