

Exodus-Malachi:

Lesson Five

How Israel's History Accomplished God's Plan

Reading: Galatians 3:19-29, Hebrews 9:1-15

Introductory Thoughts

According to the New Testament, the Old Testament and its Laws were designed to teach man about sin and direct them to Christ. Every detail was carefully crafted to this end. Every building project and ceremony that God assigned Israel was to be followed exactly because the lessons were in the details (Hebrews 8:5). Israel did not see all of the lessons in the symbols, but one day Christ would come and explain to them all of the mysteries taught by the Old Testament.

This lesson looks at some of those details, showing how they fit into the big picture, God's Plan of Salvation which began with Israel and culminated in Christ.

- **Read Hebrews 9:1-10.** Why was Jewish worship so meticulous and ceremonial? Name some of the details that would later be revealed to be symbols of spiritual lessons.

- **Read Hebrews 8:4-5.** Why did Israel need to be so careful to follow the pattern?

The Story Of Israel: *Lessons From The Books Of Their History*

1. **Exodus.** Exodus means *going out* (*Hitchcock's Bible Names Dictionary*). It's the story of Israel leaving Egypt. God sent Israel to Egypt to be rescued from famine, but ended up becoming enslaved. This played well into God's plan. While in Egypt, Israel grew from 70 people to over a million people. They were now a nation, as God intended. God delivered them from slavery through mighty works. He defeated Pharaoh through the Ten Plagues and allowed Israel to cross the Red Sea on dry land. This got the attention of the rest of the world (read

Joshua 2:9-11). God did not want to save Israel alone. He wanted the whole world to know about Him and be taught about salvation and holiness, and the Exodus from Egypt was the perfect way of reaching everyone.

- ❑ **Laws in Exodus.** The Ten Commandments are delivered to Israel in Exodus 20, followed by many other rules and regulations.

Read Exodus 19:1-10. What did God want to turn Israel into? Why did they need to wash before meeting God and Mount Sinai?

Read Matthew 22:34-40. What did God teach mankind through these Laws?

- ❑ **“Types and Shadows” in Exodus.** “Types and shadows” are things in the Old Testament that are symbolic of spiritual truths revealed in the New Testament (Hebrews 8:5). God gave Israel blueprints for many things that would become central to their worship. What were the true spiritual lessons behind these things:
 - **Tabernacle** (Hebrews 9:11)
 - **High Priest** (Hebrews 9:11)
 - **Unleavened Bread for Passover** (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)
 - **Incense Offerings** (Revelation 8:3)
 - **Veil in the Temple** (Hebrews 10:19-20)

2. **Leviticus.** Leviticus refers to the Levites, the priests and Temple workers of Israel. They needed to pay particular attention to this book because it described how they were to perform the duties of sacrifices and festivals. Through Leviticus God taught many lessons about how to seek forgiveness and cleansing from God.
 - **Read Hebrews 9:22.** What did Leviticus teach Israel about forgiveness?
 - **Read Leviticus 10:1-3.** What did Leviticus teach about approaching God?
3. **Numbers.** The nation of Israel is numbered in this book. This is where we learn how large they had gotten. Numbers tells the story of Israel losing faith in God. God promised to deliver to them the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey (Numbers 13:27). However, Israel sent spies into the land and learned that the people living there were powerful. They were afraid to go take the land. God punished them by leaving them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. God's people must trust Him !
4. **Deuteronomy.** This means "second law." In this book Moses teaches the people the Law for the second time. Deuteronomy is Moses' final speech to Israel before they leave for Canaan. He tells them that God's people must obey the Covenant!
5. **Joshua.** Joshua is Israel's next leader after Moses dies. Joshua is the story of Israel settling in the land of Canaan. God's nation now has a home.
6. **Judges.** The book of Judges is an insight into the relationship of God with His people. Sin was punished, and repentance was always treated by God with compassion. In this book, judges are not like we think of judges today. They are men and women raised up by God to fight for and lead Israel against the oppression of their enemies.

7. **Ruth.** The story of Ruth is a very important part of God's plan because it introduces us to the family of Jesus. Ruth is the great-grandmother of King David, ancestor of Jesus. He is the beginning of a line of kings who will hold the throne until Christ, the true King, will come.
8. **1 & 2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles.** These books show how Israel developed into a monarchy. At first Israel had no kings. But the people pleaded with God to give them a king so they could be like other nations (1 Samuel 8:5). God first gave them the king they wanted, King Saul, but he failed. So God then raised up a King after His own heart, David.
9. **1 & 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles.** Poor decisions by Israel's kings and unfaithfulness by its people divided the nation into two parts. These books report the steady decline of God's people into sin. In the end God punishes them by defeating them with the nations of Assyria and then Babylon. God, however, is not done with Israel yet! He still has lessons to teach and plans to accomplish through them.
10. **Ezra.** God allowed Israel to remain in captivity for 70 years, but then allowed them to go home and rebuild His nation. There were only a remnant left, but they returned to Jerusalem with a fire for their God. Ezra, a Jewish priest and scribe who helped rebuild Jerusalem, writes about their rebuilding efforts. First they rebuild the Temple. Then, after a long delay and years of neglecting that Temple, the people rebuild themselves spiritually and set to work restoring the religion of Israel.
11. **Nehemiah.** Nehemiah was not a priest or (until much later) a prophet, but he was a leader and loved God. He helped Israel rebuild the walls around the city and rededicate the people to God's Law.
12. **Esther.** Esther shows how God maintained the nation of Israel even while they were in captivity. An enemy of Israel tried to exterminate them, but God raised up Esther from orphan to queen and saved His people from extinction.

7. **Old Testament Poetry.** 2 Peter 1:3 tells us that God has given to us all things we need for life and godliness. God chose out of Israel certain men to reveal important truths about how to live life on earth. Much of their wisdom is revealed through these books of poetry.
- **Job** teaches how the godly are to handle suffering and be blessed by it.
 - **Psalms** teaches how the godly are to express themselves to God in the midst of every possible circumstance.
 - **Proverbs** teaches practical wisdom about nearly every aspect of life.
 - **Ecclesiastes** teaches perspective on the seemingly hopeless aspects of life.
 - **Song of Solomon** paints a picture of true love between a man and woman.
8. **Old Testament Prophets.** The last books of the Old Testament, Isaiah through Malachi, are all the works of prophets who lived during the periods of the other books of the Old Testament. Their writings had two purposes. 1) They warned Israel of inevitable consequences of sin if they did not repent. 2) They foretell and prepare us for the culmination of God's great plan – the coming of Jesus. When He comes, the Old Testament will be completed and obsolete, and He will lead people back to God, forgiven and holy.

■ **Application Questions**

- What role does Israel play in God's plan to restore man to Himself?

- What is the significance of Ruth and King David in God's plan?