

Far From Home

Exodus 1:1-14

Detailed outline from the Sermon on September 30, 2007

Exiled by famine

Joseph exiled by his own brothers
Resolved (Genesis 50:19) by reconciliation.

The brothers exiled by famine (Genesis 42:1-6)
Resolved by their reunion with Joseph and Joseph's undeserved favor.

The people multiply and become a threat.
The Israelites are enslaved and "used ruthlessly."

Four hundred bad years (predicted in Genesis 15:13), becomes specifically 430 years (Exodus 12:40). God's people are far from home.

Renewal and homecoming

Moses leads them out of slavery and exile, but that's a story for the weeks to come.

The cliff notes: God raises up Moses, God renews the covenant, God establishes the Law, God restores them to their land and renews their faith.

This is the first of a set of exiles and renewals that mark the history of a nation and the spiritual journey of a people of faith.

Exiled by the Assyrians

Israel's greatest years are under David and Solomon. After Solomon's death, Israel divides into Israel and Judah. This makes them politically vulnerable and spiritually unsettled.

Internal issues erupt

Sexual depravity – Hosea 7, "They are like an oven burning with fire that doesn't need rekindling from the kneading of the dough to its rising... the passion smolders all night."

Political intrigues

Graven images (idols) of false gods, Hosea 8:6, “This calf, a craftsman made it; it is not God.”

They are becoming litigious; “They make many promises, take false oaths, and make agreements, therefore lawsuits spring up like poisonous weeds in a plowed field.” Hosea 10:4-5

Assyria’s wants are predictable:

Timber
Passage to Egypt
Access to the Mediterranean

Canaan and her peoples (including the children of Abraham) are overrun by this rumbling Assyrian empire between 740 B.C. and 680 B.C. 733 took Galilee. 721 took the prosperous and leaders away and resettled the land with their own colonists. Well into the next century, God’s people (at least a large influential cross-section) were far from home. Israel was ruled by puppet kings dominated by Assyria.

Renewal and Homecoming

Hezekiah stands up and says “enough.” He leads them through a season of spiritual renewal.

Josiah does the same.
Coupled with attacks on Assyria that force them to fight elsewhere, Israel enjoys a hundred years of relative independence. And many wander back home. There are good kings, bad kings, and again a slow leakage of spiritual fervor.

Exiled by the Babylonians

Idols appear again, and intrigues of every kind.

Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians who had overrun the Assyrians (587 B.C.). Seventy bad years (predicted in Jeremiah 25) set in. Again, the wealthy, influential and educated are carried off (not totally prisoners; sort of like the pillaging of German scientists by America and Russia after WWII).

The Songs of Lamentation and mourning get their own book in the Bible. (1:1-4)

Renewal and Homecoming

The Persians overtake the Babylonians, and they’re friendlier to the Israelites.

Ezra leads a homecoming party and rebuilds the temple.

Nehemiah leads a homecoming party and rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem.
All the while, the prophetic voice is strong. (Jeremiah 30)

Personal exile

David running from Saul - This popular hero is a threat to the first King of Israel.

Renewal and homecoming follow Saul's death, and David becomes King and spiritual leader in the greatest time of Israel's history.

David runs from Absalom, who leads an uprising during a time when David's approval ratings are low.

Renewal and homecoming follow the death of Absalom. Through it all, David mourns, and then does all of history the favor of writing down his prayers, poems and songs from exile far from home. (Psalm 42, 43, 59, 63)

David gets it and we get David!

This is the truth about God and our lives:

Fundamental truths: God's ways are bigger than our ways. He has the power and freedom and foresight to work with people and even with nations, shaping, molding, breaking.

A parable of Jesus (The Prodigal Son)

Are you far from home?
By your own doing? Famine? The external force of others? Come home.

Far from home

By your own doing?

- Sin, shame, separation...
- Friendship with the world, replacing God with things made by human hands, looking for security in things other than God.
- You quit doing the things that breed intimacy and growth.

Come home

- Accept forgiveness and renewal.
- The power of confession
- Let go of idols.
- Start again on the behaviors that cultivate relationship.

By famine?

- No easily discernible reason why you're in a faraway place.

Come home

- Find beauty in the desert.
- Lean into your pain and desolation.
- Do yourself and others a favor by writing songs from the desert.
- Keep walking. Soon you'll be in the foothills again and maybe even the mountaintops.

By the external force of others?

- Survive – gather every resource available and survive.
- Brace for a crisis that could save you and others.
- Watch God show up in His time. Never soon enough, it seems, but He's having His way somehow, somewhere, and we have to trust Him.

Then come home. Whatever that means, as soon as you can. Come home.