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Ex 1	1 Kings 3-4	Ps 105	Luke 14:12 – 15:32
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Introduction to Exodus

“Exodus is the record of Israel’s birth as a nation,” says *The New Open Bible* (introductory notes to Exodus). “The Hebrew title, *We’elleh Shemoth*, ‘Now These Are the Names,’ comes from the first phrase in 1:1. Exodus begins with ‘Now’ to show it as a continuation of Genesis. The Greek title is *Exodus*, a word meaning exit, departure or going out. The Septuagint [Greek translation of the Old Testament] uses this word to describe the book by its key event (see 19:1, ‘gone out’)” (1990). Though a nation of slaves, Israel will leave Egypt victorious to meet their God in the wilderness.

Exodus is the second of the five books written by Moses. Yeshua affirmed him as the author (compare Exodus 17:14; Mark 12:26). After calling Moses, God sends him to lead the people. But it is clear that the power to free the Israelites is not the power of Moses. Rather, it is the power of the divine King of the universe. All the while, the weakness of man is made quite clear—from Moses’ own initial resistance of God’s will to the stubborn hardheartedness of Pharaoh to the incessant complaining, murmuring and outright rebellion of the Israelites.

God, however, proves ultimately faithful. He will deliver His people. And this is all a mere type or forerunner of the future deliverance that He will accomplish through sending Yeshua—first to die as the true Passover lamb (represented in type here in Exodus) and then to come again as immortal Savior—to destroy His enemies and glorify all who choose to serve Him and live according to His law, a law first spelled out for us in the book of Exodus.

Archaeologists and biblical scholars have entered into lively discussions about whether Israel’s sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus really occurred. Biblical “minimalists” dispute the historicity of these events, because there is no evidence outside of the Bible for them. Yet many distinguished scholars uphold the veracity of the biblical account. “‘Absence of evidence,’ observes Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen, ‘is not evidence of absence.’ Nahum Sarna, professor emeritus of biblical studies

at Brandeis University, argues that the exodus story—tracing, as it does a nation’s origins to slavery and oppression—‘cannot possibly be fictional. No nation would be likely to invent for itself, and faithfully transmit century after century and millennium after millennium, an inglorious and inconvenient tradition of this nature,’ unless it had an authentic core. ‘If you’re making up history,’ adds Richard Elliott Friedman, professor at the University of California at San Diego, ‘it’s that you were descended from gods or kings, not from slaves.’

“Indeed, the absence of direct material evidence of an Israelite sojourn in Egypt is not as surprising, or as damaging to the Bible’s credibility, as it first might seem. What type of material evidence, after all, would one expect to find that could corroborate the biblical story? ‘Slaves, serfs and nomads leave few traces in the archaeological record,’ notes [respected archaeologist] William Dever. And since official records and inscriptions in the ancient Near East often were written to impress gods and potential enemies, it would be quite surprising to find an account of the destruction of the pharaoh’s army immortalized on the walls of an Egyptian temple” (Jeffery L. Sheler, *Is The Bible True?*, 1999, p. 78).

Though Enslaved, Israel Becomes a Nation (Exodus 1—2)

Here we have a recount of the sons of Israel, interestingly not by order of age, but listed according to the sons’ mothers. First listed are the sons of Leah, then the sons of Leah’s handmaid (Zilpah), Rachel’s son Benjamin (Joseph was already in Egypt), then the sons of Rachel’s handmaid (Bilhah). It is stated that Jacob’s family of “seventy persons” had come into Egypt (verse 5), just as was stated in Genesis 46:27. Yet some people see here a conflict with Stephen’s statement in Acts 7: “Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, *seventy-five* people” (verse 14). Yet, as Christ stated, “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). And indeed, a simple explanation is given in John W. Haley’s *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*: “Jacob’s children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren amounted to sixty-six [Genesis 46:8-26]. Adding Jacob himself, and Joseph with his two sons, we have seventy. If to the sixty-six we add the nine wives of Jacob’s sons (Judah’s and Simeon’s wives were dead; Joseph could not be said to call himself, his own wife, or his two sons into Egypt; and Jacob is specified separately by Stephen), we have seventy-five persons, as in Acts” (p. 389).

