

Text: 1 Cor. 10:1-13

Title: "Why study Exodus?"

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Introduction: Why would a New Testament local church study an Old Testament book like the Book of Exodus? That is an especially important question for us as members and friends of New Boston Baptist Church, because you have a pastor who has determined to preach through the book of Exodus beginning in the new year.

Certainly, one answer to this question we must trust is the one that Paul gives in his description of *All Scripture* in 2 Tim. 3:16-17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

That verse is a verse about the Book of Exodus as much as any other portion of Scripture ("All Scripture"). It tells us that the Book of Exodus is God's Word, and as such it is profitable for four things we need as believers: doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

Experiencing the meeting of these needs of our hearts and lives from Exodus will help to complete us where we are incompletely Christlike and will equip us sufficiently for any good work (v. 17). That is God's promise about the Book of Exodus. It is His promise about all Scripture.

But another Pauline passage focuses more specifically on our question, "Why study Exodus?" In 1 Corinthians 10, the Apostle Paul is explaining to the Corinthian local church why the Book of Exodus is so very important for

their spiritual well-being and mission as a New Testament local church. This morning I want us to see 3 reasons from this passage why, like the first-century Corinthian church, our 21st-century New Boston church must study Exodus.

I. We must study Exodus because it is a book about our fathers (vv. 1-4).

Illustration: Last Sunday a sister in Christ shared with me that she has a Bible that has been in her family since the mid-19th century. It is wonderful to know that you have had a heritage that includes the Bible.

One day, my mom got word that someone had found a very special Bible at a yard sale in Wisconsin. That Bible is now in my library. It was the Bible of Lila Elizabeth Jesse, who was born in Lewiston, WI in 1891.

Lila Jesse and my mom, Carolyn Hobi, share the same maiden name - *Blank*. The middle and end of the Bible are filled with the dates and locations of the births, marriages, and deaths of the Blank family dating all the way back to my great, great, grandfather, William Blank, who was born in Germany on November 23, 1861.

Lila was the sister of Herbert Blank, who was my great grandfather, born in Lewiston, WI in 1888. My grandfather, Wilson Blank, was born up the road a bit in LaValle, WI in 1913. One of the notes on the marriage page reads: "Carolyn Blank married Jack Henry Hobi Dec. 22, 1962." Ten months later, I came along, but Lila had stopped recording births by that time.

Application: It is a remarkable thing to open a Bible and read about the births, marriages, and deaths of all your

ancestry. Only one copy of the Bible ever printed gives me that for the Blank family.

But notice this morning that, as the Apostle Paul begins to describe some of the content of the Book of Exodus to these Corinthian believers, he calls the characters of this Old Testament history *our fathers*. He does not say “my fathers,” but “our fathers.”

Exodus is the history of the birth of the nation of the Jewish people, and Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that these people were our fathers. We know that Paul was not talking about the bloodlines of family. Instead, he wants this church to see that these are their fathers in the faith. Every time we pick up any copy of the Bible, we can read about our fathers in the faith.

It turns out that we have much in common with our fathers in the faith, because they were a privileged people in a way that every local church full of saved Gentile believers is also comprised of privileged people. Paul mentions essentially two OT privileges that are similar to some of our own:

(1) They were baptized into Moses by the cloud and the sea (vv. 1-2; Exod. 14:30).

The pillar of cloud that guided the Israelites and the splitting of the Red Sea for their protection were miraculous signs that validated the message of Moses to the people, who said that God had called them to be His special people, a nation redeemed from Egypt and headed for the Promised Land.

In 1 Cor. 12:12-13, Paul will explain that the Corinthian church members experienced a similar baptism privilege.

Pentecost was a baptism of the Holy Spirit that involved signs and wonders and that created a new ecclesia that God would determine to use in a special way – local churches. It was the baptism by Spirit and fire that John the Baptist prophesied Jesus would perform (Matt. 3:11). Just as Israel was privileged to be the nation God had determined to bless and use through a baptism of new revelation, local churches are privileged to be that today.

God's purpose for creating the nation of Israel with this new miraculous revelation was that He wanted the world to have a kingdom of priests (Exod. 19:1-6). Notice that He says, "all the earth is mine" (v. 5), and then "ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation" (v. 6).

