

Session 3: Egypt and Exodus

The session started with a recap of the story so far – Creation, rebellion, and God choosing to reconcile with humankind by using the family of one man – Abraham.

Video clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jH_aojNJM3E The Bible Project overview of Exodus chapters 1-18, starting with Joseph being elevated in Egypt and thereby saving his family (descendants of Abraham). 400 years later, the family is much larger and are slaves in Egypt.

The Pharaoh thinks that this growing immigrant group are a threat to him, so oppresses them. However, God has chosen this family as the route through which he will reconcile with humankind.

Moses, burning bush, plagues, God 'hardens Pharaoh's heart', Passover (just as Pharaoh killed the sons of the Israelites, God kills the firstborn ... but the houses covered with the blood of the lamb were saved), pillars of fire and cloud, crossing the Red sea "on dry ground", the Israelites then trek through the desert, God provides food and water for them in the desert.

We did a 'sample verse run through' – trying to get an overview of the whole story by reading excerpts:

Ch1 : 6-11

Ch1 : 15-16 & 22

Moses (birth, growing up, killing Egyptian and fleeing to Midian, burning bush)

Ch3 : 1-2, 6-8, 12

Ch5 : 1-3

Ch6 : 6-7

Ch7 : 8, 13

Ch 7 : 14-17

Ch 7 : 20

Ch 8 : 1

Ch12 : 3

Ch12 : 7-8

Ch12 : 31-32

We then considered the plagues and saw that they were each targeted at one (or more) Egyptian gods in ascending order:

Water into blood

Hapi – Egyptian god of the Nile



Frogs

Heket – Egyptian god of fertility



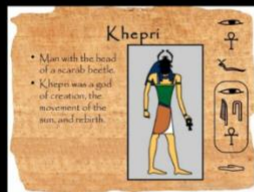
Lice

Geb – Egyptian god of the earth / soil / dust of the earth



Flies / gnats

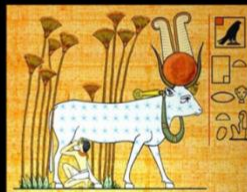
Khepri – Egyptian god of creation and rebirth



Some say Uatchit – Egyptian god of the marshes (who has the head of a fly)

Cattle & livestock

Hathor – Egyptian god of love and protection



Hathor is often portrayed with a cow or sometimes as having the head of a cow.

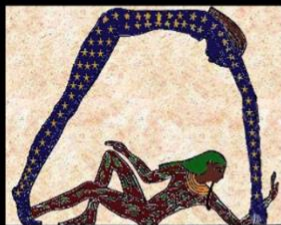
Boils

Isis – Egyptian god of medicine and peace (and magic)



Hail

Nut – Egyptian god of the sky



Locust

Seth – Egyptian god of chaos, violence and threats to the nation (and therefore war)



Some say Osiris – god of vegetation / crops / growth and a very few claim the minor god Senehem who had the head of a locust

Darkness

Ra – the Egyptian sun god – the king of the gods and the patron / sponsor of pharaoh



A minority say the god Horus whose right eye was the sun and whose left eye was the moon

Death of the firstborn

Pharaoh – the most powerful of all
– the son (firstborn) of Ra

PLUS Anubis, the god of the dead
PLUS Osiris, the giver of life

A TRIPLE WHAMMY of gods shown
to be impotent compared to
Yahweh.

(and one reason why most think that the plague of locusts
was against Seth, not Osiris – he'd be 'hit' twice if that were
the case)



We then did another sample verse run-through to get an overview of the next part of the story:

Exodus Ch 13 : 18

Exodus Ch 13 : 21-22

Exodus Ch 14 : 5-7

Exodus Ch 14 : 13-14

Exodus Ch 14 : 16

Exodus Ch 14 : 19-28

And saw that the story continued with:

Ch 16: manna & quail

Ch 17: water from a rock

Ch 19: Mount Sinai

Ch 20: 10 commandments

Chs 21-23: laws & festivals

Ch 24: covenant renewed

Ch 25-40: Tabernacle and Ark

The next video clip was 'Exodus part 2' From chapter 19 onwards:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNpTha80yyE>

This included the renewal of God's covenant (promise) to Abraham, but now with his descendants whilst at Mount Sinai. God's presence was in a thick dark cloud.

Lots of laws were developed which created Israel as a nation of justice, unlike the surrounding nations.

God's PRESENCE was lost in Eden, and God shows how he will renew it – in this part of the story the 'most holy space' or 'holy of holies' is a place where God lives together in peace with humankind – just like Eden.

BUT – it goes wrong – the people get impatient and make a golden calf to worship! They break the first 2 commands of the covenant they had only just agreed to !!

We then looked at some of the 10 commandments:

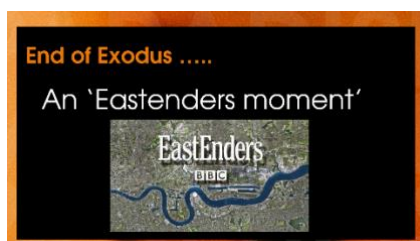


Commandments 6-10 are clear – they are about creating a cohesive social group / family / nation which is positive and viable from all aspects.

However ... commandments 1-5 Why?

Especially why commandment 2 – no idols? Does this mean no pictures / paintings (like the Muslims teach)? Why no idol? – ultimately it looks back to genesis 1, image & likeness (imago dei / TSLM & DMWT) – with the temple language in Genesis 1, God has already put an 'idol' in his cosmic temple. The idol is NOT the god, it represents the god and if the vehicle through which the people pray and offer worship to the god the jawdropping realisation that one of the functions we fulfil as humans is the 'idol in the temple'; through whom the rest of creation worships God !

Exodus ends as an 'eastenders moment' The cliffhanging finish with the question of how God is going to work through this conflict of His holiness with the people's corruption and rebellion?



We then saw the 'what happened next' part – Exodus finishes with the question of how will God do this And Leviticus answers it – God will set apart this family of Abraham by making them holy and different to the other fallen people in surrounding nations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmvyrLXoQio&t=5s>

(this clip quite rightly starts with Eden The aim is to recover the lost Eden)

Leviticus – ritual, priests and purity all set carefully around details of the Day of Atonement – the 'chiastic structure' we have seen before.

Atonement – 2 goats – 1 sacrificed and one as the scapegoat and it all points to Jesus!!!

This also shows the difference between Israel's God and the gods of all the other nations.