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FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN

1. SETTING THE SCENE

Reading: Exodus 1:1-22

The family are off on holiday. Dad and Mum in the front seats are feeling a bit worn out, what with the effort of getting ready and packing, and the worry about leaving something behind. In the back the kids are bubbling with excitement, the whole of their holiday ahead of them. For the first ten miles or so everything goes well. And then comes a little voice from the back seat, “*Daddy are we nearly there ?*” Dad’s heart sinks, he’s going to hear that question a few times more before the journey’s end, and in between there will be grumbles, and squabbles and tears, and his nicely cleaned car will end up looking like a litter bin. Now the journey we are going to take in this series of studies will be slightly different. It will be about where God wants to get in our Christian lives, and the experiences we can expect on the way. But maybe we shall often have to ask ourselves the same question, “*are we nearly there ?*” Now kids in the back of a car may know very little about where they are going, though they are sure it will be great when they get there.

But do we understand where the Lord is taking us in our Christian experience ? *Do we know how far we have come ? How much of the journey still lies ahead ?* And have we a clear picture of just what may happen to us on the way ? Of course every believer know that they are bound for heaven at the end of this life. But do we all understand that God has an objective for us to reach and enjoy in this life ? And that our readiness to be guided by the Lord will determine whether we reach that objective quickly and happily, or whether we make heavy weather of the journey. Now in this series,

“*From Egypt to Canaan,*” we are going to look at the incidents which occurred during Israel’s journey from the House of Bondage to the Land of Promise, incidents which set forth some of the most important lessons in the Christian’s life, and which illustrate our history as we travel from the place of bondage to the land of fulfilled promises. So how shall we make this journey ? And what is the best way to study this theme ? Well, first of all our approach,

1. Must be BIBLICAL:

Which means we must study the relevant passages many of them in the Book of Exodus. Like every other book in the Bible, Exodus is the living Word of God. It was breathed out by the Holy Spirit and written down by Moses for our spiritual benefit. (Ex 17:14 Mk 7:10)

2. Must be HISTORICAL:

For this journey from Egypt to Canaan is more than merely a story, it presents itself as history, and therefore the only way to interpret it is to accept it as a true account of the history of the nation of Israel. The Bible says that Solomon began to build the temple in Jerusalem “ *in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt.* ” (1 Kings 6:1) Now we know that Solomon built the Temple in or around 962 BC, which would place the Exodus around 1440BC. The word “ *exodus,* ” means “ *the way out,* ” or “ *departure,* ” the book speaking of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.

3. Must be THEOLOGICAL:

For as we study the Biblical history in this journey, we discover that the real hero of the story is God. God is the one who reveals Himself to Moses as the Great I am. God is the one who hears the cries of His people in bondage. God is the one who raises up a Saviour in Moses. God is the one who visit's the plagues on Egypt, who divides the sea, and who drowns Pharaoh's army. God is the one who provides bread from heaven and water from the rock. God is the one who gives the law and fills the tabernacle with His glory. My in this study we will encounter God, for this journey is about the mercy, justice, holiness and glory of God who rules history by His sovereign power and who delivers His chosen nation. Have you ever noticed something ? That when the Biblical writers talk about the exodus, they rarely mention Moses at all, rather they speak about the wonders of God. My our subject is an exercise in theology, which is simply the study of God. (1) (2) (3)

(4) Must be PRACTICAL:

In order for Israel's journey out of Egypt, to become part of our own pilgrimage, we must apply its spiritual lessons to our own walk with God. Paul reminds us that “ *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable,* ” (2 Tim 3:16) and again “ *For whatsoever things were written afortime, were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* ” (Rom 15:4) The former of these Scripture assure us that the earlier parts of the

Bible are the breathings of God, and the latter that they are of practical value to us. A dear lady who went to be with Christ some years ago had written along the margin of her Bible the following two lines,

***“ In the Old Testament the New lies hid
In the New Testament the Old lies open.”***

This simple testimony to the value of Old Testament type and teaching is true. Since the exodus is a story of deliverance from bondage through the work of a Saviour, it is the story of the Christian life. For as we trace their spiritual journey we discover that we need exactly what the Israelites needed. We need a liberator, a God to save us from slavery and destroy our enemies. We need a provider, a God to feed us bread from heaven and water from the rock. We need a lawgiver, a God to command us how to love and serve Him. And we need a friend, a God to stay with us day and night, forever. Now in this opening study all I want to do is to “ ***Set the Scene,***” for all that will follow. That means touching on three things.