But the Israelites were not to remain at these numbers for long. God had promised and covenanted with Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore (Genesis 22:17-18). He reiterated that promise with Isaac (26:4) and with Jacob (28:14), who was renamed Israel (32:28). Now we see in Exodus the beginning of the fulfillment of that promise, emphasized by the use of five different descriptions: “were fruitful”; “increased abundantly”; “multiplied”; “waxed exceeding mighty”; “the land was filled with them.” It seems as though God inspired Moses to drive home the point that He was starting to fulfill the

promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is very easy to forget God's Word, especially when we fall upon difficult times, but this shows God's faithfulness to His promises.

Now we read that a number of years have passed since Joseph and his family (including his brothers and their families) have all died. A new pharaoh has come into power who does not know, remember or acknowledge the deeds and position that Joseph once held. Ask any number of young adults today whether they remember men such as Dwight Eisenhower, Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. It doesn't take long to forget men who once held highly visible positions. Yet in Egypt the tendency was far worse. There weren't textbooks to read or TV news to watch. And a new pharaoh often erased evidence of the glory of the previous pharaoh to aggrandize himself in the eyes of the people.

This new pharaoh now regards the Israelites as a threat because of their vast and growing population. So, the Egyptians devise a plan to bring the Israelites into total submission through slavery. This is all according to God's plan that He had revealed to Abraham (Genesis 15:13-14). The attempt by the pharaoh to use the taskmasters to break the spirit of the Israelites, ruin their health through long, hard hours of work and discourage them from having children who would be born into slavery was not working. So, an edict was proclaimed to *kill* the male children, thus restraining the population growth. It's interesting to note God's intervention here, as the midwives were not punished for disobeying Pharaoh's command. In fact, God blessed the midwives due to their respect for Him! Pharaoh, in turn, commanded the Egyptians to engage in the murder of the male Hebrew children. Though many were killed, it is improbable that the edict lasted very long as we can see that by the time Moses returned to lead Israel out of Egypt as a grown man (in his 80s), the adult males of Israel numbered approximately 600,000.

Solomon Requests Wisdom (1 Kings 3; 2 Chronicles 1:1-13)

The Egyptian pharaoh gives his daughter in marriage to Solomon, cementing an alliance between Egypt and Israel. "In the ancient Middle East, political alliances were often ratified by the marriage of the son of one king to the daughter of another" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 1 Kings 3:1). Yet this case is remarkable in two respects. First: "Except in unusual circumstances, the pharaohs of Egypt did not observe this custom (but see 1 Chr. 4:17, 18). Therefore, the giving of Pharaoh's daughter to Solomon attested to the Israelite king's growing prestige and importance to the Egyptian king" (same note). Second: The pharaoh is the one giving his daughter to a foreign ruler along with a dowry, making Solomon appear to be the senior partner in the alliance. It is perhaps even likely that the pharaoh is the one who first proposed the alliance and marriage, rather than it being something Solomon sought. In any case, as part of the dowry, the pharaoh gives Solomon a captured, albeit destroyed, city of the Canaanites located near the Philistine border, which Solomon rebuilds as a fortress city (1 Kings 9:15-17). Solomon provides well for Pharaoh's daughter, building a special house for her patterned after his own (3:1; 7:8; 9:24).

