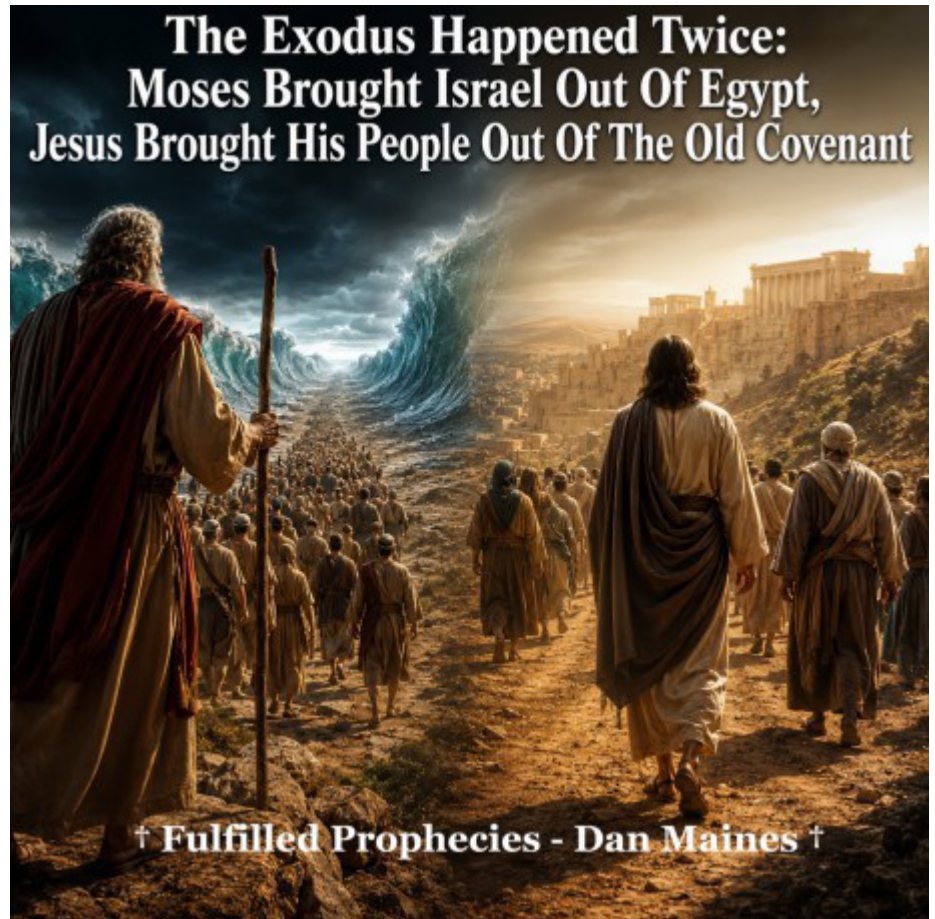


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Covenant - The Exodus Happened Twice: Moses Brought Israel Out Of Egypt, Jesus Brought His People Out Of The Old Covenant



By Dan Maines

The Exodus Happened Twice: Moses Brought Israel Out Of Egypt, Jesus Brought His People Out Of The Old Covenant

Introduction

† The Bible tells the story of two great exodus events. The first was physical and national, when God brought Israel out of Egypt under Moses. The second was covenantal and redemptive, when Jesus brought His people out of the bondage of the Old Covenant age and into the inheritance of the New Covenant kingdom.

† The first Exodus established the pattern. There was bondage,

a Passover lamb, deliverance through water, a wilderness journey, bread from heaven, a covenant, judgment on the unbelieving generation, and finally entrance into the promised inheritance.

† The New Testament deliberately uses that Exodus pattern to explain what was happening in the first century. Jesus is the greater deliverer, Christ is the Passover Lamb, baptism corresponds to the passage through the sea, Christ is the spiritual food and drink, and the first-century believers were warned not to fall in the wilderness of unbelief (1 Corinthians 5:7; 10:1-12).

† This is especially important because Paul said Israel's wilderness experiences were examples written as warnings for the believers who were living at the end of the ages (1 Corinthians 10:11). He didn't place the fulfillment thousands of years beyond his readers.

† Hebrews develops the same pattern. The first-century church had been delivered, but they were still awaiting the completed entrance into the promised rest. Like Israel between Egypt and Canaan, they were living during a covenant transition.

