

The Weight of Memory

Remember this and never forget how you aroused the anger of the LORD your God in the wilderness. From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here, you have been rebellious against the LORD. (Deut. 9:7)

Memory and Freedom

In Deuteronomy 9-10, Moses reminds Israel of its painful past: both its slavery in Egypt and its faithlessness towards God. Like the rest of us, Israel was both a _____ and a _____. So why does Moses keep reminding Israel of its past?

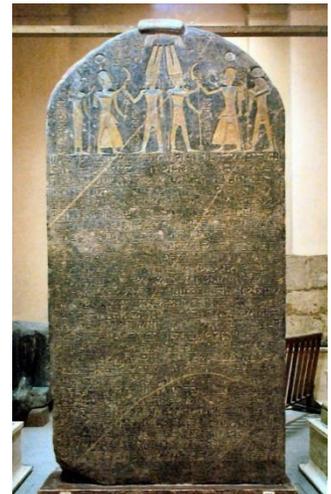


Relief of Thutmose II, possible Pharaoh of the Exodus; from Karnak (Wm Pearl derivative, Wikimedia commons)

Memory has the power to motivate us to achieve great things and to bring about our ruin, so it is critical that we deal with our past. Can you name a memory that needs to be conquered?

A Reminder of Israel's Past (Deut. 9:1-10:22)

- **Deut. 9:1-7.** For the third time, Moses reminds Israel of its past. Clearly, memory plays an important role in faithfulness. **Anakim:** tall people from Hebron—the Israelites were intimidated by them. (Num. 13:22; Josh. 15:13) **Your righteousness:** God chose Israel because God is faithful to His promise, not because Israel was good. Israel was **stiff-necked:** a farming term describing a stubborn mule who won't turn while plowing. **Because of the wickedness:** The conquest of Canaan was also a form of punishment for Canaan's evil culture.
- **9:8-11.** After 40 days of prayer and fasting at Sinai (aka Horeb), Moses received the Ten Commandments, written by the very finger of God.
- **9:12-17. Calf:** Worshiping a cow made sense to Israel, because cattle were worshiped in Egypt (as Hathor) as well as in Canaan (as Baal). When everyone around you worships a cow, it is easy for you to do so, too. **Breaking them.** Moses breaks the stone tables to symbolize a broken covenant. God almost destroyed the Israelites for their faithlessness.
- **9:18-29.** Twice, Moses intercedes with God to save the Israelites from punishment. **Aaron:** Moses' brother and the high priest.
- **10:1-5.** Moses **chisels** out a new set of the Ten Commandments; note that this time God does not personally carve out the stone.
- **10:6-11. Aaron** dies at Moserah. The **Levites** are appointed as a sacred tribe—they inherit service in the temple rather than land.
- **10:12-22.** God preserved Israel, so Israel's proper response is to love and obey God. **Circumcise your hearts:** a phrase meaning open your affections to God. **Love the foreigners:** Because God treated Israel with kindness, Israel should treat others with kindness. **Seventy in all:** God took a rag-tag group of slaves and turned them into a nation.



Merneptah Stele (13th century BC), containing the first non-biblical reference to Israel. Egyptian Museum (<https://commons.wikimedia.org>)

Turning Scars into Beauty Marks

1. **Honesty.** Be forthright about your past, remembering that the truth will set you free. (Deut. 9:24) If you try to stuff away your painful memories, they will likely _____.
2. **Dependence.** Recognize that God is willing to give you power to start over. (Deut. 9:3) With God, it's never too late to _____.
3. **Identity.** Where you were wronged, refuse to adopt it as your identity. (Deut. 9:29) Let it energize you, not debilitate you. "Forgive it, and move on."

4. **Fearlessness.** Take a fearless and honest moral inventory. (Deut. 9:21)
Where you've done wrong, promptly admit it and _____
where possible.
5. **Ministry.** Use your past to minister to others. (Deut. 10:18-19)
6. **Grace.** Now walk in grace and extend grace to others (Deut. 10:10). Lift up
your head and enjoy the _____ of God's grace.
7. **Trust.** Realize that your story was never about you; it was always God's
story. Look forward to the day you can look backward at the God who
was leading you the whole time. (Deut. 10:22)



Tel Aviv, Israel. From 72 people,
God formed a nation of millions
(dmy)

*“Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and
there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.” (Isa. 46:9)*

The Exodus and History

- The Exodus is the defining event in the pre-Jesus history of Israel, but history offers us few clues as to its exact date and nature. As a result, there are endless theories about this pivotal event.
- One problem arises from the lack of archaeological remains of the 600,000 men (plus their families) wandering the Sinai and Negev for 40 years. Surely such a large number of people would have left evidence of their presence. Perhaps the Bible's *thousands* actually refer to *clans* (600 *clans*, not 600 *thousand*). This would result in smaller numbers which could account for the lack of archaeological remains.
- **Early Date:** Many believe the Exodus occurred during the reign of Pharaoh Thutmose II (c. 1440 BC). 1 Kings 6:1 says there were 480 years between the Exodus and Solomon (c. 960 BC), which would put the Exodus around 1440. Judges 11:26 mentions 300 years of Israelite occupation of Canaan (before 1000 BC), also indicating an early date. Some archaeological remains in Canaan seem to suggest that someone invaded Canaan in the 15th century BC., and a collection of letters found in Egypt (the Amarna Letters) also mention invading armies in Canaan in the 15th Century BC. But it is not clear if these invaders were the Israelites.
- **Late Date:** Others believe the Exodus occurred during the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II (around 1290 BC). Asiatic people called “Hyksos”—comparable to the Joseph of the Bible—ruled in Egypt starting in the 1700's B.C. Exod. 12:40-41 suggests the Israelites stayed in Egypt for 430 years. If Joseph was part of the Hyksos people, his rule began in the 1700's, and 430 years later, the Exodus would have occurred around 1290. The cities of Pithom and Rameses, built by Israelites (Exod. 1:11), seem to have been constructed in the 14th-13th centuries BC. Archaeological evidence suggests that some of the places Israel captured didn't exist in the 15th century BC. And Merneptah (d. 1203), son of Rameses, is the first to mention Israel, and he seems to refer to them as a people still without a homeland.
- Eventually the question will be solved through a more precise understanding of how Hebrews used numbers (see p. 19 of previous sermon notes) and through archaeological evidence yet undiscovered. In the meanwhile, we give thanks to God for rescuing His people from bondage.

Answers: victim, perpetrator, explode somewhere else, open a new chapter, make amends, freedom.