Consider what this development means as far as Solomon's power and prestige is concerned. The image of Israel as an insignificant nation in the time of David and Solomon is simply incorrect. David was already allied with King Hiram of Tyre, the ruler of the Phoenician Empire, which dominated ancient maritime commerce (2 Samuel 5:11-12). This close alliance continues under Solomon (1 Kings 5:1). Assyria remains weak and subdued at this time, David apparently even achieving dominance over the powers of Mesopotamia (see highlights on 1 Chronicles 19 and 2 Samuel 10). And now Egypt, the other great power of the ancient world, joins the Israel-Phoenician alliance—with Solomon apparently sitting as the dominant figure among the partners. This is rather astonishing. And the true greatness of Solomon's reign has not even been experienced as of this point in the story flow.

We next see the point made that the people sacrificed at high places (1 Kings 3:2). While this originally denoted hilltop shrines, it eventually became a generic term for any place of worship. Since the destruction of Shiloh and the separation of the tabernacle and the ark, and until the temple was built at Jerusalem, no single established place of worship existed. So multiple sites were employed for sacrificing and burning incense—perhaps even some formerly pagan worship places.

Indication that the current practice of the people was not acceptable is found in 1 Kings 3:3, where we are told that Solomon "loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, *except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.*" Still, Solomon's overall attitude at this time was one of seeking and obeying God. (It should be noted that later righteous kings of Judah allowed such high places to remain—apparently not understanding the problem with them.)

The *chief* high place—that is, the main worship center—was now at Gibeon, since that is where the tabernacle and original bronze altar were currently located (1 Kings 3:2-4; 2 Chronicles 1:3-6). Clearly this was an acceptable place of worship. Solomon goes there often in his early years as king to worship God. At one such visit, God appears to him in a dream and offers to grant him whatever he wants. Solomon focuses on the immense task of governing the people, and has the humility and sense, thanks to his father David's instructions (compare 1 Chronicles 22:12; Proverbs 4:3-9), to ask for wisdom, knowledge and an understanding heart to carry out his responsibilities in governing God's people (2 Chronicles 1:10; 1 Kings 3:9).

David would have preferred Solomon's focus be on acquiring the understanding and wisdom *to remain faithful in keeping God's laws* (2:3; 1 Chronicles 22:12-13; 28:7, 9; 29:19). It is not enough to judge righteously. A leader must be righteous himself. Nevertheless, God is impressed with Solomon's unselfish request at this point, and not only grants him knowledge and wisdom, but also the tremendous riches and honor he could have asked for. And if he should continue in God's way, he would also be granted a long life (1 Kings 3:14).

An example of the wisdom to judge that God granted the king is shown in the case of the two prostitutes and the baby, a case still famous even among those with little biblical knowledge.

Solomon's Government (1 Kings 4)

Solomon has a special group of district officers who arrange for food for the king and his large and growing household (see 1 Kings 11:3). Two of these district officers become part of the family by marrying Solomon's daughters (4:11, 15). "The provisions described here would have fed some 4,000 to 5,000 people though some estimates run as many as 14,000! The figures suggest Solomon developed a large, complex bureaucracy, and the land was wealthy enough to support it" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 20-23).

Solomon's wisdom is not confined to discernment in judgment. He is also known throughout the world of his day for his proverbs and songs, a number of which are preserved as part of the Scriptures. And he develops a keen knowledge in the sciences: "To say that Solomon 'named' (1 Kings 4:33, NIV, 'described') plants and animals means that he mastered zoology and biology" (note on verses 29-34). He also gets involved in building projects, some of which we will read about in the next few chapters, and others which are described in Ecclesiastes (2:46).

With the peaceful reign of Solomon underway, Judah and Israel flourish with population growth and good times. The general peace and prosperity brought about by God were a type of conditions the whole world will experience when Yeshua returns and rules the earth (1 Kings 4:20-25; see Micah 4:4).