† Israel's first wilderness period lasted forty years. The New Covenant transition also unfolded across approximately forty years, from the ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ to the judgment of Jerusalem and the removal of the Old Covenant order in AD 70.

† The Exodus wasn't merely an ancient story for the first-century believers. It was the prophetic pattern through which they could understand their own generation.

Exodus 12:11-13

Now you shall eat it in this way: with your garment belted around your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in a hurry-it is the Lord's Passover. For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and fatally strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the human firstborn to animals; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments-I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign

for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will come upon you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

† The first Exodus began with Passover. Israel's deliverance wasn't based upon its own strength, but upon the blood of the sacrificial lamb.

† The Passover separated those protected by the blood from those who remained under judgment. Deliverance and judgment occurred together on the same night.

† The New Testament identifies Christ as the fulfillment of this Passover pattern. Paul wrote that Christ our Passover had been sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus wasn't simply another lamb in a long succession of sacrifices, He was the reality to which Passover had been pointing.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

† Paul doesn't leave the Passover connection to speculation. He directly identifies Christ as the Passover sacrifice.

† Moses led Israel from slavery under Pharaoh, but Jesus accomplished the greater deliverance from sin, condemnation, and the covenant administration that could expose sin but couldn't bring perfection (Hebrews 7:19; 10:1).

† The first Passover began Israel's journey out of Egypt. Christ's sacrifice began the climactic New Covenant Exodus that would bring His people out of the old age and into the fully established kingdom.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our fathers were all under the cloud and they all passed through the sea; and they all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and they all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

† Paul explicitly connects the Exodus with baptism. Israel passed through the sea and was baptized into Moses, while believers were identified with Christ in the greater redemptive reality (Romans 6:3-4).

† Israel came out of Egypt before entering Canaan. Their deliverance began a journey. In the same way, the first-century believers had been redeemed by Christ while still moving toward the consummation of the covenant transition.

† Paul also connects the wilderness manna and water with Christ. The Exodus pattern wasn't accidental. Christ stood at the center of what those wilderness signs anticipated.

† Passover, water, spiritual food, spiritual drink, wilderness testing, and inheritance form one continuous pattern. Paul expects his readers to recognize themselves within that pattern.

1 Corinthians 10:5-6

Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased; for their dead bodies were spread out in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they indeed craved them.

† The generation that left Egypt wasn't automatically guaranteed entrance into the land. Many fell during the wilderness because of unbelief and rebellion.

† Paul tells first-century Christians that these events were their examples. His warning only makes sense if they were passing through a comparable period of testing.

† The danger was covenant apostasy. Just as Israelites wanted to turn back toward Egypt, some first-century believers were tempted to turn back toward the Old Covenant system they had been called to leave behind (Hebrews 10:26-39).

† The message was clear, don't go back. The greater Moses had come, the greater Passover had been sacrificed, and the greater inheritance was ahead.

1 Corinthians 10:11-12

Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the

ages have come. Therefore let the one who thinks he stands watch out that he does not fall.

† This passage establishes the timing. Paul says the wilderness events were written for "our admonition," speaking to his first-century audience.

† Even more importantly, Paul says the ends of the ages had come upon them. He doesn't say the ends would come upon people thousands of years later.

† The first-century church was standing at the end of an age. The Old Covenant world was passing away while the New Covenant order was being established in its fullness (Hebrews 8:13).

† That's why Israel's forty-year wilderness experience was so relevant. Their history provided the pattern for the generation living through the end of the Old Covenant age.

Hebrews 3:7-11

Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, As on the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers put Me to the test, And saw My works for forty years. Therefore I was angry with this generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they did not know My ways'; As I swore in My anger, 'They certainly shall not enter My rest.'"

† Hebrews brings the forty-year wilderness directly into its warning to first-century Jewish believers.

† Israel saw God's works for forty years, yet an unbelieving generation failed to enter the promised rest. The writer warns his own generation not to repeat that rebellion.

† The language of "today" makes the warning immediate. Those believers weren't being instructed primarily about Christians living thousands of years later. They faced a present covenant decision.