A priest represents the people before God and God before the people. The nation of Israel was to be a kingdom of priests for the rest of all the earth. Similarly, today local churches have that same mission (1 Pet. 2:9-12). Every member of every true local church has this ministry among the Gentiles or nations (v. 12), to be a group of holy priests making disciples (Matt. 28:19-20).

(2) They enjoyed spiritual food and drink (vv. 3-4).

The second privilege was spiritual food and drink. The physical food was the manna from heaven and the physical drink was the water from the rock. They were spiritual food and drink in the sense, once again, that they were revelatory miracles.

Manna was bread from heaven that would symbolize Jesus, who is the Bread of life from heaven (John 6:31-41). The rock gave Israel water in the midst of their wilderness wanderings, and Jesus gives water that a person can drink and never thirst again (John 4:10-16). Christ is the Rock that

gives the water of everlasting life; He is the heaven that gives the bread of everlasting life. He is so because He died for our sins and rose again. Do you see your need for Him this morning? Just ask for Him, and you will receive.

II. We must study Exodus because it is a book about our examples (vv. 5-11).

Illustration: We have been watching a dvd about the historicity of Exodus called *Patterns of Evidence*. One of the things featured in the film is an interview that Michael Medved conducted with Rabbi David Wolpe who leads Sinai Temple in Los Angeles and whom Newsweek hailed as the most influential Jewish Rabbi in America today.

In 2001 Rabbi Wolpe's Passover sermon challenged the historical reality of the Exodus account in the Book of Exodus. In the interview Wolpe told Medved the following about the Exodus: "The Exodus certainly didn't happen the way the Bible depicted, assuming that it was a historical event in any description. I think that if you look at it scientifically, it is virtually indefensible to make the Bible's case. But you also have to understand that your faith isn't based on splitting seas or archaeological digs." Wolpe would go on to say that the legendary nature of the account should not undermine a person's faith in its lessons. He told Medved, "Whether it was true, it is true, and those are two different things. In other words, things that are not facts can be truths."

Application: It is important for us to understand this morning that things that are not facts also cannot be truths. It is true, only if it also was true. Paul is clear about this in verse 11. Not only were these things written for our admonition, but also they did indeed happen to them, says the apostle Paul. They are examples for us, not because they are fairy

tales, but because what is described in Exodus really did happen in history to them.

Paul takes all that for granted in a way the Wolves of our world do not allow us to (today we have to be explicit about this). Instead, what Paul is focused on here is that although all our fathers experienced great privilege and great opportunity for blessing, very few of them realized that blessing (v. 5-6).

God's purpose in bringing His people out of Egypt in Exodus included His desire to richly bless them in the Promised Land (Exod. 3:8, 6:8). Yet an entire generation, with the exception of two households—Joshua's and Caleb's, failed to experience this blessing. Why?

They lusted after evil things (v. 6); they became idolaters instead of true worshippers of the true God (v. 7); they committed religious and sexual fornication (v. 8); they tempted Christ instead of obeying Him (v. 9); and they grumbled and complained rather than giving thanks (v. 10).

Paul warns us through these examples that we can fail in the same way (v. 11). Our antidote to these same problems is to not be ignorant of their example, and so we must study Exodus (v. 1).

III. We must study Exodus because it is a book about the way out (vv. 12-13).

Illustration: Exodus got its name from the Greek translators of the Old Testament that produced the Septuagint, a translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek. Exodus is a Greek word meaning *the way out*, and that phrase

does a wonderful job describing the core theology of the Book of Exodus.

Application: That core is summed up nicely in Exod. 6:6-8, "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord."

You and I have never been slaves in Egypt, but perhaps you can remember a time when you were a slave of a different kind. Every man begins a sinner, in bondage to his sinful nature. Just like Israel needed a way out of the bondage of Egypt, every sinner needs a way out of bondage to his sin. Paul explains it this way in Rom. 6:20-23: "For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

God has made a way of escape from sin for both the sinner and the saint. That way is forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Have you found your way out of Egypt? Have you been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb? Have you escaped the burden of sin by trusting Christ to save you?

Conclusion: Before you think those questions are unnecessary or impractical, read with me again verse 12. Exodus tells of Pharaoh and his hardened heart against the Lord. His was a heart that felt that God's demands were not for him. He did not think he needed the Lord's way out. He was wrong. He did not take heed, he tried to stand his ground, and he fell. Will we take heed? Will we cling to Christ, our way out from the bondage of our sin, or fall?

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*