"He Remembers His Covenant Forever" (Psalm 105)

Psalm 105 continues from the past two psalms on the theme of praising and thanking God for His benefits—in this case, for His special care and provision for Israel in fulfillment of His promises. We earlier read Psalm 105 in conjunction with David's bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem—for the first 15 verses of the psalm are taken from the first part of David's song composed for that occasion (1 Chronicles 16:4-36). We more recently read Psalm 96, which is taken from the second part of that psalm in 1 Chronicles. (See the Bible Reading Program comments on 1 Chronicles 16:4-36; Psalm 105:1-15; 96; 106:1, 47-48 and on Psalm 105:16-45; 1 Chronicles 16:37-43; 2 Samuel 6:20-23.)

Just as the same doxology or praise expression "Bless the LORD, O my soul!" appears at the beginning and end of both Psalms 103 and 104, it seems likely that another doxology, "Praise the LORD!" (Hebrew *Hallelujah*) is found at the beginning and end of Psalms 105 and 106—the last two psalms of Book IV in the Psalter. It appears that the doxology "Praise the LORD!" at the end of Psalm 104 should actually begin Psalm 105—as it does in the Septuagint—prefixed to the

statement from 2 Chronicles 16:1: “Oh, give thanks to the LORD!” (Psalm 105:1). Again, observe that the same doxology ends Psalm 105 and that it has been prefixed to the excerpt from 1 Chronicles 16:34 in Psalm 106:1 (and also affixed to the adaptation of 2 Chronicles 16:35-36 in Psalm 106:47-48).

Psalm 105:1-15 follows the source material from David in 1 Chronicles by instructing others to thank God, to seek Him and call on Him and to proclaim His wondrous deeds to others—one important way being through psalms such as this one. Minor changes may be noted from the source material. For instance, Psalm 105:6 refers to the Israelites (“children of Jacob”) as the “seed of Abraham His servant” rather than “seed of Israel His servant” (see 1 Chronicles 16:13)—perhaps to emphasize the covenant with Abraham mentioned a few verses later. Both descriptions are of course true. The progression of patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/Israel) appears in 1 Chronicles 16:16-17 and Psalm 105:9-10. In the entire book of Psalms the name Jacob occurs 34 times while Abraham is mentioned by name in only Psalm 105 (verses 6, 9, 42) and 47:9—and Isaac is recalled by name in Psalm 105:9 only.

In 1 Chronicles 16, David had emphasized the theme of remembering—for the Israelites to remember God’s marvelous works and judgments (verse 12) and to remember the covenant He made with the patriarchs to give their descendants the land of Canaan (verses 15-19). The first reference (verse 12) is repeated in Psalm 105 verbatim (verse 5). Yet in the second reference, rather than calling for the audience to “remember His covenant forever” (1 Chronicles 16:15), Psalm 105 says that “*He* remembers His covenant forever” (verse 8). The change here would seem to stress that even if the people don’t remember, God does. This further demonstrates, in line with other psalms of this section, God’s benefits—here being His eternal faithfulness. The same theme of remembering is built on later in verse 42, where God’s faithfulness is again demonstrated.

David’s words in 1 Chronicles 16:20-22, repeated in Psalm 105:13-15, are a further reference to the patriarchs. God had promised them the land of Canaan as an inheritance when their households were few in number and they were actually strangers in the land, which was for the most part out of their control (verses 11-12). Though not immediately giving them this homeland, God preserved them from harm in the meantime as they traveled as nomads from nation to nation and kingdom to kingdom (verses 13-14). Regarding his rebuking of kings for their sakes, telling these rulers not to hurt His anointed ones (verse 15)—here synonymous with His prophets (same verse)—note two examples in the life of Abraham (see 12:10-20; 20:1-17). In the latter instance, God told Abimelech (the Philistine king of Gerar) that Abraham was a prophet (verse 7). Other stories in Genesis show that God continued to oversee the lives of Isaac and Jacob, protecting them from those who would have harmed them.

We then move into the latter part of Psalm 105, which was *not* taken from David’s earlier composition in 1 Chronicles 16. The author of this latter section is unknown. It could have been

David or, just as easily, anyone else from his time up to that of Ezra more than five centuries later. This section follows on from God's promise to give the land of Canaan to Israel by telling the story of what led up to their eventual inheritance (verses 16-45).