† The parallel is powerful. The first generation experienced deliverance from Egypt followed by forty years of wilderness testing. The generation of Jesus and the apostles experienced the beginning of the greater Exodus and then lived through the

transition leading to the end of the Old Covenant age.

Hebrews 3:12-14

Take care, brothers and sisters, that there will not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another every day, as long as it is still called "today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we keep the beginning of our commitment firm until the end,

† The writer addresses living people who could fall away during their own covenant wilderness. The warning was urgent because they were approaching the end.

† They were told to hold their confidence firm "to the end." In the context of Hebrews, that end belongs to the covenant transition already underway, not the destruction of the physical universe.

† Returning to the Old Covenant system would have been comparable to Israel wanting to return to Egypt. They were being called forward into Christ, not backward into the system that was becoming obsolete (Hebrews 8:13).

Hebrews 4:1-3

Therefore, we must fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also did; but the word they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united with those who listened with faith. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My anger, They certainly shall not enter My rest," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

† Hebrews moves directly from Israel's failed wilderness generation to the New Covenant promise of entering God's rest.

† Canaan was never the ultimate reality. It was the earthly pattern. The greater rest is found in Christ and His completed kingdom.

† The first-century believers had already begun entering that

rest by faith, yet Hebrews still urged them forward toward the completed covenant reality.

† This already-and-not-yet condition makes sense during the transition between the covenants. They had left the old realm, but the old system hadn't yet disappeared completely.

Hebrews 8:6-8

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, to the extent that He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been free of fault, no circumstances would have been sought for a second. For in finding fault with the people, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, When I will bring about a new covenant With the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

† The greater Exodus wasn't merely an escape from political oppression. It was movement from one covenant administration into another.

† Moses mediated the covenant associated with the first Exodus. Jesus mediates the better covenant associated with the greater Exodus.

† The destination wasn't another geographical Canaan. It was the better covenant, the better promises, the better priesthood, the better sacrifice, and the better heavenly country revealed throughout Hebrews (Hebrews 7:22; 9:23; 11:16).

† Everything about the second Exodus is greater because everything centers upon Christ.

Hebrews 8:13

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

† This verse gives us the covenant setting of Hebrews. The first covenant was old, aging, and near to disappearing when Hebrews was written.

† Notice the transition language. The Old Covenant had been made obsolete by the establishment of the New Covenant, yet

its visible institutional order was still awaiting its final removal.
† That explains why the wilderness imagery is so appropriate. They were living between the decisive redemptive work of Christ and the historical removal of the Old Covenant system.
† AD 70 brought the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, ending the functioning priesthood, sacrifices, and temple order that represented the former covenant age.

Hebrews 10:36-39

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one will live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not among those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith for the safekeeping of the soul.

† The wilderness generation needed endurance before entering Canaan. Hebrews says these believers also needed endurance before receiving the promise.

† The writer says it would happen in "a very little while." That language belongs to the expectations of the original audience.

† Once again the warning is not to shrink back. Egypt was behind ancient Israel, and the obsolete covenant order was behind the followers of Christ.

† They weren't to return to the shadows when the reality had arrived in Christ (Hebrews 10:1).

Hebrews 12:22-24

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

† Here we see the destination of the greater Exodus. It wasn't earthly Jerusalem, but heavenly Jerusalem. It wasn't Sinai, but

Mount Zion.

† Moses brought Israel to a mountain where the Old Covenant was given. Jesus brought His people to the heavenly Zion of the New Covenant.

† The contrast running through Hebrews reaches its climax here. Sinai gives way to Zion, the earthly city gives way to the heavenly Jerusalem, the old mediation gives way to Jesus, and animal blood gives way to the blood of Christ.

† The Exodus pattern has reached its greater fulfillment. God's people haven't been brought into another temporary national arrangement. They've been brought into the everlasting kingdom of Christ.

Hebrews 12:28

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

† The inheritance of the greater Exodus is an unshakable kingdom.

† Ancient Israel inherited a physical land that could be invaded, conquered, and lost. The kingdom received through Christ can't be shaken or removed.

† This is why the destruction of the Old Covenant world wasn't the destruction of God's kingdom. It revealed the permanence of the kingdom that couldn't be shaken.

† The first Exodus ended with Israel established in a land. The greater Exodus culminated in God's people established in the everlasting New Covenant kingdom.