(1) THE PROFIT OF THIS BIBLE STUDY

For you might be asking the question, “ *What’s the point of looking at some of these Old Testament Scriptures, which have so little relevance for us in the 21st century ?* ” Well, in answer to that question, let me say that the Lord Jesus set his seal on the authenticity of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament as a whole. (Jn 5:46) But not only that, Christ quotes specifically from Genesis (Matt 19:4) Exodus (Lk 20:37) Leviticus (Matt 18:4) Numbers (Jn 3:14) and Deuteronomy (Lk 4:1) the Master has spoken the question of authenticity is therefore closed. Now I believe this study will enable us to do two things.

(a) This Study will enable us to see our SAVIOUR:

“ *Sir we would see Jesus,* ” (Jn 12:21) should be the constant cry on our hearts as we come to the Word of God, and the wonderful is that we shall see Jesus as we pursue this series of studies ! In one way or another the whole Bible is about Jesus Christ. *The theme of the Old Testament is the Saviour to come, the theme of the New Testament is the Saviour who has come and is coming again.* You will recall that Moses is the human writer of the first five books of the Bible. (Deut 31:24-26 Ex 17:4) But do you remember what Christ said of Moses ? He said, “ *Moses wrote of Me.* ” (Jn 5:46) Now where did Moses write of Christ ? In the Pentateuch. For in the Inspired Word of God we see the Incarnate Word, even our Lord Jesus ! For example, in the Pentateuch we have the *First Glimmerings of*

Christ, in the Psalms we have the Feelings of Christ, in the Gospels we have the Facts of Christ, in the Epistles we have the Fullness of Christ, and in the Revelation we have the Finality of Christ.

Christ in all the Scriptures even in its earliest books ! Do you remember that day that the Risen Lord appeared to those two despondent disciples on the Road to Emmaus ? (Lk 24:13-27) Wouldn't you have loved to be there as He expounded unto them " *the things concerning Himself*," that is the passages in Scripture which referred to Himself. Beginning at (Gen 3:15) with the seed of the woman, going on to Mount Moriah in Abraham's day with the offering up of Isaac (Gen 22:1) In Exodus He would be perceived as the Passover Lamb (Ex 12:5) In Leviticus He would be perceived as the Scapegoat (Lev 16:8) In Numbers He is the Rock in the wilderness (Num 20:11) In Joshua He is the Captain of the Lord's Host. In the Psalms and the Prophets we are told of His suffering, death, and resurrection. I wonder what the Risen Lord said about " *Behold a virgin shall conceive*," (Is 7:14) What did He say about " *the Son given*." (Is 9:6) I wonder what He said about (Isaiah Ch 53) ? What a Bible Reading on into Jeremiah, into Ezekiel, and then right through the Minor Prophets. " *The things concerning Himself*," I wonder did Christ conclude in Malachi " *And the Son of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings.*" (Mal 4:2) What a Bible reading ? Can you imagine it ? Can you picture it ? No wonder their hearts burned within as He talked with them by the way. Have you come in this despondent, perhaps disillusioned ? Then fix your eyes on Jesus !

But the Risen Lord not only appeared to the Two He appeared to the Eleven. (Lk 24:36-44) Now the Jews grouped all of the O.T. books into 3 major sections. The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, and this three fold division is probably what Christ had in mind here.

In effect Christ is saying, " *You'll see Me in the Old Testament.*" So in this series we are going to see some precious types of Christ. Now an O.T. type is a figure or representation of something to come, a type's an anti-type is usually seen in the N.T. Now when we touch on typology we need to be carefully balanced, for sometimes preachers allow their imaginations to run riot.

