

Numbers 20:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers:

Analysis

Moses recounts Israel's history: 'our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time.' This historical summary provided context for the request, showing Israel as fellow-travelers, not invaders. Sharing one's story can build bridges and explain present circumstances. Yet even accurate history doesn't always persuade hardened hearts.

Historical Context

Israel's Egyptian sojourn began with Joseph's elevation (Genesis 41) and lasted 430 years (Exodus 12:40-41). Moses' summary connected present request to ancient history shared by both nations through Abraham. This appeal to common heritage hoped to evoke kinship compassion.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does telling your spiritual history create connection with others?

2. When is it appropriate to appeal to shared heritage or common ground in seeking cooperation?

Interlinear Text

וַיָּרֶד ו	וְלֹאֲבֹתֵינוּ:	מִצְרַיִם	וְנִשְׁבּ	מִצְרַיִם
went down	How our fathers	and the Egyptians	and we have dwelt	and the Egyptians
H3381	H1	H4714	H3427	H4714
יָמֵינוּ	וְרַב־עוֹ	לָנוּ	מִצְרַיִם	וְלֹאֲבֹתֵינוּ:
time	a long	vexed	and the Egyptians	How our fathers
H3117	H7227	H7489	H4714	H1

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 12:40 (References Egypt): Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.

Genesis 46:6 (References Egypt): And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him:

Deuteronomy 26:6 (References Egypt): And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:

Acts 7:15 (References Egypt): So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,

Genesis 15:13 (Parallel theme): And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years;