The psalmist picks up the Genesis account with the story of Joseph, who was sold by his brothers into slavery and ended up the ruler of all Egypt under its pharaoh. While in prison, Joseph, with God's inspiration, accurately interpreted the divinely induced dreams of the pharaoh's baker and butler—eventually securing his release. This is evidently what is referred to in Psalm 105:18-19, which the NIV translates as saying that Joseph was imprisoned “till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true.” Joseph then interpreted dreams of the pharaoh to mean that a period of plenty would be followed by a period of famine—and the pharaoh appointed Joseph as his vizier or prime minister to oversee the storing up of provisions for the famine.

This eventually served to provide during the time of famine for Joseph's father Israel or Jacob and the rest of his family—who came down to settle in Egypt. Verse 16 declares the destruction of provision and resultant famine to be the work of God. And verse 17 further declares Joseph being sent as a slave to Egypt to be by God's design—so as to provide for His people. This is just what Joseph himself acknowledged in assuring His brothers that He would not take vengeance on them: “You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones” (Genesis 50:20-21).

Note, incidentally, that Egypt is referred to here as the “land of Ham” (Psalms 105:23, 27; 106:22; compare 78:51). Ham was one of the three sons of Noah, and from him sprang Mizraim or the Egyptians (Genesis 10:1, 6). The H in “Ham” was pronounced as a heavily aspirated or “coughed” K—so that the name could be written as Khem (as the Moffatt Translation renders the word in Psalms 105 and 106). Khem (sometimes spelled Chem) was in fact the ancient name for Egypt, written in hieroglyphic script as KM, the name denoting “black” or “hot” (in the sense of “burnt.”). The “black” meaning here is often understood to refer to the darkened fertile soil along the length of the Nile. But the name Khem could just as well derive from the name Ham, which has the same meaning, or be a reference to Ham's darkskinned descendants.

Jacob's family grew and prospered in Egypt until God turned the hearts of the Egyptians “to hate His people...and deal craftily with His servants” (Psalm 105:25). At no time does the psalmist question why this long history of intrigue and reversal was necessary for giving the Promised Land to Abraham's descendants. He trusts God. The Lord's performance of spectacular miracles during the Exodus period that comes next in the story flow was critical for Israel's *remembering* (see Deuteronomy 15:15).

In introducing the Exodus, the psalmist mentions God sending Moses and Aaron to perform signs and wonders (Psalm 105:26-27; compare Exodus 4; 7:8-13). He then follows with a description of the plagues with which God struck Egypt (Psalm 105:26-36; compare Exodus 7:14-12:30). The

psalmist begins with the plague of darkness (Psalm 105:28a), which was actually the ninth of the 10 plagues. It may be that he was using this to metaphorically represent all the plagues as a dark time of affliction for Egypt. And this could have been intended as a play on words—the sending of darkness or blackness on the “Black Land” (as “land of Ham” in the previous verse could mean).

The second part of verse 28 has caused much difficulty in interpretation. The NKJV has: “And they did not rebel against His word.” Some take the “they” as “these”—referring to the plagues that follow in the next few verses, meaning that these (in a personified sense) did not veer from accomplishing what God sent them to do. Others take the “they” of verse 28 to be the same “they” of verse 27, that is, Moses and Aaron (verse 26), which would mean they did not go astray from fulfilling the signs God gave them to perform. Others take “they” in verse 28 to refer to the “them” of verse 25, among whom signs were performed—though it is not clear whether this refers to the Israelites or the Egyptians (see verses 24-25). If the Israelites, verse 28 would mean that they did not go against doing what God commanded them at this time— i.e., keeping the Passover, etc.