On the other hand we must not fail to see some of the precious types of the person and work of Christ that are to be found here. For example, the Lamb in (Ex Ch 12) is perfect type of the Lamb of God whose blood prevails.

(1 Cor 5:7) The Manna is a picture of Him who said,

" *I am the bread of life.*" (Jn 6:35) and the Rock is a type of Christ from whom refreshment flows.

(1 Cor 10:4) So this study (a)

(b) This Study will enable us to see our SELVES:

You see, the history of the Israelites which is brought before us in the Pentateuch is very largely typical of our own. Is this not what Paul what is Paul is getting at in (1 Cor 10:11) ? Do you see that word “ *ensamples,* ”? Its found some sixteen times in the New Testament. Do you recall what Thomas said ? “ *Except I shall see in His hands the **print** of the nails and put my finger into the **print** of the nails I will not believe.* ” (Jn 20:25) Paul speaking to Titus uses the same word when he says, “ *Showing thyself a **pattern** of good works.* ”

(Titus 2:7) In writing to the preacher boy Timothy he says, “ *Be thou an **example** of the believers.* ”

(1 Tim 4:12) Now the words “ *print, pattern, example,* ” represents the same Greek word as that which is translated “ *ensamples.* ” It means a pattern to be copied, an example to be followed, an impression. These things happened to them as examples or types. You see, behind the historical interpretation of the Scriptures there lies the spiritual application, behind the local, the universal. So as we chart the course of the children of Israel we shall be as it were in a picture gallery, in which are hung sketches or outlines of our entire careers. We shall see here pitfalls we need to avoid, pathways we need to follow, and principles we need to embrace. So in this study we are going to see Christ and we are going to see ourselves sometimes pleasing other times grieving the Lord. (1)

(2) THE POSITION OF THIS CHOSEN NATION

In all study and research two methods are usually employed, the synthetical and the analytical, from broad outlines to minute detail. Now in this opening study I want to give you a bird's eye view from the mountain top, then in our subsequent studies we shall descend the mountain and look at the events more closely. In our studies we shall discover that the Israelites occupied successively three distinct positions.

(a) IN EGYPT: THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE:

(13:3) Now it had not always been like that. Do you remember when old Jacob when went down to Egypt with his sons he was warmly welcomed and given the best of the land of Egypt, the land of Goshen to dwell in.

(Gen 47:6 50:8) This area, sometimes called Rameses, was a fertile area, lying in lower Egypt, and situated to the East of the Nile delta. Now we are not given the personal names of the Pharaohs referred to in the Biblical history. *Pharaoh was the*

title given to the kings of ancient Israel. Besides being different personalities, they may have represented different dynasties in the long and eventful story of ancient Egypt. What we do know is this, that the Pharaoh of the oppression was not the Pharaoh who had welcomed Israel and his sons. Another king arose, and suspicions grew among the governing classes that in a time of war, an alien people in their midst could become a kind of fifth column. Consequently, Israel lost their freedom, and in the end became cheap labour to build store cities for the Egyptians.

Can you see them ? In a dark land, subject to a ruthless tyrant, bound to chains. The typology of all of this is not hard to see ! For surely the land is a picture of the world, in which the Spirit of God found us (Rev 11:8) Pharaoh foreshadows the “ *prince of this world,*” (Jn 12:31) and the cruel bondage illustrates our bondage to sin. There was but one hope for Israel and for us. If they or we were to be redeemed, God must come down, (3:7-8) and this He has done in the person of His Son ! You know, after they were released from captivity, Israel were always to remember that they had been enslaved. When they sat down to share their Passover meal, they ate bitter herbs to remind them of their bitter slavery. (12:8) In other words, the exodus was meant to be remembered. My we should remember it too, for we are God’s redeemed people, and this is part of our history. Praise God for bringing us out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage !

(b) IN THE WILDERNESS: THE PLACE OF TESTING:

For the purpose of God was not only to set them free but to bring them out ! *And so He opened the Red Sea in front of them to let them out, and He closed it behind them to keep them out.* Cut off from the sources of sustenance upon which they used to depend, they now discover that their need is to be met of God’s fullness. So what happens in the wilderness ? Well, they are *Guided* by God through, the pillar of cloud and fire (40:34) They are *Fed* by God, as manna fell daily from heaven (16:5) they are *Refreshed* by God as water flows from the smitten rock (17:6) and they are *Tested* by God, to know what is in their hearts. (Deut 8:2) Here they were, Egypt was behind them, Canaan was before them, God was with them. They were strangers from Egypt, and pilgrims to Canaan. Now, the wilderness is to the Christian believer the “ *School of God.* ” Is it not here that we experimentally learn our own weakness ?

Is it not here that we prove the grace and power of the Lord ? Restoring us when we fall, in weakness our strength, in battle our deliverer, our sufficiency at every

stage of the journey ! Its great when as young believers we take the first step into the wilderness and like Israel sing the song of the deliverance. But is not greater still to see the aged pilgrim standing there on the last step of the desert, with the long dreary wilderness behind him, all the life-long discipline, the ups and downs, the failures and restorations past. Standing there on the last stage of the journey and hear him exclaim as Caleb did, “ *Behold the Lord hath kept me alive as He said, these forty and five years ..., as yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that sent me, as my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war, but to go out and come in.* ”

(Jos 14:10-11) He has learned himself, and proved God and this is experience !

My surely when we stand in His light, and look back over all the rugged road, the Lord our God has led us, delivering, upholding, strengthening, encouraging and restraining us, we shall we adoring hearts proclaim, “ *He hath done all things well.* ” Do you ever feel you are walking through a foreign land, where nothing can satisfy your soul ? Do you ever feel the power of the flesh and the devil seeking to allure you ? Well, then look up. For the Man at the right hand of God is for you and He will bring you through. (a) (b)

(c) IN CANAAN: THE SPHERE OF VICTORY:

Here we find them on the eve of taking possession of the land of which God had spoken a land flowing with milk and honey. Canaan spread itself before them, and all they had to do was enter and conquer, to appropriate and enjoy. In one sense the whole land was theirs by divine gift (Gen 17:8) In another sense, they had to win it inch by inch actually taking possession of it.

(Jos 1:3) Now what is described ***Historically*** in the Book of Joshua, is set forth ***Doctrinally*** in the letter to the Ephesians. They were blessed with all material blessings in Canaan, we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Eph 1:3) Their enemies were enemies of flesh and blood, but we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against unseen spiritual foes who will dispute every inch of the ground and leave no stone unturned to rob us of the enjoyment of our blessing in Christ.

Here then are the three distinct positions that the Israelites occupied. (1) *In Egypt: the House of Bondage.*

(2) *In the Wilderness: the Place of Testing.* (3) *In Canaan: the Sphere of Victory.*

Now here is the wonderful thing, namely that was true of the Israelites in three successive stages of their journey, is true of believers in Christ at one and the same time. We are naturally as to our surroundings, in Egypt, we are actually as to our

experience in the wilderness, and we are spiritually and position-ally in Canaan.
(1) (2)

(3) THE PURPOSE OF THIS SOVEREIGN GOD

You see, it was always God's purpose to give Abraham a land, and to make of Abraham a great nation.
(Gen 12:1-2) That purpose must have seemed "*pie in the sky*," to the Israelites in Egypt. Here they were suffering but their suffering was not outside God's control. You see, one eye saw their toil, one ear heard their cry, one heart knew their sorrow. Do you know something ? The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New Testament, the sympathetic Saviour, the Christ who can be touched with the feeling of your infirmities ! (Heb 4:15) My are you here this ... with burdens on your heart ? With anxieties on your mind ? Well, Jesus knows, cares and understands ! But what was God's purpose for Israel ? Well, notice here we see,

(a) THE PURPOSE OF GOD FULFILLED:

Look if you will at (1:7, 1:12) The Lord had many reasons for allowing Israel to suffer hardship, but the most obvious was to help them grow. (1:12) The irony is that this was exactly the opposite of what Pharaoh intended to happen. Yet this is exactly what God had promised when He said to Jacob, "*Fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation.*" (Gen 46:3) Of course that was just a repetition of what God had declared to Abraham years before.
(Gen 12:1-2) (a) For nothing or no-one can thwart the purposes of God ! Is this not encouraging for us today ?

