



UNDERSTANDING THE OLD TESTAMENT

Seeing the Big Picture

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Part 5A: The Wilderness Period

I. INTRODUCTION

A. ABRAHAMIC COVENANT: GOD PROMISED HIM:

- A great blessing.
- A great land.
- A great nation.

B. DEFINITION

- A nation is usually a group of people who speak a common language, occupy a common land, and live under a common form of government.
- While in Egypt the Israelites spoke a common language but had not yet have their own form of government (worship) or a common land of their own.

II. THE NATION DEVELOPED

A. IT BEGAN WITH ABRAHAM'S GREAT GRANDSON JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

- Jacob's 12 sons
- Joseph rejected by brothers, sold into slavery in Egypt.
- Joseph faced several trials, trusting fully in God's wisdom.
- Joseph rises to power under the Egyptian Pharaoh.

B. A FAMINE IN CANAAN FORCED JACOB TO GO TO EGYPT.

- The "House of Jacob" (Jacob's family and clan) eventually moves to Egypt (70 people; Gen. 46:27b).

C. THE ISRAELITES ("HOUSE OF JACOB") WERE ALLOWED TO LIVE IN THE LAND OF GOSHEN.

- They were sheep herders which were despised by Egyptians, so they confined to the land of Goshen (Gen. 46:34).
- Goshen: Eastern part of Nile, fertile land for agriculture and grazing
- Israelites grow in number.
- In Goshen they lived in peace for about 200 years.

D. THE NEXT PHARAOH (PROBABLY AHMOSE I) OPPRESSED THE ISRAELITES.

- Because didn't know Joseph's accomplishments (Exod. 1:8).
- Because the Israelites were "more and mightier" than the Egyptians.
- The new Pharaoh tried to hinder Israelite population growth
- By this time the Israelites had grown to be about two million in number.

E. GOD THEN RAISED UP MOSES.

- God raised up Moses to meet the needs of oppressed and burdened Israelites.
- As a baby Moses was saved and raised by pharaoh's daughter who named him *mosheh* ('drawn out').
- He was raised as a royal prince.
- He killed an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating a Hebrew slave, so he fled to Midian.
- He married Zipporah, a Midianite of the family of Jethro, and has two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.
- Moses spent 40 years learning to live in the desert wilderness (became like "Navy Seal").

F. THE PHARAOH REFUSED TO SET THE ISRAELITES FREE

- Moses returns to Egypt and tells Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.
- Pharaoh refuses ("hardens his heart").

G. GOD THEN SENT TEN PLAGUES ON THE EGYPTIANS

- The ten plagues of Egypt in order are: water turning to blood, frogs, lice, flies, livestock pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the killing of firstborn children.

H. JUST PRIOR TO THE EXODUS GOD INSTITUTED THE PASSOVER

- In the Passover the death of a lamb takes the place of the firstborn.
- As a lamb took the place of the first-born sons of Israel show the Lamb of God would die in the place of those under the penalty of death because of sin (John 1:9).
- The blood from the la was to be applied on the doorposts and the beams (lintels) of the Israelite homes.
- God promised that when he saw the blood he would pass over the Israelite homes and the first-born son would be spared. This is why it's called Passover.

I. THE EXODUS

- At Rameses: Israel begins the Exodus.
- Succoth: God leads with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night. God is with them!
- Israel passes through the Red (Reed) Sea. Specific crossing unknown—there may have been a series of lakes connecting to the Red Sea in those days.

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