However, the “they” in verse 28 is usually understood to refer to the Egyptians, as “their” in the next verse clearly refers to them. Yet how did the Egyptians “not rebel against [God’s] word” when they were punished for defying God’s command to release His people? Some Bible versions try to fix this problem by dropping the word “not” before “rebel”—meaning that the Egyptians *did* rebel. However, the Hebrew word for “not”—*lo*—is clearly present here. The NIV and Jewish Publication Society Tanakh more reasonably solve the problem by interpreting the words as a rhetorical question: “...for had they not rebelled against his words?” Another possibility is that the statement here speaks of the end result of all the plagues—that the darkness of the plagues in the previous clause broke the Egyptians so that they no longer rebelled against His order to release His people. Finally, it may be that the statement simply means that at all points the Egyptians did not *withstand* His word (to any effect)—as they *could* not.

The psalm then reiterates the various plagues in generally the same order as the book of Exodus except for switching flies and lice and skipping over the fifth plague of livestock deaths and the sixth plague of boils (and, as already mentioned, for having darkness first as a summary rather than in its actual next-to-last position). The psalm, we must remember, is written as poetry and makes no claim to giving the historical order. The present wording may simply have better fit the musical composition.

Following the description of Egypt’s punishment, we then again see God’s provision and benefits for His people. Psalm 105:37 mentions the Israelites departing enriched with silver and gold. Where the same verse says that there was “none feeble” among them, J.P. Green’s Literal Translation says that “not one was stumbling.” The NIV says “no one faltered” (compare JPS Tanakh). Thus, God took such excellent care of His people that everyone made it. Verse 39 describes His pillar of cloud and fire, which shaded the people from the desert sun during the day and gave them light to see at night. And during their travel through the desert He miraculously fed

them with quail, manna and water (verses 40-41)—the word “satisfied” here recalling the listing of God’s benefits in Psalm 103:5.

God performed all of this because (“for”) “He remembered His holy promise” to Abraham (Psalm 105:42). Joyfully and gladly, God gave the land to “His chosen ones,” Abraham’s descendants. They inherited a land already developed by the labor of the Canaanites, so they could immediately enjoy its produce and benefits. Yet all this required a proper heartfelt response of gratitude (as the psalm begins) and the honoring of God through obedience. “He gave them the lands...that they might observe His statutes and keep his laws” (verse 45).

God remembered His covenant and promises and stuck to them—and the people needed to do the same. Moreover, these wonderful laws, as God’s greatest benefits to Israel, gave the people far more freedom than their physical deliverance from Egypt. Far more than land and populace in the land of Canaan, obedience to God’s laws would make them a truly great nation, as God had also promised Abraham (compare Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 4:6-8). This promise is yet to be completely fulfilled when Israel at last comes to properly understand all this and fully submits to God’s ways in the Kingdom of God.

Psalm 105 makes it clear that God is in charge of history—and guides its outcome for the benefit of His people. As we will see, the next psalm continues the theme of God remembering His people for their great benefit (compare 106:4-5). As we reflect on these psalms, may we all join in our thoughts in the expression that opens and closes them: *Hallelujah* or “Praise the LORD!”

Luke 14:12-15:32

Yeshua continues His teachings. When you give a feast, invite the poor, the cripples, the lame, the blind... then you shall be blessed. You will be repaid at the resurrection. Yeshua shares the parable of the wedding feast, how the invitations went out through the servants of a certain man. One by one the people began making excuses as to why they could not come.

So the man told his servants to then go out and invite everyone they saw, down to the very least of society. The ones who were sent invitations who made excuses will not attend the supper with the Master. No one, who does not leave all to follow Yeshua cannot be His taught one.. and serious consideration must be given to the cost of doing so as well.

The scribes and Pharisees were questioning Yeshua eating with sinners and Yeshua taught them that the sinners are the ones who need salvation, forgiveness, and healing. There is more rejoicing in heaven over these because they have been found after having been lost. He tells the parable of the lost gold coin and the parable of the prodigal son.