You see, unto are given "*exceeding great and precious promises.*" (2 Pet 1:4)
And let us remember that these are the promises of Him who cannot lie. (Titus 1:2)

We can therefore rest with implicit confidence on this sure Word for what God promises He will certainly perform. (Rom 4:21) (a)

(b) THE PURPOSE OF GOD CHALLENGED:

Look if you will at (1:10-12) The more Pharaoh made God's people suffer, the more God triumphed. This pattern of growth through suffering has been repeated many times in the history of the church. Do you recall that after the death of Stephen, the disciples were all scattered abroad. We are told, "*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.*"

(Acts 8:4) When Herod stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church, and killed James the brother of John with the sword, do you know the consequence ?

“ The Word of God grew and multiplied. ” (Acts 12:24)

My the Reformation never went on so well as when it was most vigorously opposed. Growth through suffering. Yet I never hear any believer pray that God would send a floodtide of persecution to Ulster, so that the church might be purified and grow. (Is 64:10) (a)(b)

(c) THE PURPOSE OF GOD STATED:

Look at (3:7-8) God purposed to do 3 things for Israel.

1. “ To deliver them, ” That was Emancipation:

“ And I am come down to deliver them, ” (3:8) this meant taking a nation from the midst of another nation.

(Deut 4:34) This meant the emancipation of those who all their lifetime were subject to bondage. My what a striking emblem of the deliverance effected by Christ who came to proclaim liberty to the captive (Lk 4:18) and sets us free from the power of darkness and translates us into the kingdom of His Son. (Col 1:13)

2. “ To bring them up out, ” That was Separation:

Out of the land, as well as out of the hand of the Egyptians is the word. (3:8) Anything short of that would be practically valueless. So it is today. The line of demarcation between the believer and the non-believer is clearly drawn in the Word of God. (2 Cor 6:14-18) and any attempt to obliterate it always ends in disaster. My Lot thought it could obliterate it (Gen 13:12 19:1) but **“ what he gained in influence he lost in power. ”** The result ? He lost his joyfulness for he vexed his righteous soul from day to day. He lost his usefulness, for his life was such that when the great crisis came and he sought to warn his relatives of the impending doom, he seemed as one that mocked unto them. (Gen 19:14) Tell me, as a Christian, have you lost your joyfulness, your usefulness, and is it because of your worldliness ?

3. “ To bring them up unto, ” That was Possession:

From the house of bondage to the land of fruitfulness. Was this not the ultimate purpose of God for them ? And in view of that fact they would think, not so much of what they had abandoned, as of what they were to appropriate, not so much of what they gave up, as of what they laid hold off.

The popular notion of Christianity is that it is a system for making us miserable here that we might be happy hereafter. But such a concept is contrary to the Word of God. (Jn 15:11) My the desire of our God is that we might have days of heaven on earth. (Deut 11:21) Now that does not mean that we will be exempt from the trials and sorrows of earth, but it does mean that in the midst of them you will be kept in perfect peace. (Is 26:3) I wonder are we enjoying all that the Lord has for us ? You see, its possible to be delivered from the penalty of sin, but not be separated from the world, it is possible to be separated from the world, and yet not be enjoying our inheritance.

But “ *I am come down,*” says the Lord to set you free, to take you out, to bring you in. (Deut 6:23) My all is ours in Christ, but lets never forget that while there are in Him for us, joys which are limitless and pleasures which are endless, these will unfold themselves to us only as we walk with and are obedient to our Master and Lord. (Is 1:19) Can I ask you therefore, *are you walking with Christ ? Resting in Christ ? Obedient to Christ ?*