The Forty-Year Pattern

† Israel's first Exodus produced a forty-year transition between deliverance from Egypt and entrance into the inheritance.

† Jesus' ministry began the climactic covenant transition in the first century, followed by approximately forty years before Jerusalem and the temple fell in AD 70.

† During both periods there were signs, miracles, divine provision, opposition, unbelief, apostasy, and warnings against

turning back.

† During both periods an old world stood behind God's people while an inheritance stood before them.

† In the first Exodus, Egypt was behind them and Canaan was ahead. In the greater Exodus, the Old Covenant age was passing away while the fully established New Covenant kingdom stood before that generation.

† Paul explicitly tells us to read Israel's wilderness history as an example for his generation, and Hebrews repeatedly builds its warnings around exactly the same wilderness pattern.

† This doesn't require inventing a forty-year pattern and forcing it onto Scripture. The New Testament writers themselves establish the Exodus framework and apply it to their first-century audience.

Historical References

† Josephus described the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, including famine, internal conflict, Roman siege, the burning of the temple, and the collapse of the city. His account provides important historical testimony concerning the judgment that ended the temple-centered Jewish order.

† Eusebius later recorded the early Christian tradition that believers in Jerusalem left the city before the war and went to Pella. This fits the New Testament emphasis upon believers recognizing the approaching judgment and refusing to remain attached to Jerusalem.

† These historical witnesses don't establish the doctrine, Scripture does. They help confirm the historical setting in which the first-century warnings concerning Jerusalem reached their fulfillment.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We aren't wandering through the Old Covenant wilderness waiting for another AD 70. That transition belonged to the first-century generation.

† We live on the fulfilled side of the greater Exodus. Christ has accomplished redemption, the Old Covenant age has passed

away, and the kingdom that can't be shaken has been established.

† We don't need another Moses, another Passover, another wilderness period, another temple, or another covenant transition. Jesus completed the greater work.

† Our calling today is to live faithfully in the kingdom we've received, trusting the finished work of Christ and proclaiming the good news of His reign.

† The Exodus story becomes even more powerful when we see where it was pointing. Moses brought Israel out of Egypt. Jesus brought His people out of the Old Covenant age and into the everlasting New Covenant kingdom.

† The first Exodus was the shadow. Christ accomplished the greater reality.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why should we connect the Exodus with the first-century church?

A: Because Paul does it himself. He says Israel's passage through the sea, wilderness experiences, spiritual food, spiritual drink, rebellion, and judgment were examples written as warnings for his first-century audience, who were living at the end of the ages (1 Corinthians 10:1-12).

Q: Was the forty-year period from Christ to AD 70 exactly the same as Israel's wilderness journey?

A: No, it was a typological fulfillment, not a repetition of every historical detail. Israel's forty years established the pattern, while the New Testament applies that wilderness pattern to the first-century covenant transition (Hebrews 3:7-19; 4:1-11).

Q: What was the greater Egypt from which Christ delivered His people?

A: The New Testament's emphasis is greater than geographical Egypt. Christ delivered His people from sin, death, condemnation, and the obsolete covenant order that couldn't

perfect the worshiper (Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:1-18).

Q: What was the promised inheritance of the greater Exodus?

A: It wasn't another piece of earthly territory. God's people came to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and the kingdom that can't be shaken (Hebrews 12:22-28).

Q: Why is AD 70 important to this pattern?

A: AD 70 brought the historical destruction of Jerusalem and the temple system that represented the Old Covenant order. Hebrews had already said that covenant was old, aging, and about to disappear (Hebrews 8:13).

Q: Are Christians today still waiting to complete this forty-year wilderness?

A: No. Paul's "ends of the ages" belonged to his audience, and Hebrews described the Old Covenant as already near disappearance (1 Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 8:13). We live in the kingdom that can't be shaken (Hebrews 12:28).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Exodus 12:11-13; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4; 1 Corinthians 10:5-6; 1 Corinthians 10:11-12; Hebrews 3:7-11; Hebrews 3:12-14; Hebrews 4:1-3; Hebrews 8:6-8; Hebrews 8:13; Hebrews 10:36-39; Hebrews 12:22-24; Hebrews 12:28

† Historical writers: Flavius Josephus; Eusebius of Caesarea

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